

**POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN NIGERIA**

**RAHMAN OLALEKAN OLAYIWOLA**

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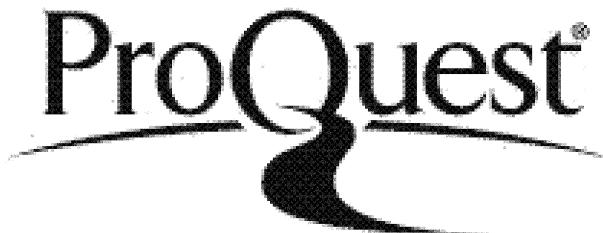
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MAP 1

Map of Nigeria showing the location of the mass media discussed  
in this thesis

NIGERIA



## POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN NIGERIA

### ABSTRACT

This study of the Nigerian Political Communications examines the patterns of mass media ownership and their impact on the coverage of selected national issues - the census controversy, ethnic problems and the general elections of 1979 and 1983. The contents of 21 newspapers of variegated ownership pattern involving governments, partisan and private interests are analysed and 'live' illustrations of stories are given. This is to demonstrate empirically the thesis argument that the criterion of ownership is the key factor which determines how the Nigerian mass media are used for moulding the citizens' perception of political reality. The thesis seeks to answer questions such as: (a) what role have the Nigerian mass media played in promoting and/or compounding the problems of national integration in the Nigerian society since independence? (b) what role should the Nigerian mass media play to promote national integration and political stability? (c) what changes are necessary and desirable with the present situation to allow the mass media perform such integrative and stabilizing functions? Located within a comparative political communication approach to the study of mass media and politics in developing countries, this thesis seeks to contribute to knowledge in the areas of the theory, methodology and practice of political communications in Africa - with Nigeria as a case study. The question of media ownership has remained central to the Nigerian political communications with the attendant intrigues, ethnic violence, character assassination, political vilification, personal vendetta, coups and counter coups, general violent political disagreement and perennial problems of political instability culminating in fragmentation and disintegration that threaten the continued existence of Nigeria. The thesis also highlights a host of other factors which work in collaboration with media ownership to influence the Nigerian political communications - ethnicity, economic position, religion, legal limitations, circulation, transportation, audience reach, freedom of the press or lack of it, linguistic barriers and literacy. The thesis argues, in conclusion, that as Nigeria approaches a third attempt at democratic rule in socio-economic conditions which are less propitious than on past occasions, there is a need for the Nigerian mass media to operate in a way which contributes to national integration. It questions the existing pattern which is elitist and urban in orientation, ignores the rural majority and divides the Nigerian people rather than unites them. To achieve integration through political communications, the thesis suggests the need to restructure the media ownership pattern and to establish a Nigerian Media Advisory Council with some regulatory powers and authority to impose punitive sanctions on media practitioners and institutions for any professional misconduct.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.G.	=	Action Group
B.C.N.N.	=	Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria
B.C.O.S.	=	Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State
C.A.	=	Constituent Assembly
C.D.C.	=	Constitution Drafting Committee
C.M.S.	=	Christian Missionary Society
D.T.	=	Daily Times of Nigeria
E.N.B.S.	=	Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service
E.N.T.V.	=	Eastern Nigeria Television
F.E.D.E.C.O.	=	Federal Electoral Commission
F.M.G.	=	Federal Military Government
F.R.C.N.	=	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria
G.N.P.P.	=	Great Nigeria Peoples' Party
L.T.V.	=	Lagos State Television
M.P.	=	Morning Post
N.A.N.	=	News Agency of Nigeria
N.A.P.	=	Nigerian Advance Party
N.B.S.	=	Nigerian Broadcasting Service
N.C.	=	Nigerian Citizen
N.C.N.C.	=	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (later changed to National Council of Nigerian Citizens)
N.L.C.	=	Nigerian Labour Congress
N.L.C.	=	Nigerian Legislative Council
N.P.N.	=	National Party of Nigeria
N.N.N.	=	New Nigerian Newspaper
N.N.D.P.	=	Nigerian National Democratic Party
N.O.	=	Nigerian Outlook
N.P.C.	=	Northern Peoples' Congress
N.P.P.	=	Nigerian Peoples' Party
N.T.A.	=	Nigerian Television Authority
N.T.V.	=	Nigerian Television
N.Y.M.	=	Nigerian Youth Movement
O.F.N.	=	Operation Feed the Nation
O.G.T.V.	=	Ogun State Television
O.I.C.	=	Organisation of Islamic Conference
P.P.A.	=	Progressive Parties Alliance
P.R.P.	=	Peoples' Redemption Party
R.A.C.	=	Religious Advisory Council
R.D.S.	=	Radio Distribution Service
R.K.T.V.	=	Radio Kaduna Television
S.A.P.	=	Structural Adjustment Programme
S.M.C.	=	Supreme Military Council
T.S.O.S.	=	Television Service of Oyo State
U.K.	=	United Kingdom
U.N.O.	=	United Nations Organisation
U.P.N.	=	Unity Party of Nigeria
W.A.P.	=	West African Pilot
W.N.B.S.	=	Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service
W.N.T.V.	=	Western Nigeria Television

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Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola  
London School of Economics  
University of London.

## POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN NIGERIA

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Focus of the Study

'In the final analysis the Nigerian tragedy has been bedevilled by a set of oppositions - generalized, stereotyped, not necessarily of the same order and may be imaginary, yet each widening the wound and reducing the hopes of healing it; North vs South, Islam vs Christianity, alleged feudalism vs assumed socialism, federal vs unitary preferences, traditional authority vs achieved elitism, haves vs have-nots, each with sinister undertones of tension, irreconciliability and threatened withdrawal. None was quite entirely accurate. Nevertheless each opposing set had sufficient seeds of truth within it to permit, and even fertilize the growth of feared fact from the semi-fiction of its existence.'

This thesis examines the anatomy of mass media bias in Nigerian political communications. It argues that ownership of the mass media in Nigeria tends to determine how they are used for political communications in the country. Of course, other factors such as ethnicity, religion, literacy, language of communication, legal limitations, political and socio-economic factors, among a host of others, are not ignored. The thesis maintains, however, that the criterion of ownership is not only the key factor which determines how the mass media are used for moulding the citizen's perception of political reality in the country, but it is also a more precise means<sup>than other methods</sup> of understanding and investigating the role of the press in political stability or instability, national integration or disintegration.

By Africa standards, the Nigerian press is by far the oldest and richest in media uses, traditions, developments and diversities.<sup>2</sup> Nigeria is the

largest and most populous country in Black Africa. With an estimated population of about 125 million people in 1988, Nigeria, it is assumed, accounted for about one-fifth of Africa's 608.7 million.<sup>3</sup> The first television station in Africa was established in Nigeria, the first African language newspaper was also in Nigeria, while the country also recorded the first political party newspaper and the first successful daily newspaper in the West African sub-continent.<sup>4</sup>

In a way, this thesis is also a contribution to the scanty data on political communications in Africa. As a leading country in the continent of Africa, Nigeria, in many respects, is not untypical, in its broad social, economic, cultural and political communication characteristics, of many developing African nations.<sup>5</sup> For example, in Nigeria as in Africa as a whole, the spheres of politics, economics, community, and communications are not strongly differentiated, and the communications media are far from being autonomous. The problem of integration and the building of a consensus in African countries is largely a problem of developing patterns of political communications - which transcend, rather than coincide with, prevailing discontinuities and communal divisions. Although there are important exceptions subsequently noted, existing political communication processes serve to reinforce those divisions, whether they are tribal, regional, ethnic, religious, political, social, class, economic, educated-uneducated, or urban-rural, among others.

What are the positive and/or negative roles of ownership of mass media in political communications in Africa? What are the problems in applying Anglo-American theories of political communications to Africa and can there be a distinctive theoretical model for explaining African political communications?

Can one really say that the mass media are of any paramount importance in the political process of African countries? This thesis attempts to provide some answers.

In another sense, the thesis is also a contribution to ways of achieving a stable political communication order in Nigeria - 1992 and beyond. By analysing the factors which affect the press performance and competence in a Nigerian Federal set-up where there are centrifugal forces always and almost permanently at work and by making suggestions which might guide policy makers on the mass media coverage of national issues, especially on setting 'the agenda' of political and election campaigns, the thesis seeks to contribute to an investigation of the underlying causes of political instability in Nigeria and how these can be minimised. This is particularly important since Nigeria now approaches a third attempt at democratic rule in socio-economic conditions which are less propitious than on past occasions. The Nigerian mass media should be able to operate in a way which contributes to political stability and national integration in the post 1992 political dispensation and beyond.

Nigeria is a good example of an unstable country in Africa. The country has witnessed a series of coups, counter coups, civil war, ethnic riots, religious disturbances, and general violent political disagreements since it became independent in October 1960. Of the seven administrations the country has had, only two were civilian (Balewa and Shagari), the rest being military. Three heads of state/government (Balewa, Ironsi and Murtala Muhammed) have been assassinated. The military has been in power for about twenty-two years, while the civilians have ruled for about ten years only.

