

HUMAN RIGHTS COVERAGE IN NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS
A QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF *DAILY TRUST* AND *THE PUNCH*

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DECLARATION PAGE

I hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research efforts; undertaken under the supervision of PROFESSOR UMARU PATE and has not been presented and will not be presented elsewhere for the award of a degree or certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION PAGE

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DEDICATION

To Al-Mustapha & Ahmad

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between media and human rights makes it essential to know how human rights are reported by journalists. This study analyses human rights coverage in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* in Nigeria over a fifteen-year period, 2000-2015. It examines the level of attention accorded to human rights, the trend of the coverage, the pattern of treatment of the issues, gender representation in the coverage and the issues covered. Stratified sampling method that yields constructed weeks is applied to pick the newspaper editions, constructing two weeks in a year. During the period, human rights receive fairly consistent level of attention. This attention increased in the last five years of the research period. However, human rights rarely receive detailed treatment and prominent placement. In addition, lack of attention to human rights legal framework shows evidences of lack of familiarity or investigative depth in human rights reporting. The newspapers also rely on official sources and devote more attention to state actors, reporting cases in which they are involved as straightforward cases of human right conditions. Civil-political rights receive the highest attention while socio-economic rights appear under-reported, often reported within the context of civil rights. In effect, the news media in Nigeria follow the traditional focus on human rights by centring attention primarily on civil and political rights and this demonstrates that human rights coverage in the newspapers focuses on a very limited definition of human rights providing supplemental but inadequate information about systematic human rights abuse in Nigeria. The study recommends further research to determine media's impact on human rights policy and how human rights NGOs use the media.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

News media have long been seen as playing an important role in politics. This influence can be seen in the area of human rights. The media are recognized as important actors in checking government behaviour, including government respect for human rights. This study begins with the contention that news reports of human rights may have an impact on human rights policy. The media are then criticized for complicity in some cases, complacency and skewed coverage (Ovsiovitich, 1993). The criticisms are often made without systematic analysis of media coverage. Few studies that examined media coverage of human rights simply looked at frequency of coverage and focused more on the international news media. Where news media in the third world were examined, the focus was largely on despotic non-democratic regimes. This way, regime type is linked to level of repression. However, with growing evidence of repressive conditions even in democratic societies – where the media are also expected to be freer and able to cover human rights situations without interference – it is equally important to examine the pattern of media coverage in democratic systems. This chapter explains the conceptual design of this study. It begins with a discussion of global human rights system as a way of providing a background to this work.

1.1.1 The Global Human Rights System

The rise of human rights idiom in global politics is central to the political discourse about the relationship between states and their citizens. This is especially for those countries claiming to be guided by a belief in or influenced by liberal democracy.

The intellectual origin of human rights lies in the concept of natural rights, which provided some of the theoretical foundations for the French and American revolutions of the late eighteenth century (Uvin, 2004). The idea of natural rights developed in Western Europe as a tool to protect individuals from the arbitrariness of the state. The central claim of this body of thought was that every individual possesses certain natural rights simply by virtue of being human. These rights are undeniable and must be respected by the state. The origin of rights idiom was, therefore, integral to the struggle against political despotism.

A major breakthrough in human rights debate was the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) from 1948 as a reaction to the atrocities of another world war, once again destroying economies and killing tens of millions of people—including the premeditated massacre of six million Jews—as well as proving, in consequence, that economic development does not mechanically translate to peace and respect for human rights. The UDHR was a milestone in world politics, seeking to place explicit limits on the way sovereign states could treat their citizens. Unlike natural rights of the eighteenth century, human rights were understood in the UDHR to be universal, that is, applicable to all human beings by virtue of their humanity. In Douzinas' tautology

Human rights were initially linked with specific class interests and were the ideological and political weapons in the fight of the rising bourgeoisie against despotic political power and static social organisation. But their ontological presuppositions, the principles of human equality and freedom, and their political corollary, the claim that political power must be subjected to the demands of reason and law, have now become part of the staple ideology of most contemporary regimes and their partiality has been transcended. (2000, p.1)

The contemporary concept of human rights as represented in the UN declaration was a dramatic affirmation of the equality of all individuals, wherever they live, regardless of

their race, colour, sex, language, religion, origin, birth, and beliefs. Before that, natural rights had been historically conceived of as only applying to men, or propertied men, or white men (Morsink, 1999). It took until after World War II for all people to become “human.”

The UDHR, in essence, states that all people, regardless of who they are, have the right to food, shelter, work, freedom of speech and religion, physical integrity, and fair trial; it also espouses democratic government as an ideal political environment for these to take place. Apart from these general rights, it also goes into great detail concerning matters such as working conditions and hours, levels of education, and other finer points typical of an international agreement. It prescribed a moral standard by which to evaluate policies and set the limit to which states could treat their subjects. Consequently, the declaration permeates other subsequent legislative concurrences at regional and national levels - such as the *African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* (ACHPR) in Africa, and national constitutions.

Principally, the UDHR comprised thirty articles dealing with two broad categories of human rights: civil and political rights; and economic, social and cultural rights. The UN General Assembly subsequently decided that the two categories would be detailed in separate treaty instruments – the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), both agreed upon by the UN General Assembly in 1966. Together, the UDHR, ICCPR, and ICESCR constitute the *International Bill of Human Rights* which is the overarching framework for global human rights today. While the International Bill of Human Rights provides the overarching foundation, the global human rights system also

entails a range of other universal instruments. Four additional core treaties are the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)*; the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)*; the *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)*; and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*. In addition, there are many other universal instruments dealing with the interpretation and application of rights in particular areas or contexts (Jergensen, 2011). These take a variety of legal forms, ranging from covenants and conventions to declarations, guidelines, and recommendations; hence, renders the global governance of human rights substantively and architecturally very complex. This UN-based human rights system is supplemented by regional human rights mechanisms which vary widely in structure and value.

The growth had been phenomenal, to the effect that at present, over two hundred assorted declarations, conventions, protocols, treaties, charters, and agreements all dealing with human rights in the world had been discovered (Morsink, 1999). Equally, Hannum (1996) realized around sixty transcendences in domestic constitutions, from which about twenty-six explicitly acknowledged the authority of the UDHR over the domestic legal system in question. Even while the UDHR is not the only factor in the spread of human rights legislations after the ending of World War II, it is important to acknowledge that the UDHR was, as it appears, a very important factor. Human rights discourse and concerns were introduced into global politics and became one of the important elements that influence and constitute a significant portion of foreign policies of many countries. As noted by Douzinas, “Human rights (embody) a powerful discourse

and practice in domestic and international law” (2000, p.4). This became obvious right at the drafting processes of the document that will represent the UDHR.

The UDHR was intensely discussed through pleas made by participating states to draw a treaty that could be acceptable to all. Yet, it is normal to assume that the drafters represented different cultural, religious, economic, and political values. In a rough estimation made, thirty-seven of the member nations stood in the Judeo-Christian tradition, eleven in the Islamic, six in the Marxist, and four in the Buddhist tradition; and the intensity of the discussion bore out this diversity. The different ideologies needed to find common grounds. In the end, eight nations absented from the final ratification of the agreement. These eight abstentions came from the USSR, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UKSSR), Yugoslavia, Poland, South-Africa, and Saudi Arabia (Morsink, 1999). Their revulsion was to do with various reasons related to non-discrimination and non-limitation clauses that the countries felt are incompatible with their various political and religious ideologies (*ibid*). However, it was just abstention rather than any explicitly expressed rejection and therefore, could not be much damaging.

Another dimension to the human rights debate is a relative emphasis on some aspects of rights over others; also, consequent upon the ideological differences of those countries that participated in the drafting process of the declaration. The process of decolonization between 1950 and 1979 transformed the UN and the discourse about human rights. The first fifty-two countries were joined by other new sovereign states that almost doubled that number. The African, Asian and Arab states that coalesced into self-conscious 'Third World' brought a powerful new set of voices to those of the late 1940s. These Third World representatives made fundamental contributions to the global

human rights projects (Burke, 2010). Most Western nations and their leaders, nurtured by a belief in democracy and free market ideology have focused on what has been called "the first-generation, or civil-political rights;" and in contrast, the Russian communist bloc rallied by the developing nations – who voiced out concerns that relate to economic independence and prosperity, as well as the neo-imperialist tendency of the prevailing international economic and political order – have concentrated on social-economic rights or what is known as "second-generation rights" (Fan and Ostini, 1999 p.94).

Subsequently, the international community has made considerable progress in instituting human rights standards and mechanisms for the ongoing monitoring of progress toward their realization. This is not to suggest that human rights are not consistently violated all around the world, often on a massive scale. If the twentieth century is the epoch of human rights, summed up Costas Douzinas,

...their triumph is, to say the least, something of a paradox. Our age has witnessed more violations of their principles than any of the previous and less "enlightened" epochs. (This is) the century of massacre, genocide, ethnic cleansing, the age of the Holocaust; ...a greater gap between the poor and the rich ... and between the north and the south globally. No degree of progress allows one to ignore that never before in absolute figures, have so many men, women, and children been subjugated, starved, or exterminated on earth... (Douzinas 2000, p.2)

However, the existence of a global framework for human rights provides mechanisms through which political and legal pressure can be applied to compel states toward greater conformity.

1.1.2 Human Rights, Democracy and the Media:

It was argued that media system is generally structured normatively (McQuial, 2005); and what this means is that regime type will, in general, determine the media system of any country in terms of political economy and what role they should play.

Therefore, the media in democratic regimes – assumed to be the ideal political environment for a respect for human rights – are generally assumed to be independent of government regulation and the watchdog in surveillance. Being free, it is equally part of the obligation expected to be fulfilled by the media to ensure that governments are responsible to the governed. Nongovernmental organisations working on human rights always argue that free media will assist to improve government respect for human rights. It is no longer debatable, as proposed in Fukuyama's (1992) "end of history" lurid thesis of "common humanity or equality of human rights" (p.16) and capitalist liberal democracies as the end state of the historical process, that democracy provides the ideological and the legal environments for the respect of human rights; and John Stuart-Mill proposed free press as the principal democratic instrument of freedom (in Gripsrud, Moe, Molander, & Murdock, 2010). The freedom of the press is indeed essential to the nature of a free state.

The term 'human rights' began surfacing in media reports and policy statements decades ago, but its usage and visibility was said to increase dramatically during the 1990s (Ron, Ramos and Thoms, 2007). Cmiel (2004) notes that few political agendas have seen a rapid and dramatic growth as that of human rights, which has been increasingly used in debates over military intervention, peace processes, humanitarian and foreign aid, and globalization. For example, the US has laid claim to be the world's 'policeman' to uphold human rights and democracy, and this is provided as the main justification for most of the US military and non-military interventions in other countries (Thussu and Freedman, 2003; Dimaggio, 2008). It is agreed that media coverage of human rights issues has played a key role in this effort, helping to generate a wave of international human rights activities and institution-building (Ron, Ramos & Rodgers,

2005). Of course, the media's potential influence can be felt in a number of areas. In Ovsiovitc (1993) summary; reporting human rights can educate people, shape public opinion, serve as an informal means of documenting human rights violations and situate human rights issues in the public agenda.

In liberal democracy, especially, the media are often under some constitutional obligation to act as watchdog over government behaviour. It is then natural to have the independence of the media legislatively guaranteed, or even preferred, alongside other rights. All other rights would supposedly be empty shells without giving the media the freedom and protection to expose violations. Hence, the main justification for press freedom is that free media will act as a watchdog over the government. Freedom of expression in general and of the press in particular, has long been regarded as fundamental in democracy, because the media provide an important informational link between the mass public, the elite and the government.

While the importance of human rights coverage by the media is clear, the coverage has also been criticized. Also in Ovsiovitc (1993) summary, coverage has been criticized as being sporadic, biased in favour of what he termed "open" (democratic) societies or and racially skewed against a section in the society (e.g. atrocities committed by the "black" are reported more than that of the "white" population in the US society). However, Ovsiovitc concludes that "these accusations are usually made without attempting to examine systematically the news coverage, raising questions about the manner in which the media report and define human rights" (1993 p.20). Of course, newsworthiness is defined in part by societal values and expectations of the way the world operates. Human rights cases, as generally understood by human rights

community(e.g. the NGOs dealing with human rights),shouldbe newsworthy topics; and the news media have often been criticized for not doing enough. There is a popular claim of media complacency on the issue. Yet, it is unclear whether human rights topics will significantly interest audience to justify its reporting in the media. Essentially, while monitoring and/or covering human rights is seen as a media trust, this may be shaped and limited by market forces and elite control over the news media.

1.1.3 Human Rights System and Situation in Nigeria:

Nigeria, as a nation state in the international community, has also been active in ratifying human rights treaties. Certainly, the influence of the UDHR and treaties dealing with traditional civil and political rights have permeated various Nigerian constitutions which, since independence, have always included a chapter devoted to guaranteeing fundamental human rights in the country (Egede, 2007). However, military interregnum slowed down the country's commitment to these treaties. For example, Pate (2011) observed that the subject of human rights was a dimension, which the military administration of Sani Abacha was hotly criticized; and based on the amount of consistent pressure, the administration decided to set up the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) with the mandate to protect and promote human rights in the country. Hence, most military regimes since Nigeria's independence were heavily pressurized for poor conformity to the acceptable human rights standard. Another transition to the country's longest democratic regime since 1999 did not have much impact on its human rights situation.

The level of human rights abuses remains unacceptable, says International NGOs. Series of reports of human rights NGOs – in this case, the Amnesty International and

Human Rights Watch –documented cases of rampant abuses, especially in relation to state intervention in and management of communal conflicts. Recently, a vicious cycle of violence in the country engendered devastating consequences for the rights of people trapped between perpetrators and the security forces. Since another return to democracy in 1999, the country has recorded some serious cases of civil violence. Over 10,000 people were reported (Amnesty International, 2012) to have lost their lives in series of sectarian conflicts that have resulted in other serious humanitarian crises. In the last five years, the terror perpetrated by the insurgent group, *Boko Haram*, has increased in sophistication and deadliness. While attacks by any individual or group targeting civilian population represent violations to human rights and crimes against humanity, Nigerian security forces were also accused of contravening rules of engagement and thus, committing serious human rights atrocities. These include extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, force eviction, house burning and demolishing and other contraventions to physical-integrity rights (Amnesty International, 2012).

It is an obvious fact that the media can be used to raise international and national awareness of human rights. The media in Nigeria are regarded as principal partners in monitoring all human rights abuses (Asemah, Edegoh & Ogoh, 2013; Pate, 2011); in this case, legally empowered by the constitution to uphold the fundamental values of democracy and “...uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people” (Section 21 of the 1999 Constitution). Pate (2011) argues that the role of the press in the protection and advancement of human rights within the framework of this social obligation in Nigeria include: exposing cases and perpetrators of human rights

violations for moral condemnation and legal actions; publicizing the plights of victims that could fire up public reactions, demanding for justice; enlightening the general public about possible human rights violations; partnering with human rights nongovernmental organizations and the police for effective monitoring and legal redress; and ultimately, providing voice to the voiceless. While these roles played by the media are obvious, it is important to understand and measure how the media fulfil these fundamental obligations of human rights monitoring activities and the manner in which the media report and define human rights in Nigeria.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the widely criticised aspects of government behaviour presently in the international community is flouting human rights standard, and reporting violations is one of the important human rights monitoring activities. It may be safe to assume that consistency in human rights reporting places not just human rights but any issue in the public mind. The media are believed to be principal partners in the human rights movement, and reporting violations and issues to do with it is regarded as a media trust. Exposing violations in the media will make governmental decisions respond to the pressure of public opinion. However, journalists and the media are put at risk when reporting controversial topics such as critical human rights issues. Governments worldwide expectedly show low willingness to admit their excesses against their subjects. It is important to understand how the media handle this trust especially when it can involve risks for journalists and for the media.

More so, it was argued that the relationship between media freedom and government behaviour, in particular government respect for human rights, differs,

depending on the level of authoritarianism or democratization (Whitten-Woodring, 2007). This suggests a frame through which both human rights community and the media approach human rights monitoring and reporting activities. Logically, attention is generally paid more on measuring the performance of authoritarian regimes on issues related to human rights; and therefore, the performance and difficulties the media in the 'oppressive' states face when raising human rights issues especially when this practice can create a major face-off between the media and the despotic regimes. In addition, previous conclusions suggested general media disinterest on human rights topics and that attention is heavily focused against certain political system, basically the "oppressive" (Ovsiovitc, 1993).

While concerns to do with human rights are easily focused on dictatorial regimes; the waves of violent behaviours in Nigerian political space breed an environment that could produce human rights atrocities barely expected in any democratic state. Beside, violations are not really confined to the non-democratic states (Frankel, 2007). Apparently, there is also increasing resurgence of human rights idiom in the global politics and foreign relations; and in discussions about globalization and world peace. According to Dimaggio, for example, the mainstream U.S. media were used to promote the themes of democracy and human rights as the main justification for the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan – the 'war on terror,' which is the most internationally acclaimed post-Cold War conflict; and this had helped in manufacturing consent of both Americans and the international community in favour of the war. "American corporate media has overwhelmingly taken the position that the U.S. (military and diplomatic) presence in the Middle East (and the rest of the globe) is driven by a noble effort to promote... human

rights, justice, and democracy” (Dimaggio, 2008 p.22). We should consequently, expect more media interests on human rights topics because of its large-scale use currently in transnational politics (ICHRP Report, 2002); and this should equally affect local news media that operate in a political environment that is neoliberal and have been officially permitted to ensure that the government is responsible and accountable to its people.

Therefore, this study examines the performance of the Nigerian media, in particular the newspapers, in covering human rights issues during a democratic regime in the country, specifically, during the period, 2000 to 2014 (15 years). It examines the extent to which the newspapers exercise their expected obligation in covering human rights in their news agenda; exposing violations to human rights, and providing surveillance to the excesses of state and non-state actors against ordinary people in the country since transition to democracy in 1999.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to examine the nature and pattern of coverage of human rights issues in the Nigerian newspapers during 15 years of democratic regime (2000 - 2014) characterized by recurrent violence. Specifically, it has the following objectives:

1. To find out the level of coverage of human rights issues in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014.
2. To determine the trend of human rights coverage in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014.
3. To identify the salience, by placement and treatment, given to human rights issues in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014.
4. To determine the level of gender representation in human rights coverage by *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014.
5. To determine the human rights issues and geopolitical zones that received media attention in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014.

6. To conclude on the selected newspapers' conception of human rights, identifying the human rights values influential in the country's media view of human rights.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following Research questions guide this study:

1. What is the extent, in relation to other issues, of the coverage of human rights in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* during 15 years of democratic regime in Nigeria i.e. from 2000 to 2014?
2. What is the trend of the coverage of human rights in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
3. What is the level of prominence accorded to human rights issues in terms of placement and treatment in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
4. What is the level of gender representation in the coverage of human rights in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
5. What human rights issues and which region received media attention in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers during the period, 2000 to 2014?

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study analyses the reporting of human rights issues in a democratic regime in Nigeria during the period, 2000 to 2014. It was a period in which the country enjoyed relative democratic stability, with about three successful transitions from one democratic regime to another. Ironically, the period also witnessed unprecedented hostility and violence in the history of the country. Early in 2000, roughly a year after the transition from military dictatorship to democracy, a sectarian conflict in Kaduna sparked hostility and bloodshed across the country. Since then, the country increasingly experiences unprecedented violence that produced serious humanitarian problems. Accordingly, the

study examines media coverage of human rights issues over this Nigerian political environment that is democratic, yet relatively hostile.

The analysis is limited to the medium of newspaper only. This is not to belittle the role of broadcast and other print media. Arguably, the press (principally newspapers) has had a long history of enjoying more independence from state control and in policy terms, had been able to, where necessary, influence Nigerian civil and political culture (Akinfeleye, 2000). The print has a historical sensitivity to political rhetoric in the country. It is also restricted to only newspapers owned by Nigerians, and located, published and operating in Nigeria. Two titles were chosen for the content analysis, *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers. Also, the study analyses only the daily editions of the selected newspapers. Weekend editions are excluded, because they differ significantly from the daily editions in variables of content, purpose, production team, style, layout, and the issues covered and the depth in which issues are reported.

The method used in the study has a number of limitations. Content analysis alone cannot serve as the basis for making statements about the effects of content on an audience. Also, findings from content analysis are limited to the framework of categories and their definitions constructed in the analysis. Varying definitions and category systems may be used by other researchers to measure the same concept. In addition, the task of examining large volumes of content for about fifteen-year period was laborious. Coders were trained to assist. The units of observation in this constituted only the general news, feature and commentary/analysis/editorial. This excluded sports page, stand-alone photographs and graphics, notices (death, anniversary, etc.), listings (stock price, movie, etc.) and paid advertisements and advertorials. It does not also involve contents that offer

a first-person opinion such as columns, opinion and letters to the editor, or advice pieces and also, art, music and entertainment criticism.

More so, it is obvious that a number of the research questions raised can only be addressed by analysing pieces that make observable reference to human rights. Therefore, only human rights stories were subjected to more rigorous analysis. Also, the data were quantified by means of nominal measurement only and the inter-coder reliability measured likewise nominally by means of percentage agreement technique, which was criticized for not taking into account some coder agreement that occur strictly by chance (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Finally, the data were not subjected to any advanced statistical analysis. The highest level of statistical analysis used is the measures of mean and standard deviation to determine variability in data distribution.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study provides an invaluable addition in understanding the media contribution in a movement for justice, freedom, protection of humanity and advocacy toward building a better world. The study is particularly important, because Nigeria has experienced bizarre episodes of violence with ordinary people trapped in the middle and hence, assists in improving the involvement of the country's media system toward galvanizing actions in solving problems related to issues of human rights abuses that may have emanated from the recurring crises in the country.

The arguments realized from the research may greatly interest human rights community and call them to relive how journalism and media can be engaged in human rights activism. The study is expected to add to our understanding of an indispensable relationship between the media and human rights and therefore, presents essential reading

within a subfield of mass communication research attracted to the interconnection between media and a global movement toward defending the fundamental issues of human rights. It contributes theoretically to social responsibility media theory. It is assumed that consistent reiteration of human rights in media news agenda will help in shaping public policy and government behaviour and respect for human rights.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Human Rights Stories: Human rights news or issue or topic is identified by either a direct mention and/or reference to ‘human rights and/or freedom,’ ‘fundamental rights,’ or just ‘rights/freedom’ when it is understood to make allusion to human rights issues or the rights of some specific group such as children or women; or an implied reference, using a number of other primary human rights subject headings including ‘genocide,’ ‘torture,’ ‘political prisoners,’ ‘extra-judicial/legal’, ‘unlawful’, ‘arbitrary’ and other indices related to physical integrity and due-process rights; or allusion to human rights international agreements, human rights NGOs and commissions and human rights courts.

General News: Any content classified as news or observably emphasizes facts of recent events, often using a straight or inverted pyramid style of writing; and this excludes stories that deal with sports, weather, entertainment, and celebrities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section is divided into two broad sub-sections. The first section presents a critical review of relevant literature. It includes a conceptual revision of the idea of human rights toward a proper operationalism; review of the accessible literature on the historic and social contexts of human rights; a conjectural summary of the fragmentary attempt at theorizing the relationship between media, journalism and protection of human rights; and finally, a run down to a review of the trend in studies conducted on how the media cover human rights issues. This dwells on social conditions predominantly over the past century, and the research builds on and adds to the substantial scholarship on human rights, whereas emphasizing the communications media in relationship to human rights. The interface of communications media with human rights provides a go-ahead for supplementary exploration of human rights ideas, ideals, and ideologies in a highly mediated public sphere. The second section provides a theoretical review and identifies the theory to guide this research work.

