

Media, National Question and Crisis of Confidence

Simon Ezaka

Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakliki

ABSTRACT

Corpus literature, much of which is sociological, has vigorously explored the various roles that the media have played, and still play, in our identification, understanding and management of national questions in many countries of the world. However, there appears to be a paucity of the literature that underscores how the media themselves have directly or indirectly, arguably, propagated the phenomenon of national questions. This, therefore, is the gap that this paper has observed and attempts to fill, even if it would mean drawing the attention of media scholars and other line agencies to the situation. To do this, the paper chose Nigeria's national question to ensure manageability, and discussed, especially with a view to exposing the appropriate empirical referents within the nation's context, basic concepts including national questions; conflict, violence and crisis of confidence especially as flagship of national question and the media and their portrayal patterns of Nigeria's national question to the extent of not only being productive of the prevalent crisis of confidence in the country but also constituting, in themselves, a miniature phenomenon of the broad phenomenon of Nigeria's national question.

Keywords: Media, National Question and Crisis, Confidence

INTRODUCTION

Right from its archeological past, especially during the fullest expression in the rhetorical culture of the renaissance to its ethnographic present dimension of pluralistic sensibilities, communication through its many and varied media has always touched the areas of vision of life, the active and social nature of man, the values of community and the inescapability of conflict and change [1,2,3,4,5]. Particularly within the realm of the golden days of media practice, humanist oratory was based on the conception of man as a social being motivated by will, and whose energies stemmed from the passions. This conception led in turn to a distinctive concern with communication as the essential bond of life in society, as well as to a new human ideal of the well rounded eloquent and thus socially effective man of affairs [6,7]. The purpose of communication in this view could not be the transmission of an absolute wisdom which the human mind is incompetent to reach but the attainment of concrete and

practical ends. Such communication has to be, above all, persuasive, and as well designed to affect the target audience by swaying the passions rather than merely to convince the mind. It needed to penetrate the center of the personality in order to achieve results in visible acts, even if such broad communication points to development issues, including negative projection of government positions and policies on those issues [8]. In our contemporary media landscape with all its modes of communication, multimedia particularly exemplifies itself as a unique form of artistic and aesthetic expression of thought, idea, feeling, view, etc. With the aid of convergence, packaging, transmission, dissemination, consumption and even evaluation of content as applied to the communication process have only taken a turn for excellence. Within the concentric of such communications has been Nigeria's national question. [9] informs that discourse on Nigeria's national question has been extended to the live stage with

the juxtaposition of dialogues through characters personae, as vehicles for encoding and decoding the national question-related messages through the instrumentality of storylines, themes, among other dramatic and theatrical flavorings like spectacles, rhythm or music, and language. The National Question is a term used for a variety of issues related to nationalism. It is often seen in socialist thought and doctrine. This is exactly the situation in Nigeria today, where there are many burning issues confronting the Nigerian nation-state. According to [10], the conventional explanation of crippling poverty, economic backwardness and perennial social turmoil in the midst of vast human and material resources in Nigeria is in terms of leadership failure, administrative ineptitude, technological deficiency, moral decadence and more recently, grand corruption. He went on to inform that other factors advanced include ethnic and religious differentiation and nepotism, and that there is scant recognition of the absence of the spirit of nation behind the inability of Nigeria to take its rightful place among developed countries of the world [10].

A major concern for this paper is that relevant literature has only captured the diverse role the media have played in identifying what constitutes a national question and vigorously disseminated not only same but also the challenges surrounding it [11]. However, the observable gap in knowledge, especially in the direction, is that media's portrayal (meaning the language and angle of the communication) of the national question has in itself become an indispensable component of the national question, which must be addressed if the nation is to survive as a nation state. By way of