These contradictions<sup>6</sup> in the Nigerian political system are also exacerbated by inter-state rivalry between the current twenty-one states of the federation as well as by social, political, economic, educational and mass media inequalities. Of the 49 newspapers and periodicals in English and Nigerian languages in Nigeria at independence, only seven were published in the Northern Region<sup>7</sup> and none was published in the rural areas.

The Nigerian press has a duty to ensure that the political objectives of the country are achieved in accordance with its motto which is 'Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress'. In fact, Nigeria's constitution provides for the obligations of the mass media on fundamental objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy - Fundamental Obligations of Government, the Government and the people, Political Objectives, Economic Objectives, Social Objectives, Educational Objectives, Foreign Policy Objectives and Directives on Nigerian Culture.<sup>8</sup>

However, as it will be demonstrated later in this thesis, and depending on the periods under consideration, the Nigerian mass media have been more negative than positive in the way they have covered political and national issues. The blatantly partisan, parochial, rebellious and reckless colouration of political communications through the Nigerian mass media has manifested itself in such issues as national election campaigns, national census, leadership of the country, political party formations, ethnic origins of contenders for political offices and religious issues among others. For example, the communal riots which occurred in Northern Nigeria during 1966, and which precipitated the drift towards the Nigerian civil war of 1967, were preceded by provocative journalism of an alarming kind. Tribal prejudices were exploited to

the full, most notoriously in a series of anti-Ibo cartoons run by the Citizen, one of which showed Easterners eating their children.<sup>9</sup>

Successive Nigerian leaders (both civilian and military) have pointed accusing fingers at the Nigerian mass media in the way they are used for political communications. A one time Nigerian Commissioner for Information reflecting on the fall of the Nigerian First Republic lamented that whoever and whatever ruined the Republic did so with the connivance and active collaboration of the greater part of the Nigerian press. One of the problems Ironsi had was one of communication which plagued him throughout his tenure of office while Gowon once complained about the conspiracy of the Nigerian press to pull him down from the reins of power.<sup>10</sup>

One issue that came up in the historic Aburi meeting of the Supreme Military Council was the role of the Nigerian press in provoking the crisis that culminated in the civil war. While Ojukwu maintained that the New Nigerian and the Nigerian Post were to be singled out for their nefarious role in the crisis, Gowon and Hassan insisted that the Outlook of Eastern Nigeria caused most of the trouble. In the end, all the members agreed that the Nigerian media in general, particularly the federal and state government's information media, should desist from inflammatory publications that would worsen the situation in the country.<sup>11</sup> A military governor in Nigeria once remarked:

'Do not blame soldiers for all the coups that had taken place. I want to say that both the military and the press took over power: the military using the gun and the press using the pen.'<sup>12</sup>

In what ways can media ownership be made to contribute to a democratic political system through responsible and effective political communications? What impediments are likely to arise and how can they be contained? This thesis attempts some answers. On the whole, this thesis intends to contribute to knowledge in the areas of the theory, practice and methodology of political communications in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular:

~If a third attempt at democratic government is to be successful, however, it must tailor democratic institutions to fit Nigeria's unique heritage and to overcome the structural problems that have defeated democratic government in the past....it must be a premise of a Third Republic that "institutional architecture is a key to democratic viability."<sup>13</sup>

#### **HYPOTHESES, METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF DATA**

The following hypotheses are formulated for the thesis:

1. The affiliation of mass media ownership was likely to have affected their editorial preferences with regard to the coverage of national issues and the campaigns of the various political parties, thus leading to unequal amount of coverage;
2. The political parties that controlled regional, state or federal power in Nigeria were likely to have used the mass media to influence the political thinking of their subjects through government ownership of such media; and
3. Political competition in Nigeria follows ethnic lines,<sup>14</sup> exacerbates ethnic conflicts and the mass media houses/personnel

were more likely to have been representatives of specific ethnic groups and to have used the media they owned and/or controlled to enhance their ethnic groups' interests in the competition for power and resources.<sup>15</sup>

This study has followed three methods of research:

1. Qualitative archival and library research, to provide data for analyses of the historical, legal, political and socio-economic background of mass media operation in Nigeria;
2. Semi-structured interviews with leading media operators, politicians, reporters, newspaper publishers, mass media owners and key government information ministry personnel, to tap data on the impact of media ownership on behaviour of mass media in political communications;
3. Quantitative method of the content-analysis of news stories in the federal government-owned, state/regional government-owned, political party and private-owned newspapers, to examine the nature of the reported political world in them, the direction and quantity of news stories, the placement and emphasis given to various types of news stories; whether they were favourable, unfavourable or neutral and to capture the flow of news and to assess its completeness and cumulative impact. Attention paid to governmental and non-governmental activities, ethnic, political and other specific interests is also scrutinised. ( For details, see the Tables and Appendices. )

Qualitative, archival and library research was done in Britain. Materials on political communications particularly in Africa and Nigeria were collected and analysed from various books, periodicals, official government publications in libraries and centres for the study of communications, cultures and African affairs, most of which were more up-to-date than what is available in African libraries. In Nigeria, most of the archival and library research was done in four field trips, two each in 1988 and 1989 respectively, and one of which was funded by the Central Research Fund Committee of the University of London in 1989. The research was done in the Search Room of the National Archives of Ibadan, the Institute of African Studies, the libraries of the Department of Communication and Language Arts, the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, the University Main Library, all at the University of Ibadan, the News Documentation Rooms of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State, B.C.O.S., Ibadan, the libraries of the Department of Mass Communication, the Gandhi Memorial and Collection Library, University of Lagos, the Lagos State University, the News Documentation and Information Rooms of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (F.R.C.N.) at Ikoyi, the Nigerian Television Authority (N.T.A.) and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, all in Lagos.

I conducted interviews, both in Britain and in Nigeria. Some politicians and former media men were easier interviewed in Britain than in Nigeria. They felt secure and relaxed in London, and some of them had left Nigeria for London as a result of the political situation in the country. The reporters, politicians, media executives and some of the electorate interviewed in Nigeria

were able to throw light on the origins through the eye-witness accounts of the ethnic, political, tribal and religious implications of the Nigerian mass media for political communications. Interviews of personalities were always done in several sittings to enable cross-checking. It was the quality rather than quantity of information that was the focus of my attention in the interviews. These measures assisted in testing validity and enhanced the thoroughness of this research effort.

The content analysis of newspapers was also done both in Britain and Nigeria. The contents, editions and news stories of papers analysed at the British Newspaper Library at Colindale in London were compared, contrasted and cross-checked with the same contents, editions and news stories of the same papers in libraries in Nigerian universities and the mass media houses where the papers were published. This multi-level cross-checking of evidence of content-analysis tremendously assisted reliability testing. There were some local sources in indigenous languages such as Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba which were full of reliable 'inside information' on political communications in Nigeria. These were made use of in the analysis and writing of this thesis after they had been translated into English. However, the final data analysis and writing up of the thesis were done in London.

The research also draws extensively on a host of other sources - internal press and party documents, press comments and controversies, reports of enquiries, official government directives and policy statements, government, press and party official publications, press, party and individual releases, House of Assembly Debates, government gazettes, records, published and

unpublished, as well as the participant observations of the author who served as a Senior News Editor, analyst, reporter, investigator, researcher and current affairs officer with a Nigerian media organisation; followed the activities of the press, the political parties and their candidates closely and was based inside the newsroom and shuttling between it, the press centre and the headquarters of the Federal Electoral Commission, at various stages during the Second Republic's general elections.

It should be noted that the collection of data and the conduct of interviews covering political communications in Nigeria is more difficult than in a liberal-democratic society. There are inevitably gaps in what it has proved possible to collect; and many of the interviews were conducted on an unattributable basis. Some incidents discussed in various parts of the thesis can not be fully documented but I have only cited such events where I have good reason to believe that they occurred in the form described.

In all, 8 newspapers were examined in the First Republic, while 13 newspapers, 2 radio and television stations were examined in the Second Republic. ( See the Tables and Appendices for an explanation of the selection. ) The choices capture variations in patterns of ownership - federal, state, regional, party and private. We are also able to compare and contrast the impact of ownership of the media on Nigerian political communications during the two Republics and this may help predict the future of Nigerian political communications. The Second Republic in Nigeria (1979-1983) marked the end of an epoch and the beginning of another. It was the period when Nigeria changed from her cabinet,

parliamentary Westminster political system to the U.S. style of presidential system of government. It also ushered in civilian administration, a second attempt at democratic rule, after thirteen years of military dictatorship and a proliferation of print and electronic media.