2.2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED CONCEPTS AND LITERATURE

2.2.1 The Historic and Political Contexts of Human Rights

A substantial history (most rights literatures, irrespective of their disciplinary source, adopt historical approach; and what is responsible for this is clearly the nature of the subject) literature on human rights is accessible, but this will not be an attempt to exhaust them. Rapidly expanding literature on human rights emerged from various

disciplinary origins. Although scholars from these disciplines do occasionally argue historically, their primary objective has been to provide a normative grounding for human rights in the present or to discuss the limits of humanitarian law (e.g. Foster, 2011; Koch, 2009; Nash, 2009 Cotzinas, 2000; Benhabib, 2011). On one hand, some tended to provide a triumphalist and presentist account of human rights genealogy, while others present charges of political hypocrisy. While it is important not to enmesh much in this debate, it is crucial that few of these literatures are examined in order to understand the social and historical contexts of the contemporary politics of human rights. This concurs with Hoffman's (2011) contention that human rights in their specific contemporary connotations are a relatively recent invention; that

...human rights (is) a historically contingent object of politics that gained salience internationally since the 1940s – and globally since the 1970s – as a means of staking political claims and counterclaims. Only in the crises and conflicts of the second half of the twentieth century did a conceptual version of human rights emerge that corresponds to the current moral universalism. (p.4)

Micheline Ishay's (2004) *The History of Human Rights* establishes controversies on the origins and legacy of human rights, cultural relativism versus universalism, the tension between security and human rights, and the question of globalization's advance of human rights. Such complex issues do not address the way the information age and modern media impact on these issues. Instrumentally, however, the author provides a chronology of events and writings related to human rights, establishing a documentary base in the speeches, writings, and documents list comparing national/regional contexts before and after the world wars. Earlier, Johannes Morsink's (1999) *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent* focused on the drafting episodes that led to the emergence of the UDHR as an important turning point in global

human rights system. It is a similar exploration of the ideological debate and cultural politics ranging from the lingering allegation of ethnocentrism to concerns about minority groups, women's rights, religious commitments, communitarian concerns, and social, economic, and cultural rights that played out during the drafting processes that produced the document to stand for the UDHR. The author succeeded in pointing out why the text of the UDHR reads the way it does and why certain rights or clauses were included and others cast aside; yet, as self-confessed, except for the obvious connections with World War II, the Cold War and Latin American socialism, the author made very little attempt to connect specific drafting episodes to specific external matters at the time; and the media question was missed out despite growing evidences of how the media were instrumental between and after the world wars and how the media were used for propaganda and psychological warfare (see Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Simpson, 1990; Perse, 2008).

Recently, historian Samuel Moyn's (2010) *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* describes the mushrooming of a new field, with modern historians adopting a celebratory, triumphalist stance toward the emergence and progress of human rights political thought. The author's approach to human rights as a moral agenda establishes the interpretation that current human rights fill a vacuum, a utopian programme. Different from Ishay and others, he de-emphasizes the history of human rights origins from the Greeks or the Jews, medieval Christians or early modern philosophers, democratic revolutionaries, or abolitionist heroes, American internationalists or antiracist visionaries. He challenges other scholars (e.g., Ignatieff, 2001; Kosh, 2009) who see human rights as an old ideal that came into its own as a response to the Holocaust. A

persuasive alternative to prior universalistic thoughts of human rights are posed and documented, with analysis of the evidentiary base of ascendant, spiking news media coverage in the 1970s in the English and American press. However, his analysis does not see the social context of the press data he presented. He argues that human rights were brought to new geographic areas around the globe and into the difficulty and drama of transformation from antipolitics to acceptance; and sloppily assumes that the press was instrumental to this build-up.

Roland Burk's (2010) *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* adds another interesting dimension to the political history of the international swelling of human rights debate, arguing for the central importance of the Arab, Asian and African participation. Their presence, he argues, was an essential requisite for the UDHR's claim of universality, and was as important as that of the Western democracies and the Soviet bloc. The Third World "...confronted European colonialism and Western racism and demanded the recognition of universal human rights" (p.5). This support for universality was decisive in a period when racism beclouds the West's policy on rights, suggestive of political hypocrisy. Wazower (2011) demonstrates that in these process human rights – and later, development – replaced the West's rhetoric of 'civilizing' mission in the Third World in international politics. Burk synthesizes how the new entrants into the human rights debate voiced out concerns that relate to cultural relativism, economic independence and prosperity, as well as the neo-imperialist tendency of the prevailing international economic and political order.

What we can conclude from these records is that the emergence of human rights as a normative concept that claimed authority even beyond state boundaries stood (and

continues to stand today), on one hand, in tandem with the global expansion of the nation-state as a model of political order as a result of the implosion of the colonial empires; and on the other, in tension with the principle of sovereignty. According to Hoffman, the new international order was thus constructed around two often mutually exclusive principles: “individual human rights, which could also be asserted vis-à-vis one’s own state; and the principle of state sovereignty, which rendered the state solely capable of guaranteeing rights” (2011, p.14). The new intergovernmental organizations, declarations, and conventions, like international politics since 1945 in general, have thus been based on the principle of state sovereignty and have at the same time employed moral imperatives such as human rights that point beyond the nation-state. The second half of the twentieth century was defined by the global expansion of the nation-state and the increasing corrosion of state sovereignty through transnational legal norms such as human rights. Ideas about the equal sovereignty of states and of individuals emerged in tandem and in political tension with one another. This constellation helps to explain the political contexts of human rights system and in particular, the difficulties involved in their political implementation. Clearly, this is a complex issue. The selective interpretation of and response to human rights abuses is a major strand of debate in volumes of international affairs literature.

2.2.2 Differing Conceptions of Human Rights

Looking at the political context of human rights, it is clear that we can be dealing with one of the most controversial of all contemporary political concepts. Hence, this will not be an attempt to arrive at a definitive conceptual definition of human rights thought. The aim here is to attempt a theoretical constellation of the different priorities

emphasized by the different parties in the debate in order to realize correct operationalism of the 'human rights' concept. It is obvious that the different nation-states that are parties to the global human rights conventions represented different cultural, religious, economic, and political norms. Human rights diversified reflective of this multiplicity of actors and interests.

Rare attempts were made to offer any definition to human rights, and all of these turned out to be triumphant. For example, Louis Henkin (1990), in *The Age of Rights*, summarized some definitions offered by mostly the liberal thinkers; that human rights are universal moral rights that are fundamental to human existence and can neither be transferred, forfeited, or waived; are demands or claims individuals or groups make on society and are deemed essential for individual well-being, dignity, and fulfilment; and are universal and belong to every society regardless of geography, history, culture, ideology, or political or economic system. As expected, these thoughts convey largely what Douzinas called the "positivisation" and "globalization" of human rights (2000, p.374) – a rhetoric of universality. Thus, human rights may not be some concept to define, but something to constellate. It is not about the universality, or the 'humanity,' of the rights, but what the humankind ought to benefit *as* (my emphasis) rights.

Emerging from its contemporary political history, human rights diversified from 'first generation' civil and political rights, associated with neo-liberal capitalist structure, into 'second generation', economic, social and cultural rights, associated with the socialist tradition; and finally, into 'third generation' or group and national sovereignty rights, associated with the decolonization process (Klein, 2011). The first generation rights are symbolized by individual freedom, the second rights by claims to equality and

guarantees of a decent living standard, while the third rights by the right to self-determination and belatedly the protection of the environment (Douzinas, 2000). This triumvirate formed, though unequally (Morsink, 1999), the transfiguration of the prevailing global human rights structure.

At the beginning of the trans globalization of rights regime, the Western capitalist's purviews of human rights dictate the global rights agenda. The explanation given on this was that; historically, the West's struggle for rights came out of its feudal past and early capitalist resistance against royalism and oppressive power (Klein, 2011); out of which came the useful legacy of a discourse (and limited practice) of rights and democratic model. This history makes it easier for today's pro-capitalist intellectuals to claim that capitalist society emphasizes political rights – the rights that guarantee participation in the public realm, or the “public sphere,” to use Habermas (1978) concept. This way, global discourse focuses on civil and political rights that include voting, speech, expression, assembly, and protection from torture.

Because of this tendency to focus on political and civil rights, the term ‘human rights’ in the popular mind refers to only these kinds of rights. This means that human rights, in popular discourse, like capitalist thinking, marginalize concerns with economic and social rights pushed by the socialist Soviet ‘welfare’ states backed, to a large extent, by the Third World countries that included in the agenda the third rights to self-determination and sovereignty. Despite popular and political cultures’ emphasis on political and civil rights, human rights literature and major treaties include the economic, social, and cultural rights such as the right to work, the right to adequate health services,

the right to housing, the right to education, the right to economic security, and the right to freedom of cultural expression.

However, after the fall of the Soviet bloc, a controversial argument raised was that a notable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy/free market model had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism; that liberal democracy may constitute the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" and the "final form of human government," and as such constituted the "end of (evolutionary process of) history" (Fukuyama, 1992). In effect, this presumes as well a remarkable global slant and consensus toward the civil-political rights as the most important rights, which is another example of the ideological bending of rights consciousness away from material and economic issues argued by Klein (2011). Or, as Eric Louw had argued, what is apparent is that the "US hegemonic dominance now makes it possible to transpose unproblematically '(neoliberal) values and morality' into 'universal' human rights" (Louw, 2011, p.128). This concurs with Krieger's remark that

...civil and political rights are, broadly speaking, claims to be protected from something, such as abusive punishment or censorship. ...social and economic rights tend to (offer) claims for benefits, like having a job or health care. The claiming process, whether first or second generation, is the struggle to overcome avoidable human suffering. (1993, cited in Klein, 2011, p.44)

Altogether, it needs to be held in mind that the late 20th century witnessed remarkable progress in the expansion of democracies. By the end of the millennium 140 of nearly 200 nations held multi-party elections; and democratization, while by no means comprehensive, advanced remarkably around the world, and with its close cousin, respect for, and concern about, human rights (Eley, 2002).

Even then, media coverage was seen to have played a role in this emphasis to civil-political rights. Ife (2001) has summarized how the media slant their human rights coverage away from the economic and social rights: “These are often not associated, in media reports, with ‘human rights’; for example, a country with inadequate health services or a poor education system would not be described as a country with a ‘poor human rights record’. Yet such human rights are just as important as the...civil and political rights, and indeed they go together” (p.54). The author observed this coverage pattern in the transnational news media of the West origin; then, what about the news media whose derivation is from those nation-states pushing for the social and economic rights? What pattern can we observe from the news media of Third World origin? Looking at the contemporary global media sphere dominated by the news media of West (the epicentre of civil-political rights ideology) origin, in consequence, the control of information traffic by these media (media, cultural imperialism thesis) what influence can we see of the predominantly Western international media on the Third World (media) consciousness of rights? This study hopes to deal with parts of these subjects.

In addition, there was an unsuccessful attempt by African political intellectuals to introduce to this debate the so-called ‘African’ definition of human rights. That “Human rights in the African context is mainly based in communal rights” (Ambrose, 1995, p.30). In this argument, the rights of a group are recognized rather than the rights of an individual. Rhoda Howard (cited in Ambrose, 1995) points out that in this African version the group is more important than the individual, decisions are made by consensus rather than by competition and economic surpluses are redistributed and not based on making profit. The group emphasis here could not hold waters since groups by their very

nature do not exist without the individuals in them. This emphasis will also pose a serious challenge in terms of justiciability of human rights laws. Also, it is easier for the law to protect individuals than groups. Moreover, individuals can be overburdened by the rules of the group. For example, women in families, children, and minorities should be fairly treated within their own groups.

Part of the global rights agenda from dedicated charters was to ensure that the rights of especially women and children are protected, because of the historical evidences of them becoming overburdened by cultural norms and institutions. *The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979) is the omnibus document advancing women's rights. The African Charter also provides for women and children in Section 18(3), stating that “the State shall ensure the elimination of any discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of women and children as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.” Women's rights should be accorded priority in the debate on democracy and development in Africa, because women's participation as the majority group is essential to development in Africa. Women in Africa are abused through customary laws, traditions, and societal norms (Ambrose, 1995). There are discriminatory laws, child marriages, genital mutilations, and other forms of abuse. There is also a significant gender gap in terms of political and economic opportunities. Also, the African child is a victim of hunger, disease, illiteracy, lack of shelter, and early death even with all international jamborees and conventions seeking to protect children in places characterized by harsh economic realities. The rights of women and children must, of course, be taken seriously in the African rights agenda. In any case, Ambrose (2007) argues that Africans must,

however, tread carefully with the liberal path of the West, including their human rights norms, and therefore, must not allow materialism to replace the Africa's long-time tradition of humanism.

2.2.3 Democracy, Media Freedom and Protection of Human rights

The original eighteenth-century formulation of rights, which contributed to the fall of political absolutism, continues to provide the theoretical underpinnings to democratic system of government. Article 21 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) stipulates that everyone has a right to take part in the government of his country, and sets out that this should be expressed by periodic elections held by secret vote. Since democracy is based on the right of the people to decide who governs them and how, democracy falls within the scope of political rights. In principle, this article espouses democracy, with its liberal philosophy, as the ideal political environment for the greater political freedoms, more open political systems and respect for human rights. This argument is proven by the egregious human rights violations committed by authoritarian regimes in many parts of the world. Uganda's president, Idi Amin, Central Africa's emperor, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, and the apartheid regime in South Africa (Ambrose, 1995), Sani Abacha and Muhammad Buhari regimes in Nigeria (Pate, 2011a, 2011b) and General Augusto Pinochet 's dictatorship in Chile (Sorensen, 2009) were considered notorious. What this recognized is that the degree to which citizens enjoy democratic rights determines the measure of human rights protection those citizens enjoy, since both concepts are interdependent and mutually supportive. Democracy provides a climate in which there is freedom of expression and majority participation. This encourages public debate on issues such as policy direction, rights, the structure and control of political

parties, and other issues affecting the citizenry. In this case, there is a mechanism for checks and balances. It also makes it possible to enact laws to safeguard citizens against the violation of their human rights. However, liberal democracy also has its inherent weaknesses.

Democratic conditions allow for better human rights protection, but democracy is not an end-all to human rights violations. Democratic governments also violate rights of women and minority groups from within, for example, the case of the Afro-American community in the United States (Ovsiovitc, 1993). As Frankel (2007, p.1) argues, human rights abuses are not confined only to despots of the developing world:

Western democracies, faced with perceived threats to their survival, have long been willing to abrogate rights. There is no more compelling contemporary example than the Bush administration's policies and practices in its declared Global War on Terrorism since the 9/11 attacks. In the name of security, the administration has sanctioned torture, extra-legal kidnapping, secret prisons and collective punishment of non-combatants.

Also, according to Ambrose (1997), Canada claims to be a democratic country, but the native peoples have long claimed that their rights are abused, and the French in Quebec are seeking language rights protection. Moreover, a government can be elected by majority vote and not be committed to human rights. Some studies show that there are countries without other democratic characteristics, but show sensitivity to human rights. For example, Whitten-Woodring (2007) argues that not all democracies have free media and sometimes media are free in countries that lack other democratic characteristics. Even the Communist states of say Russia or China, often shamed by the West for poor human rights records, will argue that they have a different priority in terms a definition of what will constitute human rights. In any case, what the universal human rights thought recognized is a political environment, which ensures that the citizens are the masters of

their own fate; and studies have consistently found that democracy plays a key role in improving government respect for human rights (Whitten-Woodring, 2007). Indeed, an argument could be made that democracy would include both free media and complete government respect for human rights.

Many advocates of democracy have offered varying conceptions of democracy, and the central theme is that democracy should be government of the majority, and government should be accountable to the people. Jean Jacques Rousseau, in his famous epistle *The Social Contract*, contended that government was a covenant between the sovereign and the citizen. Therefore, the state existed primarily to protect those people to which it owed its existence; and that individuals should be regarded as equal in rights, and that only in an opportunity in which the whole population is allowed to take part in the affairs of the state is true democracy accomplished (*trans.* Cranston, 1968). Equally, John Locke, in his famous essay, *Second Treatise on Government 1690*, contended that government was based on a contract and that those who rule must be cognizant of the inalienable rights of the people; and argued that people must be allowed to express their opinions on the policies of government (in Gripsrud, Moe, Molander, & Murdock, 2010).

In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill tasks us to consider whether we will be open for discussion or we would feel an urge to censor what we despise. For the would-be censors, Mill wrote, “to refuse a hearing to an opinion because they are sure that it is false is to assume that their certainty is the same as absolute certainty. All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility.” As a staunch defender of liberty, Mill contended that no opinion should be silenced. “All of mankind,” he asserted, “has no justification in silencing even the voice of one dissenter.” In his view, “If the opinion is right they are

deprived of exchanging error for truth; if wrong; they lose what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error” (In Gripsrud, Moe, Molander, & Murdock, 2010, p.16 -17). In *Tolerant Society*, Lee Bollinger had argued that this system of free speech advanced by Mill that should extend to voices of dissent and extremist speech provides a safety-valve or "social thermometer for registering the presence of disease within the body politic and the best opportunity of administering a speedy cure" (1986, p.55). Essentially, the contributions to the nature of liberal democracy grows, and espouses such values as, in Ambrose’s abstract, “equality of all individuals before the law and the state, the freedom and dignity of the person guaranteed through human rights, the respect for a constitution as the fundamental law of the land, and primarily the power of the people to decide their leadership through universal suffrage and free and fair elections” (Ambrose, 1995, p.22). Most critical among these is, for obvious reasons, free speech, for even elections are a form of expression. Communication is a necessary *means* of participation in democratic governance. Thus, the freedom of expression is indeed essential to the nature of a liberal society.

Communication is itself a matter of human rights. This principle is solemnly proclaimed in various international instruments dealing with human rights. The Article 19 of the UDHR (1948) states that the right to freedom of opinion and expression includes “freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. Likewise, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) stipulates that the right to freedom of expression “comprises the freedom to seek out, to receive and to

communicate information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontier whether in oral, printed or artistic form, or by any other means of the individual's choice.” In the most recent *Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War* (UNESCO – Adopted on 28 November 1978), it is stated in Article II that "The exercise of freedom of opinion, expression and information recognized as an integral part of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is a vital factor in the strengthening of peace and international understanding.”

To use a concept by Jean d' Arcy *et al*, the “right to communicate” is an extension of the continuing advance towards liberty and democracy. Historically, man has tried to be free from dominating powers that tried to restrict communication. Through unflagging efforts, people achieve freedom of speech, of the press, of information. Jean d' Arcy, as one of the originators of the "right to communicate" idea, succinctly described the successive stages that lead to the recognition of freedom of expression; he argues that

In the age of the agora and the forum, when communication was direct and interpersonal, there first emerged – a concept at the root of all human advancement and all civilization – freedom of opinion... The advent of printing, the first of the mass media, gave rise, through its very expansion and in defiance of royal or religious prerogatives to exercise control, to the corollary concept of freedom of expression... The nineteenth century, which saw the extraordinary development of the mass circulation press, was marked by constant struggles to win freedom of the press... The successive advent of other mass media – film, radio, television – and the abusive recourse to all forms of propaganda on the eve of war were rapidly to demonstrate the need for and possibility of a more specific but more extensive right, namely, the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers"... Today, a new step forward seems possible: recognition of man's right to communicate, deriving from

our latest victories over time and space and from our increased awareness of the phenomenon of communication... Today, it is clear to us that it encompasses all these freedoms but adds to them, both for individuals and societies, the concepts of access, participation, two-way information flow – all of which are vital, as we now sense for the harmonious development of man and mankind. (In Golding & Murdock, 2007, p.173)

This was a direct affirmation of the crucial nature of democratization of communication, in general and of the media, in particular in the advancement of democracy, freedom and human rights. It recognized as a prerequisite for democracy and respect for human rights, the democratisation of communication, and broad access to media – free media.

One of the justifications for media freedom within the context of human rights thoughts is that the media *should* be free to be able to monitor and report critical human rights violations, in particular, and will act as a watchdog over the government, in general. Whitten-Woodring (2007) argues that free media play a crucial role in providing information that facilitates political competition and accountability, but that the effects of free media vary depending on the level of democracy or autocracy. This clearly laid sensitivity to the American model of press freedom which could be seen as freedom from government interference, and has become the dominant model in the world. He gives a comprehensive checklist of what constitutes free media, which has been subsumed into four major indicators, namely: the legal, political, economic and professional environments.

A further breakdown of the Whitten-Woodring's categories indicates that the legal environment entails the ability of media freedom to be constitutionally protected, as well as being free from restrictive laws against reporting; the political environment enables media freedom from government censorship, "access to competing resources", and freedom from intimidation and violence directed against journalists; the economic

environment ensures freedom from any form of financial manipulation by any actor, and the encouragement of plurality for competition among media organizations; finally, The professional environment ensures that journalists carry out their roles as watchdogs on government, reporting on issues of dissent, speaking for the marginalized, and, discouragement of self-censorship(Whitten-Woodring 2007). Just as it is appropriate to limit freedom of expression in certain cases like hate speech or slander, so it is appropriate for the media to exercise reasonable caution in their practice. While a free press is a necessary condition for the exercise of human rights, the expectation is that the media should be freer in states that have democratic characteristics. Even then, how free can the media be in democracy?

Curran (2002, 2005) summarizes three key arguments by liberal theorists regarding the democratic role of the media. On one hand, the media should act as a “free market watchdog” – a check on the state. The media should monitor the full range of state activity, and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority; by implication, protect citizen against the excesses of political elites. The assumption is that the state should be the primary object of media scrutiny because of its monopoly of legitimated violence. For this reason, it is especially important to establish a critical distance between the media and the government through private media ownership. It is about protecting the public by preventing those with power from overstepping their mark. Second, the media can also be viewed in a more expansive way, in liberal theory, as an agency of “information and debate” which facilitate the functioning of democracy. In this view, free media brief the electorate, and assist voters to make an informed choice at election time. Independent media also provide a channel of communication between governments and the governed.

Above all, the media provide a forum of debate in which people can identify problems, propose solutions, reach agreement and guide the public direction of society. All these, according to this view, can best be achieved through free market. The freedom of the market allows anyone to publish an opinion. This extends participation in public debate, and ensures that all significant points of view are aired. It also means that people are exposed through market competition to divergent views and sources of information. This makes for good democratic governance. Finally, representing people to authority is the third key democratic function of the media. The claim is made simply that the media speak for the people, and represent their views and interests in the public sphere. The conjecture is that the broad shape and nature of the media is ultimately determined by no one but their audiences, because the media must respond in a competitive market-place to what the people want; and express their views and interests. As a consequence, the privately owned media speak up for the people. All the three conjectures have obvious direct bearing on the maintenance of democracy and human rights protection.

However, these arguments often ignore the influences that can shape the media in a free market, including the political commitments and private interests of media shareholders, the influence exerted through news management and the ideological power of leading groups in society (Curran, 2005). Media activities can also be viewed in terms of pursuing particular political agendas and in terms of manipulating material for commercial and/or political reasons (Feintuck & Varney, 2006). The media, even being autonomous and independent of government (in most democratic countries), are often not free from interference by corporate powers, advertisers and professionals in the circle, and these are seldom taken into account (Apodaca, 2007). All these constraints also influence the coverage of human rights. More so, because free media itself could be

considered an essential component of democracy, we would expect to find most free media in democratic states and most controlled media in autocratic states, although this is not always the case.