The Concept of National Question

As has been pointed out in the introductory part of this paper, the national question is a term, operationally used, especially in socialist thought and doctrine, to explain a variety of issues that borders on nationalism. It follows, arguably however, that every nation state of the world has its peculiar national Question. Perhaps, a few examples

explication, communication, as a phenomenon, activates and facilitates the sharing of meanings, ideas, messages, experience, among others through the instrumentality of organic signs and symbols resulting in perception, encoding and decoding as another phenomenon of human interaction. [12] adds that when ready to be expressed, ideas and thoughts become the stream of consciousness to which language is the channel, and the communication, the medium of projection to the target audience. He further notes that when used in this way, language and communication, verbal or non-verbal, can be regarded as Siamese twins, which cannot be separated without causing mortal damage to one or both. The kernel of the aforesaid is that communication in all its dynamism can be manipulated to control events (in our case national question), assuage or mollify crisis situation or, on the other hand, inflame crisis or conflict situation with the aim of achieving dissension, discontent, disorientation, agitation or destabilization of an otherwise quiet atmosphere and disposition characteristic of peace and concord [13]. Thus, the media can mould and shape for good, and can as well cut to destroy. As its vortex, the paper draws attention to the destructive aspect of communicating Nigeria's national question, and it does so by reviewing a range of issues that culminate in the national question, which by implication is a theoretical examination of the key aspects of the national question discourse and debate in Nigeria, and thereafter emphasizes how the media in their portrayals of the societal challenges, have become a major aspect of the national question that the country has to contend with [14].

around the world are necessary to buttress the fact. Britain has continued to grapple with old-fashioned monarchical government even in this predominant air of democracy around the world, soccer hooliganism and religious and racial bigotries, especially as evidenced in Northern Ireland; the national question of United States of

American has equally been expressed in racism, often hallmarked by brutish violence and judicial prejudices. [14] gave just a few examples to include the moral Cincinnati riot like the earlier violence replications in Los Angeles, Chicago and the recycling Kluklus Clan (KKK)-inflamed burning of the Black churches, years ago. Vietnam and recurrent obsessions about nuclear and biological warfare, recurrent terrorism, multiplicity of gender issues and other endemic fixations, juvenile and adult delinquencies, gun violence obesity etc, are as well prevalent in the supposedly God's own country; Germany as well has as its version of national question xenophobia, unemployment, alcoholism among other socio-political malaises, while Russia has its endemic food insecurity, incurable alcoholism, excessive expenditures on armament and militarism at the expense of humanity, and paradoxical communist institutionalized corruption (Iji, 2014). There are also the national questions that are specifically related to the Arab/Israeli incurable crises including the ethnic nationalism and religious dichotomies, which had erupted in the Balkan, while the Middle East flash points of conflicts continue recurrently. In the same token, the Nigerian National Question has similarly severed national development imperatives, threatened her fragile federation or federalism, fragile unity and marred collective and individual destinies [14,15]. Socialist Alternative, a national organization fighting in Nigerian work-places, communities, and campuses against the exploitation and injustices people face every day, and which also doubles as community activists fighting against budget cuts in public services; campaigning for increased wage and fighting and speaking, as democratic unions, against racism and attacks on immigrants, tuition hikes and war, sexism and homophobia, identified four major Nigeria's national questions to include nationalist and religious options, independent republics, resource control and sovereign national conference. The group maintains that the rapid growth in nationalism and religion is caused by the

desperate search for solution to the problem of mass poverty, hunger, diseases, unemployment, crimes and insecurity by the masses, especially given the failure of the labor leadership to provide an alternative on how the crises could be permanently resolved [16,17]. In addition, various sections of the ruling class have continued to play ethnic and religious cards in order to maintain political control. To underscore the point, the group explains that the nation has not only been largely dominated by ethnic/religious strife and violence, but has also, particularly in the core north, been greeted with a geometric rise in Islamic fundamentalism. Similarly, Nigerians, especially those in the South, have consistently had to grapple with, since recent time, an astronomical rise in Christian fundamentalism across the country. And perhaps more than at any other time in Nigeria, both before and after independence, the country has witnessed a more widespread clamor for the restructuring of the country itself. Today, there is the existence of nationalist organizations of all hues and cries, which sprang up and almost instantly began to experience phenomenal growth and support of members of the different nationalities. There are the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Egbesu Boys, Bakassi Boys, Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra that has made way for Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), all of which have perfected all strategies to institutionalize their fiery but phenomenal growth and activities. As at today intra/inter ethnic and religious strife and violence have resulted in the premature death of tens of thousands of Nigerians. Their death were usually caused by the warring nationalist/religious groups themselves and very largely and usually too, by the capitalist state apparatus of coercion like the army and police. Equally worthy of note at this point is that the fierce opposition which greeted the introduction of Sharia criminal code in the core North by Christians and the non-Muslim Nigerians has for now assumed a subtle feature of resignation to the extent that even the politicians that introduced