The 8 newspapers examined in the First Republic were the Nigerian Morning Post owned by the federal government, the Eastern Outlook owned by the Eastern Nigeria regional government, the Daily Sketch owned by the Western regional government, the Nigerian Citizen owned by the Northern regional government, the Daily Times which was independent, the West African Pilot, the Daily Express and the Nigerian Tribune, all of which were political party newspapers articulating the interest of the N.C.N.C. and A.G.

For the Second Republic, the 13 newspapers examined were the Daily Times and the New Nigerian, both of which belonged to the federal government, The Sketch, owned by the governments of Oyo, Ogun and Ondo states, The Observer, (Bendel state government), The Herald, (Kwara state government), The Standard, (Plateau state government), The Star, (Anambra state government), The Statesman, (Imo state government), The Tide, (Rivers state government), The Tribune, The Concord and The Satellite, all of which were owned by political parties and politicians - Chief Awolowo and the U.P.N., Chief Abiola and the N.P.N., and Chief Nwobodo and the N.P.P. respectively. The Punch which belonged to Chief Aboderin, The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (F.R.C.N.) and The Nigerian Television Authority (N.T.A.) which were owned by the Federal Government with branches in all the states of the federation and in Abuja, the new federal capital territory, and The Broadcasting

Corporation of Oyo State (B.C.O.S.) which was owned by the Oyo state government. The number of news stories, column-centimetres analysed, the time period, the issues and units of analysis are given in the body of this thesis (at the end of the chapter in which the analysis is reported).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

### 1. General Literature on Political Communications

This section analyses the implications of major existing studies on political communications for the study of African political communications in general and for understanding political communications in Nigeria in particular.

Political communication has been a major focus of attention in political and social theory. However, the perspectives and problems that have informed the general studies of the subject have been very largely on modern Western societies. Although Aristotle recognised many years ago that politics and communication go hand in hand because they are essential parts of human nature, political communication as a concept distinct from other political analysis of communication phenomena or communication analysis of political phenomena is relatively new.

Humans are, according to Aristotle's Politics, 'political beings' and 'he who is without a polis, by reason of his own nature and not of some accident, is either a poor sort of being [a beast] or a being higher than man [a god].' And because nature makes nothing in vain, Aristotle continues, humans 'alone of the animals are furnished with the faculty of language'.<sup>16</sup>

Also, Bentley, as early as 1908, suggested that communication analysis could appropriately be applied to the study of politics because the raw materials of government 'is never found in one man by himself...It is a 'relation' between men...the action of men with or upon each other'.<sup>17</sup>

In the same vein, Lucian Pye pointed out about three decades ago, that there is a 'peculiarly intimate relationship between the political process and the communication process'.<sup>18</sup> Karl Deutsch also suggested that a study of the nerves of the body politic - its decision-making processes - gives insight into the performance of its bones and muscles - the exercise of power.<sup>19</sup>

**Earlier Studies:**

By far the most common area of research in the past has been election studies. Although research along these lines prospered, theories of political communications never emerged. The classic voting studies defined political communication research for many years and for that period, political communication was composed of mass mediated messages about politics. Even besides the voting studies conducted by political scientists and sociologists, one other academic group which developed a notion of political communication - the journalism and mass communication researchers - focused primarily on press (and later electronic) coverage of explicitly political events such as election campaigns. Perhaps this was why Meadow in an essay review of political communication research in the 1980s questioned whether there are new findings about the relationship between media and politics and whether there is more to political communication than election studies. He identified what he sees as the major problems of current political communication research. These are the tendency of rehashing the same findings over and over again, the continuing 'journalismization' of social science, the continuing focus on event-based research, particularly elections and the emphasis on crass empiricism at the expense of theory. He

suggested that given the limited contribution of more election studies, it would appear that the time is ripe for political communication research to move in new directions, with an agenda oriented to the political institutions, processes, and ideological environments of the 1990s, not the 1940s.<sup>20</sup>

### **Early Works on Political Communications:**

One significant early work to use political communication as a part of its title was Karl Deutsch's The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control. As the title implies, the work develops a series of models through which control in political systems is established. But Deutsch's book was most applicable and most effective in theoretically explaining power relationships, but less significant in its ability to draw a full picture of the scope of political communications. For instance, in Nigeria as in Africa, the questions of the ownership of mass media and its usage for power relationships, the contents of communications, the methods of information dissemination, the structure and organisation of the political communication process, how the means of communication are related to one another and how the patterns of political communications affect the development of representative government have to be examined, explained and analysed. It must be mentioned, however, that with Deutsch's work, political communication moved beyond evaluation of mass media in election ~~com~~ campaigns.

Research in comparative politics published about the same time as Deutsch's work returned political scientists to a position of leadership in political communication research. But more important, for the first time whole political

systems (rather than discrete events, such as elections within those systems) were considered to be influenced by communications. Of major relevance was the work of the development and modernisation oriented political scientists summarised by Fagen, who in a volume titled Politics and Communication, sought to consider 'a communication approach to the study of comparative politics'.<sup>21</sup> However, Fagen failed to consider the fuller implication of his definition because of his concern for macropolitical systems in a comparative framework. Key questions in the enquiry reveal the limits of the analysis. Fagen is concerned with communication processes in the selection of leaders, definition of the agenda, participation in decision-making, scope of permissible criticism, and socialisation. In other words, political communication analysis is essentially limited to participation and socialisation questions, particularly as related to questions of development.

Other recent works have also failed to take into account the analysis of the role of political processes in shaping the communications process; instead, they still maintain a narrow view of the scope of political communication. For example, in a volume explicitly titled Political Communication, Arora and Lasswell pay little attention to broad notions of political communication, instead considering it to be synonymous with the public language of politics as expressed in the elite press in the United States and India. This again is a mass media based notion of political communication.<sup>22</sup> Also Chaffee, in a volume entitled Political Communication, reflects the problem by conceptualising political communication as a unidirectional discipline:

'What is sought is a set of research paradigms through which we can extend the depth and breadth of our understanding of the role of communication in the political process'.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Blumler and Gurevitch<sup>25</sup> have addressed the issue of a more sophisticated notion of political communications. In their effort to demonstrate the theoretical linkage of communication to politics, they argue that if politics is about power, then this must be conveyed by power wielders. If politics is about participation, then the desires of citizens must be communicated to leaders. If politics is about legitimacy, then regime norms must be symbolically expressed. And, if politics is about choice, then policy options must be circulated.<sup>26</sup> In this way, politics and communication are linked.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Mass Media: Mass media of communication comprise the press (Newspapers), magazines, comic booklets, Radio, Television, Cinema and other means of communication which reach large heterogeneous audiences and in which there is an impersonal medium between the sender and receiver.<sup>27</sup> A mass medium is essentially a working group organised round some device for circulating the same message, at about the same time, to large numbers of people. The term mass media is also used to refer to the Institutions and techniques by which specialised groups employ technological devices to disseminate symbolic content to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences. It is that form of communication process which utilises mechanical electronic instruments and devices to create news and information, ideas and images and to transmit such messages simultaneously to a mass audience.

Political Stability: By this term we refer to persistence of political patterns with some degree of civil order, legitimacy, efficiency and durability. It is also used to refer to the existence of a legitimate constitutional regime, the relative absence of violent civil conflict, the absence of structural change in the political system and the relative longevity of 'government'. In fact, a composite view from the relevant literature concludes that when one speaks of the 'stability' of a certain democratic polity, one is referring to (a) the ability of the political system to persist; (b) the existence of a legitimate political system; and

(c) the presence of effective decision-making by the political system.

Political Instability: By this I mean a condition in political systems in which the institutionalised patterns of authority break down, and the expected compliance to political authorities is replaced by violence intended to change the personnel, policies, or sovereignty of the authorities through injury to persons or property.

A Stable Democracy: We use this term to refer to a system, characterised by constitutionalism, broad representation, freedom of opposition and governmental stability. It is also used to refer to a system characterised by a stable competitive party system, freedom of the press, political neutrality on the part of the military and police and relative absence of anomie groups. Political democracy is a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials. It is a social mechanism for the resolution of the problems of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest to choose among alternative contenders for political office.

Political Parties: By this term we refer to organised groups of individuals who work together to control the policies and personnel of the government. And by 'recognised' parties, we mean those political parties registered by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), as in 1979-1983, or National Electoral

Commission (NEC) as in 1990- , as eligible to present candidates and compete for political offices in the Elections of the Second and Third Republics in Nigeria.

Political Communication: By this term we refer to that subset of communicatory activity considered political by virtue of the consequences, actual and potential, that it has for the functioning of the political system. It is also used as a process in which informational and persuasive messages are transmitted from the political institutions of society through the mass media to the citizenry to whom they are ultimately accountable. It is the role that communication plays in political institutions and process and the role politics plays in shaping communication processes.

National Newspaper: Defining 'national' newspaper in the Nigerian context has been problematic, given the absence of universally respected indices.<sup>28</sup> Data on circulation cannot be used to measure spread of circulation because much of the circulation data available are collected by the newspapers themselves or by advertising agencies which do not command general acceptance.