Altogether, based on the identified mutually inclusive relationship between democracies, free media and human rights protection, this research is guided by Whitten-Woodring's proposition that

... in a democracy where news media are (significantly) free from government (regulation) and able to act as a watchdog over the government and where there are executive constraints, political competition and participation, there is higher government respect for (human rights) because of an interaction between the free media which are likely to cover violations of human rights and the presence of vibrant institutions with which to hold the government accountable. (2007, p.16-17)

However, it is important to assess the performance of media in their watchdog role that holds democratic government responsible for human rights.

2.2.4 Journalism, Media and Human rights – Between Freedom and Responsibility

The simple assumption is that the media stand between common people and political elite, protecting the former from latter's abuse. For the media to be able to do that, they have to be critically dissociated from the government. But this independence can also be constrained by a free competitive market-place; and in consequence, can limit what the media report or represent. This is sometimes reflected in the statement that the central purpose of commercial media is not to deliver products to audiences but to deliver the audience, as a product, to advertisers. In this case, is independence sufficient to guarantee media coverage of human rights? When the shape and content of media are generally determined by the audience in a free market-place, do the human rights topics constitute sufficient value to justify media coverage while competing in a liberated news

market? The main justification for freedom of speech, of information, and of the media was that democratised communication will be instrumental to human rights administration. However, given the pronounced tendencies for free media markets to tend towards concentration in private ownership, which presents the problems of selectiveness and, contingently, of lack of diversity of output, and given the perceived democratic and social need for diversity of content and for the media to satisfy its democratic obligations (Feintuck & Varney, 2006); this goes beyond just freedom. It is equally about responsibility.

In Feintuck & Varney's (2006) contention, if the media are to justify their existence and power in relation to any of the theories of freedom of communication, or in terms of their contribution to the establishment and maintenance of the Habermasian public sphere, then they must also establish that the commercial market place in which they operate as profit-making enterprises in turn contributes to the wider, democratic market place of ideas; and for

The media, to continue legitimately to claim the power associated with freedom of communication and the domination of its channels, must contribute to the acquisition by citizens of a range of political and cultural 'information', from which they may engage, individually and collectively, in a triangulation process which ultimately allows them an informed view of the world. In this sense, the media may properly be viewed as a public resource. (p.16)

This rightist argument is what guides much of assumption of the human rights community that the media should exist to ensure that states are accountable to their citizens. Thus, "while media serves as an important check on power and as an indispensable bulwark of human rights protection, it also relies on the protection provided by the human rights in order to play that role effectively" (Shaw, 2012, p.28).

The same 'valuation process' that influence the treatment of all other news stories affect the reporting of human rights. News selection process, as many studies had revealed (see Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Hall, 1981; Gans, 1978; Allan, 2004; Harrison, 2006), constitute a form of matrix system that is needed to prioritize events, and to filter them into levels of applicability and relevance to the audience; and this is generally determined by a complex interaction of many internal and external factors that include commercial pressures, structure and hierarchy of media organizations, and other external determinism that relates to factors such as technology, economy, ideology, culture, audience, and sources. Allan (2004, p.60–62) approaches definitions of 'newsworthiness' from the perspective of what he called the "News Net." This is based on the notions of geographic territoriality, organizational interest, and topical area. A link is then made to a range of other influential factors: economic and profit pressures on the organization; daily production schedules; reutilizing the uncertainty of future happenings to fill story quotas; anticipation or pre-planning of news-as-event; and the role of new technology.

Allan also quotes Bell (1991) on the over-access to news agendas of the 'pre-existing text' – "a story, which is marginal in news terms but written and available, may be selected ahead of a much more newsworthy story which has to be written and researched from the ground up' (1991, p.59). For example, human rights news is not usually 'pre-existing' and in many occasions reporters are required to do some digging, and their legal events may last for a long time. Altogether, the general routine of news selection process and the reality of media organizations and policy can constitute possible impediments to news coverage of human rights.

The inclusion of human rights issues as news stories is said to be better than it used to be (ICPHRP Report, 2002). Although human rights issues sometimes make it to news stories, Ovsiovitch (1993) argues that as a newsworthy topic, only little attention is being given to them by the media. There are general claims of media complacency and sometimes, tilting in favour of some sets of rights. The media disinterest is seen as responsible for the governments' disinterest (Klein, 2011). Research indicate that human rights as a concept often fails to be used as a 'subject' in the heading of media stories, though some specific terms often used point to human rights indirectly (*ibid*). Shaw (2011) argued that the media may have failed in this area. This raised questions such as what really constitutes 'good' reporting of human rights issues. How should journalists and editors themselves judge the quality of their reporting in this area? What pressures and constraints do they face and how might they be managed better? In order to answer these questions, the International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP) conducted a two-year study in 2002 involving interviews with over 70 journalists from several countries. The research report argues that, "as human rights are integrated increasingly in policy frameworks, journalists have a professional duty to report on this subject with accuracy, fairness, consistency, and precise knowledge of human rights" (ICHRP Report, 2002). This calls for responsibility on the part of the media.

Thus, with their enjoyment of free speech and freedom of information, journalists are considered to have a social responsibility to criticize those in power "on behalf of citizens and society, effectively serving as their surrogates" (Hohenberg, 1978, cited in Shaw, 2011, p.31). This belief is largely informed by the social responsibility model, which calls on journalists to serve as watchdogs of society on the basis of democratic

principles such as their being disseminators of honest and fair information and opinions to help people hold their leaders to account for their actions. Based on this thinking, some scholars, specifically Shaw (2011), proposed what is now known as ‘human rights journalism’. This conceptualization calls for moving the parameters of human rights-based journalism beyond the role of journalism in exposing human rights abuse, which has resulted from more conventional political (physical) violent conflicts or from the discourse of free speech as a human right. It calls for “the rarely explored third level, that of the more pro-active role of journalism as an agency that knows no borders, no race, no age, no gender and no class – a journalism with a human face and for the human race” (Shaw, 2011, p.36). “For journalism to be taken seriously,” Shaw explains,

“it must be seen to be helping, and not undermining or threatening, the enjoyment of these inalienable human rights by all human beings... This means that journalists should be able to select narratives and words that would impact positively, rather than negatively, on the people targeted as well as on those alluded to” (p.36).

Human rights journalism model calls for another interventionist media the same way other academics (Galtung, 1998; Lynch, 2007; Bratic, 2008) proposed the idea of peace journalism as an alternative to the mainstream war reporting – a journalism model that is not only about reporting facts but also, and arguably more importantly, digging deeper about how social problems can be prevented or managed in order to achieve a minimum level of human suffering. Equally, Shaw (2011) proposed human rights journalism, journalism with a human face, a journalism that cares for the people, one that prioritizes them over capitalism and, above all, over the whims and caprices of political demagogues” (p.38). It raises the question of why journalists should contribute to human rights discourse. Shaw further argues that

Journalists can use their much privileged access to news media sources and their professional ability to communicate, not only to report events as they happen, but also to deconstruct the news and add more in-depth analysis; this will then promote a better understanding of the undercurrents of the events and issues at stake and then encourage a human rights-based response to tackling or coping with them. (p.38)

Like other similar proposals, the conceptualization of human rights journalism suffered a similar onslaught. Strong defenders of objectivity ritual in conventional journalism point to the undermining nature of these models to some of the important values of professional journalism – especially objectivity, which emphasizes neutrality and the simple separation of facts from opinion. However, its proponents responded by pointing out its strength in terms the model's solution-oriented and pro-active rather than problem-oriented and reactive approach. They argue that human rights journalism can, but does not necessarily have to, be objective, since, as Lovasen argues:

...it has clear values of humanitarianism, truth, holism, and empowerment. It has its orientation on peace rather than war, on truth rather than propaganda, on people rather than elite, on solution and transformation rather than victory [...] is also proactive and asks questions of why violent acts are committed-before they are. And a core value is having a voice for all parties. (Lovasen, 2008, cited in Shaw, 2011, p.39)

Still, one common problem with these idealistic proposals is that they fail to take into account the political and economic realities of media organizations. Mediacontents are either pushed or pulled by its complex relationship with other general forces in the society. Media's output is a result of interplay of organizational structures, bureaucratic work routines, economic constraints, professional norms and other internal and external factors (McQuail, 2005). This reality may constitute a problem to human rights reporting. So, the possibility of these interventionist models is somehow unguaranteed. This

research will, therefore, not be part of the feasibility studies to lay a support to the proposal of human rights journalism. Rather, it falls within a media performance analysis.

Other possible impediments to human rights reporting identified in the ICHRP Report (2002) include inability of journalists to understand what constitute human rights, as well as the contents of human rights instruments has resulted in the journalist looking at human rights from the perspective of war/violent conflicts – “unknowing to (the) journalists, they do in reality come in contact with such issues every day” (p.11); and there is also a skewed notion about the places where human rights violations occur. For example, western journalists reason that violations to human rights only occur outside their countries, and paying little or no attention to similar cases right around them (Heinze & Freedman, 2010); and selective focus on particular regimes, the “oppressive” states and places outside US spheres of influence (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McNair, 2001). Also, space constraint limits the treatment of human rights issues in-depth by the media (ICHRP Report, 2002). Heinze and Freedman (2010, p.493) note that “pressure to attract reader interest, and to respond to the most topical and controversial issues overpower any priority that might be placed on comprehensive human rights coverage.” Human rights coverage by the media also prioritize civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights, which are hardly reported (ICHRP Report, 2002). Sometimes the inherent belief of ‘non-obligation’ on the side of the media workers constitutes a problem (*ibid*). Journalists only choose what to report, as they have “no duty to privilege human rights stories over other stories”; and they believe they have interest in human rights reporting as long as the stories are ‘newsworthy,’ plus the notion that human rights do not rate high in “reader’s surveys” (*ibid*, p.17). Despite all these possible

constraints, the human rights community still believes firmly in potential media influence in human rights structure.

2.2.5 Research on Human Rights in the Media

The social production perspective of press coverage is part of the constitutive reality and significance of human rights movement. Human rights advocates assume the importance of media in framing and influencing the public (Robinson, 2006). In *Human Rights in the International Public Sphere: Civic Discourse for the 21st Century*, Over (1999) addresses the human rights challenge, channels of discourse, knowledge and power in the global village; contending that during the 1970s the debate began in the United Nations over the dominance of the U.S. television programming around the world. The New World Information Order opened up this debate surrounding the dominance of the First World on the Third World that, in effect, re-energized the campaigning for the application of the human rights issue as an international moral barometer (Preston, Herman, & Schiller, 1989); which, according to Taylor (2003), became a pivotal subject in the final fifteen years of the Cold War; and this may explain part of the 1970s press coverage spike revealed by Moyn above and Gayer and Shapiro below.

The following decades have brought global politics to the issues of human rights much closer. Much of the responsibility for the exposure of human rights violations has resulted from such NGOs as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and independent journalists, who function as worldwide ‘watchdogs’ and ‘whistle-blowers.’ The internet has intensified this process, giving non-corporatized civil society the opportunity to participate in the rights monitoring and reporting regimes. Past analyses on the role of the media on human rights found in human rights political and history

literatures (reviewed above) have often been limited to anecdotal examples or limited case studies. Apodaca (2007) raised the questions: Do large communication capabilities (large numbers of TVs, radios, Internet users, and newspapers) and few journalistic restrictions advance human rights protections? Or does access to media technologies, facilitated by a state-censored media, act as a tool of human rights abuse? His statistical analysis reveals a significant relationship between access to the media and press freedom and levels of human rights violations discussed above.

Understanding the complex interaction of media environments and human rights agendas, in specific media coverage, equally requires empirical research. Earlier work on human rights reporting in the media had simply observed the number of stories dedicated to international human rights (Geyer and Shapiro 1988; Hanson and Miller 1987; Pritchard 1991). While examining the trends in human rights coverage, these studies point to a boost in the number of news reports mentioning human rights. Geyer & Shapiro (1988) examined the rate of coverage in three newspapers, two news magazines, and one television news programme by looking at index entries listed under selected human rights subject headings and tallying the number of stories. They found that human rights coverage received a dramatic boost in media attention during late 70s and early 80s. Geyer & Shapiro used an eleven-year period when examining the *New York Times*. A twelve-year period was used when examining the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines, and *CBS Evening News* broadcasts. Similar subject headings were examined for the other periodicals/broadcasts. Pritchard (1991), in an attempt to replicate Geyer and Shapiro's findings, suggests that this increased coverage is, indeed, at least partly responsible for the increased awareness of, and support for,

human rights found in the U.S. public and by extension, international community. While these studies present a significant opening in understanding human rights coverage, questions about press conceptualization of human rights were neglected. Gayer & Shapiro counted in the frequency index headings: 'Freedom and Human Rights,' 'Torture,' 'Political Prisoners,' and 'Amnesty International.'

To Ovsiovitch (1993), these references, only provide a vague understanding of human right. 'Freedom and Human Rights,' he explains, could refer to any issue including freedom of movement, peaceful assembly, or the right to political participation. Encountering a similar problem, Hanson & Miller (1987) included the headings 'torture,' 'assassination,' 'political assassination,' 'violence,' 'disappearances,' 'repressed,' and 'oppressed.' While each of these topics might relate to human rights, they provide a limited understanding of the concept and, as findings of these studies seem to indicate, define almost any act of violence as a human rights question. These categories also revealed exclusive slanting toward reference to only civil-political rights and physical integrity rights. These conceptual problems raise doubts about their findings. Still, their focus was primarily on the US media as the purveyors of global human rights agenda.

This was explicated by some studies to relate to the US, specifically Jimmy Carter administration, revival of the almost forsaken human rights discourse in global politics. As Cassara (1998, p.478) shows, Carter's predecessors "...were more interested in maintaining the balance of power than in exploring the implications of (human rights), (and) human rights played no significant role in U.S. formulation of foreign policy" before the late 70s. Her research investigates how the Carter initiative affected U.S. prestige newspaper coverage of the region most affected by the U.S. policy change - the

countries of Latin America. Looking through presidential agenda-setting influence, she examined US newspaper coverage of human rights in Latin America between 1975 and 1982, Cassara found that Carter's elevation of human rights to a major foreign policy concern had an impact on U.S. news coverage of Latin America. After Carter took office, she writes,

U.S. diplomats were concerned about human rights and the government offices charged with oversight had been given a new lease on life. Bureaucrats were available and interested in talking about rights concerns; government officials went on the record. Nongovernmental groups concerned with human rights took on new importance. Reporters had sources for their stories, editors believed those stories were newsworthy, and human rights sources in and out of government became routinized. (p.484)

However, the governments of the affected Latin American countries fought back largely through the local media. Sorensen (2009) wrote about this contra-flow, alleging media complicity during the years of repression in Chile that explain the pattern flow observed by Cassara. In this view, the media in Chile both support, and later, help broken the repression and the human rights abuse in Latin America. Dominant media organizations were said to have fervently supported military coups, applauded economic programmes, and thus, hushed up political matters such as human rights violations and the absence of press freedom (Macari, 2000).

Other studies seem to believe that the political ideology of the offending state (to the Western power) influences the amount of coverage. Herman & Chomsky (1988) compared the amount of newspaper coverage given to victims of abuse in the Soviet and American spheres of influence and concluded that the media systematically ignored human rights violations committed by U.S. client states such as Israel; and that the media does not focus a great deal of attention on human rights, and the attention given is biased

against certain regime type. In an attempt to shift focus away from early emphasis on amount of coverage, Ovsiovitc (1993) analyses human rights coverage in the *New York Times*, *Time magazine*, and the *CBS Evening News* for a ten-year period, 1978-1987, focusing on the different indexes that determine what subject of human rights and which countries received media attention. He realizes that the three news outlets present a similar view of human rights, focusing on civil and political rights; and that there is very little attention given to economic, social, and cultural rights. Geographical coverage focuses on a small number of countries primarily in two regions, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

While Ovsiovitc succeeds in shifting a research focus from frequency to content, there is over-reliance on the U.S. media space as purveyors of international human rights agenda in his revision and of those that precede him. Added to this repository, Cole (2010) examines how media coverage may relate to skewed perception of abuse. He considers whether increased awareness of and attention to human rights practices in fact distort perceptions of abuse with an analysis of human rights coverage in two major American newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, between 1980 and 2000. This shifted the research agenda from frequency to the question of media's influence on awareness and perception of repression or abuse. Cole employed multivariate regression analyses to identify the characteristics of countries that are mentioned in conjunction with human rights in these, again, US (assumedly, the international) most prestigious newspapers. His results show that human rights coverage tends to be negative, with 'repressive' countries getting the most attention. He, however, conclude that human rights reporting appears not to foul human rights awareness and

perception, inasmuch as coverage does not vary systematically by a country's respect for press freedoms, linkage to international civil society, or the extensiveness of its communication infrastructure. Others seem to disagree.

Heinze and Freedman (2010), while still admitting the decisive role of the media in shaping perceptions about human rights, argue that the media fail to reflect the realities of global violations. This study examines day-by-day coverage of global human rights, during the three-month period from October to December 2006, in two American and two British broadsheets: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times*. They offered evidentiary cases of western media distortion and exclusivity in human rights worldwide coverage. According to them, situations of egregious abuse are often overshadowed by those which receive attention for reasons “extraneous” to any specific concern for human rights; arguing, however, that the “distortions” in the media arise not necessarily from “deliberate misrepresentation, but from the inevitable disparities that arise when human rights abuses are reported as by-products of military, economic, or other interests” (p.491). They conclude that media coverage is disproportionate, giving attention to one locus of abuse in say China, Russia, Iran or Japan, while ignoring other equally or more repressive conditions in, for example, USA, Israeli-Palestine conflict, Pakistan (when it becomes an ally in the war on terror), or the inattention to gross human rights violations in Darfur and Chad in favour of the military and political nature of the conflicts. In their phrasing,

Media coverage of human rights entails several tensions which will remain difficult to balance. On one hand, the mass media are derelict when they neglect to report on gross and systemic human rights violations. On the other hand, strongly disproportionate emphasis on one locus of abuse raises questions about why equally or more abusive situations receive less attention, particularly when

a noticeable pattern of disproportionate coverage emerges over time. If the disproportion arises from concerns related to, yet ultimately distinct from, human rights, as appears when reporting on violations spurred by distinct military, economic or cultural interests, then it cannot be said that a focus on human rights as such is being faithfully pursued. (p.514)

The media, as McNair (1991) revealed, in Russia also react to the flow of accusations of repression from Western media. A consistent theme in western media coverage of the USSR has been the poor record of the country's government in the provision and guaranteeing of human rights; and in reply "the Soviets have rejected such criticisms, on the grounds that they are often factually inaccurate and that, in any case, Soviet definitions of what constitutes human rights are substantially different from those which prevail in advanced capitalist societies" (p.143-144). The reaction constitutes a contra-flow labelling counter-accusations of abuses in the capitalist West using a different standard of human rights. Another contra-flow was observed in pan-Arab media, specifically *Aljazeera* (Miladi, 2003; Balliet, 2013). The success of *Al-Jazeera* was attributed to the kinds of programmes it broadcasts, giving airtime to critical voices from opposing views, the academic community or human rights activists, and, in the process, provoking many Arab leaders and throwing a big competition in an international news market dominated by the Western media (Miladi, 2003). Ultimately, programmes often tackle crucial, yet taboo subjects in Arab world, such as women's freedom, banned political groups, polygamy, torture and rival interpretations of Islamic teachings and, this way, opens the floor for free and often noisy debate on some of the most sensitive issues in Arab society including human rights, Arab-Israeli conflict, gender equality and democracy (*ibid*). *Aljazeera* also presents complex human rights issues in many regions that may not be deemed important in other news media, including reports about the

repressive conditions of marginalised and vulnerable persons in the West (Balliet, 2013). Hence, Aljazeera's content represents largely human rights and other critical subjects.

In another shift, Ramos, Ron & Thoms (2007) addressed the questions of what influence media coverage of human rights, and specifically examined the influence of NGOs in the coverage. They analysed human rights reporting by *The Economist* and *Newsweek* from 1986 to 2000, covering 145 Northern countries. They argue that these two media sources cover abuses in human rights terms more frequently when they occur in countries with higher levels of state repression, economic development, population, and Amnesty International attention. There is also some evidence that political openness, number of battle-deaths, and civil societies affect coverage, although these effects were not robust; and that Amnesty International's press releases appear to have less impact on media coverage when discussing abuses in countries that are central to the medias' district of interest. Yet, they lament the discouraging effects of poverty, or social-economic rights, on media human rights coverage.

Some, motivated by different theoretical beliefs, moved the analyses away from the international media, largely of global North. Fan and Ostini (1999) made an analysis of mass media coverage originating in four Chinese-speaking regions of the world – the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. Their motive was to determine the extent of diffusion of Western conception of human rights and compare the situation between Chinese-speaking regions with great exposure to West and those with less exposure to West. Based on discussions of diffusion and modernization thesis, they argued that regions with the greatest amount of exposure to the West (in these cases, through colonialism) exhibit definitions of human rights similar to those in the

West and theoretically, concluded that the phenomenon supports arguments about the homogenizing or synchronizing effects of globalization. Similar thesis can be considered in the Nigerian situation. Burgoon, Ruggeri, Schudel & Manikkalingam (2015) was more interested in how violations of human rights in the context of a conflict have in recent years received an increasing amount of attention from the international media, with a particular reference to many civil wars fought in different parts of the world. In a slightly casual conclusion, they argue that while media coverage of human-rights abuses constituting “naming and shaming” might temper hostilities, such coverage might, on the other hand, spark intransigence and complicate negotiations among conflicting parties, thereby hindering rather than hastening peace.

In Nigeria, few studies had any interest in media treatment of human rights. Pate (2011b) could probably be a pioneer work, which has examined the nature and pattern of the newspaper coverage of issues of human rights by the local media in Nigeria with a particular focus on how the media fulfilled their roles of social responsibility by shrilling out abuse cases during the reign of an absolutist military government in the country. He argued that Nigerian press gave "considerable attention" to the issues of human rights in the country; and yet, that the media analysed appeared subdued in their approach especially when the government is involved. Olatunji (2011) was more interested in human rights representation in the escapist newspaper cartoon content. He examined the newspapers' cartoons portrayal of human rights abuses in period of economic deregulation in Nigeria, transcending from military (from 1986) to civil rule until 2003. One important area of emphasis in the study was the exclusive interest in social-economic rights. This was mainly based on the assumption that economic performance of

a state relates to level of repression in any country, and in this case, constraints in the Nigerian economy relate to the high level of repression and social discontent in the country.

In a sample of over one thousand randomly selected editions, Olatunji obtained more than two hundred samples of cartoons whose message directly made reference to “human rights” and other related index. This, as a matter of fact, is high. However, his focus on cartoons amounts to trivialisation of human rights; and he failed to connect his analysis to the clamp down on press freedom observed during the era of military dictatorship (Oso, Odunlami & Adaja, 2011; Pate, 2011a). The high number of the satirical cartoon content may constitute part of the press struggle to circumvent the muzzle imposed by the absolute military regimes that constitute a large part of the period he analysed. Therefore, it is equally important to balance the cycle by measuring how the media in Nigeria thrive in terms of human rights coverage within the context of democratic regime.