Sharia have had to take public feeling into consideration in the day-to-day execution of Sharia in their areas of jurisdiction. Whatever the case, it has be noted that the recurrent culture of religious, ethnic and tribal insurgencies are significantly a creation of the failures of leadership, followership and governance and other vice-influenced man's inhumanity to man, perhaps, with their roots anchored on family weaklinks; like charity beginning at home. The fundamental problem of mass poverty and destitution which is making the masses of the different nationalities to feel that their material and cultural conditions will be better if their destinies are in the hands of their own nationalities has not received the nod of government. Daily, the governments formed by these pro-rich parties bombard the masses with paid adverts claiming fantastic achievements in all aspects of social life and economy. And, just like in the past, the current capitalist governments across the country have heedlessly continued with the fruitless counterproductive policy of suppressing agitations with superior firepower instead of that of honest inquiry and resolution. Thus, there is little or no surprise as to the re-emergence, with greater fury than was witnessed in our recent past, of nationalist agitations that appeared to have receded from the front stage of polity [18,19]. Again, the 1999 constitution has a provision that not less than 13% of revenues generated from natural resources of any given area must be paid to the area concerned by the central government. This very minimal provision has now even been sidetracked by past and present administrations in Nigeria [7]. This has been done through the artificial demarcation between revenues generated from onshore and offshore oil exploration. Regrettably, though not unexpectedly, the Supreme Court has given a ridiculous judgment to sabotage this modest constitutional provision. According to this ruling, the oil found within the territory of a state, including its neighboring shallow water, is onshore and the respective state is entitled to be paid 13% derivation

revenues, whereas oil sourced from deep water belongs to no states but Nigeria as a whole [15]. Hence for the selfish capitalist/nationalist interests of the elites of the major Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo nationalities that dominate the economy and polity of Nigeria, logic must be overturned. The attitudes of the working masses to the agitation for resource control differ from one part of the country to the other. The masses in the non-oil producing states are either apathetic towards it or opposed to it. To this layer, the whole demand is seen as something which would reduce the revenue being earned by Nigeria with the attendant negative effects this is likely to have on their own living standards. On the other hand, the masses in the oil producing states support or have sympathy for the agitation for resource control [16]. To them, this is the only way out of the prevailing endemic mass poverty in the oil-producing areas. There are, however, those who simply hold the view that the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) or National Conference (NC) will automatically straighten out any socio-political problems faced by the working masses. A truly democratically elected Sovereign National Conference may address some of the critical questions ravaging the country today. But if the country or its new fashion or units remain within the framework of global capitalist network, it will mean that little or nothing can be positively done to better the material well-being and democratic rights of the masses by such an SNC [17]. Therefore, the SNC must not be about sovereignty where the masses are only allowed to choose between one set of exploiters and tyrants or the other. For an SNC to be meaningful to the masses, it must be capable of raising and taking measures which are capable of enforcing the democratic, working class control and management of all resources and technical manpower of the society in the interest of all as opposed to that of a few as it is under capitalism. This is why all the various sections of the capitalist ruling class including its Afenifere extraction have not been able to