The convention, given the experience of other writers, has been either to assume a meaning or define 'national' to include any or all of the following:

Circulation and offices in Lagos, the outgoing federal Capital (given the historical role of Lagos as centre of the earlier presses and the tendency to, because of this, now open office in Lagos); place of publication, circulation and presence in big cities, spread of correspondents; and, given the high mortality

rate, those old enough to have been seen around for long enough in most parts of the country for their 'national' claim to be well accepted.

News Stories: We define this term for Newspapers as including editorials, letters to the editor, features, grape vine, world sport-light, Datelines, Question time, Peoples' Parliament, as well as ordinary news reports, but excluding advertisements, obituaries, cartoons, In Memoriam, public notices, puzzles, radio and television listings and similar announcements.

Communication Content: By this term we mean that body of meanings through symbols (verbal, musical, pictorial, plastic, gestural) which makes up the communication itself. In the classic sentence identifying the process of communication - 'who says what, to whom, how, with what effect' - communication content is the what.

Content Analysis: By this term we refer to the research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.

Journalist: By this term we refer to a person whose primary occupation is the gathering, writing and editing of materials which consist largely of the reporting or interpretation of current events. Anybody who deals with the dissemination of news or information on a large scale is a journalist.

Fourth Estate of the Realm: By this term we refer to the newspaper press. The term goes back to the early days of the British Parliament, with its three estates of man; Lords Spiritual, Lords Temporal, and 'Commons'. 'The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the "realm"', wrote Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay.

Editorial: By this term we refer to an essay or article on the editorial page, usually without a byline, that expresses the opinion of the editor, the newspaper, or editorial writer on an issue or event that is often controversial.

Mast Head: This is a box or table, usually on the editorial, listing top editors and offering other information about the paper: frequency of publication, place of publication and the like. The name of the paper, running across the top of page 1, is the nameplate or flag.

Good Government: We use this term in the same sense it was used in the Reports of the Constitution Drafting Committee in Nigeria as effective and popular government. Effectiveness was to be derived from the decisive action and authority of the President, while the provisions on citizen participation in governmental affairs were intended to make government reflect the popular will.

A Theory: We use this term to refer to a set of general statements which act as the premises for explanation. Theories are used to

explain, to organise, systematise, predict, generate hypothesis, and coordinate existing knowledge in a particular area or field.

Bias: This concept is used in this study to explain the tendency of the newspapers to lean in favour of or towards a particular government, group, political party - or against them - by giving more or less coverage, in terms of quantity of stories, the majority of which occupy prominent positions in the papers and/or favourable or unfavourable to the particular political party, candidate, government or ethnic groups.

Ownership: The Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English defines 'ownership' as 'state of being an owner', 'right of possessing', and an owner is a person who owns something or has a property.

Favourable Story: Any story about a political party directed to any audience to get votes, or story in defence of a party's policy or any story reporting about a member leaving party A to join party B (decamping), is entered under party B as a favourable story. Stories pointing to the success, progress, orderliness in a party depicting the programmes of such a party as being desirable are also favourable. Favourable stories in general reported cases of progress in the parties' campaigns strategies. Favourable stories showed the parties and their candidates in good light. Favourable stories also showed the presidential candidate as:

Having the best programme that would benefit the majority of the people.

Having the ability to execute his programme - talking about his past achievements, honesty, experience and efficiency.

As a national leader who would unite the country. Any statement meant to preserve the loyalty of friends and win over foes.

Unfavourable Story: In this study, these are stories depicting any of the parties as irresponsible, or pointing to weakness in ideology, leadership, etc. and reporting that many have decamped from such parties. An unfavourable story also refers to any derogatory article about a party or its candidate. Unfavourable stories in general reported issues like crises in the party, people decamping from the party, and also described the low and disheartening campaign tactics of political parties. In short, unfavourable stories showed the parties and candidates in a bad light. Unfavourable stories also portrayed the presidential candidate as:

Having the worst or an unrealistic programme.

Lacking the ability to execute his programme - talking of inexperience, ignorance, dishonesty, poor records and inefficiency.

As a tribalist, an elitist or a capitalist.

Any statement meant to mobilise hatred against the candidate and his party as well as to demoralise his supporters.

Neutral Story: Any story which has no particular inclinations as to whether it is favourable or unfavourable. Any item that is devoid of appeal for votes is a neutral story. For example, a story reporting about the plan of a political party to embark on a campaign tour. Neutral stories portrayed information about parties, candidates, issues and events covered without the occurrence of positive or negative references.

Prominence: In this study, this refers to the placement of the story in the newspaper.

Special Stories: These are stories which appeared in the regular columns such as: 'Candido', 'As I see it' in the New Nigerian; 'Political Round-Up' as in The Daily Times. Articles written by the columnists who write regularly for the newspapers as well as special interviews with the candidates are considered special stories.

Hypotheses: Research hypotheses are derived from the theory of the social investigator and generally state a specified relation between two or more variables. An example of a research hypothesis might be: 'There is an inverse association between variables X and Y'. More specifically, 'When job satisfaction decreases, labour

turnover increases'. The symbol  $H_1$  is used to identify research hypotheses.

Another kind of hypothesis is called the statistical hypothesis. This statistical hypothesis is usually constructed to enable the social researcher to evaluate his research hypothesis. Often the statistical hypothesis is stated in null form. Such an hypothesis might be 'There is no association between variables X and Y'. Hypotheses such as this are referred to as null hypotheses. The symbol  $H_0$  is used to represent hypotheses of this type.

The Chi-Square Test: The Chi-square is a test of significance. It tells us whether our observations differ from what is expected by chance, when chance is defined according to a particular set of rules.

Models: A model seeks to show the main elements of any structure or process and the relationships between these elements. Deutsch notes the following main advantages of models in the social sciences. Firstly, they have an organizing function by ordering and relating systems to each other and by providing us with images of wholes that we might not otherwise perceive. An aspect of this is that a model gives a general picture of a range of different particular circumstances. Secondly, they help in explaining, by providing in a simplified way information which would otherwise be complicated or ambiguous. This gives the model a heuristic function since it can guide the student or researcher to keypoints of a process or system. Thirdly, the model may make it possible to

predict outcomes or the course of events. It can at least be a basis for assigning probabilities to various alternative outcomes, and hence for formulating hypotheses in research. Some models claim only to describe the structure of a phenomenon. In this sense, a diagram of the components of a radio set could be described as 'structural'. Other models, which we call 'functional', describe systems in terms of energy, forces and their direction, the relations between parts and the influence of one part on another.<sup>29</sup>

## ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTERS

Political Communication in Nigeria is treated in this thesis in terms of the following organisation, structure and chapters. The thesis begins with an introduction which explains the focus of the study, research questions, hypotheses, sources and methods of data collections and analyses, overviews of pertinent and relevant literature on the subject, definition of terms in order to give the reader a detailed overview and prepare him to grasp the general message of the project and the identification of its major ideas. A list of notes and references which contains all citations to examples, documentation, quotations, sources for verification and possible additional reading on some areas of interest is located at the end of each chapter.

Chapter One examines theoretical models of political communications in general and their implications for political communications in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular. Because of the circumstances of the African countries, the great variety of social, economic and political conditions and the changing nature of the African situations which limit the application of other theoretical models or that reduce their potential benefits to Africa, Chapter Two deals with political communications in Africa and the impact of ownership on mass media behaviour. Chapter Three is an historical background, while Chapter Four is an attempt to propose a theoretical model of Nigerian political communications based on the ownership of the mass media and the philosophy that guides their behaviour as a result of this model. This chapter also examines the nature of the Nigerian state and society, its political economy and

development, its heterogeneity, its ethnic, linguistic, tribal, religious compositions, the origins, birth and development of its media, together with their involvement in partisan political activism. The press in Nigeria, as elsewhere, does not operate in a vacuum, but responds to its particular historical and socio-politico-economic environments. In order to understand the Nigerian political communications, therefore, we must understand the nature of the Nigerian social system, its constitutional engineering and how the press grew with political parties, governments and ethnic chauvinism. Chapter Four has been devoted to this task.

Chapter Five begins to relate the theoretical model of ownership of Nigerian mass media and their behaviour on political communications to the empirical case studies of how the newspapers were actually used by their owners for political communications in the First and Second Republics. It examines how 8 newspapers of variegated ownership pattern, involving government (federal and regional), political parties and private interests alike, covered national, ethnic and political issues during the republic. In a way it is a survey of political communication issues in Nigeria's First Republic - electoral politics, census politics, ethnic politics, and the press contribution to the fall of this republic.

Chapter Six is on the Nigerian press under the military regimes. Although the military is increasingly being regarded as an aberration in governance by social scientists, nevertheless it is a factor to be reckoned with in Nigerian politics. Even though political activities and constitution are suspended under the military, the way some recurring issues in Nigeria are tackled by the military leads one to think that Nigerian military rulers are politicians in khaki uniform.