Overall, many assumptions were made about media role regarding human rights. Even so, there has been little research analysing the local media. Heavy priority was placed on the international/western media in the academic community. Even where local media were approached, the purpose of the researchers transcends simple media performance investigation, and was largely in the areas of international communication, either to measure the validity of cultural imperialism thesis or to study contra-flow from the periphery to the centre or to validate the arguments of media’s complicity in tyranny (e.g. Fan & Ostini, 1999; Novi, 2005; Sorensen, 2009). There are still many questions that need to be examined in terms of what is reported by the media. There is a pressing

need to expand beyond focusing on a particular political system. Reporting of human rights abuses and events in Western liberal democracies is largely and relatively ignored by both the media and NGOs and, by implication, the scholarship community. Nigeria, arguably, does not have one of the best democracies, characterized by crises of many dimensions, providing impetus for serious repression; and there is a need to understand media performance regarding respects for human rights in democracy, especially when it is not the best one. Therefore, this research hopes to add to our understanding of the relationship between media and human rights from this and some other angles identified above.

2.2.6 Democracy and Human rights situation in Nigeria

It was argued that Nigeria has a long history of violation of human rights having colonial genesis (Jauhari, 2011). Documented evidences show that in an effort to impose their presence and consolidate their control, the colonial powers in Africa applied repressive and exploitative methods, contributing to the continents backwardness (Rodney, 1999). In effect, human rights situation in the continent is similar across all African countries, perhaps because of this shared experience of imperialism. Possibly, native African principals after political independence learned from their colonial predecessors. Africans continue to face constant violations of basic rights in the hands of their kinsmen, who also contributed to the economic repression in the region. Terrible atrocities were committed by these sit-tight African rulers in addition to almost constant communal conflicts across the region. Life and human rights situation in the continent have never been any better since the last century. Africans become victims of political instability, economic repression and despotic rulers have been mainly concerned with

consolidating their hold on power and have used the coercive organs of the state to deny basic rights to their subjects (Ambrose, 1995). These conditions also contribute to the worsening position of women and children as the most vulnerable groups.

After independence, Nigeria, like most other Africa countries, experienced a mix of periods of military and civilian rule. The military rule in Nigeria became a symbol of complete authoritarianism. After every military coup, the government suspended the constitution including the relevant sections that guarantee certain basic rights and, thus, absolved itself of accountability towards its people. The coercion and the disrespects to human rights during the military rule were archetypical to the arbitrariness of the regime type. Especially from mid-1980s, Nigeria witnessed the worst forms of military rule, state repression, and unpopular economic policies and human rights violations; the politics of structural adjustment and the dramatic upsurge of popular protest and civil society struggles to challenge the state; and the dramatic transformation in the global balance of power leading to neoliberal economic and “political conditionality” imposed by international financial institutions (Baylies, 1995). This situation culminated into popular resistance by mostly the labour unions, civic associations and the media (Tar, 2009), and the ensuing military crackdown to subdue them. Another process of democratisation in 1999 brought hope that Nigerians can regain their freedom, but as documented evidences show, things have not been any better.

Similarly, the civilian rule also came to be characterized by the institutional failure in observing people’s rights. In order to hold on to power the civilian leaders denied freedom of expression, practised unlawful and extra-judicial killings and rigged elections (Jauhari, 2011). Adejumobi (2010) constitutes a major interrogation of the

progress of democratic governance in Nigeria in a post-military era. The various contributors to the volume reveal that post-military governance in Nigeria is embedded in authoritarian practices and culture, institutions are weak and often manipulated by dominant social forces, and the political leadership is increasingly bereft of public trust, credibility, and confidence. The defining realities of this strand of the country's democratic rule constitute executive arrogation of power and a culture of impunity, uncertainty of rules and procedure, lack of trust and cooperation among political elite, poor accountability, flawed elections and rampant human rights abuse (Adejumobi, 2010a). Elections have become events of political disempowerment, intense acrimony, discord, tension, and violence (Adejumobi, 2010b). These political conditions have resulted in, and were compounded by, intermittent sectarian hostility and *Boko Haram* terror, resulting to grievous humanitarian crises and economic setback. Interventions by security forces were often brutal (Amnesty International, 2012).

Police brutality in crime control, crowd control, management of protests and clashes, suspect interrogations and at checkpoints were well documented by Okeshola, (2013). Their brutality occurs in the form of extra-judicial killings or summary execution of suspects and revenge killings. During criminal investigation, there is always absence of respect for human rights as the police resort to torture to extract confession. The methods or instrument of torture used by the police include beating with sticks, iron bars, wires and cables, sticking pins or sharp objects into the private parts of suspects, shooting of suspect on the limbs, use of cigarette lights to inflict burns on suspects. These and other practices such as arresting a relation as substitute for wanted suspect, apart from being a human right violation, create indelible negative impression of police among the

victims of these practices. Nigerian security joint forces were also accused of contravening rules of engagement and consequently, committing serious human rights atrocities in counter-insurgency operations, also well documented by international NGOs working on human rights. These include extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, forced eviction, house burning and demolishing and other contraventions to physical-integrity and due process rights (Amnesty International, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2012).

All these happen despite the fact that human rights were adequately protected by the appropriate constitutional and institutional mechanisms in Nigeria. Sections 33–42 of the 1999 constitution recognize political and civil rights that include the right to life, personal liberty and dignity, the right to fair hearing, freedom of expression, the right to privacy and family life, freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, freedom of association, freedom of religion, and the right to acquire and own property in any part of the country. Recognising other social-economic rights, constitution has also imposed a duty on the state to ensure that the “security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government” and direct its policy toward ensuring that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum wage, living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens (Falana, 2010).

Barely a month after his assumption of the office, the president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo set up the Human Rights Abuses Investigation Commission (HRAIC) with a mandate to inquire into gross violations of human rights by past governments. The HRAIC received about 10,000 petitions and from the committee noted cases of

indiscriminate arrests, detention without trial, extrajudicial killings, disappearances and political assassinations, seizure of citizens' passports, political victimization, and closure of media houses, revealing how the culture of impunity became entrenched under successive military regimes in the country (Falana, 2010). All these, as others show, have not changed in the post-military era (Coker & Obo, 2012; Jauhari, 2011; Ojo, 2006). Contraventions to human rights norms are still rampant and this cannot be dissociated from crises of governance and other structural problems in the country.

2.3 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.3.1 Protection of Human Rights: What is the Extent of the Potential Media influence?

So far, we have crossed rampant arguments believing strongly that the media can influence compliance to human rights norms. This, to a large extent, may be legitimate in view of evidentiary cases of employing the media to support repression. Some studies alluded to the media complicity in bolstering unconstitutional governments and their culpability in human rights abuses in Ghana (Novi, 2005), Latin America (Macari, 2000; Sorensen, 2009) and, clearly, how the media were used to support the Rwandan genocide show some evidences of how the media could be used to commit unimaginable atrocities (see Thompson & Annan, 2007). Ironically, it remains an unsettled disagreement among media scholars regarding cultural and political influences of the media. Conclusions about how media contribute to changes in our society are still uncomfortable. Earlier views, when earlier channels of public communication were evolving, believed media impact to be automatic (Baran and Davies, 2012). The popular accepted wisdom then was based on observations that the technological improvements in public

communication and mass production of popular culture had created a mass audience attending to the same messages.

This theoretical argument shifted after 'empirical' verification that media effect is rather limited and actually operates within a whirlpool of other social and psychological "intervening" factors (McQuail, 1979). Rather than influencing any change, mass media 'reinforce' or 'speed up' the process of social change (Klapper, 1960). So, it may be argued accordingly that media coverage of human rights, rather than mechanically influences as many had carelessly concluded, reinforces other institutional and legal frameworks to achieve a minimum level of human suffering. It will rely on the presence of other democratic characteristics that, according to Whitten-Woodring's (2007) proposition, include executive constraints, political competition and participation.

Later, new thought emerged arguing that media effect can be powerful in certain conditions. Noelle-Neuman (1973) argued that the media can achieve greater power the more that its message was presented as something with which the majority of people were in agreement, 'silencing' those who wished to express alternative views. This way, it may then be argued that media slanting toward civil-political rights, presenting them as the most important set of rights and what is in agreement globally, may silence those who wish to promote other different sets of human rights. Similarly, McCombs and Shaw (1973) argued that consistent reiteration of important news items led people to adopt media agenda as public agenda. The central argument in this shift is that the media had strong, long-term influence, based on the ubiquitous and constant stream of messages they present to audience. Others believed that audiences are not passive consumers of media — they interpret their media with a repertoire of meaning-making tools. All these

views are caught within the whirlpool of the constant hesitation of power of mass media and trending reiterations of the activities of audiences to resist them. Yet, multifariousness of media sphere and constant evolvement of communication technology remain an impediment to any definitive, acceptable conclusion.

The debate about the supposed media influence rages on. On one hand, media critics – largely the political, social and religious aristocrats – believing media effect to be powerful, express ‘moral panic’ about the pernicious nature of the modern media-saturated society, consistently in support for state regulation. These advocates of “technocratic control” built their argument on the historical cases that the media were utilised for propaganda and repression. They also believe that media practitioners cannot be trusted to use the media effectively to serve vital public needs. “Some sorts of oversights or control are necessary to ensure that important public needs are satisfied” and that media must be placed in the hands of technocrats who could be trusted to act in public interests (Baran & Davies, 2012, p.119). They exploit the theories of powerful media to push for total state control and/or regulation. However, others believe that the media cannot bite the fingers that feed them and therefore, may not be able to be critical of government behaviour.

For this reason, on the other hand, others believe in a good and rational public, and totally unregulated media. These free media crusaders, largely constituting corporate media owners and private individuals, opposed to state control and/or regulation and sponsored ‘empirical’ verifications to show that the argument of powerful and destructive media are, in fact, unfounded and wild. According to them, “the media should serve as a forum allowing people to deduce between good and evil;” that “press freedom (of

expression) is the strongest, if not the only, guarantee of liberty from political elites” and that falsehood must be countered, ideas challenged and tested or they will become dogma (Keane, 1991, cited in Baran & Davies, 2012, p.122) – obviously summarising much of the thoughts of the pro-democracy philosophers discussed above. So, the contention has not just been about media effect, but, concurrently, by a more important question about how the media *should be* and what *role* they should serve if some ideal values and principles are to be realised. This contention is normally expressed in normative theories, describing an ideal way for a media system to be structured and operated.

In the midst of the pro-regulation versus no-regulation agitators, media practitioners have been able to strike a deal. Although, many powerful people are for controlling the media, they could not reach a consensus about who should do it and how it should be done as a result of the natural plurality and distrust among the political elites. Media practitioners were able to strike a consensus by offering to engage in self-regulation – “to become more socially responsible” (Baran & Davies, 2012, p.120). Eventually, social responsibility theory emerged as a consequence of this contention, representing a consensus between the two extreme views – between those views favouring government control of media and those agitating for total media freedom. The media can have its freedom, but, where necessary – largely for the so-called ‘public interests’ – the state can come in. The private owners can pursue whatever ends using the media, but the system must remain professional and responsible to the public, for even the freedom they enjoy is only necessary for the same purpose. By maintaining a critical distance from government, they should be able to check government’s behaviour in the general interest of the republic.

As price for freedom, certain responsibility expectations are placed regarding media conduct and performance in society. The promise is to reconcile independence with obligation. Human rights community often argue that the media must accept the obligation to scrutinize government actions, in particular government respect for human rights, as a price for its independence. This research is guided by a related assumption and also, by a belief that consistent coverage of human rights subjects in the media agenda help to shape the policy priorities of society in favour of human rights. This will form a diagnostic feedback which may expose problems of media performance in this area.

2.3.2 Theoretical Framework - Social Responsibility Theory:

Much of the earlier researchers analysed above on the relations between media and human rights were predisposed to a careless theoretical equation of media performance with effect. The dominant argument is that the media have been able to affect protection of human right and global rights agenda; there have been theoretical concerns, on one hand, on the negative consequences of media structure on performance (Over, 1999; Apodaca, 2007; Cole, 2010), and on the other, on the intentional use of the media for public good and to uphold human rights (Shaw, 2012). Others show evidences of considerable pressures, constraints, potential ‘agents of influence’ and power leverages within the context of global politics that shape media work in the area of human rights (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Fan & Ostini; 1999; Heinze & Freedman, 2010). These studies were genuinely more interested in political than in media theories. Few systematic content analyses conducted by media-aware scholars (such as Geyer and Shapiro 1988; Hanson and Miller 1987; Pritchard 1991) were simply concerned about frequency and

therefore, did not show much sensitivity to theoretical conclusions. However, Cassara (1988) and Ramon, Ron & Thoms (2007) employed agenda setting approach and offered good explanations concerning the potential sources of influence in building the media rights agenda.

Differently, this study avoids the causality conjecture, adopts a normative argument and, therefore, applied social responsibility theory in order to collect evidences of performance when media practitioners have agreed to self-censor their conduct for the 'good' of society. It is largely a critical assessment of media conduct and performance in democracy, specifically protection of human rights. The main thrust of the theory had to do with a growing awareness that in some important respects, the free market as a consequence of liberal democracy had failed to fulfil the promise of the press and to deliver expected democratic benefits to the society. The theory has thus tried to reconcile independence with obligations to society.

In principle, this framework is normally guided by the understanding that media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to the society; such obligations are mainly to be met by setting high or professional standards of information, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance; in accepting and applying these obligations, media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions; and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance and intervention can be justified to serve the public good (McQuail, 2005). Essentially, the media could be 'interventionist' as long as it serves on matters of public interests. This was the main justification and framework used by some scholars to propose interventionist journalism model in the area of human rights protection they called human rights journalism. The research is guided

by a belief that journalists should be able to use the media to promote human rights in Nigeria.

2.4 CONCLUSION

From this review, we have seen the contentions that human right issues were under-reported in the media and what issues are reported and involving who and which region. A major observation was that previous research in the relations between media and human rights had focused more on coverage in the news media in developed countries. Where news outlets in developing countries such as Africa and Latin America were examined, they largely measured media coverage in dictatorial regimes. This research, therefore, focused on one of the important countries in Africa and among the third world nations. It examined human rights coverage in Nigeria during many years of democratic regime in the country. Also, a good number of previous studies have also tried to link media coverage to a condition where the regimes of government have respects for human rights or not, conceptually guided by argument linking severity of human rights conditions to regime type, i.e. depending on the level of authoritarianism or democratization. However, the emerging evidences of repression even in democratic societies calls for investigations to find out how news media respond to the repressive conditions in multi-party democracy. This study hypothesized that severity of human right conditions, which can occur in any regime, determine media coverage not the regime of government in use. The next chapter presents the research design on how to address the questions raised in the first chapter. The design is guided by the above conceptual framework and theoretic interest.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this research is to examine the pattern of newspaper coverage of human rights in Nigeria. Large number of studies has concentrated on human rights situation and its mediation in despotic regimes. Democratic regimes were mostly ignored in human rights studies for a simple but not necessarily correct calculation that there is greater regard for human rights in democratic societies. Accordingly, this study contributes to our understanding of media performance in reporting right abuse in democratic environment, especially when there are documentary evidences of abuse even in supposed free societies. Large number of studies interested in news media representation of human rights had involved content analysis. Also guided by a similar conceptual framework and theoretic interests, this study equally involves content analysis of two selected national newspapers in Nigeria for 15 years of democratic regime in the country. This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It identifies a roadmap to address the research questions raised. The problem the study addresses demand direct and objective observation and measurement. Therefore, this is largely quantitative and empirical.

3.1 THE METHOD OF THE STUDY

The study used quantitative content analysis as the method of data collection largely clued-up by the research theoretic interest. The role of media in placing human rights discourse in the public and policy agenda is highly recognized in human rights

literature. We can infer from media contents how the media place human rights issues in the public and policy discourse, infer human rights political beliefs, and conclude about media conduct and performance in terms of what *role* they should serve if respect for human rights are to be recognized. Using this approach, therefore, it is hoped that we can measure the extent of media involvement in human rights administration, and infer cultural and ideological biases in human rights discourse. Accordingly, a large amount of the researches, though often motivated by different goals, interested in the relationship between human rights and the media have involved content analyses, and it becomes a useful technique in understanding the media's representation of human rights system. It is also hoped that possible constraints to human rights media reporting can be inferred from the content, which is seen invariably as a consequence of a variety of influences including (but not limited to) a news media market.

Therefore, quantitative "content analysis is a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitativemanner for the purpose of measuring variables" (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011, p.156). It is also defined as "the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods" (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014, p.3). Procedurally, it involves defining relevant content, specifying population and sampling plan, identifying units and categories of analysis, designing coding protocol and sheet, pretesting and establishing reliability procedure, processing the data applying relevant statistical procedures and ultimately, interpreting and reporting results (*ibid*). In a similar passion, the study involves a systematic observation and quantitative recording of the nature and pattern of newspaper coverage of human rights in

Nigeria. It measures frequency of human rights idiom, degree of salience given to the issues, and the nature of human rights beliefs entrenched in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers' news content.

3.2 UNIVERSE, POPULATION AND SAMPLING FRAME

According to Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2014), the 'universe' includes all possible units of content being considered; while the 'population' is composed of all the sampling units to which the study will infer; and the 'sampling frame' is the actual list of units from which a sample is selected. In this research, therefore, the universe constitutes all the newspapers published and distributed in Nigeria, but two privately owned newspaper titles were picked using purposive sampling approach.

These are *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers. These two titles have been picked based on geopolitical site of production, ranking in terms of circulation and ownership structure. On one hand, the two papers are both private in terms of ownership. It is assumed that for the media to be able to be critical of government behaviour – in this case, government respect for human rights – the media have to be critically dissociated from government. Editorial independence will largely mean freedom from overriding influences such as found in media ownership structure. Based on this argument, all the state-owned papers have been excluded. Besides that, none of the state-owned newspapers rates high in terms of circulation and consistency.

From a controversial audit report (the only Nigerian newspapers' circulation data available so far) published in 2013 by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), *The Punch* was ranked first with 34,264 unit sales, which made it the highest selling newspaper in the country. It, however, has its most footing in the South. To strike a

balance, *Daily Trust* was selected from the North, whose rating in the same report was not really bad with a daily output of about 11,000 copies, emerging the biggest and most successful private newspaper in Northern Nigeria. The population, therefore, constitutes all the daily editions of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers during the period, 2000 to 2014.

Accordingly, the sampling frame comprises all the editions of the two selected newspapers within the time frame defined in the study. The weekly editions have been excluded, because they are significantly different from the daily edition in terms of the nature and organization of content, and they are under separate production teams with different editorial demands. Still, one major limitation is that *Daily Trust* newspaper, which becomes the only available option from the newspapers published in the North, started daily publication in January, 2001 – one year later than the actual period specified for the study. This may be a bit of a problem if the aim is to compare the output of the two newspapers. This gap may be too huge for an effectual comparative analysis.

However, few studies dealing with media coverage of human rights were not troubled by the year on year variance between the different news outlets analysed and did not really attempt to reconcile this through sampling. For example, Gayer and Shapiro (1988) used an eleven-year period when examining *New York Times*, while twelve-year period was used when examining the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Time*. Since it does not mean they were completely correct, and rather than completely ignoring the one-year deficit in *Daily Trust* newspaper, it is decided that a different sampling approach can be adopted to draw samples from its weekly paper, the *Weekly Trust*, being produced in year 2000 before introducing the daily publication in January 2001. One logical reason

for adopting this approach is that the weekly editions were supposed to contain aggregated content that ordinarily could have featured in the daily editions if they were to be produced. Thus, *Weekly Trust* editions for year 2000 are technically part of the population of the study.

Accordingly, the sampling frame for this research constitutes all the daily papers produced by *The Punch* newspaper, from January 2000 to December 2014, without the Saturday and Sunday editions; and equally, all the daily editions produced by *Daily Trust* from January, 2001 (when they started daily publication) to December 2014, also excluding the Saturday and Sunday editions; as well as, in *Daily Trust's* case, the weekly editions (*Weekly Trust*) produced for the one deficit year when there was no daily publication, i.e. from January to December 2000 (see Appendices 1A-C). Ultimately, the population is defined this way in order to look at a proportion of content/stories from a normal mix of coverage, avoiding extraordinary special editions and sections or anything that can alter the usual news mix and cycle.

3.3 THE SAMPLING APPROACH

Two decisions confronting content analysts involve defining the population and, problematically, determining how many issues to sample. While it is practically possible to study the whole issues no matter the timeframe, this is also constrained by time and resources at hand. That is why, in newspaper content analysis, researchers are confronted with the problems of what should be the most efficient sampling approach and how much should be enough to estimate a given population parameter. Although a handful of sampling methods are available in social research literature, the sampling of content for daily newspapers involves some special considerations. The goal is to sample enough

issues to achieve an acceptable estimate of cyclic variation of newspaper content, while maximizing efficiency of time and effort.

A number of studies have appeared to explore the comparative efficiency of different type of probability sampling in describing a year's content of daily and weekly newspapers (e.g. Stempel, 1952; Jones and Carter, 1959; Riffe, Aust & Lacy, 1993), and across extended time frame (Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin & Chang, 2001). Most often, these have compared simple random samples of different sizes with stratified samples of different sizes. These studies have concentrated on efficiency of sampling for inference to a typical level of content by using the constructed week, created by randomly selecting an issue for each day of the week.

Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993) conducted a more thorough replication of the earlier studies. They compared simple random sampling, constructed-week sampling and consecutive-day sampling for efficiency; and conclude that, when dealing with daily newspapers, stratified constructed weeks approach is more efficient than simple random, which may over-represent some weekdays, or consecutive days, which may not be reliable in estimating content for a six-month period or longer. As for how many constructed weeks should be most efficient, they suggested that "for a population of six months of editions, one constructed week was as efficient as four, and its estimates exceeded what would be expected based on probability theory. By extension, two constructed weeks would allow reliable estimates of local stories in a year's worth of newspaper entire issues" (p.139), a conclusion consistent with the earlier findings. While taking two constructed weeks of daily newspapers works well to infer to one year of representative content, but some were interested in studying content changes across

longer time periods. Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin & Chang (2001) examined efficiency in selecting a representative sample of daily newspaper content from five years of newspaper editions. They concluded that nine constructed weeks taken from a 5-year period were as representative as two constructed weeks from each year.

Guided by the above practical recommendations, therefore, this study adopts stratified sampling that yields 'constructed' weeks, elsewhere called 'composite' week (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This was in line with Riffe, Aust & Lacy's (1993) empirical conclusion that this approach was superior to both a random sample and a systematic sample when dealing with newspaper content as it helps to control sources of what they call "systematic variation". As described by Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin & Chang, constructed week samples involve "identifying all Mondays, and randomly selecting one Monday, then identifying all Tuesdays, and randomly selecting one Tuesday, etc., to "construct" a week that ensures that each source of cyclic variation - each day of the week - is represented equally" (2001, p.837).

This study opts for the more conservative approach, and consequently, one constructed week was picked at random in each six month (within the 15-year period of the study) in accordance with an earlier conclusion reached by Riffe, Aust & Lacy's (1993) that, one constructed week picked at random is adequate for representing a six month population of editions; this way, constructing ten weeks in five years instead of the minimum of nine constructed weeks later recommended as adequate to represent 5-year population (Riffe, Stoddard, Martin & Chang, 2001); and in total, ends up with 30 constructed weeks in fifteen-year population (see the distribution of samples highlighted in Appendix 3A-C). Using the six-month data point increases the stretch and substance

of samples for better representation, and helps take care of uneven distribution of samples across the years. While to account for the 1-year (2000) deficit for *Daily Trust* newspaper, same technique is used but only the circumstances differ. Stratified sampling is equally applied to pick samples from the weekly version of the paper - *Weekly Trust* - produced during the year. Therefore, the study applies Riffe, Aust & Lacy's (1993) recommendation that favours randomly selecting twelve issues per year stratified by month to pick samples from *Weekly Trust* newspaper (refer to Appendix 1C for the Sampling Frame and distribution of samples picked at random in each month).