consistently champion the convocation of an SNC, or an NC. Not even the south-south bourgeois, who is supposed to be more radical, given the fact that most revenues come from its area while little development ever occurs, is prepared to risk his prevailing privileges for an uncertain and very difficult ideal. Their reasons are not farfetched. Their present luxury and privileges are reality while the outcome of an SNC or even NC is a gamble [18]. Arguably, [19] is however more detailed in his discourse on the national question. According to him, what is commonly referred to as the Nigeria's National Question is a pocket of national malaises, which can be regarded as Nigeria's multi-directional malfeasances, replicated in political maladministration at all levels of our nation state. He notes that it is manifest in organized religious questions of scandalous proportions, exemplified recently in the seat of CAN (Christian Association of Nigeria) in the 9.3 million dollars plane load seized in South Africa: ownership of states of the arts universities among religious bodies; educational institutions that dwarf any Nigerian governments; states or federal universities. All these, he maintains, are at the expense of over famished fanatical religious followers. In his view, the national question can be seen manifest in the subversion of judiciary as the last hope of the common man to the extent that justice can only be procured by the highest bidders, all at the expense of the down-trodden. Similarly, national question is sufficiently observable in leadership deficits at all levels of government, leadership or command structures, can be seen in bad governance, deficit in transparency and accountability; variety of moral and ethical bankruptcies at all levels [13]. For instance, the legislative performance of rare or deficit accountability to their constituents, many and varied deficiencies in the delivery of democracy dividends, various levels of corruptions, in all the body polity, civil service performance deficits, and among people relationships to fellow humans, are all archetypes of national question.

Furthermore, national question is evident in the order of leadership succession at all the chief executive levels; in devolution of powers among political office holders; in do-or-die electoral malpractices at all levels, the scandalous management of the wealth of the nation, often observable in inequitable allocations of resources, which [15] notes that it has led to the demise of the middle class cadres of the nation, and productive of poverty acceleration rather than poverty alleviation, entrenchment of the culture of kidnapping, baby factories, child-trafficking etc, as very lucrative avenues of survival or wealth creation. Other manifest forms of national malaises include the apparent collapse of Nigeria's educational sectors, health institutions, decadence in civil or military service performances, among other security strongholds, reportedly ridden with corruptions [17]. Nigeria's electricity, power generation and distribution are scandalously low, leading to endemic blackouts and entrenchment of endemic culture of widespread resort to electric generators and the pervasive environmental or ecological pollution and health hazards, consequent on this culture. National question also rears its ugly head in the form of widespread moral downturn, despite the ever increasing escalation of prosperity churches, mushrooming by the day, encouraged, perhaps, by the lack of role models in our polity, judiciary, legislature, educational institutions, and again among the clergies or clerics [16]. Today in Nigeria, even an elementary one pupil can attest to so much widespread overt violations of the oaths of office and oaths of allegiance among our leaders at all levels, with again, no checks and balances. The result is that culture of impunity is entrenched nationwide among our leaders. In this respect, the relationship between the older generation and the corner-cutting newer generations is a threat to the future of civilized, productive co-existential imperatives, especially the culture of indolence and of get-rich quick mania, which are in turn vital aspects of national question. Equally noteworthy in defining our national question is the structure of Nigeria's

federation that is arguably ever precarious. The situation manifests in the ever increasing north-south dichotomies, exacerbated by the Christian-Muslim polarities [17].

Beyond politics, [11] informs that ever-increasing threats to Nigeria's biodiversity is also very worrying as seen in the depletion of forest and ecological systems, widespread pollution of the coastlines, seas, rivers and degradation of farm lands, fishery population and wild lives; in short Nigeria's flora and fauna are in ever increasing danger to Nigerian citizenry, and to the wealth of the nation. There are also widespread violations of children rights, very much associated with the ever-increasing violations of women rights, including child labor and child-trafficking as noted somewhere in this review, all bordering on child welfare laws, while labor laws, among other legislations, have obviously not been implemented or enforced to the benefits of all. The same problems can be expressed as major concerns on cultural practices, such as wife inheritance and series of oppressions meted out to widows in parts of the country just as Nigerian Foreign Policy has for long been imprudently culturally situated in Africa as its centre piece, to the detriments of Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora. In the same vein, evidence of hatred of Nigerians abroad, even among our so-called African brothers and sisters from other African countries and among many African-Americans who do not hide their animosities against Nigerians in