Chapters Seven and Eight continue to relate the theoretical model of ownership of Nigerian mass media and their impact on political communications to the empirical case studies of how the mass media were actually used for the coverage of the 1979 and 1983 general elections in Nigeria. They give qualitative and quantitative analyses of the development and content of 13 newspapers, radio and television stations of variegated ownership pattern, involving governments (Federal and State), political parties and private interests alike, all of which, it is hoped, capture enough of whatever editorial differences that might have been anticipated as a result of ownership. It is also hoped to establish the tendency of media to be biased in favour of and/or against particular registered political parties, governments, ethnic groups, and candidates in coverage of election campaigns, to play down programmes of 'small' parties and lay greater emphasis on the 'big' parties, to become willing instruments and megaphones of their owners - individuals, governments, politicians - in the positioning of news stories with blatant disregard for professional journalistic ethics and constitutional provision; to de-emphasise the interest of the public, especially the majority rural electorate and to give <sup>an</sup> asymmetric amount of unfavourable and neutral news stories to political party programmes.

The Conclusion critically evaluates the other factors of the anatomy of press bias in Nigerian political communications. It examines the implications of such factors (in addition to the key factor of ownership and control) as ethnicity and religion, economy, literacy, legal limitations and press freedom, as well as linguistic barriers in information dissemination and political communications among a host of other factors. This section, which concludes the discussion and

closes the thesis, is also an amplification and a summary of findings on political communications in Nigeria in particular and in Africa in general. In the light of the discussions, the literature overviews, the interviews, the research experiences, participant observations and content analyses, this section also offers some concluding thoughts as representing and recapitulating the essence of this research project and its attempted contributions to knowledge in the areas of the theory, methodology and practice of political communications and their implications for Nigeria's Third Republic and subsequent years.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES TO THE INTRODUCTION

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THEORETICAL MODELS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the relevant theoretical models of political communications, political importance of the mass media, the utility of communication in politics, theories of the press and communication systems and their implications for the study of political communications in African countries.

#### 1.1 Models of Political Communications

Many different models of political communications have been offered from sociological to psychological, Marxist to non-Marxist, and normative to empirical.<sup>1</sup> However, some have ignored the critical issues which are the main themes of my thesis. For instance, who controls or owns the mass media and in whose interest? Who has access to the media and on what terms? Whose version of the world (social reality) is presented? What variable factors limit or enlarge the power of the media in covering events and how effective are they in adhering to the ethics of journalism?

Functionalism: The functional model analyses the consequences of communications, particularly mass media, to the political system. It considers the role of communications and communication processes with respect to the selection of leaders, the definition of the political agenda, participation in decision making, receptivity to criticism, and socialisation.

'All of the functions performed in the political system - political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication - my emphasis - rule-making, rule-application and rule-adjudication are performed by means of communication'<sup>2</sup>

But the functional approach has ignored questions such as who has power in society<sup>3</sup> (rather than what are the implications of the division of power), how are conflicts resolved, and who controls political information? In African countries, where the channels of communication are not only mostly short but also personal, political and governmental, power lies with ownership and control of the media. For instance, in an African village which has, say, one radio, the ownership of that radio is both a symbol and a tool of power. The owner is in a position to know what is happening in the capital, or in foreign capitals, or in the market, before others know it. Furthermore, he is in a position to share the experience of using the radio, or the information derived from the radio, with whomsoever he wishes. Similarly, the ownership of a newspaper by a government, a private individual, an ethnic group or a political advocate in an African country, is an altogether more potent fact of power and status than such ownership by such groups in a Western country.

Systems Approach: The systems approach to communication explains the interaction among elements in the system. Communication is linked to control in general. More specifically, as it relates to political communication, communication is for social control. Processes for describing patterns of social control, system responsiveness, and other mechanistic social forces are described through the systems approach. The most important contributions to this approach have been made by Deutsch, although the work of Easton has also been very influential. However, general systems theory is not without its limitations. Criticisms of the approach range from the argument that systems theory routinizes, trivializes and mechanizes complex social phenomena; and only describes rather than explains social phenomena. Moreover, in terms of its utility for capturing political variables, it neither describes key political concepts such as power or socialization, nor explains processes by which political goals are established.

#### 1.2. The Utility of Communication in Politics

~Some kinds of communication on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people under some kinds of conditions have some kinds of effects.<sup>4</sup>

The problem of examining the political role of the mass media in political communications and their effects on national issues, election campaigns in particular, is not confined to Nigeria. Anywhere in the world, the press has always been involved in politics, formation of public opinion, perception of images of candidates for political offices, the definition of social reality and social norms, the education, information, enlightenment and

entertainment of the public, as well as the presentation and clarification of issues, values, goals and changes in culture and society.

Great scholars have been concerned with the possible influence of mass media of communication on the formation of public opinion and attitudes, but there have been divergent and diametrically opposed views on the subject. The result of many disputes about the role of the press is arguably what the French call a 'dialogue of the deaf', where nobody hears the other side's argument.

The entire study of mass communication is based on the premise, that there are effects from the media, yet it seems to be the issue on which there is least certainty and least agreement'.<sup>5</sup>

Aristotle and Plato<sup>6</sup>, for instance, acknowledge the immense power of propaganda carried out on the face to face setting during their days. Some writers believe that the media are very powerful while others see the powers of the press as very limited. For example, politicians and journalists are agreed that the role of media is crucial, though they disagree about how effectively it is being played. Further tribute to this role is paid by the various social scientists who have made research into mass media and political communications a growth point in academic industry. Yet clear and specific descriptions, definitions and analysis of what the mass media actually contribute, or ought to contribute, to the political communication process are still inconclusive. In the words of C.R. Wright,

It is customary to speak of 'the influence of the press' in global terms, as if it were a single, indivisible pressure at work within society, but closer examination reveals that newspapers are actually multi-functional institutions which make their presence felt in a variety of ways?

Political Importance of the Mass Media:

Harold Lasswell, itemises three functions performed by the mass media -viz: surveillance of the world to report ongoing events, interpretation of the meaning of events, and socialisation of individuals into their cultural settings<sup>8</sup>. Another attribute of the media is the deliberate manipulation of the political process<sup>9</sup>. The manner in which these functions are performed, it is argued, affects the lives of individuals, groups, and social organisations, as well as the course of domestic and international politics<sup>10</sup>.

In short, the main argument of those who believe in the omnipotent power of the mass media is that it is primarily through the media that citizens monitor their political process, gain information and insights on the functioning of government, its leaders, and the problems confronting the nation in both domestic and international spheres<sup>11</sup>. They also argue that there is no national election campaign outside the media and that the polls and the media, at least at election campaign time, cannot live without each other. By raising certain political questions in the public forum, the media can bring issues to heightened public consciousness, emphasise one political conflict at the expense of another, and influence the range and substance of national debate.

It is no exaggeration to say that the media can make or break presidential hopefuls. Not only may they determine who will

receive massive electoral support, but their ability to project advantageous or disadvantageous images for candidates and link them to suitable issues also may decide who will be elected eventually. Lang and Lang observed:

"The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass media should think about, know about, and have feelings about"<sup>12</sup>

In relation to developing societies, the communication functions of the mass media are even more crucial.<sup>13</sup> A developing society is in a more or less constant condition of crisis, faced with the possibility of disunity, with the need to mobilise its people for a war on poverty, disease, hunger, indiscipline, economic sabotage, smuggling, armed robbery, hooliganism, vandalism, brigandage, social injustice, and crippling attitudes and traditions, and with the need to ensure that its few resources, both human, physical, natural and material, are harnessed for achieving the goals of political stability, rapid industrialisation, rural development, freedom of the individual, greater economic equality, democratic political participation, and for solutions to other problems.

African political communications cannot adequately be explained within the context of the Anglo-American press theories.<sup>14</sup> For example, no thoroughly libertarian media systems are found in Africa. All national radio and television systems are owned by the government. Ownership is either outright, with supervision by

such officials as the Minister of Information, or by government corporations. Government after government has decided it must have the sensitive broadcasting tool in hand.<sup>16</sup>

In the same vein, African nations cannot truly be classified as having an authoritarian press theory, although the press in some African countries has many elements of the authoritarian philosophy, which emphasises the existence of a privately owned but heavily controlled press.

The more prevalent pattern in Africa, however, is for the government to own and operate the press.

Consequently, the Soviet Communist theory in some way better describes the African setting. Like U.S.S.R., many African nations have a wholly owned government and party press, with major policy decisions made by a single ruling party. Many nations also put major emphasis on the positive harnessing of media outlets for the goals of national development and social change. Another ingredient is the value placed on unity. In such a setting, the mass media become teachers of the masses.