3.4 THE UNITS OF OBSERVATION/ANALYSIS

A unit of analysis refers to "that demarcated content about which we can define and observe one or more variables of theoretic interest" (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014, p.60). Given that newspapers are composed of various types of content including, in general categories, stories, advertisement, listings and graphics; this study demarcates five elements – namely: general news, feature, news commentary/analysis and editorial - for the analysis. This is largely because these elements emphasize facts of recent events, hence, constitute the primary responsibility of journalists; and to understand the nature of human rights reporting, we need to infer from contents that fall within these key outputs by journalists.

Technically, this excludes sports agate, stand-alone photographs and graphics, notices (death, anniversary, etc.), listings (stock price, movie, etc.) and paid advertisements and advertorials. It does not also involve contents that offer a first-person opinion such as columns, opinion, or advice pieces and also, art, music and entertainment

criticism. More so, it is obvious that a number of the research questions raised can only be addressed by analysing pieces that make observable reference to human rights.

3.5 CATEGORY SYSTEM AND CODING PROTOCOL

In each story item included in the analysis, a number of variables, emergent from the research theoretic interest, are studied and categorized according to a number of rationally constructed category system defined for each variable of interest. These analyses have been made at two levels. To examine the extent of human rights coverage in the selected newspapers, on one hand, I compare the frequency of stories dealing with human rights issues to other topics treated in the newspaper stories. This way, and at this stage dealing with the '(V1) theme' covered in the stories, a category system is constructed to cover a hypothetical estimate of general themes covered in news media reports. The first category tabulates general references to human rights. This would include the simple mention of "human rights," or non-specific discussions of the topic.

On the other hand, the stories dealing with human rights are earmarked for further analysis, studying a number of variables. By a way of operational definition, human rights stories are contents that make a direct mention and/or reference to 'human rights and/or freedom,' 'fundamental rights,' or just 'rights/freedom' when it is understood to make allusion to human rights issues or the rights of some specific group such as children or women, or reference to human rights agreements, human rights NGOs and commissions, human rights courts and jamborees; or an implied reference, using a number of other primary human rights subject headings including 'genocide,' 'torture,' 'political prisoners', 'extra-judicial/legal', 'unlawful', 'arbitrary' and other indices related

to physical integrity and due-process rights or as long as the story is understood to be making reference to human rights.

This second level of analysis focuses on placement by (V2) *section*, (V3) *treatment*, (V4) *geopolitical focus*, (V5) *origin*, (V6), *source* (V7) *reference to specific categories of human rights*, (V8) *gender focus* and (V9) *Reference to specific perpetrators of abuse*. A category structure is constructed for each of the above variables based on some prior considerations largely clued up by the study objectives. Placement and treatment of the rights stories is examined to infer the weight carried by human rights subjects; whereas the gender and geographic focus dimensions are examined to study the topography of articles that made reference to human rights and the level of gender representation in the stories respectively; while origin and sources may reveal the influential factors that trigger human rights coverage; and finally, we can infer from the human rights categories referred and emphasized in the stories the human rights values that inform journalistic view of human rights in Nigeria.

Since an important dimension in debate about human rights is the relative emphasis on first- and second-generation rights, in this last variable, content was scored separately for the discussion of *civil-political* and *social-economic* rights. The concepts composing these rights were drawn from all the rights listed in the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Other categories considered here include *child and Women rights/right to quality health*, *collective rights* and *physical-integrity rights* to reflect specific human rights issues in the African context. This category system is represented in a table below:

Table 3.1: Categorization and Classification Systems

No	Category	Code No.	Classification System	Operational Guide
V1	Theme	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Human Rights Business/economy/labour Politics/Governmental/Election Sports & youth International Police/crime/legal/courts Property/real estate/environment Education/research/training Health/fitness/epidemic/drugs Community/local tradition/tourism insurgency/communal conflict Corruption & due process Science/technology/ICT Food/agriculture/rural development Natural disaster/emergencies/accident Women/family/parenting/relationship Religion/theology/morality Media/entertainment/art/literature Others	Compare contents matching specific reference to ‘human rights’ and other related indices (1) to this list (2-18) of hypothetical subjects generally reflected in media news reports. Some stories may be complex, involving more than one theme. In this, case, we determine which most prominent by resorting to the headlines and section heads as clues or use paragraph counting to choose the theme most referred in more paragraphs.
V2	Placement by section	20 21 22	Front page Section front Section (see list in coding instruction)	Mark whether a story starts in either front or section front pages (it does not matter if it continues elsewhere). A <i>section</i> is a stand-alone entity, not just a themed page. Note that the newspapers under analysis do routinely place only a combination of first-person opinion and/or sport stories/analysis at the back page; and these are outside the unit of observation in this study. That is why back page is not included in the classification of section in this category system – in case it was, it is coded as a front page article.
V3	Treatment	23 24 25 26	General news Feature Commentary/analysis Editorial	<i>General news</i> emphasizes facts of recent event told in straight news format. <i>Feature</i> is longer, more detailed, embellished and entertaining. <i>News commentary/analysis</i> resuscitates series of facts, but offers first-person opinion or stated opinion of the newspaper.
V4	Geographic focus	27 28 29 30	Southern Nigeria Northern Nigeria National International	Articles are coded based on obvious reference to a particulate location within the story or in the bye-line or sometimes when it is located under a section clearly

				identified to a particular state or geo-political zone. Articles that had no identifiable location or those made reference to the federal capital were coded as 'national'
V5	Origin of story	31 32 33	Staff/Newspaper Investigation Wire Service Wired stories Local News Service	<i>Wire service</i> includes stories originating from international news agencies and stories credited to other international news media; <i>Local news service</i> includes only stories vended by local agencies; <i>Staff/newspaper investigation</i> includes stories identified as coming from the newspaper, with or without by-line; and <i>Wired stories</i> imply specific cases where the story acknowledge the input of other actors in human rights defence community through press releases, report, jamborees were journalists are invited, communiqué, and many other methods, these are coded when there is an obvious reference to any of these communication methods used by individuals or NGOs working in the area of human rights
V6	Sources in the story	34 35 36 37 38	Official/Governmental Ordinary People/Challengers Human Rights Community (Ngo/Advocates/Jamboree) Human Rights Agreements/Documents Staff/media investigation	Count the number of sources directly quoted in the story. count the number of official/government sources quoted, number for ordinary people, for human rights community (from NGOs, lawyers/individuals acting as human rights advocates/reports from human rights jamborees/representatives of HR commissions, including government commissions), and number of citations from HR documents representing treaties and laws, including relevant sections in the constitution.
V7	Reference to specific categories of Human rights	39 40 41 42 43 44	Civil-Political Rights Social, Economic & Cultural Rights Women/Child Rights Physical Integrity Rights Collective Rights Others/Unclear	A <i>civil-political rights</i> category includes, but is not limited to, political participation, elections, political protests and political prisoners, freedom of movement, speech, religion, the right to a trial/fair hearing, and minority right. <i>Socio-economic</i>

				<p><i>rights</i> category includes, but is not limited to, the right to an adequate standard of living, education, health care, and housing and labour. <i>Collective rights</i> category reflects movement for self-determination and the demand for a global redistribution of power, wealth, and other important value, the right to a healthy environment and peace. <i>Women/Child rights/right to quality health</i> categories reflect specific reference to women and child rights issues or reference to ‘gender/women rights’, ‘child rights’ and right to access to quality health. <i>Physical integrity rights</i> category involves reference to imprisonment, murder, disappearance, torture, arson, battering and other degrading treatment to human person.</p>
V8	Gender focus (victims referred in the story)	45 46 47	Identifiably male Identifiably female/minor Gender unidentified	Count whether the victims of abuse referred in the stories are identifiably male or female or minor (below 18 years or reference to ‘children’). Abuse against minors are treated as an extension to abuse against women, because of their physical and social dependence on their maternal parents.
V9	Perpetrators referred in the story	48 49 50 51	State actors Non-state actors Neutral actors Unclear	<i>State actors</i> involve individuals, groups or institutions acting for the government. <i>Non-state actors</i> are primarily armed groups acting against the state. <i>Neutral actors</i> act neither for nor against the state.

A *civil-political rights* category includes, but is not limited to, political participation, elections, political protests and political prisoners. Some overlap occurs between political rights and the third category, civil rights. Integrity of the person is one example of this overlap, particularly when considering the issue of political prisoners. Also includes civil rights to freedom of movement, speech, religion, the right to a trial,

and minority right. A *Socio-economic rights* category includes, but also not limited to, the right to an adequate standard of living, education, health care, and housing. Most media discussions of these rights were not specific. Stories usually spoke of the creation or recognition of economic rights. Labour union activities are also considered under the category of economic rights, because union activities often are seeking the improvement of economic conditions. A *collective rights* category reflects the emergence of Third World nationalism and its demand for a global redistribution of power, wealth, and other important values. Included in this category are the right to a healthy environment, and the right to peace. *Women/Child rights/right to quality health* category reflects specific reference to women or child rights issues. Women rights include reference to sexual and reproductive health rights and gender equality.

Another category considered here is what is termed the human right to *physical integrity* (Cingranelli & Richards, 2006 in Whitten-Woodring, 2006) which constitutes some of the widely criticized forms of government behaviour that involve imprisonment, summary execution, disappearance, torture, revenge killings and other inhuman, degrading and extrajudicial treatment of human person by mostly the state actors. While physical integrity is an upshot of civil/political rights, it is given separate treatment due also to special treatment given to this set of rights by UN by considering it in a separate treaty instrument, the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)*. For the coding scheme, see Theme Structure Analysis Worksheet and Story Analysis Form/Instruction in Appendix 2A & B. I have modified the coding instrument recommended in a content analysis guide prepared

by Lynch & Peer (2002). The story analysis form in appendix 1A-B is used to examine stories observed to be about human right, while the coding work sheet in appendix 2 is used to aggregate the analyses made in the right story form and to register the theme structure of the content observed.

3.6 INTER-CODER RELIABILITY TEST

Reliability in coding newspaper stories is considered extremely important for validity of the analysis made (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). It refers to the consistency or agreement of coding decisions between coders (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). To establish reliability of coding scheme used in the study, therefore, two coders have been trained and pilot study conducted. All coders code the same set of stories and their output compared for those stories. The coders have been tasked to code sample of 78 stories of interest taken from 10 percent of samples of editions. This separate pilot test is used to assess reliability during coder training, and a final test to establish reliability level for the coding of full sample of units.

Even though inter-coder reliability can be calculated by several methods, Percentage Agreement technique is used here to determine the level of reliability of the coding procedure. This involves calculating the "...the percentage of all coding decisions made by pairs of coders in which the coders agree" (Lombard, Syder-Duch & Bracken, 2002, p.590). This method arrives at a value between .00 (no agreement) and 1.00 (perfect agreement). The technique is applied because it makes sense to use percentage agreement with nominal level quantification system. It is also simple and easy to calculate. Holsti (1969) reported this formula for calculating reliability of nominal data in terms of percentage agreement (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011):

$$Reliability = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

Where M is the number of coding decisions on which two coders agree, and N_1 & N_2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder, respectively. Out of the 78 subsamples of stories coded, the two coders engaged agree on 59 units, and therefore the level of reliability is calculated as follows:

$$Reliability = \frac{2(59)}{78 + 78} = .76$$

Thus, on a scale of .00 to 1.00, the .76 realized as the level of reliability of the coding scheme used can be adjudged to be within the acceptable limit.

3.7 QUANTIFICATION SYSTEM & METHODS OF DATA REPRESENTATION/ANALYSIS

Quantification in content analysis is considered to involve three (3) levels of data measurement: nominal, interval and ratio levels (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Analysis can involve all of these, but it was suggested that data system in content analysis will largely involve data quantification at a nominal level (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014). Therefore, it is clear from the research theoretic interest and the category system constructed that this study largely requires quantification at a nominal level. Looking at Figure 3.1 above, the variables identified and the different category system constructed can all be quantified by means of nominal measurement. This involves counting the frequency of occurrence of the units in each category scheme. The data are presented in tables, and subjected to descriptive statistical analyses. The data analyses involve calculation of percentage and descriptive measures. The highest levels of statistical analysis used are mean and standard deviation.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter explains, gradually, the approach adopted for the research – which is content analysis. It identifies the population and data sources and concludes with the explanation of the methods of collecting and analysing the data to be used for the research. This process involves stepped approach. Samples have been selected using stratified sampling that yields constructed weeks. Guided by an empirical recommendation, one constructed week picked at random was selected in each six-month data interval over 15-year period, from 2000 to 2014. The analyses involve an observation of four content elements in the papers, the general news, features, news commentary/analysis and editorial. These elements constitute the primary journalistic output of any news media. Categorization scheme have been carefully formulated, which includes categories and subcategories under nine mutually exclusive dimensions. A coding instrument is then developed that included operational definitions. A pre-sample of analysts' reports have been test-coded in order to refine the categories and the coding plan. A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the coding instrument. Two coders have generated the reliability from sampled units. The result of reliability measurement suggests that a satisfactory level of inter-coder reliability has been achieved. Therefore, the main data collection is conducted by an individual coder, the author of this thesis, and presents the data in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this research is to examine the pattern of human rights coverage in the Nigerian newspapers. This, theoretically, involves a diagnostic feedback when media professionals obliged to self-censor their conduct in favour of public interest as the price for their independence. For this purpose, using content analysis as the methodological approach, a number of variables were coded based on a structured category system. In this chapter, the coded data for each research objective are summarized, and frequencies, patterns and relationships are displayed in tables and charts alongside discussions of major observations from the data; and finally, a narrative synthesis of key findings is done as a final discussion in the chapter. SPSS Statistics is used for most of the descriptive statistical analyses.

4.1 RESULT AND FINDINGS

4.1.1. Frequency of Human Rights Coverage in Relation to other Issues:

To understand how regularly human right issues are covered in Nigerian newspapers, it is important to begin with a quantitative analysis of the overall coverage of human rights issues in relation to other potentially identifiable issues within the news coverage. This helps us ascertain the significant level of coverage given to human rights and how adequately it was represented. Mean and standard deviation are used as statistical tools to determine a midpoint and variability of the data distribution across the different category structure. This way, the level of human rights coverage is established within the mean scale. Table 4.1 and Table 4.3 (see Appendix 1A-B) show a

yearly breakdown of coverage of different issues according to a predetermined category structure by *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers respectively. *Daily Trust* produced an average of 886 articles in a year and a total of 13,292 articles from the samples within the period under review with no significant variance across the years ranging

TABLE 4.2: Coverage of Human Rights in Relation to other Issues, *Daily Trust* & *The Punch*, 2000-2014

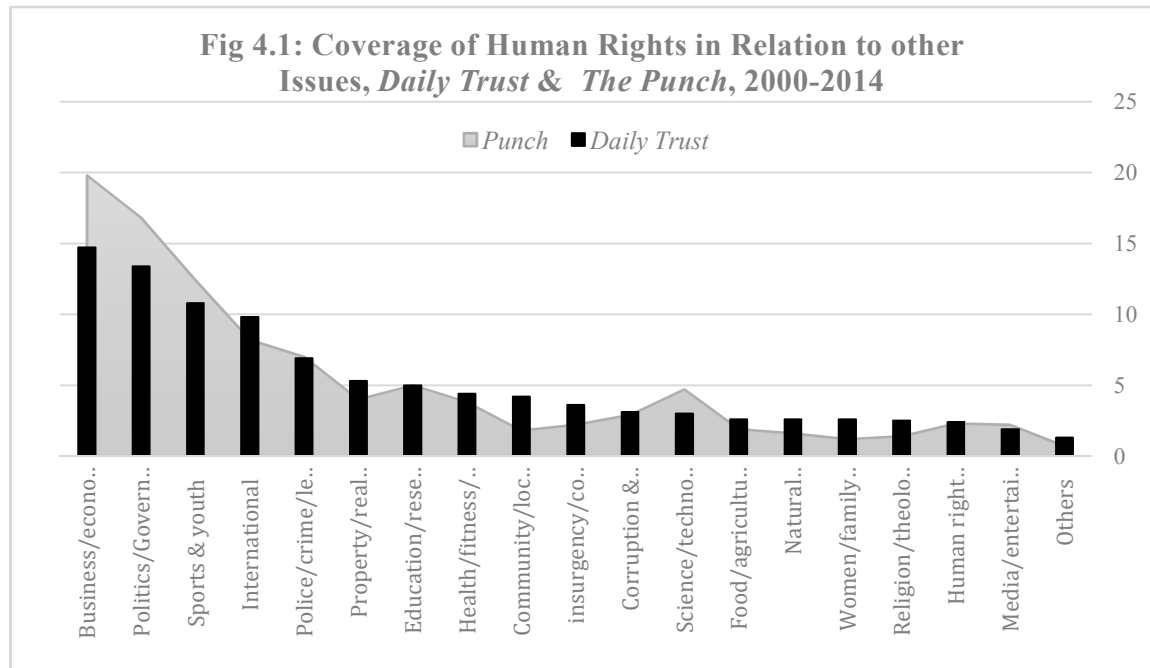
Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>			<i>The Punch</i>		
	Σ	Average	%	Σ	Average	%
Business/economy/labour	1949	130	14.7	3281	219	19.8
Politics/Governmental/Election	1780	119	13.4	2779	185	16.8
Sports & youth	1435	96	10.8	2061	137	12.4
International	1298	87	9.8	1352	90	8.2
Police/crime/legal/courts	912	61	6.9	1162	77	7.0
Property/real estate/environment	710	47	5.3	658	44	4.0
Education/research/training	664	44	5.0	829	55	5.0
Health/fitness/epidemic/drugs	582	39	4.4	626	42	3.8
Community/local tradition/tourism	556	37	4.2	306	20	1.8
insurgency/communal conflict	484	32	3.6	363	24	2.2
Corruption & due process	414	28	3.1	486	32	2.9
Science/technology/ICT	402	27	3.0	784	52	4.7
Food/agriculture/rural development	342	23	2.6	319	21	1.9
Natural disaster/emergencies/accident	342	23	2.6	259	17	1.6
Women/family/parenting/relationship	339	23	2.6	203	14	1.2
Religion/theology/morality	334	22	2.5	224	15	1.4
Human right issues	320	21	2.4	374	25	2.3
Media/entertainment/art/literature	255	17	1.9	371	25	2.2
Others	174	12	1.3	122	8	0.7
Total (Σ)	13,292	886	100	16,559	1104	100
Mean	699.6	46.7		871.5	58.0	
Standard Deviation	530.3	35.4		901.3	60.1	

proportionately from 6-8% of the total number of units. The quantity increases as the years progressed with the last four years having the highest percentages of approximately 8% each. Year 2000 recorded the lowest with 4%, and the reason for this is obvious. The samples were drawn from the weekly editions of the newspaper as the paper started its daily publications in early 2001.

Table 4.2 above presents the summary of the data according to the different categories with average and percentages. From this, we get a picture of the proportionate level of attention received by each category from the newspaper and particularly, the level received by human rights in relation to the other issues in the category list. ‘Business, economy and labour’ issues received the highest amount of coverage within the period with an average of 130 articles per year and a total of 1,949 units constituting about 14.7% of the entire coverage. It was closely followed by issues related to ‘politics, government&election’ with 13.4% of the coverage having an average of 119 articles in a year and a total of 1,780 units. ‘Entertainment, art &literature’ got the least possible coverage in *Daily Trust* with just 1.9% having an average of 17 and a total of 255 units. Equally,at the bottom of the table,human rights, which isthe main focus here, recorded barely 2.4% of the total coverage with an average of about 21 in a year and a total of 320articles (the yearly spread of this is examined below). Looking at its standing in the table, therefore, the level of attention given to human rights by *Daily Trust* seems proportionatelyunassertive if compared to attention received by political and economic issues.

However, looking at the measure of standard deviation ($s=530.3$ for the total and $s=35.4$ for the average), the total value of ($=320$) and an average value of ($=21$) indicates that the value for human rights is one deviation away from the average ($=699.6$ for the total and $=46.7$ for the average). Essentially, most of the other categories also fall within one standard deviation plus or minus the average value with the exception of the first three in the table. Coverage value of politics and sports are within two standard deviations away in favour of the average, while coverage value for business and economy

is within three. Inferentially, this analysis shows that the amount of coverage given to



human rights by *Daily Trust* within the period under review (in a mix most other issue) is statistically concentrated around the average without much variability across majority of the issues covered. *The Punch* newspaper also demonstrated a similar pattern.

Table 4.3 gives a yearly breakdown of the data from *The Punch* newspaper while Table 4.2 contains the summary. A total of 16,559 articles were analysed drawn from a total of 300 sampled editions within the period of the study with a yearly average of 1,104 articles. Equally, the coverage was found to be heavily skewed to issues of ‘business, economy & labour’ placed at the top of the paper’s priority of things with a total of 3,281 articles and a yearly average of 219 articles, constituting 19.8% of the total converge; then, ‘politics, governmental & election’ matters with a total of 2,779 averaged at 185, representing 16.8%; and then faintly followed by sports, international, and crime and legal issues somewhere above the overall average of (=870.5 for the total, and =58.0 for the average) representing 12.4%, 8.2% and 7.0% respectively. By the standing of

human rights in the list, it looks more encouraging than that of *Daily Trust*. But it is not in any way better. Of course, *The Punch* had higher number of articles with a difference of more than three thousand units, and therefore, 2.3% can be slightly greater or equal to 2.4% when there is this huge difference between the denominators in favour of the former. And, it is obvious that most of the categories are consequentially below the average in *The Punch* with the exception of only the first four variables mentioned above.

The standard deviation (=901.3), higher than the average (=871.5), represents high variability across the different categories, and indicated lop-sidedness in the coverage in favour of few issues at the top of the list. Majority of the issues are within one standard deviation away from the average, but coverage of issues related to business, politics, sports, international and crime are all in the range of one to three deviations in favour of the average. The overall coverage is lopsided in favour of these top five issues in *The Punch*. Human rights issue, in the mix of the rest of the other issues, is equally close to the average with a total of 374 articles and a yearly average of 25 articles, representing 2.3% of the entire coverage. Therefore, bearing in mind the above data as pictured in Fig.4.1 above, the amount of coverage given to human rights in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers appeared to be unassertive. While it is not the priority of the newspapers, human rights issues have been able to feature routinely in the newspapers' overall news coverage.