Conflict, Violence and Crisis of Confidence as Flagship of National Question

Among the many and varied definitions and explanations of conflict, the one by [7] is apposite for the context of this paper. It says that "conflict is a process in which one party perceives that another party has taken some actions that exert negative efforts on its major interests or is about to take such action". [9] Corroborates this stance by defining conflict as "a perceived incompatibility of actions or goals". It is however generally believed that conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence, though, according to [8], violent conflict

very many avenues of interactions, abounds. And like [11] points out to be the most worrying core of our national question in the cultural subsector are the threats to Nigeria's over 350 languages; ethnic or tribal, as endangered species, under the aegis of globalization and post-modernist sensibilities. Our children are not interested, these days, in learning to speak their mother tongues, because they have been lost to the fast-paced digital culture of the new media of the Internet World.

In summary, the archetypes of Nigeria's national question must be noted to among others include the actualization of fiscal and true federalism of the Nigerian federation, power equation to be expressed in the actual devolution of political power between the North-South dichotomies, especially by rotating the presidency and other political leadership positions not only among the three major tribes but also to include the minority groups as demonstrated by the six geopolitical zones. Also noteworthy as indispensable parts of Nigeria's national question jigsaw are endemic corruption profiles, mismanagement of public affairs or common wealth, poverty, military aberration in Nigerian polity, the need for the separation of church and state, crimes and immoralities, increasing insecurity of lives and properties, the upsurge of Boko Haram, unknown gunmen and allied terrorist activities. All these forms of Nigeria's national question have been hallmarked by conflicts and violence as a demonstration of crisis of confidence.

is not inevitable and as such is an anomaly. Consequently, if conflict is explained as the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups, it does not include armed conflict that is the resort to the use of force and armed violence in the pursuit of incompatible and particular interests and goals. The worst forms of armed conflict include mass murder and genocide against unarmed civilians as have been the case in Nigeria since recent time. Therefore, conflict resolution scholars [8] argue that conflict has an ontological basis in human needs,

and it is the denial which causes violent conflicts, or causes resolvable differences to degenerate into armed violence or armed conflict.

The conception of conflict, its management and resolution have led to terms such as a peacemaking, conflict prevention, third party intervention and the focus on mediation and negotiation, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace-building [12]. Conflict analysis, i.e. a critical investigation into the root, secondary and tertiary causes of conflict, highlighting the actors, structures and dynamics in conflict situations, is important in determining intervention mechanism, and the resolution and management of conflict, and it is at this point that the media exercise their power to either make or mar such a process. Conflict intervention describes the whole range of development and crisis intervention efforts to reconcile parties and groups with incompatible interests, and to prevent the pursuit of divergent goals from degenerating into armed violence [8]. Also, when the pursuit of irreconcilable differences and interests escalate into armed conflict and is resolved, the efforts and intervention strategies relapse to prevent violence is described as conflict prevention. By implication, this definition embraces the concept of peacebuilding, which in the main refers to efforts and interventions aimed at overcoming the root causes of conflict. Arguably, it has everything to do with the attempts to overcome the structural, national and cultural contradictions which constitute the national question, and therefore lies at the root of conflict and violence in order to underpin the processes of peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Violence has to do with behavior or treatment in which physical force is exerted for the purpose of causing damage or injury. It is physical force creatively packaged to injure, damage, or destroy; and often expresses extreme roughness of action. [16] explains violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person,

or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. In a trajectory that aptly captures an expression of development scholarship, [18], while tracing the causative factors of violence, informs that dialectical materialism is a tradition of social analysis associated with the German philosopher Karl Marx., which suggests that to understand society, it is imperative to consider the processes through which society produces and distributes the means of its material existence and the struggles, usually among social classes, that are integral to the process. This therefore implies how human societies produce and distribute work and rewards, because according to him, societies are often divided into classes, such that dominant classes do less work but appropriate most of the rewards. The scenario created, he maintains, becomes exploitative relation that is productive of the class struggle, which sometimes degenerates into open/objective violence, such as violence by state agencies like armed forces against underprivileged groups, but most times entails covert/structural violence. However, covert /structural violence is not immediately perceived as violence because it is expressed in such conditions as poverty, inequality, psychological violence, oppression and social exclusion [17], and as well its degree of negative influence on the downtrodden depends on the level of hegemony it has been able to establish as practiced by the dominant class. On the whole, it should be noted that both the violence inflicted by the dominant classes and the state under their watch and the revolutionary violence, i.e. the organized violence, often designed and perfected by the underprivileged classes either to express crisis of confidence or completely overthrow and usurp state power are all critical forms of national question. From Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, crisis of confidence is a situation, in which people no longer believe that a government or an economic system is