But the Soviet Communist theory also is less than satisfactory to describe Africa. It is rooted in the ideology of Marx and Lenin and leaves out non-communist nations that also utilise the press as an agent of national development. Although Guinea, Somalia, and Congo endorse selected concepts of communism, Nigeria and most African nations with a wholly owned government press express little or no ideological affinity for communism. Their press theory is based on ownership, economics and practical choice, not Western concepts of political ideology. As noted earlier, the libertarian theory also seems inappropriate for the

nations of the Third World. It is based on the historical evolution of democratic concepts in Western Europe, which derived from universal literacy and the weakening of traditional monarchies. The basic foundation of the libertarian theory is a financially independent press that can operate as a watchdog on government. This theory can only be an ideal in Africa because there is still massive illiteracy and a lack of private capital to support an independent press.

The final press theory offered in the Siebert-Peterson-Schramm<sup>16</sup> analysis, Social Responsibility, is based on media responsibilities and functions in a highly urbanised, industrial society. Robert Hutchins and the Commission of Freedom of the Press in the U.S. were concerned about maintaining the free marketplace of ideas in an age when prohibitive costs restricted media ownership to only a few individuals or giant corporations. The commission suggested a degree of government control to assure that all viewpoints would have access to the mass media. Such a press theory, dealing with the problems of the mass media in post-industrial society, seems to have little relevance for the developing nations of Africa, since there are other factors which dictate the 'responsibility' of the mass media.

#### CONCLUSION

The implication of some of these models and theories for political communications in Africa is that there is a major danger in categorising African nations on the basis of theories of the press conceived from the viewpoint of Western values and

concepts. Although mass media in Africa may be operated according to principles deriving from some of the theories, nevertheless there are many circumstances of Africa which limit their application.

One circumstance is the absence of some of the conditions necessary for a developed mass communication system: the communication infrastructure; the professional skills; the production and cultural resources; the available audience. Another related factor is the dependence on the developed world for what is missing in the way of technology, skills and cultural products. Thirdly, there is (variable) devotion of African societies to economic, political and social development as a primary national task, to which other institutions should submit.

'It is inappropriate to judge governments and press in Africa by the same criteria one would apply in the United Kingdom or the United States....Africa is in a transitional state, experimenting with new forms of democracy and building new political structures'<sup>17</sup>

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## CHAPTER TWO.

### POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN AFRICA

#### INTRODUCTION

It seems logical to have a chapter of comparable studies on political communications in Africa before we analyse political communications in Nigeria. This will help to shape a general understanding of the political role of communications media in developing societies and provide in particular the necessary background for discussing and explaining the various ownership problems, issues, findings, analyses, recommendation and conclusion that are offered in this thesis. This chapter is devoted to the task of examining political communications in Africa in terms of the communications media, their models, their origin, struggle for independence, ownership and control, as well as the development and problems of political communications in different regions of the continent at different periods in history.<sup>1</sup>

Although communications media have been used for political communications and public opinion formation in Africa from time immemorial, it still remains a sad fact that among the developing regions of Asia, Latin America and Africa, Africa is the continent with the least developed communications media in general, and the lowest circulation of newspapers in particular.<sup>2</sup> This is as a result of many problems which are dealt with in the subsequent sections of this Chapter. The communications media of Africa consist of the traditional communications media, the modern mass communication media, newspapers, radio, television and news agencies. But first, we examine the African Press Models and Political Communication.

Map of Africa showing the African countries.



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## 2.1 MODELS OF THE AFRICAN PRESS AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Monographs on the functioning of mass media in given African countries consist, frequently of two parts. The first part deals with general information about a country or region, that is, it is concerned with its geography, culture, history, and economic and social conditions. The second part contains a proper analysis of mass media which is a full, or partial, realisation of Lasswell's research directives: Who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect.<sup>3</sup> The 'who' question includes the study of organisation and personnel, 'what' refers to the content, 'channel' to the study of different media, 'to whom' points to the structure of the audience; and the 'with what effect?' aspect has received attention in the studies of mass media impact and audience response.

Although this formula was put forward over forty years ago, it is still a guide-line of research and a very useful approach to the study of mass media of communication and their effects. In Africa generally the functions expected of the mass media, especially by most African leaders, are harnessing the press for nation-building, the press as an instrument of national unity, the need for 'constructive' criticism, and the press as an agent of mass education. This type of functional expectation has influenced the kind of African press models that have emerged in recent years.

Before independence, there were four distinctive ways of categorising the African press.

The first was the authoritarian (e.g. Ethiopia, Liberia, and Portuguese and Spanish Africa) in which the mass media were characteristically

either instruments of government or non-political and highly deferential toward government. In the second category (Union of South Africa, Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Belgian Congo), one finds in varying degrees a very highly developed European press and radio networks, the virtual non-existence of an independent African-owned press; and newspapers and other literature addressed to Africans, but owned either by government or missionary societies, or by Europeans deferential to government policies. In the third category, missionary societies and colonial governments specifically developed the media, the former to spread their particular brand of the gospel, and the latter to further programmes of mass literacy and rural development, as well as to counter nationalist activity. In the fourth (e.g. the Sudan, British West Africa, and French tropical Africa), one finds variant forms in which the distinctive feature of the pattern is the early growth and overwhelming predominance of African-owned and edited newspapers.<sup>4</sup>

However, at least two developments have brought about a change in this earlier pattern. One has been the emergence of an independent press whose influence upon political developments and popular attitudes has been profound. The other has been the expansion in the public relations activities of governments.

#### Hachten's Model of the African Press

Today there is a basic authoritarian model for the African press.<sup>5</sup>

William A. Hachten contends that the press systems of the African nations can be

better organised by using the concepts of authoritarian, libertarian and neo-communist.

'Under the neo-communist ideology, all instruments of mass communication are brought under direct government control and ownership so they may best serve government policy in a "revolutionary state", Hachten wrote. The neo-communist theory, of course, is government ownership and party control without the ideology of Marx or Lenin. But the purpose of the press remains the same. As Hachten put it, 'The media must serve government, which is inseparable from the party and its leader. The press should inform and work for national integration and inspire the people, but not criticise the government or the leadership'.<sup>6</sup>

Although he included libertarian as a classification, Hachten saw little use for the category in Africa:

'The western model of the newspaper as a profit-making enterprise, independent of government, and supplying the public with reliable and objective news and public information is seldom found, although many African journalists aspire to such a press. Economic and social factors - poverty, illiteracy, economic structure, Linguistic and ethnic diversity - have combined to inhibit such media development.<sup>7</sup>

However, Hachten said, the authoritarian classification has greater application in independent black Africa:

The non-governmental newspapers are usually permitted wide latitude to report the news, provide

entertainment and pass along government information, as long as they do not directly challenge the government or its leadership. Some news media carry a good deal of news and even low level criticism of public officials. Yet always lurking behind the newsman is the potential restraint of government; the newspapers usually know how far to go'.<sup>8</sup>

### Assessment

Hachten's press model, although interesting, is too simplistic. African press systems are either neo-communist or authoritarian under his classification and there is little opportunity for more descriptive differentiation. Like the four theories discussed earlier, Hachten's is also tied to press ownership in determining the difference between neo-communist and authoritarian. It thus fails to recognise that wholly owned governmental press systems can be more authoritarian than neo-communistic. It also ignores other types of ownership common in Africa.

A better model with a double approach is proposed by Ralph L. Lowenstein. Press systems are classified on one level by ownership and on another by press philosophy.

### Lowenstein's Model of the African Press

The model is a two-tier concept, which has more flexibility and descriptive quality than the earlier four theories or Hachten's model. The first tier is classification of dominant press ownership in the country, using three categories:

**Private:** Ownership by individuals or non-governmental corporations, supported primarily by advertising or subscription.

**Multiparty:** Ownership by competitive political parties, subsidised by party or party members.

**Government:** Ownership by government or dominant government party, subsidised primarily by government funds or government-collected license fees.<sup>9</sup>

The second tier involves categorising press philosophies:

**Authoritarian:** Negative government controls over the press to stifle criticism and thereby maintain ruling elites.

**Social-Centralist:** Positive government controls to harness the press for national economic and philosophical goals.

**Libertarian:** Absence of government controls, assuring a free market place of ideas and operation of self-righting process.

**Socio-Libertarian:** Minimal government controls to unclog channels of communication and assure operational spirit of libertarian philosophy. All viewpoints, including those of the opposition, are heard.

## Assessment

Lowenstein's four press philosophies somewhat resemble Siebert-Peterson-Schramm's four theories, but there are important differences. For one, the Soviet Communist theory has been renamed the social-centralist theory. In effect, this removes the ingredient of communist ideology as a philosophical base and recognises the fact that many Third World nations harness the press for national development on the basis of other considerations.

The social responsibility theory has been renamed <sup>the</sup> social-libertarian concept by Lowenstein. The meaning is essentially the same but avoids the semantic problem of attempting to define a socially responsible press. As Merrill points out, it depends on who is doing the defining: government or publishers. In the Third World, the social-libertarian philosophy probably is best represented by nations that provide an opportunity, through minimum controls, for political parties to operate a press in opposition to the government in power.