4.1.2 Level of Human Rights Coverage per Year:

It is also important to understand the trend of human rights coverage in the 15-year period of the study. This gives us a picture of how Nigerian journalists develop interests in human rights subjects over the years, the trend of this interest and the possible events responsible for that. Table 4.4 shows a breakdown of the number of human rights

articles from 2000 to 2014 in both newspapers. *Daily Trust* records the highest coverage in 2014 with a total of 39 articles related to human rights representing 12.2% of the total

Table 4.4:
Yearly distribution of Human rights stories, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch*, 2000 – 2014

Year	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
2000	13	4.1	32	8.6
2001	20	6.3	29	7.8
2002	13	4.1	20	5.3
2003	18	5.6	25	6.7
2004	16	5.0	15	4.0
2005	22	6.9	18	4.8
2006	8	2.5	21	5.6
2007	20	6.3	15	4.0
2008	12	3.8	16	4.3
2009	24	7.5	17	4.5
2010	23	7.2	31	8.3
2011	27	8.4	30	8.0
2012	36	11.3	37	9.9
2013	29	9.1	32	8.6
2014	39	12.2	36	9.6
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

coverage, and the lowest in 2006 with 8 articles representing 2.5% percent of the total coverage. *Daily Trust's* coverage of human rights remarkably increased in the last five years of the timeframe of this study. This probably shows growing interest in human rights topics as they are increasingly included in the news coverage. Figure 4.2 represents this trend with a low start in the first five years but picks up steadily during the last five years. Predictably, it probably shows growing interest and/or awareness about human rights issues among journalists in Nigeria. This spike in coverage is also consistent with Heinze & Freedman's (2010) finding that coverage of human rights has also increased in recent years in the international news media even though they argue that the coverage is disproportionate from one locus of abuse to another. And a great deal of these articles in



the local newspapers originated from international sources. This same pattern is also, to a certain extent, replicated in *The Punch* newspaper.

Table 4.6 also shows a breakdown of human rights coverage by *The Punch* newspaper from 2000 to 2014. From the data, human rights got a high coverage in 2012 with 9.9% percentage of the total number of articles and least coverage in 2004 and 2007, with 4.0%. Unlike in *Daily Trust*, coverage of human rights in *The Punch* begins with a notable spike in the first four years of the timeframe of this research, but slumped between 2004 and 2009 and then noticeably picked up again from 2010 to 2014. The first trend was not observed in *Daily Trust* newspaper. However, similar considerations can be applied to explain the ascendance in human rights coverage from 2004 to 2014. In addition to the increased international news media coverage, some local events had also contributed to this spike. A number of human rights reports in the two papers were largely focused on some key security challenges in the country such as *Boko Haram* insurgency, crisis in the Middle belt especially in Plateau state, and the humanitarian problems related to internal displacement caused by these crises; and then regularly reports cases of abuse by state actors – the police and the army, to be specific.

Also, reports of rampant rights abuse by security agents while mediating in these security problems released by international NGOs working in the area of human rights in 2012 – in this case, *Amnesty International* and *Human Rights Watch* – stimulated media debate locally and possibly, changed the local media perspective about how they see the role of our security operatives intervening in these crises. These reports attracted attention from local media and local right-based NGOs. The human rights ecosystem was reinvigorated and began to debate a lot more about the role of security agents in security interventions.

Some of the headlines, for example, were “Rights Group Sue Jonathan, Adoke over Amnesty Report” (*Daily Trust*, April 23, 2013), “HRW tells FG to prosecute Jos killings by security” (*Daily Trust*, September 28, 2011), “Jos: Army denies involvement in video clip murder” (*The Punch*, January 23, 2012), “Police cruelty still uninvestigated, Amnesty International says” (*The Punch*, March 5, 2010) and so on. On 22nd November, 2012, *Daily Trust* ran an important editorial entitled “An Ominous Path to thread” on the arrest and detention of two journalists working for *Almizan*, but the piece largely commented strongly and generally on the alleged abuses committed by security operative fighting insurgency or what it called ‘extra-legal measures through display of official highhandedness and disregard for due process’ by the operatives of the Joint Task Force (JTF). Even before these crises escalated, these papers routinely reported police highhandedness as potential cases of rights abuse. Therefore, the escalation of security challenges in the country, to a large extent, was perhaps contributory to this recent ascendance in human rights coverage.

As indicated in Fig. 4.2, it is obvious that *The Punch* had accorded high amount of human rights issues, a pattern not seen in *Daily Trust*. After the country’s transition to

democracy in 1999, Nigerian media ecosystem engaged in a debate over the decision of some Northern states to expand their criminal justice system to include capital punishment as recommended under Islamic Law (*Shari'a*). The ecosystem seemed to have become divided geo-politically. *The Punch*, which is a southern-based newspaper, pushed the human rights discourse in order to challenge the adoption of Islamic Law by political leaders in the North. In some of its human rights articles, *The Punch* seemed to have consistently pushed for the debate over the constitutionality of *Shari'a* in the Nigerian legal environment, and in some cases, the controversy over some capital sentences passed by *Shari'a* courts – specifically, the case of Safiyya Huasaini and Amina Lawal who were sentenced to death by stoning for having babies outside wedlock, and Bello Karegaike Jangedi whose right hand was amputated for stealing a cow. Notably, *The Punch* carried a front page story on April 27, 2000 entitled ‘Obasanjo condemns amputation in Zamfara’ featuring clerics and the president condemning the amputations of Jangedi’s hand as a violation to his right. Another front page story, ‘*Shari'a*: We’ll protect Christians – CAN’ (May 18, 2001), raised critical questions about how *Shari'a* infringes the rights of Christians and endangers them in the *Shari'a* states. In addition, the paper featured a commentary on January 25, 2000 titled ‘Supremacy of Constitution over Sharia’ in which it concluded that ‘Sharia is manifestly unconstitutional’ and also, published another front page story vended by AFP few months later, ‘US worried over Sharia’ (October 19, 2000), in which it quoted US government challenging the adoption of *Shari'a* as a violation of constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and condemning some of the judgments passed by *Shari'a* courts. There was a great deal of these kinds of stories predicating the debate over *Shari'a* and this

contributed to the spike in human rights coverage by *The Punch*. Generally, *The Punch* discussed Shari’a from a human rights perspective.

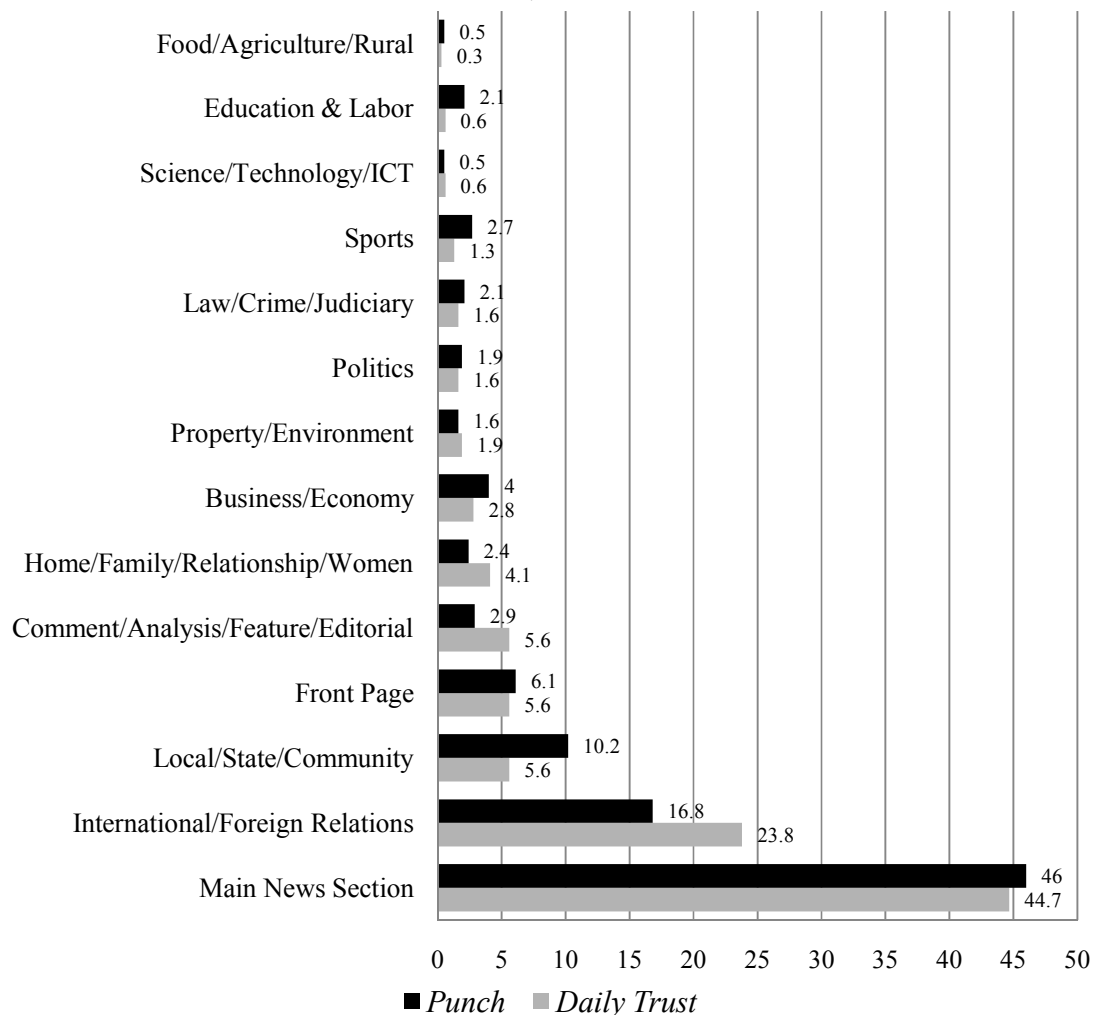
4.1.3: Placement of human rights issues by section:

We understand the level of prominence attached to human rights issues by looking at their placement in different sections of the newspapers. Routinely, newspapers structure contents according to a predefined template that chart out a rough map of how the papers prioritized their contents. The most important stories are placed at the front and back pages and the first few pages that in some cases may be continued in some other pages more deeply placed in the paper – what is referred to here as ‘main news section’, and then other special sections determined to group a number of content dealing with identifiably same subject. These sections seemed to mentally segregate content from the main newspapers’ news circle which may exactly help us understand how some of the human rights cases covered may be particularly affiliated to specific topics.

Section	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Business/Economy	9	2.8	15	4
Comment/Analysis/Feature/Editorial	18	5.6	11	2.9
Education & Labour	2	0.6	8	2.1
Food/Agriculture/Rural	1	0.3	2	0.5
Front Page	18	5.6	23	6.1
Home/Family/Relationship/Women	13	4.1	9	2.4
International/Foreign Relations	76	23.8	63	16.8
Law/Crime/Judiciary	5	1.6	8	2.1
Local/State/Community	18	5.6	38	10.2
Main News Section	143	44.7	172	46
Politics	5	1.6	7	1.9
Property/Environment	6	1.9	6	1.6
Science/Technology/ICT	2	0.6	2	0.5
Sports	4	1.3	10	2.7
Total	320	100	374	100

Table 4.5 above presents the placement of human rights by section in *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers. This is also represented in Figures 4.3. Almost half of human rights articles were placed in the main news section representing 44.7% in *Daily Trust* and 46% in *The Punch*. These indicate that human rights issues were most consistently considered in the newspapers' main news circle. This is followed by a great deal of human rights reports placed in the international or foreign section representing 23.8% in

Fig.4.3: Placement of Human Rights by Section, *Daily Trust* & *The Punch*, 2000 - 2014



Daily Trust and 16.8% in *The Punch*, and these articles are mostly about reports of rights conditions that happened outside Nigeria. Also, a high percentage of the human

rights issues have been able to make it to the front pages – 5.6% for *Daily Trust* and 6.1% for *The Punch*. Few of these have been discussed above. The two papers equally run a reasonable amount of commentaries, editorials and features representing 5.6% in *Daily Trust* and 2.1% in *The Punch*. These are very influential contents that tell deeply and seriously how the papers review human rights conditions reported. Notably, in a section ‘Inside Politics’ *Daily Trust* ran a full page report of the ‘2003 human rights report of the US state department’ on April 6, 2004 and was serialized for the rest of the weekdays. In it, the paper commented on reports that gave a good picture of human rights situation in Nigeria with all the specific cases of abuse documented in 2003. The entire section was hijacked for about four days. Similarly, on July 21, 2010 *The Punch* in an editorial raised alarm over what it called ‘A fresh *Boko Haram* threat’ in which it used human rights frame to persuasively call for action over the looming fresh *Boko Haram* threat. It analysed broadly the growing insecurity situation in the country with demographic breakdown of how political ‘assassination, vigilante-related killings and religious/communal violence’ had claimed a lot of lives ‘outside the law.’ Looking at all of these, therefore, human rights issues as covered by both newspapers have been routinely distributed across the papers’ normal content traffic.

4.1.4: Origin of Human Rights Articles:

For origin of the articles, the categorization was a straightforward judgment by identifying the common journalists’ origin of articles generally acknowledged by the newspapers in most cases in the by-line and rarely, within the story. These include news agencies, journalists’ independent sourcing, and people or organisations that wire contents aimed at influencing media reportage, here called ‘wired origin’. This last

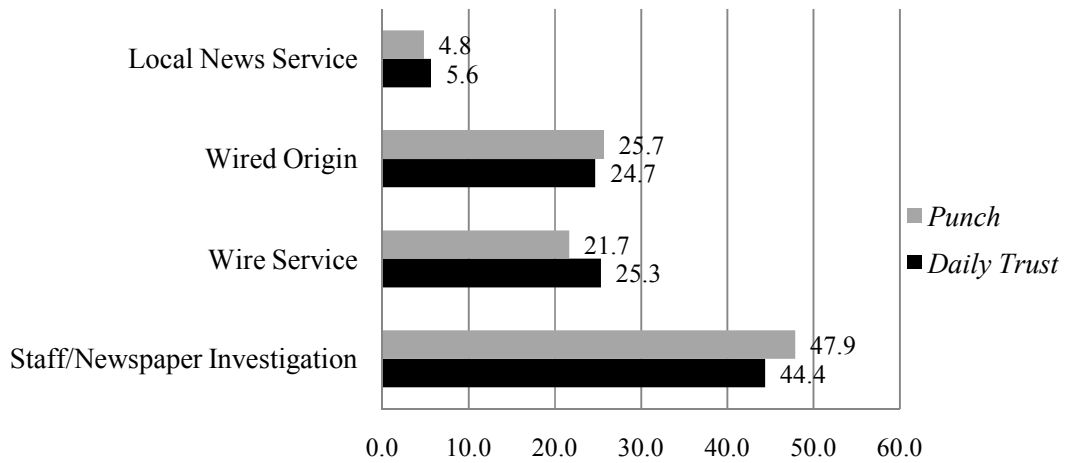
category is included in order to acknowledge the input of other actors in human rights defence through press releases, report, jamborees where journalists are invited, communiqué, and many other methods. Also, international and local news services were

Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Staff/Newspaper Investigation	142	44.4	179	47.9
Wire Service	81	25.3	81	21.7
Wired Origin	79	24.7	96	25.7
Local News Service	18	5.6	18	4.8
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

separated aimed at recognising the potential influx of international media content into the local media, which was recognised under ‘wire service’ while treating local agency as an exclusive category instrument. Table 4.6 above, also represented in Fig. 4.4 below, shows that journalists were responsible for the highest percentage of human rights stories, with about 114 articles representing 44.4% in *Daily Trust*, and 179 articles in *The Punch* representing 47.9% of the total human rights coverage. Both Newspapers also relied significantly on international news sources as possible sources of human rights stories, representing 25.3% in *Daily Trust* and 21.7% in *The Punch*. These constitute a significant influx of human rights articles from international news agencies and other foreign news media. Also, there were significant attempts to influence amount of coverage by human rights community through wiring human rights agenda into the news media agenda. These wired contents represent 25% of the total coverage in both the newspapers. And, human rights news rarely originates from local news agencies with least values among the categories.

In a final note, the data above show that journalists lead in human rights newspaper campaigns having the highest amount of articles originating from them. This

Fig. 4.4: Origin of Human Rights Article, *Daily Trust* & The *Punch*, 2000 - 2014



makes the arguments of journalists' complacency within the rights defence community seemed unfair. Also, since we recognized that journalists equally put themselves at risk when reporting critical cases of right abuse, providing satisfactory means of ensuring journalists' safety is as important as the legal frameworks guaranteeing media independence. The risks involved may be responsible for the perceived lack of journalists' interest.

4.1.5 Types of Articles Discussing Human Rights:

It is also important to understand the kind of treatment received by human rights stories in the newspapers. How human rights cases are treated in media reports reveal the kind of depth with which human rights issues are reported. Human rights cases can sometimes last long involving intense legal battles. How the sequence of actions and debates are treated in media reports, which is also another means of documenting them, may determine popular understanding of the case reported and in some cases, mass public support. To achieve the best impact, it is better when the timeliness of general news

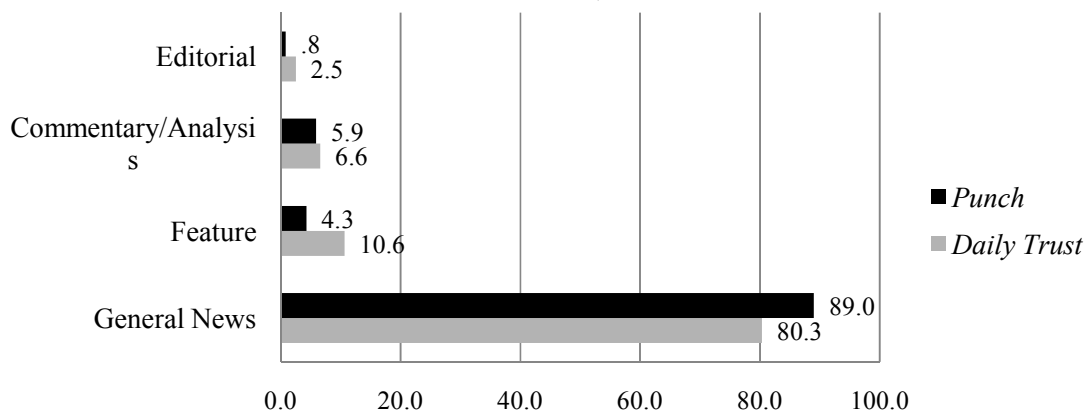
issupported by the depth of features and the official position of the newspapers as powerful actors in the rights defence community through commentaries and editorials.

From Table 4.7 which is also represented in Fig. 4.5, there are some striking

Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
General News	257	80.3	333	89.0
Feature	34	10.6	16	4.3
Commentary/Analysis	21	6.6	22	5.9
Editorial	8	2.5	3	.8
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

similarities on how human rights issues were reported between *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* in terms of the distribution of the data. 80.3% (=257) of the articles were actual news pieces and 6.6% (=21) were commentary/analysis in *Daily Trust*. This is a slightly lower percentage than occurred in *The Punch*, in which 89% (=333) of the stories were actual news reports and 5.9% (=22) were commentaries/analyses. Differences between

Fig. 4.5: Types of Articles Discussing Human Rights, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch*, 2000 – 2014



the two papers were seen in the number of feature and editorial pieces. In *Daily Trust* almost 11% (=34) of the stories were feature essays compared to about 4% (=16) of the human rights features in *The Punch*. Slightly more than 2% (=8) of the articles in *Daily*

Trust were editorials, compared to less than 1% (=3) in *The Punch*. *Daily Trust* appeared to treat human rights stories more deeply having proportionately higher number of human rights pieces treated in depth. With the overwhelming tendency of the two papers to treat human rights stories as general news essays, this shores up the argument above that both newspapers most easily consider human rights reports within the normal news sequence, treated most regularly as straight news essays, receiving less detailed treatment.

4.1.6 Reference to Specific Category of Human Rights:

An article might refer to more than one human rights issue, but articles were coded based on the category of the central issue discussed in the story. Table 4.8 illustrates the frequency of references to each category of rights. As expected, little treatment is given to socio-economic rights and collective rights. Civil and political rights were emphasized, receiving the most attention. Expectedly, women and child rights as one of the important African human rights concerns received reasonable attention. Each news outlet has a similar view of human rights, supporting the argument that a cultural

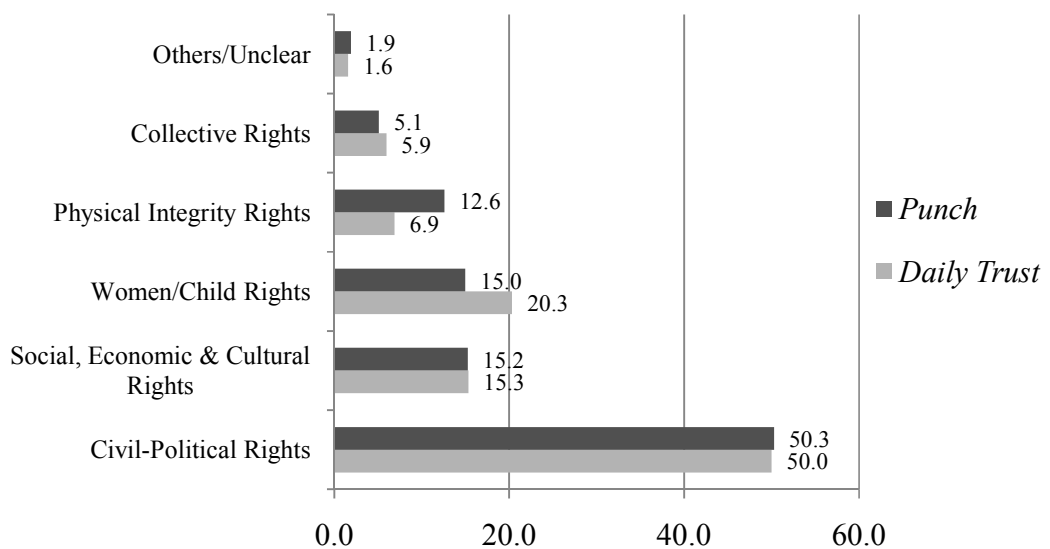
Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Civil-Political Rights	160	50.0	188	50.3
Social, Economic & Cultural Rights	49	15.3	57	15.2
Women/Child Rights	65	20.3	56	15.0
Physical Integrity Rights	22	6.9	47	12.6
Collective Rights	19	5.9	19	5.1
Others/Unclear	5	1.6	7	1.9
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

view common to the broader society influences how human rights issues are reported.

Nigeria has, historically, great exposure to the West as a Commonwealth country and may share similar cultural view of human rights. Civil and political rights are

explicitly stated in Nigeria's constitution and therefore, this shows clear policy preference in favour of the first generation rights which can influence journalists' yardstick for recognizing

Fig. 4.6: Reference to Specific Category of Human Rights, Daily Trust & The Punch, 2000 – 2014



violations. In Fig. 4.6, there are some striking similarities between the types of human rights issues referred to in both newspapers. Civil rights issues received the most attention, accounting for approximately 50% of references in both newspapers. Both papers also had a similar proportion of references to Social, Economic & Cultural Rights each having about 15%, but this was only a small number. *Daily Trust* had a larger proportion of reference to Women/Child rights, while *The Punch* had larger coverage of Physical Integrity rights focusing on integrity of person. This category is a composite group of issues that include, but is not limited to, discussions of torture, political prisoners, and summary executions. Both reported a great deal of police and military highhandedness in security business. Also, both papers' international human rights articles constitute a major percentage of reference made to civil-political rights.