working properly, and will no longer support it or work with it. The majority of the forms of the country's national question as identified by corpus literature and reviewed above have also been noted by relevant literature as the structural - functional causes of conflicts. Particularly, crisis of confidence among the Nigerian citizenry has been vigorously and overtly expressed by the nation's regions and ethnic nationalities in the increasingly continual quest for sovereignty.

Thus, it is the assumption of this paper that conflict and violence engender crisis of confidence among the citizenry, while all of them (conflict, violence and crisis of confidence) put together are the

Media, National Question and Crisis of Confidence

The media have always been the supplier of the information that the general public and political elites need to form political opinions and political decisions. If the media guide our attention to certain issues and influence what we think about, it follows that they also influence the choice of issues that will be matters of political concern and action, and by extension what the generality of the people believe, especially about political leaders and their actions and inactions. That, in the main, is the premise for the agenda setting hypothesis of the media. The majority of agenda setting research begins after media have featured an issue and attempt to fathom the relation between media concerns and the concerns of the various audiences.

It is obvious that communication plays phenomenal role in resolving conflicts at all levels of human existence. It is so from the personal and interpersonal levels to group, organizational, societal, regional and international levels [18]. The mass media are particularly important in conflict resolution because they are, as he puts it, "information merchants, conduits or carriers of various shades and colours of information" (p. 14). According to him, in times of conflicts or even wars, media's adequate or inadequate management of information is considered to be a critical factor in the emergence, escalation or reduction of tension points at various

flagship of Nigeria's national question. [15] confirms that there is a strong relationship between levels of violence and modifiable factors in a country such as concentrated (regional poverty), income and gender inequality, the harmful use of alcohol, and the absence of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between children and parents. However, strategies addressing the underlying causes of violence can be relatively effective in preventing violence, although mental and physical health and individual responses, personalities, etc. have always been decisive factors in the formation of these behaviors.

levels, tensions which depending on how they are managed can determine the end or continuation of conflicts, after all, it is often said that nothing defines the character of a mass media establishment more sharply than any crisis that pitches nation against nation or one section of society against another as evidenced in the intra and inter community and ethnic conflicts now littered in parts of the country. Accordingly, in development communication, media's agenda setting power also lies in their ability not only to bestow publicity but also to deny it in situations of conflicts. But, as noted, the media have failed to do the needful.

The media's projections of a group of issues, which in our context are national questions in Nigeria, have aroused variant national conflicts that include crisis of confidence. They have brought the national questions to public attention and highlighted various aspects of them from the perspectives that only glory in inciting the people against the government. To begin with, let us recall the mimetic characteristic of the media, which stems from the fact that they, the media, recreate the activities of people in their environment and use media production strategies to represent and reproduce them in form of features, articles, news stories and programmes of different types and genres [5]. For the sake of explication, [14] informs that