By separating the element of ownership from the press philosophy, Lowenstein's two-tier concept permits a different interpretation of authoritarian press systems. The Siebert-Peterson-Schramm concept was based on the premise that government controlled an essentially private press. In Africa, however, a nation may be authoritarian even though no privately owned press exists. The major criterion is not ownership, but how the government utilises its press system. In some African states, government ownership is a negative control because no attempt is made to harness the press for economic development. Government ownership and regulation are effective methods to suppress dissent, control the

dissemination of information, and maintain the status quo; they may not be vehicles for social change.

By the same token, removal of ownership considerations makes it possible for nations with elements of a private press to be classified as having a social-centralist philosophy. Again, the emphasis is not necessarily on ownership, but <sup>on</sup> <sub>how</sub> national leaders view the role and function of the press. If the press (government or privately owned) is perceived as an integral part of national development, its role is defined within that cultural framework. This is particularly relevant when a private press operates under the watchful eyes of a military regime or a formalised one-party state.

It also is entirely possible, under Lowenstein's two-tier model, that different media in the country will reflect different ownership and philosophies. The print media may be privately owned, operating under a social-libertarian philosophy, <sup>while</sup> <sub>the</sub> the broadcasting services are government-owned and operate under the social-centralist philosophy.

Although the two-tier concept is not completely value-free in terms of Western judgements, it does offer a pragmatic and flexible system for classifying press systems in the African countries.

## 2.2 Developmentalism

Out of the authoritarian concept in African nations that mass communication media should be mobilised for national development came the notion of 'development journalism' which has been applied in many parts of the continent. Development communication, or Development Support communication

as it is sometimes called, states that the state should not be content to control the media in a negative sense, censoring or requiring self-censorship of the press, but the state should go beyond this to guide the media in publicising development tasks and achievements.

The main principles of <sup>*an African*</sup> development communication model can be stated as follows:

- ◀ Media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy;
- ◀ Freedom of the media should be open to restriction according to (1) economic priorities and (2) development needs of African society;
- ◀ Media should give priority in their content to the national culture and language;
- ◀ Media should give priority in news and information to links with other African countries which are close geographically, culturally and politically;
- ◀ Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks;

- In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict, media operations, and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified.<sup>10</sup>

### A Critique

Whether it is called development support communications or developmental journalism, there is the distinct danger that this philosophy of African communications will take the form of 'government say-so' journalism. Depending on one's definition of this new concept, development journalism belongs either to the authoritarian or to the social responsibility theory of the press. It is just another example of new wine in old bottles. It is a relatively vague concept charged with political rhetoric. The obvious questions are: who determines national goals and indices of development? What are these goals and who benefits? Under the banner of development communication, African governments and politicians in most states now control the media for their own political goals. Also, under the aegis of development journalism, African elites have worked out a political communication strategy consistent with their power interest. By defining what people are fed as reality, most ruling African groups consolidate and perpetuate power in the name of development journalism. Indeed, in most of the developing African states, the media are manipulated by politicians to present only those facts and issues that are of interest to them.

### **2.3 The Control of the Newspaper Press**

One reason for concern about media ownership and control is expressed in the old adage that 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' - or at any rate is less likely to have to listen to uncongenial and discordant tunes. Research evidence has shown that control and influence do go with ownership. The owner of an enterprise controls the policies, management, organisation, recruitment, behaviour of the enterprise, and also influences whatever goes on in the establishment.

Government attempts to control and manipulate the media are universal because governments throughout the world believe media effects are important political forces. This belief is based on the assumption that institutions which control public information shape public knowledge and behaviour and thereby determine the support or opposition of citizens and officials to the government and its policies.

The methods by which governments control the communications media vary from one system to another. Generally, control may take the form of monitoring the appointment of media personnel, control over the financing of media enterprises, control over media content, shielding of sensitive governmental proceedings and the frequent use of treason and sedition laws and a host of other formal and informal techniques and processes by which government officials exert influence on the press-legislation, licensing, regulation, judicial rulings, the issuing or withholding of information, officials' threats and pressures.

In Africa, government control of the press takes various forms such as: direct control through the ministry of information, government-organised

corporation or a similar agency, restrictive legislation, laws, regulations and decrees, newsprint rationing, licensing of newspapers, postal and tariff regulations, excessive secrecy in the execution of public business, threats, open intimidation, bribery, censorship, proscription of newspapers, arrest and imprisonment of journalists, and a host of other methods of controlling the press.<sup>11</sup> Politicians, businessmen, trades union leaders and other special interest groups also exert control on the press.<sup>12</sup> Let us examine briefly some of these control mechanisms.

#### Laws, Regulations, Legislation and Decrees

The broader the legislation, the more authority a government has over the press. Libel and sedition laws of a highly restrictive nature have been reported in the Central African Republic,<sup>13</sup> Ethiopia, Gabon, Malawi, Mauritania, Somalia, Uganda and Zaire. Restrictive laws<sup>14</sup> are also applied in Benin, Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda, Swaziland and Burkina Fasso<sup>15</sup> among others.<sup>16</sup> Malawi in 1973 passed a law making the publication of a false report punishable by life imprisonment. Nigeria has had about 25 of such restrictive legislations - sedition laws, Official Secrets Act, the Criminal Codes, Decrees 2, 4 and 11, laws of obscenity, defamation, libel and a host of other extra-legal and non-legal restrictive laws including emergency regulations to control the press.

#### and Arrest, Physical, Psychological, Harassment and Imprisonment of Journalists

Journalists have been murdered, arrested and jailed the world over. Africa has had its share of such incidents. The killing of journalists in Uganda and Equitorial Guinea resulted in most established newsmen leaving those

countries. Beatings and other forms of man-handling have been the journalists' lot in many African countries. Legislators, government officials, the police and soldiers have conducted a constantly running battle with journalists. Also, verbal and written threats, damage to printing and recording equipment, unannounced police searches, proscription of newspapers, suspension, banning and other forms of harassment have been experienced.

Between October 1968 and January 1969, Rajat Neogy, the editor of the influential Ugandan magazine, Transition, and Abubakar Mayanja, a local politician and constitutional lawyer, were imprisoned on charges of sedition because the editor published an article written by Mayanja, on the question of the Africanisation of the judiciary in Uganda. When later the two men were acquitted of the sedition charges against them by the Uganda High Court, they were promptly re-arrested and detained under the country's emergency regulations and the magazine was banned.<sup>17</sup> The editor of the Istiqlal party newspaper, La Nation Africaine, was imprisoned in 1965 and the newspaper banned by the Moroccan government because the paper criticized the <sup>alleged</sup> high-handedness of King Hassan. Almost at the same time, newspapers Le Progres, Actualites Africaines, and Presence Congolaise of Congo-Kinshasa were also seized by the government because they criticized the postponement of the country's national elections.<sup>18</sup> The list could be extended.

In Nigeria, cases of media practitioners' harassment and incarceration that are still fresh in memory include: Horatio Jackson of the Weekly Record, jailed for sedition for his article 'There is no Justice in Nigeria'; J.B. Davies of the Times of Nigeria, the controversial columnist, and Herbert

Macaulay, who were members of a Delegation to London protesting against the Land Acquisition Ordinance and other objectionable legislation; Tai Solarin for his article 'The Beginning of the End'; the proscription of the Newswatch magazine by the Babangida military regime;; Mr. Minere Amakiri, chief correspondent of The Nigerian Observer, who was stripped, beaten up and his head shaved because of a story on the teachers' strike published on a military Governor's (Diete-Spiff's) 31st birthday in Rivers State during the Gowon military regime; the imprisonment of Mr. Thompson and Nduka Irabor of The Guardian for one year under decree 4 during the Buhari military regime; the little-known case of Segun Sowemimo, a journalist whose tragic death inspired the title of Wole Soyinka's prison notes, The Man Died; the mysterious and sudden death of Dele Giwa through a letter bomb during the Babangida military regime; and a host of other cases that cannot be mentioned here for lack of space and time. The sacking of Jonathan Ishaku, editor of the Plateau State government owned Nigerian Standard over the editorials published on the retirement of Dr. Ayagi and Chief Olasore, two Bank Chief Executives because of their different views from that of Babangida government on financial and economic matters, and the detention of Mohammed Haruna, Managing Director of the Federal Government owned New Nigerian Newspapers Limited for authorising the publication in the New Nigerian of an advertisement by the Council of Ulaama over the unjust, unfair and unconstitutional treatments being meted against Muslims under Babangida's military administration, all deserve mentioning.<sup>19</sup> In the published advertisement, the Council of Ulaama had enjoined Muslims to take steps to

protect themselves saying that the government and the security agents, including the armed forces, had failed to protect them as citizens of Nigeria.