Table 4.11A: Geographic Focus of Human Rights Stories by Reference to Specific Category of Human Rights, Daily Trust, 2000-2014

		Reference to Specific Category of Human Rights					
		Civil-Political Rights	Social, Economic & Cultural Rights	Collective Rights	Women/Child Rights	Physical Integrity Rights	Total
Geographic Focus of Human Rights Stories	Southern Nigeria	23 43.4%	8 15.1%	<5	14 26.4%	7 13.2%	53
	Northern Nigeria	40 58.0%	11 15.9%	<5	10 14.5%	5 7.2%	69
	National	48 50.0%	23 24.0%	<5	18 18.8%	<5	96
	International	49 48.0%	7 6.9%	16 15.7%	23 22.5%	6 5.9%	102
Total	160 50.0%	49 15.3%	19 5.9%	65 20.3%	22 6.9%	320	

Out of the total number of 102 international articles in *Daily Trust*, about 49 (48%) articles (see Table 4.11A) dealing with cases of abuse in foreign countries made reference to human rights, 23 (22.5%) made reference to women and child rights, 16 (15.7%) made reference to collective rights (most exclusively discussed in international articles largely discussing the cases of Tibet, Bosnia & Myanmar), and 7 (6.9%) made reference to social-economic rights which remain the least discussed set of rights in the international news media. Similar result is observed in *The Punch*. Out of the 95 articles, 74 (50.7%) equally made reference to civil-political rights (see Table 4.11B). We have seen in Table 4.9 above that both newspapers have relied significantly on wire service for most of its coverage of abuse occurring in foreign countries.

Both civil and political rights are very broad categories encompassing many different issues, yet clearly defined in all human rights legal frameworks. However, stories about economic, social and cultural rights can sometimes be obscure. In both newspapers, they were generally focused on labour issues, and discussions of poverty

Table 4.11B: Geographic Focus of Human Rights Stories by Reference to Specific Category of Human Rights, Punch, 2000-2014

		Reference to Specific Category of Human Rights					
		Civil- Political Rights	Social, Economic & Cultural Rights	Collective Rights	Women/ Child Rights	Physical Integrity Rights	Total
Geographic Focus of Human Rights Stories	Southern Nigeria	19 42.2%	<5 n<5	<5 n<5	10 22.2%	11 24.4%	45
	Northern Nigeria	44 50.6%	12 13.8%	7 8.0%	10 11.5%	14 16.1%	87
	National	74 50.3%	31 21.1%	<5 n<5	24 16.3%	11 7.5%	147
	International	51 53.7%	12 12.6%	8 8.4%	12 12.6%	11 11.6%	95
Total	188 50.3%	57 15.2%	19 5.1%	56 15.0%	47 12.6%	374	

and social justice. Of the 57 stories in *The Punch* that refer to social-economic rights, 26 (46%) focused on labour rights. 10 *Daily Trust* stories also refer to labour union activities. Often, these articles report on the formation of unions or difficulties unions have with governments or other neutral actors. A local news service article entitled ‘Senior civil servants threaten strike over ‘insensitivity’ of defence ministry to workers’ plight’ (*The Punch*, February 18, 2009) highlights this point where workers reportedly struggled against the ‘the culture of denying workers legitimate wages and allowances’ (*The Punch*, February 18, 2009).

Some articles also refer to consumer rights as economic rights. A business article entitled ‘Electricity consumers, Discos bicker over crazy billing’ also highlights this point (*Daily Trust*, July 29, 2014). There is also a great deal of discussion about the social welfare of displaced population caused by especially *Boko Haram* crisis. A ‘Star Feature’ article entitled ‘They buried her baby by the river’ captured the gripping stories of people whose lives froze when *Boko Haram* struck in Adamawa (*Daily Trust*, December 1,

2014). In most cases, these kinds of stories about IDPs were discussed from the angle of vulnerability of women and children as the group most affected by violence. A wired article entitled ‘*Boko Haram* still holding Bama as women and children die of hunger’ by a community-based organization named Bama Development Foundation (*Daily Trust*, September 12, 2014) talked to the press about the living condition of women and children in Bama as a captured territory in Borno State. Also, articles about the rights of women and children were focused on trafficking and forced labour.

Only minimal attention was given to collective rights and physical integrity rights. Collective rights were addressed in only 19 articles in both newspapers, while physical integrity rights were addressed in 22 (6.9%) articles in *Daily Trust* and 47 (12.6%) articles in *The Punch* (see Table 4.10). Articles discussing collective rights mostly discussed human rights conditions in foreign countries – with few articles discussing the struggles of communities in Niger-Delta for economic emancipation. Most references were to the promotion of collective rights during international conferences or jamborees. A number of wire service articles discussed the struggle for self-determination by Palestinians, Tibetans and genocide in Bosnia. The latter is seen in a *Reuters* piece published in the *Daily Trust* entitled ‘Bosnians condemn ICJ genocide ruling’ (February 28, 2007) about the ICJ ruling that clear Serbia of genocide in Bosnia, even though this story can also be understood within the context of civil-political rights. Articles discussing physical integrity focused mainly on torture and other humiliating treatments of people by mostly security agents. *The Punch* had reported a good number of cases involving Nigerian police torture of suspects at the point of arrest or in detention or during protests. Hence, the small number of references to these second and third

generation rights, and the manner in which they are addressed often seemingly within the context of civil-political rights, highlight the fact that these rights are not understood by the media.

In a final note, news stories of civil and political rights are most frequently reported in the two news sources examined in this study. Emphases on these issues come as no surprise since Nigeria historically had emphasized these same concerns in its legal frameworks discussing human rights. Other sets of rights are rarely discussed on their own terms. They are usually considered in relation to civil and political rights. Stories generally do not focus on the protection of second and third generation rights, but on the denial of certain economic benefits and mistreatment of those seeking to promote second or third generation rights, for example, in protests by labour unions. While *The Punch* had the largest number of stories, similar patterns of coverage by categories of human rights were found between the two news sources with little differences.

4.1.7 Geo-Political Focus of Human Rights Articles:

The biggest point of contention between different critics of media coverage of human rights is not only about what issues are reported, but also what geo-political locus receives attention, often criticizing the media of lop-sidedness in coverage paying attention to one locus of abuse while ignoring another. Locally, there is also a historic contention concerning how Nigerian media ecology is disproportionate geo-politically and how this imbalance might affect coverage between the North and the South. That is why the choice of the news sources to analyse in this study was deliberate in order to highlight evidences of a relationship between regions – locally – receiving attention and location of news sources. The topography of human rights articles was analysed to show

similarities and differences in terms geo-political focus of rights coverage in the country and the amount of coverage dedicated to foreign news events. This compares coverage between the two newspapers, *The Punch* located in southern Nigeria and *Daily Trust* in northern Nigeria. Articles were coded based on obvious reference to a particular location within the story or in the by-line or sometimes when it is located under a section clearly identified to a particular state or geo-political zone. Articles that had no identifiable location or those that made reference to the federal capital were coded as ‘national’.

Geographic distribution was considered in four different levels – the international, national, Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria. A comparison of the different news sources found that they provided a similar geographic representation of human rights even though few differences were noted. As expected, the geographical distribution of

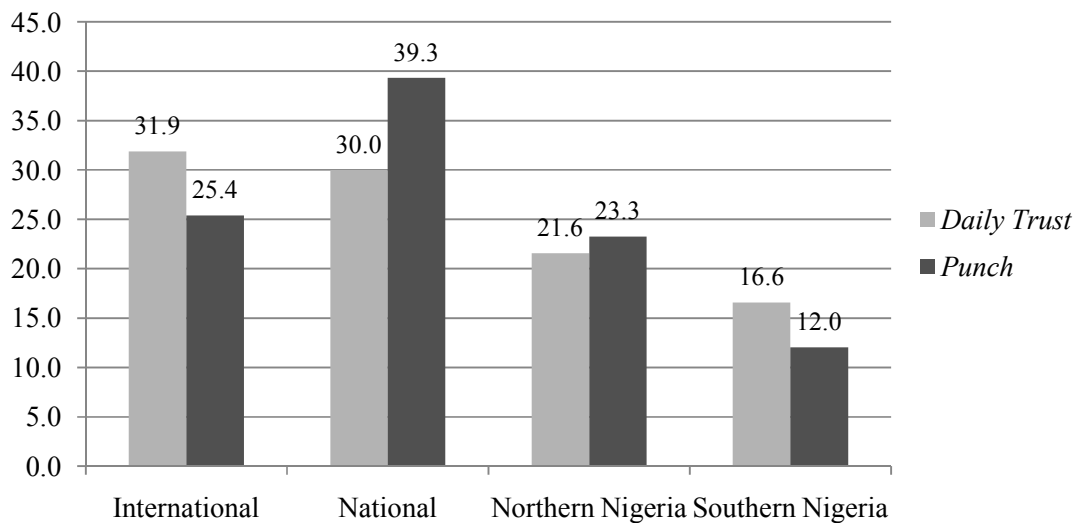
Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
International	102	31.9	95	25.4
National	96	30.0	147	39.3
Northern Nigeria	69	21.6	87	23.3
Southern Nigeria	53	16.6	45	12.0
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

human rights coverage largely concentrated at the national (i.e. without specific reference to a particular location) and international levels. Depending upon which news source is examined, these two regions comprised between 25% and 39% of the geographical coverage (see Table 4.9). *Daily Trust* has more of its stories discussing foreign human rights news with about 32% and then closely followed by percentage of articles discussing national cases which is about 30%. In *The Punch*, however, more articles

discussed about human rights cases at national level with 39% and about 25% discussed about international human rights cases.

The sources show striking similarities in coverage given the different regions within the country. Both papers gave a relatively larger proportion of their coverage to

Fig. 4.7: Geo-Political Focus of Human Rights Coverage, *Daily Trust* & *The Punch*, 2000 - 2014



the Northern region with 21.6% in *Daily Trust* and 23.3% in *The Punch*. Human rights coverage in Southern Nigeria received less attention in *The Punch* which is located in the same region with 12% of the papers' coverage compared to about 17% in its counterpart (see Fig. 4.8). The *Shari'a* issue and escalation of violence in the North were at the focal point of human rights discussion in both news sources. While differences were found in specific geographic references, each news source covered the regions in the country in a similar manner. The North received more attention than the South and then more articles discussed human rights events mostly at the national and international levels. One can attribute the major cause of the North receiving more attention to the increased violence

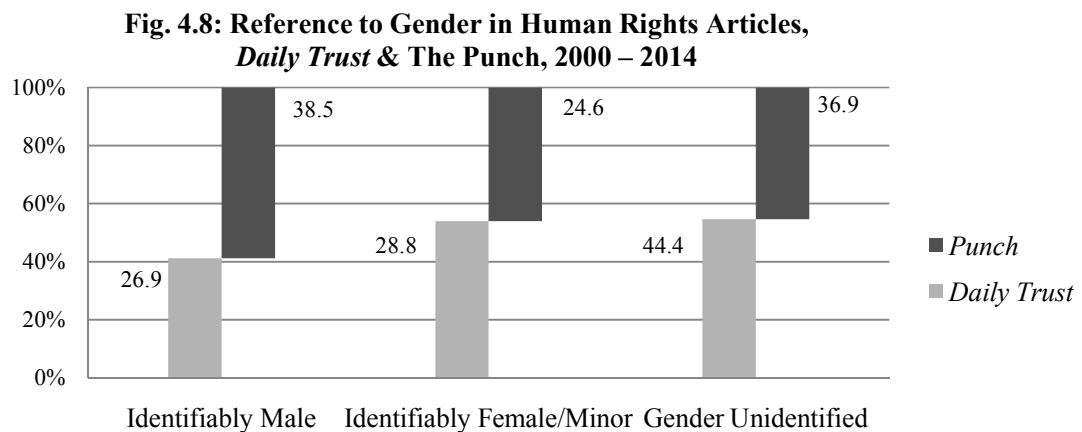
taking place within the region. Claims are, however, made that the media may have a political bias paying more attention to one locus and ignoring the other.

4.1.8 Reference to Gender in Human Rights Articles:

Articles were also coded based on whether they make any identifiable reference to gender of the victims of abuse. This measures the propensity of human rights coverage by the media to capture gender rights and rights of the minor as some of the important

Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Identifiably Male	86	26.9	144	38.5
Identifiably Female/Minor	92	28.8	92	24.6
Gender Unidentified	142	44.4	138	36.9
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

human rights concern in the African context. A good number of articles identified victims of abuse either male or female and in some cases, as minors. From Table 4.10, 86 (26.9%) in *Daily Trust* and by far, 144 (38.5%) human rights articles in *The Punch* referred to the victims as men, while 92 articles in each news source constituting 28.8% in *Daily Trust* and 24.6% in *The Punch* referred to the victims as either female or minor or both. Between 37% and 44% of the total articles had made no reference to gender of



the victims of abuse, and in most cases referred to them by their names. Looking at Fig. 4.8, we can observe few critical differences between the newspapers. While *Daily Trust* had more articles without identifiable reference to gender of victims, still the paper made more identifiable reference to the victims as either female or minor and therefore, had more stories focused on women and child rights. *The Punch* coverage was more focused on men, although, both papers had the same number, and almost equal percentage of articles with identifiable reference to women and children.

4.1.9 Sources and Potential influences in Human Rights Coverage:

The category system for sources directly cited in the stories include ‘official and governmental,’ ‘human rights community’ as defenders, ‘ordinary people’ as challengers of violations, independent ‘staff/media’ inquisition, and ‘human rights agreements/documents’ as the legal framework for human rights administration. All these sources are good media sources of human rights information. It is observed below that media coverage of human rights is heavily focused on state actors as potential perpetrators of abuse and therefore, pushing them in the defensive becoming important sources for media reports. Also, non-governmental organizations and other pressure groups play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights. They will often use the media as informal sources of information, and as a means of transmitting their message and goals. The media benefit from this relationship by having an additional source of information on human rights conditions. However, these organizations can also become a subject of the news. This raises the question, how often does the press refer to non-governmental organizations working in the area of human rights?

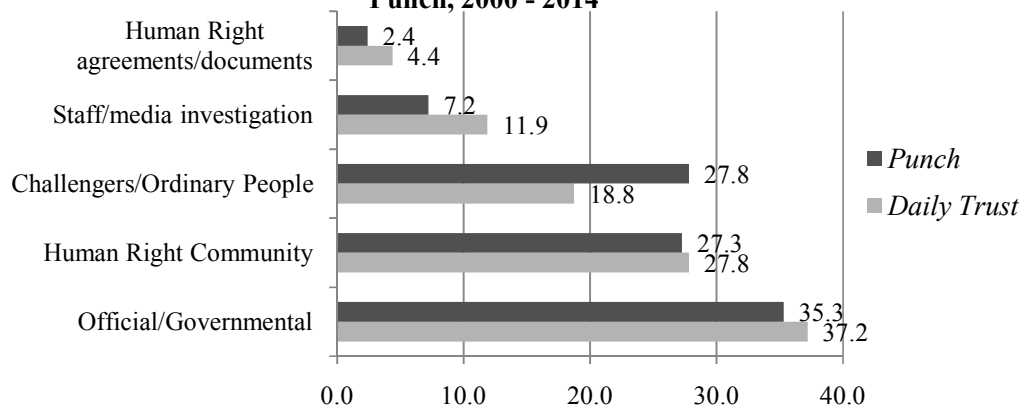
In most cases, it is also important for the media to give attention to the victims of abuse in order to be heard. This effort may determine the quality of media reports. Other important sources are human rights agreements and documents that constitute the legal

Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Official/Governmental	119	37.2	132	35.3
Human Right Community	89	27.8	102	27.3
Challengers/Ordinary People	60	18.8	104	27.8
Staff/media investigation	38	11.9	27	7.2
Human Right agreements/documents	14	4.4	9	2.4
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

frameworks of human rights and can educate journalists about nature and procedure of human rights administration. Table 4.12 shows the number of references given to identifiable sources in human rights article. Official or governmental sources received the largest number of references in the papers, dominating 119 (37.2%) articles in *Daily Trust* and 132 (35.3%) in *The Punch*. Official sources were mostly cited in defence of allegations of abuse and rarely, covered human rights activities by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The latter is highlighted in an article entitled ‘Lack of fund derails humanitarian mission – NHRC’ (*Daily Trust*, October 22, 2014).

There was also high amount of references to human rights community, in most cases NGOs. Both papers acknowledged, in reasonable number, different actors in the human rights defence community in 89 (27.8%) articles in *Daily Trust* and in 102 (27.3%) articles in *The Punch*. Most references were specifically to the organization's human rights activities in most cases providing information about specific cases of violations. The most referred organization was Amnesty International quoted in more than 30 articles in both local and foreign human rights reports by both newspapers. And

Fig. 4.10: Sources in Human Rights Articles, Daily Trust & The Punch, 2000 - 2014



the most common reference index was ‘rights group’, otherwise individuals and groups were referred to by their names.

We can also observe in Fig. 4.10 that *The Punch* gave an extraordinary opportunity to ordinary people mostly as challengers in human rights cases reported, dominating in 104 (27.8%) articles slightly more than references to human rights community. *Daily Trust*, though far below, equally had a reasonable number of articles – about 60 (19%) – controlled by references to challengers. Rarely did the papers grant attention to right agreements and documents which may corroborate evidences of the fact that journalists may not have sufficient understanding of human rights legal framework. Lastly, in a number of cases, the papers have also relied on corroborative evidences provided by their colleagues largely in the foreign news media. *Daily Trust* had relied significantly on some of these sources most notably the Hausa service of BBC. In a final note, the papers relied significantly on official sources, human rights defenders and challengers. And lack of attention to human rights legal framework shows evidences of lack of familiarity or investigative depth in human rights coverage.

4.1.10 Reference to Perpetrators of Abuse in Human Rights Articles

One of the questions hardly raised in media-human rights literature is how media attention is distributed among different actors in human rights conditions. In most cases,

what the media or NGOs report as clear cases of violations might depend on who was involved as a perpetrator. That is why it is important that we understand how the media might devote different attention to different actors in conditions of abuse. From Table 4.13 and

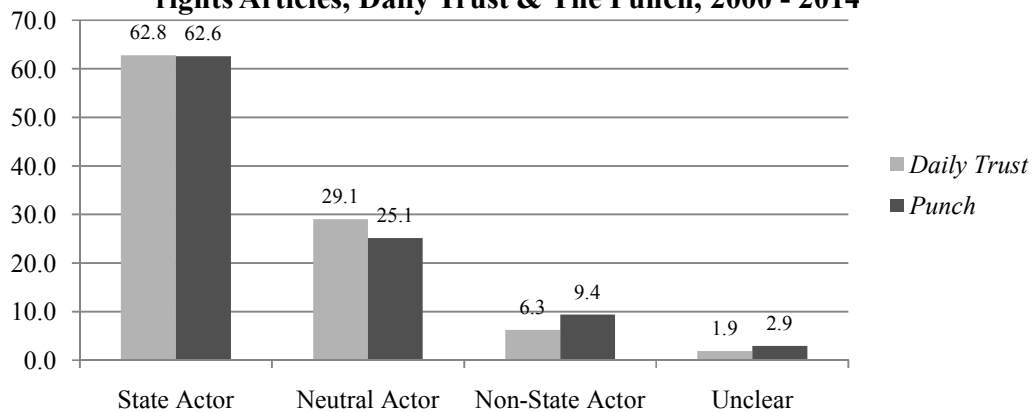
Fig. 4.11, the news outlets examined in this study devoted more attention to state actors and readily report abuse perpetrated by agencies representing government as straightforward cases of abuse. 201(62.8%) articles in *Daily Trust* and 234 (62.6%) in

Category	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Punch</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
State Actor	201	62.8	234	62.6
Neutral Actor	93	29.1	94	25.1
Non-State Actor	20	6.3	35	9.4
Unclear	6	1.9	11	2.9
Total	320	100.0	374	100.0

The Punch made reference to the actors acting for the state. Most common references were made to security operatives most especially the police and the military. This was highlighted in *Daily Trust*'s 'Star Feature' entitled 'Military campaign against Tiv people' (October 31, 2001) in which it collated testimonies from vengeance mission of the Nigerian military after 19 soldiers were killed in Zaki-biam. Few also made references to denial of certain economic and labour rights by governmental agencies. For example, in another article entitled 'Nakande tasks Jang on justice' discussed allegedly the gross violation of Muslim fundamental rights in Plateau state by the government of the state through unfair policies. Least attention was devoted to non-state actors such as the insurgent groups. Few articles involving non-state actors made reference to human rights. Only 20 (6.3%) articles in *Daily Trust* and 35 (9.4%) that reported cases of human rights conditions involving non-state actors made reference to

human rights both directly or using other human rights index. Surprisingly, 93(29.1%) in *Daily Trust* and 94(25.1%)

Fig. 4.11: : Reference to Specific Perpetrators of Abuse in Human rights Articles, Daily Trust & The Punch, 2000 - 2014



articles in *The Punch* reported situations involving neutral actors – those acting neither for nor against the state – made reference to human rights. This mostly carried cases of abuse against women and children, and in good number of cases, involved labour disputes between private companies and their employees. This last point was illustrated in a business article entitled ‘Workers decry unfair labour policy at UAC’ (*The Punch*, January 28, 2004).

4.2 MAJOR FINDINGS ON THE MEDIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NIGERIA

This study began with the contention that news reports of human rights issues are important, and can have an impact on policy development. There were contentions that human right is under-reported in the media and which issues are reported and involving who and which region. A major observation was that previous research in the relations between media and human rights had focused more on coverage in the news media in developed countries. Where news outlets in developing countries such as Africa and Latin America were examined, they largely measured media coverage in despotic

regimes. This research, therefore, focused on one of the important countries in Africa and among the third world nations. It examined human rights coverage in Nigeria during many years of democratic regime in the country.

A number of previous studies have also tried to link media coverage to a condition where a system of government determines the proclivity of states to have respect for human rights. Most of these arguments have conceptually linked severity of human rights conditions to regime type, i.e. depending on the level of authoritarianism or democratization. However, the emerging evidences of repression even in democratic societies calls for investigations to find out how news media respond to the repressive conditions in multi-party democracy. This study hypothesized that severity of human right conditions, which can occur in any regime, determine media coverage. In order to support this argument, these questions were raised.

1. What is the extent, in relation to other issues, of the coverage of human rights in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* during first 15 years of democratic regime in Nigeria i.e. from 2000 to 2014?
2. What is the trend of the coverage of human rights by *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
3. What is the level of prominence accorded to human rights issues in terms of placement and treatment in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
4. What is the level of gender representation in the coverage of human rights by *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
5. What human rights issues received media attention in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers during the period, 2000 to 2014?

To begin with, human rights received considerable level of attention during the period of the study. There were 375 articles referring to human rights in *The Punch* from 2000 to 2014. Compare this to 320 articles that referred to human rights in *Daily Trust*. Figure 4.1 shows the differences in the percentage of human rights stories reported in both newspapers in relation to other issues. Although variability across the different categories of issues covered is higher in *The Punch*, the level of attention devoted to human rights was statistically reasonable. Human rights feature routinely and consistently within a mix of many other issues – with nothing extraordinary. Inferentially, the analysis shows that the level of attention given to human rights in both newspapers, in a mix most of other issues is somehow concentrated around the average without much variability across majority of the issues covered.

Looking at the trend of coverage, the level of attention devoted to human rights increased in the last five years. While there are some fluctuations in the Southern-based newspaper's coverage (see figure 4.2), there was a steady upward trend in the number of articles referring to human rights in the Northern-based newspaper. Worsening security situation in the country was responsible for the spike in coverage in the last five years of the period of the study, which shows how severity of human rights condition may determine the amount media attention dedicated to human rights. Perhaps, this accounts for why Northern region received more attention from both news outlets analysed, constituting between 21% - 23% (see figure 4.7) of the total coverage, because of the high number of articles relating to insurgency that made reference to human rights. However, human rights conditions in Southern region may have been underreported. In some cases, cultural bias was seen to determine coverage. *The Punch* begins with a

remarkable attention to human rights in the first few years of the research period. The southern-based paper has used the discourse of human rights to challenge the geo-cultural attempt by politicians in the North to redefine the legal environments in most Northern states in order to include Islamic law. High level of attention was, in addition, devoted to international human rights stories mostly culling the story from news agencies and foreign media. Majority of the of the articles that made reference to human rights, more so, originated from the staff of the newspapers, constituting 44% - 47% in both newspapers. It normally involved independent effort of journalists to gather the materials using additional information from human rights organizations.