mimesis is a term used in literary criticism and philosophy that carries a wide range of meanings, including imitation, non-sensuous similarity, receptivity, representation, mimicry, the act of expression, the act of resembling, and the presentation of the self. Again, to reflect the state of society in their production and reproduction, the media undertake surveillance and correlation functions. [12] clarifies that media production's reflection to society, in this regard, should be understood to be distinct from the classical narrative, which is always oriented towards an explicit there and then, towards an imaginary 'elsewhere' often set in the past and which has to be evoked for the reader through predication and description. In our quarry, it rather explores the dramatic worlds which are presented to the spectator as 'hypothetically actual' constructs, since they are 'seen' in progress 'here and now' without narratorial mediation [8]. Commercial success among the media of communications including film and television always spawns a stream of imitations. For instance, the total colonization of the media industry including film, television, newspaper, magazine, and the new and social media by images that revolve around Nigeria's national questions has arguably been one of the most successful of all the crisis of confidence's campaigns. There have been many brilliant films which have largely become poisoned, poisoning and powerful outlets for lawlessness, and therefore leach evil into every corner of the nation. For this film industry, arguably, is nothing less than the champion of exploding heads and diabolical babies; a home for teenage werewolves and flesh-eating zombies; a place for brains to be splattered on gravestones and mothers to be eaten alive; the patron saint of teenage suicide, vampirism and chainsaw massacres; the resident war counselor of the 'crack' wars in Nigeria; an unspeakably vile standard-bearer of evil which is nothing more than a naked and continual celebration of perversion, murder and death [9]. The word 'death' figures in more headlines

and titles than any other word in the language. The national questions often presented in the media as being powered by Devil appears in more film and television titles and newspaper headlines than anyone else, and thus depicting a fair mirror of the activities in which the media industry is engaged. It does not take too long to work out that there are several distinctive tidal patterns in the media, even in their acclaimed modernity, even if they are governed by the same moon. The ensuing media philosophy if diagnosed, especially in the light of its portrayals of national questions, can only be symptomatic of persistent attraction to the morbid, the supernatural, the cruel, the perverted and the violent. It is therefore correct, though arguable; to assert that such media philosophy that gives precedence to violence and exaggerates lawlessness by viewing even government good intentions on the negative side is simply immoral in ethics, barbarous in its aesthetics, and destitute of what normally passes for rational thought. It is totally at odds with the mind, heart, development communication and the very ideas of God. Similarly, the majority of newspaper editorial writers have from time to time shaken the nation with the lyrical explosiveness of their ideas about societal harmony. For instance, there is no justification for enunciating the fundamental rights of citizens without mentioning their corresponding fundamental obligations. It is therefore commonplace not only to read that the citizenry has freedom of speech but also that 'man is born free, but is everywhere in chains', a catch phrase now bandied about from one revolutionary mouth to another, and has as well led to many of the insurrections and other rebellious activities so far recorded in the country. In such editorials, there is the recurrence of crisis of confidence referents as the cult of the individual, primitivism and the corrupting evil of society. In addition, some journalists are experts in reporting sexual deviations, and as such have both overtly and covertly promoted sadism and glorification of perversion, which in their own forms are no less national questions.

The problem of such content is that the ethical contentions of the writers simply border on society that is corrupt and that all social virtues are redundant, and thus, the style and the threads of the editorials and even reports contain many of the picaresque scenes peculiar to lawlessness. In the prevailing circumstance, the victims are always innocent, while the persecutors always malicious. Simply put, virtue always loses and vice always wins: the one in misery and the other in luxury. The patterns are many, but in summary, there has been a growing preoccupation of our writers with the social sewers, the broken homes of disloyal parents and unloved children, the bedroom of the prostitute, a brothel, a den of criminals, a ward of the insane, a club of dishonest

politicians, a street-corner gang of teenage delinquents, a hate-laden prison, a crime-ridden waterfront, the courtroom of a dishonest judge, the sex adventures of urbanized cavemen and rapists, the loves of adulterers and fornicators, of masochists, sadists, prostitutes, mistresses, playboys. Juicy loves, ids, orgasms and libidos are seductively prepared and served with all trimmings. Collectively, they have exalted the power of the imagination over and above the claims of reason and audaciously misinterpreting and exaggerating the national questions on one hand, and the other, fervently supporting crises of confidence, insurrection and revolution in all their forms.

