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Recall of Politics of Identity in the Narratives of the Nigerian Press

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ABSTRACT The phenomenon of differentiation in Nigeria is pervasive as a result of the nation's ethnic and religious diversities. Again, the strand of religion is usually intertwined with that of ethnicity in Nigeria as each of the two major religions in the country – Christianity and Islam – are usually identified with a particular broad division of the country. In clear terms, while the majority of Northerners are Muslims, a large number of Southerners are Christians. This ensures that practically all conflicts between any of these groups of people could easily degenerate into religious or sectarian conflict. During conflicts, propaganda is a major tool; and the various groups in Nigeria employ the tool well against their opponents whenever there is a conflict. A major technique of propaganda used in this instance is the selective recall of past misdeeds of the opposing group or individual(s) in the group. Using Selective Retention as a theoretical framework, this paper considers a number of instances where selective recall of past misdeeds of a group or a member of a group has been used as a technique of propaganda in a conflict with the group. Significantly, the Nigerian Press abstracted from the ethnic configuration of the Nigerian nation, and they therefore become veritable sites for the selective recall of the past misdeeds of opposing sites. For instance, this paper looks at recall of past events in the Nigerian press during ethno-religious conflicts.