Human rights took a prominent position in both papers. Between 44%-46% of articles that referred to human rights were placed at the main news section, normally the first few pages in both news outlets, and 5%-6% made to the front page in the 15 years examined. A number of these articles were also placed at the international or foreign news section. These obviously constituted foreign news events related to human rights. Placements of human rights articles were distributed as expected. We expect to have more stories placed within the papers' main news sequence with fewer articles placed at the front page and a great deal of the articles related to foreign news event placed at the foreign section, and the rest balanced across the other sections. The placement was in fact routinely distributed across the newspapers' normal placement pattern. Another way of understating the level of prominence is by how the papers treated articles that referred to human rights. Nearly all articles, between 80% - 89% in both newspapers, were actually straight news pieces; around six percent were commentaries and analyses. Differences were seen in the number of features and editorials with *Daily Trust* having slightly higher

number of articles. However, these differences did not change the fact that human rights rarely received detailed treatment and were presented as short straight news essays.

There are some striking similarities between the types of issues referred to in both newspapers. Civil-political rights received the most attention, accounting for 50% of the references in both newspapers (see figure 4.6). Many of these stories focused on international human rights organizations and foreign news events. Both papers also had similar proportion of reference to social-economic rights and collective rights. Socio-economic rights were under-reported and in a number of cases, were reported within the context of civil-political rights. There was also a reasonable amount of gender representation in both news media. Reference to women and child rights represents between 15% - 20% of the total reference to human rights. Likewise, between 24% - 29% (see figure 4.9) of the total references to human rights emphasized the gender of the female victims involved in the human rights situation reported.

Media coverage of human rights was found to reflect western values of human rights by devoting greater attention to civil-political rights and its close cousins, physical integrity rights, collective rights, and the rights of women and children. The second generation rights received very little attention, and we cannot dismiss the influence of Nigeria's experience as a Commonwealth country and its relationship to the global North. Economic, social, and cultural issues, when considered at all, were viewed as benefits provided to society, or humanitarian issues, rather than as human rights. In fact, the news media in Nigeria follow the traditional focus on human rights by centring attention primarily on civil and political rights.

In addition, the newspapers made more references to official sources, though, both papers also gave considerable level of attention to the right defence community, and

ordinary people challenging violations to their rights. Where human rights defenders were quoted, it is largely in wired articles from human rights non-governmental organizations communicating their message and goals or cited as an additional source of information for the human rights conditions reported. Rarely did the papers grant attention to right agreements and documents. This lack of attention to human rights legal framework shows evidences of lack of familiarity or investigative depth in human rights coverage. Just like they relied heavily on official sources, the papers also devoted more attention to state actors and reported cases in which they were involved as straightforward cases of human rights conditions. State actors were in 62% of articles that made reference to human rights in both news outlets (see figure 4.11). Most common references were made to security operatives most especially the police and the military. Least attention was devoted to Non-state actors and rarely reported their activities as clear cases of human rights violation. The major findings are summarised in the next chapter.

Most human rights violations come to public knowledge through the media. Therefore, it is important for the media to be able to report them accurately, consistently and with precise knowledge of human rights. However, the findings from this study have demonstrated that media reports focus on a very limited definition of human rights and therefore, while these reports can serve as a supplemental source of information, they do not provide an adequate means of understanding systematic human rights abuses in Nigeria. By implication, when journalists do not understand these rights and have been unable to recognise their violations, it will affect how human rights abuses are exposed and how much people know about them and ultimately, how the relevant bodies responsible for human rights protection may be pressurised to act. This level of poor

coverage of human rights by the media as one of the principal actors in rights monitoring and reporting regimes can affect compliance to human rights and humanitarian laws.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

This study began with the contention that news reports of human rights issues are important, and can have an impact on policy development. In the literature review, we have seen the contentions that human rights issues were under-reported in the media and what issues are reported and involving who and which region. Another observation was that previous research in the relations between media and human rights had focused more on coverage in the news media in developed countries. Where news outlets in developing countries such as Africa and Latin America were examined, they largely measured media coverage in despotic regimes. Also, while conceptually guided by argument linking severity of human rights conditions to regime type, i.e. depending on the level of authoritarianism or democratization, a number of previous studies have tried to link media coverage to a condition when the regime of government has respect for human rights or not. However, the emerging evidences of repression even in democratic societies call for investigations to find out how news media respond to repressive conditions in multi-party democracy.

This research, therefore, contributes to the growing literature on media and human rights by focusing on one of the important countries in Africa and among the Third World. It examined human rights coverage in Nigeria during fifteen years of democratic regime in the country. This study assumes that severity of human rights conditions, which can occur in any regime, determines media coverage not necessarily the regime type in use; and therefore, analysed the reporting of human rights issues in a democratic regime

in Nigeria during the period, 2000 to 2014. During this period, the political environment was democratic, yet relatively hostile. Two national newspapers were studied: *The Punch* in the Southern region and *Daily Trust* in the Northern region. Theoretically, it was hinged on social responsibility theory. It involves a diagnostic feedback when media professionals obliged to self-censor their conduct in favour of public interest as the price for their independence. The study was guided by the following research questions,

1. What is the extent, in relation to other issues, of the coverage of human rights in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* during first 15 years of democratic regime in Nigeria i.e. from 2000 to 2014?
2. What is the trend of the coverage of human rights by *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
3. What is the level of prominence accorded to human rights issues in terms of placement and treatment in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
4. What is the level of gender representation in the coverage of human rights by *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers from 2000 to 2014?
5. What human rights issues received media attention in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers during the period, 2000 to 2014?

In order to address these questions, content analysis was used. This process involved stepped approach. Samples were selected using stratified sampling that yields constructed weeks. Guided by an empirical recommendation, one constructed week picked at random was selected in each six-month data interval over the 15-year period of the study. The analyses involve an observation of four content elements in the papers: the general news, features, editorials and news commentary/analysis. Categorization scheme has been carefully formulated, which includes categories and subcategories under nine mutually inclusive dimensions.

Structurally, Chapter One introduced the conceptual framework of the research. Media and human rights literature were reviewed in Chapter Two. It also involved

theoretical review explaining the theoretical framework of the research. Chapter Three explained the method used for the research including the research design, sampling procedure and the result of inter-coder reliability test. The results were presented and discussed in Chapter Four. And the fifth and the final chapter conveyed conclusions and recommendation for further work from the study. This is concluded by summarizing the major findings and by raising areas for future research below.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Most human rights violations come to public knowledge through the media. Therefore, it is important for the media to be able to report them accurately, consistently and with precise knowledge of human rights. However, the findings from this study have demonstrated that media reports focus on a very limited definition of human rights and therefore, while these reports can serve as a supplemental source of information, they do not provide an adequate means of understanding systematic human rights abuses in Nigeria. By implication, when journalists do not understand these rights and have been unable to recognise their violations, it will affect how human rights abuses are exposed and how much people know about them and ultimately, how the relevant bodies responsible for human rights protection may be pressurised to act. This level of poor coverage of human rights by the media as one of the principal actors in rights monitoring and reporting regimes can affect compliance to human rights and humanitarian laws.

5.3 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

These are some of the major findings from the research.

- Human rights received considerable level of attention during the period of the study. They feature routinely and consistently within a mix of many other issues with nothing extraordinary.

- Looking at the trend of the coverage, the level of attention devoted to human rights increased in the last five years within the timeframe of the study. Worsening security situation in the country was probably responsible for the spike in coverage, which shows how severity of human rights condition may determine the level of attention devoted to human rights. In some cases, cultural bias was seen to affect coverage.
- Good level of attention was devoted to international human rights stories mostly culling the story from news agencies and foreign news media.
- Majority of the articles that made reference to human rights originated from staff of the newspapers.
- Human rights took a significant prominent position in both papers. The placement was routinely distributed across the newspapers' normal structure.
- Nearly all articles that made reference to human rights were straight news pieces. Human rights rarely received detailed treatment and were presented as short straight news essays.
- There are some similarities between the types of issues referred to in both newspapers. Civil-political rights received the most attention. Both papers also had similar proportion of reference to social-economic rights and collective rights. Socio-economic rights were under-reported and in a number of cases, were reported within the context of civil-political rights.
- There was also a modest amount of gender references in both news media. Rights of women and minors received significant attention in both newspapers, and often

made reference to the gender of women involved in repressive conditions reported.

- Media coverage of human rights was found to reflect western values of human rights by devoting greater attention to civil-political rights and its close cousin, physical integrity rights.
- The second generation rights received very little attention, and we cannot dismiss the influence of Nigeria's experience as a Commonwealth country and its foreign policy direction.
- Lack of attention to human rights legal framework shows evidences of lack of familiarity or investigative depth in human rights coverage.
- Just like they relied heavily on official sources, the papers also devoted more attention to state actors and reported cases in which they were involved as straightforward cases of human right conditions. Least attention was devoted to Non-state actors and rarely reported their activities as clear cases of human rights violation.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the research findings above, the quality of reporting in the area of human rights is poor even while there is a significant level of attention dedicated to human rights issues. Journalist in Nigeria show symptoms, from the content of the newspapers analysed, of lack of familiarity, and the news reports show lack if investigative depth and a tendency to rely of official and governmental sources. Based on these facts, it is therefore recommended as follows:

1. There should be proper joint actions and educative relationships between media professionals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in this area to stimulate journalists' interests and carry them along in human rights monitoring system.
2. Journalists should be engaged in forums of discussions to improve their reporting and investigative skills in the area of human rights, and coach them on how they can protect themselves when reporting critical cases of human rights violations.
3. Media work should also be supported by adequate statutory protections to minimise cases of, especially, state actors interfering in the work of journalists when reporting human rights violations involving security agents.
4. Journalists can be targeted with training manuals and other educational publications through their unions, and forums can be organised in order to create more awareness among editors and reporters.
5. Since we believe resolutely that journalists have an important role to play in the area of human rights and have the capacity to do so, we should think of how they can be engaged more in this effort and how to improve the quality of their reports.
6. We should not also direct all our reproach to journalists and fail to notice other perhaps more fundamental failures from other actors in human rights defence community.
7. We should look forward to having a synergetic working relationship between all the actors in the field to ensure quality and consistent monitoring, documentation and reporting system.

8. Research should concentrate energy on media performance analysis, which will constitute diagnostic feedback on the challenging areas of human rights coverage.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This examination of the media and human rights serves only as a first step in looking at the importance of news coverage and human rights. There are still many questions that need to be examined. For example, how are human rights treated in other media sources such as the broadcast media and in popular culture? We need to also collate more evidences of nature of human rights coverage in democratic environment and in non-western media. This project should be viewed as a starting point. As further research is carried out on this topic, a more detailed picture will develop on how the media influences the formation of human rights policy in Nigeria. These are some of the areas that need further analysis.

1. Research needs to be undertaken that will determine if, in fact, there is a direct link between the number of news stories on human rights and shifts in public opinion.
2. Further work also needs to be done on media impact on policy development.
3. Also, research needs to determine how non-governmental organizations use the media. Do they plan reports and other activities to coincide with policy making decisions?
4. Further research can also determine, using qualitative method, the events responsible for fluctuations in the trend of media coverage of human rights, especially what is responsible for the recent increase in media attention.

5. Research can be carried out to understand how journalists report human rights issues in times of violent conflicts, and their tendency to ignore human rights atrocities committed by both state and non-state actors in adversarial situations in favour of the actual conflict.
6. Research should be conducted to establish the level of journalists' awareness of human rights.

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APPENDIX 1A

Table 4.1: Yearly Distribution of Units by their Theme, *Daily Trust*, 2000 - 2014

Daily Trust Newspaper																
Category/Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	Total
Business/economy/labor	121	148	184	154	114	106	139	125	123	125	147	119	113	123	108	1949
Politics/Governmental/Election	150	123	115	174	144	102	77	101	116	89	123	112	157	117	80	1780
Sports & youth	88	0	96	83	81	96	133	97	102	100	107	111	107	97	38	1435
International	77	61	92	95	73	91	98	83	111	95	88	107	92	107	28	1298
Police/crime/legal/courts	69	67	77	100	74	44	63	63	79	50	45	38	66	58	19	912
Property/real estate/environment	40	39	51	54	83	75	88	69	46	26	38	28	29	24	20	710
Education/Research/Training	42	65	49	46	60	58	45	25	37	48	41	39	59	27	23	664
Health/fitness/Epidemic/Drugs	58	76	59	42	41	45	42	29	29	33	31	31	25	35	6	582
Community/local tradition/tourism	45	44	46	22	31	62	46	36	41	34	31	26	33	33	26	556
insurgency/communal conflict	75	49	86	66	29	36	21	10	23	6	26	8	29	12	8	484
Corruption & due process	21	36	47	26	35	37	39	36	29	30	28	8	13	15	14	414
Science/technology/ICT	28	29	29	20	11	27	40	60	30	25	33	21	24	24	1	402
Food/agriculture/rural development	38	38	29	19	21	42	35	25	22	21	9	10	13	12	8	342
Natural disaster/Emergencies/accident	25	37	32	26	30	19	36	19	28	29	14	17	15	11	4	342
Women/family/parenting/relationship	28	19	30	28	43	19	27	30	27	29	17	9	13	5	15	339
Religion/theology/Morality	33	33	31	25	20	35	20	15	32	14	10	19	12	11	24	334
Human Right Issues	39	29	36	27	23	24	12	20	8	22	16	18	13	20	13	320
Media/entertainment/art/literature	17	17	17	14	7	22	13	11	14	9	10	15	33	24	32	255
Others	21	17	21	10	18	15	7	8	13	13	7	9	9	5	1	174
Total	1015	1026	1127	1031	938	955	981	862	910	798	821	745	855	760	468	13292
Percentage	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	4	100

APPENDIX 1B

Table 4.3: Yearly Distribution of Units by their Theme, *The Punch*, 2000-2014

Category/Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	Total
Business/economy/labor	219	215	218	197	255	241	181	161	221	208	246	253	258	220	188	3281
Politics/Governmental/Election	207	160	209	179	173	137	141	221	209	161	154	264	215	166	183	2779
Sports	163	154	169	112	139	151	164	112	160	104	138	159	122	96	118	2061
International	79	96	114	61	100	118	97	56	90	51	66	122	139	104	59	1352
Police/crime/legal/courts	119	112	109	60	74	59	56	80	80	70	80	77	71	59	56	1162
Education/Research/Training	40	34	39	52	55	69	46	61	50	49	59	59	86	66	64	829
Science/technology/ICT	28	34	44	51	60	61	77	64	47	48	73	110	49	26	12	784
Property/real estate/environment	73	53	48	27	26	64	52	30	27	47	66	51	59	16	19	658
Health/fitness/Epidemic/Drugs	43	43	63	38	62	43	43	32	36	29	42	46	51	33	22	626
Corruption & due process	68	30	44	20	27	29	45	28	42	42	39	13	19	14	26	486
Human Right Issues	36	32	37	30	31	17	16	15	21	18	15	25	20	29	32	374
Media/entertainment/art/literature	21	23	21	15	35	54	28	13	30	20	18	17	14	17	45	371
Insecurity/insurgency/communal conflict	55	34	35	20	20	22	8	11	22	14	35	19	19	18	31	363
Food/agriculture/rural development	23	16	25	14	46	12	26	31	20	16	22	21	17	18	12	319
Community/local tradition/tourism	23	22	19	11	23	8	24	19	16	21	19	23	23	19	36	306
Natural disaster/Emergencies/accident	20	22	24	16	22	21	10	20	19	15	25	16	13	7	9	259
Religion/theology/Morality	18	18	18	11	3	9	9	8	7	10	9	22	17	20	45	224
Women/family/parenting/relationship	14	12	11	9	21	15	20	20	5	13	10	15	13	10	15	203
Others	9	11	7	7	10	7	7	8	9	7	9	8	8	5	10	122
	1258	1121	1254	930	1182	1137	1050	990	1111	943	1125	1320	1213	943	982	16559
	8	7	8	6	7	7	6	6	7	6	7	8	7	6	6	100

APPENDIX 3A:
STORY ANALYSIS FORM

_____ **Story ID**

Reference to Human right

_____ Direct=1; Implied=2

Front Page

_____ Yes=1; No=2

Section Front

_____ Yes=1; No=2

Section

_____ Use code (see instruction)

Origin

- _____ 1. Wire service
- _____ 2. Local news service
- _____ 3. Staff/Paper investigation
- _____ 4. Wired story
- _____ 5. Unknown

Treatment

- _____ 1. General news
- _____ 2. Feature
- _____ 3. Commentary/analysis
- _____ 4. Editorial

Geographic Focus

- _____ 1. Southern Nigeria
- _____ 2. Northern Nigeria
- _____ 3. National
- _____ 4. International
- _____ 5. Unclear

Sources Quoted in the Story

- _____ # Quoted
- _____ # Official/governmental
- _____ # Ordinary people
- _____ # Human rights community
- _____ # HR agreement/documents
- _____ # Staff/media inquiry

Specific Human Right Category

- _____ 1. Civil/political rights
- _____ 2. Social/economic rights
- _____ 3. Collective rights
- _____ 4. Women/child rights
- _____ 5. Physical integrity rights
- _____ 6. Other

Gender Focus

- _____ # identifiably male
- _____ # identifiably female/ minor
- _____ # Gender unidentified

Perpetrators of Abuse Referred

- _____ 1. State actors
- _____ 2. Non-state actors
- _____ 3. Neutral actors
- _____ 4. Unclear

General Reaction

(1=negative.....10=positive)

How solemn is the story/case reported?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How clear and understandable did the story represent the case reported?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How emotionally engaging was the story?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How active/evocative was the story?
1 2 34 56 78 910

APENDIX 3B:

Story Analysis Form Instructions

(Fill out one form per story)

Story ID

Newspaper Date (6 digit) – Story # (2 digit) November 11, 2001 newspaper story 4 would be: 111101-04 If analysing more than one newspaper title, add another code at the front indicating paper. For example, 2-111101-04

Front Page

Mark 1 if the story starts on the front page, 2 if it doesn't. If a story starts on the front page and continues inside, it's still front page. This does not include promotion of the item on the front page (if a skybox refers to a story inside, it does not count as a front page story)

Section Front

Mark 1 if the story starts on a section front, 2 if it doesn't. If a story starts on the section front and continues inside, it's still a section front. This does not include promotion of the item on the section front (if a skybox refers to a story that doesn't appear on the section front, it does not count as a section front story).

Section

Mark the section that the story appears in from the list below using the appropriate number. A section is a stand-alone entity, not just a themed page. Be careful not to confuse the story's content with the section in which it appears.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Local/State//community | 7. Editorial/opinion/commentary & analysis |
| 2. Business/economy | 8. Science/technology/ICT |
| 3. Home/Family /relationship/women | 9. Travel/tourism |
| 4. Sports | 10. Law/crime/judiciary |
| 5. Education & Labour | 11. Foreign/international |
| 6. Property/environment | 12. Food/agriculture/rural development |
| | 13. Others |

Origin of Story

Wire service include stories originating from international news agencies and stories credited to other international news media; **Local news service** include only stories vended by local agencies; **Staff/newspaper investigation** include stories identified as coming from the newspaper, with or without by-line; and **Wired stories** implies specific

cases where the story acknowledge the input of other actors in human rights defence community through press releases, report, jamborees were journalists are invited, communiqué, and many other methods, these are coded when there is an obvious reference to any of these communication methods used by individuals or NGOs working in the area of human rights

Geographic Focus

Articles are coded based on obvious reference to a particulate location within the story or in the by-line or sometimes when it is located under a section clearly identified to a particular state or geo-political zone. Articles that had no identifiable location or those made reference to the federal capital were coded as ‘national’

Treatment

General news emphasizes facts of recent event told in straight news format. *Feature* is longer, more detailed, embellished and entertaining. *News commentary/analysis* resuscitates series of facts, but offers first-person opinion, and *editorial* stated opinion of the newspaper.

Sources in the story

Mark the number of sources directly quoted in the story; the number official/government sources quoted; number for ordinary people; for human rights community (from NGOs, lawyers/individuals acting as human rights advocates/reports from human rights jamborees/ representatives of HR commissions, including government commissions); number of citations from HR documents representing treaties and laws, including relevant sections in the constitution, and quotation from media or staff investigation.

Reference to Specific Category of Human Rights

Civil-Political Rights category includes, but is not limited to, political participation, elections, political protests, political prisoners, freedom of movement, speech, religion, association, the right to a trial/fair hearing, due process, etc.; *Socio-Economic Rights* category includes, but is not limited to, the right to an adequate standard of living, education, health care, clean water, housing, labour, social infrastructure, the right to social security, intellectual property right, right against forced evictions, rights of older persons, persons with disabilities, the rights of minorities, and internal displacement; *Collective Rights* category reflects Third World’s movement for self-determination and the demand for a global redistribution of power, wealth, and other important value, the

right to a healthy environment and peace; *Women/Child Rights/Right to Quality Health* categories reflect specific reference to women and child rights issues or reference to ‘gender/women rights’, ‘child rights’ and right to access to quality sexual and reproductive health, equality of rights between men and women, protection of the family/private life, and the right to marriage and equality of the spouses; *Physical Integrity Rights* category involves reference to imprisonment, murder, disappearance, torture, arson, battering and other degrading treatment to human person by mostly state and non-state actors.

Gender Focus

Count whether the victims of abuse referred in the stories are identifiably male or female or minor (below 18 years or reference to ‘children’). Abuse against minors is treated as an extension to abuse against women, because of their physical and social dependence on their maternal parents.

Perpetrators referred in the story

State actors involve individuals, groups or institutions acting for the government. *Non-state actors* are primarily armed groups acting against the state. *Neutral actors* act neither for nor against the state.

General Reaction

In this optional portion, mark within a scale of 1 to 10 what your judgment of the story is.

APPENDIX 4: Coding Work Sheet

Coding Work Sheet

Newspaper title: _____

Code/ Category (theme)	Variable	Code/Category	Year:										Year:					Total										
			January-June					July - December					January-June						July - December									
			M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F					
1	Human Rights	Placement by section	20	Front page																								
			21	Section front																								
			22	Section (use code)																								
	Treatment	23	General news																									
		24	Feature																									
		25	News commentary/analysis																									
		26	Editorial																									
	Geographic focus	27	Southern Nigeria																									
		28	Northern Nigeria																									
		29	National																									
		30	International																									
	Origin of story	31	Staff/Newspaper Investigation																									
		32	Wire Service																									
		33	Wired Origin																									
		34	Local News Service																									
	Sources in the story	35	#Official/Governmental																									
		36	#Ordinary People																									
		37	#HR Community																									
		38	#HR agreements/documents																									
		39	#Staff/media report																									
	Human right category	40	Civil/political rights																									
		41	Social/economic rights																									
		42	Collective rights																									
		43	Child/women rights																									
		44	Physical integrity rights																									
		45	Others/unclear																									
	Gender focus	46	#Identifiably male																									
49		#Identifiably female/minor																										
47		#Gender unidentified																										