The Way Forward

The only way forward is for the media to redefine their way of communicating societal issues. As it were, journalists and programme producers on mainstream, new and social media attach so much importance to destructiveness as a process message of their communications, and as well place undue emphasis on the primacy of passion and the imagination, insisting on the ugly and obscene in their tireless pursuit of violence and war as newsworthy phenomenon. In praxis, the media cultural imagination, which in a nutshell is driven by the society's intellectual powers, demands many a situation smacks of the concentration camp or the street riot; that nearly every image should be emblematic of shuddering violence and that we should thus be made aware of the extreme peril of our position, and this must be discarded. The philosophy or way of thinking, particularly in the way

the media select and present images tells us that the country is irredeemably rotten and insists the only reasonable conclusion is that God has fully and finally abandoned Nigeria. We can be responsible without this modern media culture that is, arguably, not only anti-peace, it is also anti-human and destructive of life itself, and denies the dignity of ordinary people and the validity of ordinary lives, devaluing the function of sex and threatening the welfare of our children. In the workings of this prevailing media philosophy, the common, the ordered and the familiar are the least trustworthy, and is steadily leading the nation into terror and darkness. It has all but managed to extinguish the claims of a society in harmony, whose very first demand is that her people enjoy unfathomable peace, and thus the very national question that must be damned forever.

REFERENCES

1. Ademola, S. (2014). Theories of social conflicts. *Introduction to peace and conflict resolution in West Africa*. In S. G. Best, Ed.). Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
2. Biose, C. O. (December, 2018). The national question in Nigeria. *The Guardian* Online.DOI: <https://guardian.ng/opinion/the-national-question-in-nigeria/>
3. Davis, T. (1989). *Man of lawlessness: The effect of the media on violence*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
4. Dhikiru, A., Yagboya, A. Akintola, O. (2019). Nigerian state and the crisis of governance: A critical exposition. *Sage journals*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10177/2158244019865810>.
5. Ezaka, S. (2018). *Introduction to broadcasting. (In the era of pluralism and digitization)*. Abakaliki: Omega Consult and Publishing Company.
6. Francis, D. J. (2014). Peace and conflict studies: An African Overview of basic concepts. *Introduction to peace and conflict resolution in West Africa*. In S. G. Best, Ed.). Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
7. Giner-Sorolla, R. (April, 2006). *Crimes against mimesis*. Archived from the original on 19 June 2005. Retrieved 17 December 2006 as a reformatted version of a set of articles originally posted to Usenet.
8. Ibeanu, O. (2014). Conceptualizing peace. *Introduction to peace and conflict resolution in West Africa*. In S. G. Best, Ed.). Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
9. Iji, (2014). Cultural preservation and cultural regeneration in the context of Nigeria's national question. *Keynotes: National questions, development imperatives*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press.
10. Iji, (2014). Culture and theatre as synergy for addressing Nigeria's national question. *Keynotes: National questions, development imperatives*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press.
11. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. *Violence*. Retrieved 2021 - 06 - 31
12. Martin, D. L., Ryan P. H., & Ventura R. P. (2012). *The bioarchaeology of Violence*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. "Archived copy". Archived from the original on 2013-11-04. Retrieved 2013-11-14.
13. Myers, D. (1993). *Social psychology*. New York: Mc Graw Hill, Inc.
14. Nwamuo, C. (2015). Theatre for development and SBCC. *WAACLALS (West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies)*, 3(1), pp. 33 - 46.
15. Nwosu, I. (2004). Conflict management, communication and mass media. A conceptual, theoretical and introductory analysis. In I. Nwosu and D. Wilson (Eds.). *Communication, media and conflict management in Nigeria*. African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria.
16. Socialist Alternative (2020). *The national question*. Socialistalternative.org .August 30, 2020. Retrieved July, 2020 <https://www.socialistalternative.org/nigeria/chapter-five-the-national-question/>
17. Vecchio, R. (1991). *Organizational behaviour*. Orland: Dryden Press.
18. World Health Organization (2013). Mortality and Burden of Disease estimates for WHO member states in 2002. (xls). *World Health Organization*. 2004. Archived from the original on 2013-01-16.
19. Zounmenou, D. (2020). Crisis of Confidence in Benin deepens. *ISS today*. Retrieved from: <https://issafrica.org/issa-today/crisis-of-confidence-in-benin-deepens>.