### **Censorship and Control of the Newsprint**

Prior censorship of materials in newspapers and magazines is exercised in over 60 per cent of African countries. More prevalent than government censorship is self-censorship by African pressmen and women. Another area of control is through the rationing of newsprint which is a very expensive item sometimes involving precious foreign exchange. Even where newsprint is produced locally, the government still uses its supply against the press through exorbitant prices, hoarding or total denial.

### **Judicial Processes**

In some African countries, the one area available to block, reverse or redress abuses of journalists by government officials has been the judicial arm of government. In fact, some newsmen have sued for damages and won as in the cases of many Nigerian pressmen: Amakiri, Dele Giwa, Tony Momoh and others - whose cases were fought in courts of law by lawyers such as Chief Gani Fawehinmi. However, many of the African countries are thought not to have judges who are free from governmental control since judges are appointed by the ruling political party or military junta. On many occasions, judges in African courts complain that 'their hands are tied' when giving judgements. As a result, many journalists in Africa have been in and out of jail repeatedly.

## 2.4 Problems of Communications Media in Africa

From the foregoing historical analysis of political communications in Africa, it is evident that communications media are fraught with many problems. Details of these are given in analysis of the anatomy of press bias in Nigeria political communications. Here we shall confine this section to those general factors contributing to problems of communication in the whole of the African continent today.

The first of these obstacles is linguistic in nature. Africa is the most multi-lingual area of the world if population is measured against languages. Nobody knows how many languages there are. A fairly small area of Cameroon, for example, contains more than one hundred languages, almost all of them unwritten. Nigeria, the most populous nation in Black Africa, has over four hundred languages.<sup>20</sup> As a result of the great number of ethnic groups and their different languages, difficulties in communication are created between various groups and the communications media have to resort to European languages. In fact, non-indigenous foreign languages have been adopted as the official media in nearly all African states.

When attention is focused on the problems of information, dissemination and political communications through African languages, a number of inter-related questions readily come to mind:

- (1) How many are recognised African languages?
  
- (2) How many of these languages are widely-spoken?

- (3) How many are written and how many have standard orthographies?
- (4) How many have systematically developed meta-language and specialised vocabularies for effective information dissemination in various fields of human activity?
- (5) How many have dictionaries, encyclopaedia and other reference sources that are suitable for information dissemination at various levels?
- (6) How many are taught at the primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels in Africa?
- (7) If they are being taught at all, how effectively, and with what instructional materials?

Although, these and a host of other related questions provide additional frame of reference for a detailed discussion of the pragmatic and multi-dimensional issues involved and these are outside the scope of this thesis.<sup>21</sup>

It is clear from many surveys that linguistic fragmentation has major significance for the mass media - not simply because of the practical problems of polylingual production, but also because media language policies have important political implications. In fact, Goody has noted that a multiplicity of languages in a country might lead to an inefficient system of communication.<sup>22</sup>

Added to the problem of language differences is the problem of the level of literacy which is still very low despite the wide educational and mass literacy campaigns undertaken by many African governments. This also affects the circulation of the newspapers, with the resultant effect of the concentration of newspaper publication in urban centres and the neglect of the rural people who form the majority in the African setting.

Lack of good roads and efficient means of transportation also militate against effective communication in Africa.<sup>23</sup> For instance, they make distribution of newspapers very difficult. It may be that the continent's geography is a hindrance in this direction - vast deserts, wild rivers, jungles and bush paths. It is a sad fact that the African countries find it more difficult to communicate with one another than with the other parts of the continent. Dakar, for example, finds it easier to communicate with Paris than with close African neighbouring states. The African continent requires an efficient postal, transport and telecommunications system. Today African states still find themselves unable to communicate directly with one another. Messages have to be routed thousands of miles out of the way through Europe to reach an African capital only a few hundred miles up or down the coast.

Training in all fields of communication and especially journalistic training for newspaper production, radio and television news preparation and programming is another problem area. It is only when sufficient qualified, competent and able professional local skills are available that dependence on features, tapes, films and media personnel from abroad can be reduced, and the

real education, political and socialisation ambitions for the communications media be realised.

Equally pernicious is the problem of dependence on foreign sources for news and feature materials. One of the dangers of this situation is that lack of African indigenous materials for the press, radio and television is a temptation to foreign propaganda and information services to flood the African media with their own material.<sup>24</sup> This problem becomes more damaging in view of the alleged injustice being meted to developing countries as far as the 'free flow' of news among nations is concerned. It is argued that the big Western news agencies, journalists, correspondents, and reporters have a virtual monopoly on news dissemination and fail to provide the world with a realistic picture of what is really happening in the Third World. Instead, these agencies and Western media practitioners lay emphasis on negative news - poverty, famine, illiteracy, riots, revolutions, volcano, eruptions, antics of national leaders, wars, national disasters, kidnappings, assassination, etc. The question is: what about the good things that are going on in Third World countries<sup>25</sup> - socio-politico-economic development, bridge building, highway construction, new schools and progress being made in the area of health services, housing, education, industrialisation and the like?

It must be noted, however, that although there is some truth in these indictments of the Western press, these indictments are equally true of African or Third World countries.<sup>26</sup> For instance, it is true that there is an unevenness in news flow within individual African countries themselves, that some of the African states are highly restrictive and secretive societies whose leaders go to great lengths to keep correspondents at arms' lengths, that sources in these countries are hard to reach, meetings are closed, leaders are secretive and touchy and some African journalists and media collude with outsiders against the interest of their own countries.

The economic problem is another major obstacle confronting the communications media in Africa and their audiences or receivers. There are difficulties in establishing newspapers, radio and television stations. They are capital intensive. Even when these problems are partially solved, the question is: how many people can patronise the newspapers? Only a small fraction of the population of the African continent can afford to buy a newspaper, a radio or television set when the struggle to get three square meals a day still continues unabated. Such an abject poverty means that a man, if he can read, must go without a meal to buy a newspaper or there must be accumulated savings to buy an inexpensive transistor radio. The list is endless. Poverty is endemic throughout the continent.

#### Press and Politics in West Africa

West Africa has a lively tradition of newspaper development. Also, the political press in the region has had a long and remarkable history that is worth documenting in brief. The impetus for publication has been, from the beginning, a political one.

By 1900, 63 newspapers had appeared in all four territories of West Africa (34 in Sierra Leone, 19 in the Gold Coast, 9 in Nigeria and one in Gambia).

Many factors accounted for this. First, West Africa, because of its climate regarded as 'the white man's grave', never had many white settlements. Both the plantations (mainly cocoa) and the trade between the interior and the coast (the development of which was stimulated by the needs of the European market)

remained in African hands. This was the situation in which the African middle class was formed, a class that was also interested in the development of an internal market and in accumulation of capital.

Secondly, the return of numbers of freed slaves from America and the West Indies to settle in Liberia, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone assisted tremendously press development in West Africa. English-speaking, and in many cases well educated, they brought their experience of political struggle in the Americas, technical knowledge, and a certain amount of capital.

The Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser published in 1801, The Royal Gold Coast Gazette published from 1822, and the Liberia Herald started in 1826, are usually mentioned among the first titles. These papers set themselves ambitious political goals: from the struggle against slavery to complaints about and criticisms of British colonisers.

In the Gold Coast it was the political protest that soon became the dominant theme, mainly directed at colonial administration.<sup>27</sup> J.H. Brew started The Gold Cost Times in 1874, and in 1880 at Cape Coast The Western Echo, together with Timothy Laing and J.E. Casely Hayford. The names of these three editors are still remembered in Ghana today as the originators of a tradition of political satire that enlivened the country's press for many years to come.

By 1880, Lagos too had its organ of protest, voicing grievances, though still in a more sedate and cautious manner than its Gold Coast and Liberian contemporaries.<sup>28</sup> Richard Beale Blaize was editor of The Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser, which appeared from November 1880 twice monthly for a period of two years. The first Nigerian Newspaper, Iwe Irohin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba (the newspaper for the Egba people and Yorubas) had appeared

in 1859, ~~Established by~~<sup>the</sup> Reverend Henry Townsend, the paper was the first African language newspaper in Africa.

The great achievement of the 19th century press in West Africa was in fact that it gave a voice to a subject people, through its literate elite, and established a tradition of political criticism and debate which served both to keep the colonial administration alive to public opinion.

The first political party paper belongs to Lagos, Nigeria. Established in 1925 by Herbert Macaulay, Father of the Nigerian Nationalism, The Lagos Daily News served as the organ of Macaulay's National Democratic Party. The paper was also the first successful daily newspaper in West Africa. Lagos, Nigeria, also recorded a major landmark in the development of the press in West Africa in particular, and in Africa in general, with the appearance on the morning of 22 November, 1937, of the West African Pilot, a new daily launched by Nnamdi Azikiwe. Azikiwe later became not only the continent's greatest newspaperman, but also one of its most dynamic nationalists. As Ronald Segal observes in his profile of Zik:

'It was by his journalism....that Azikiwe gave a new impetus to Nigerian nationalism. He started a chain of newspapers, the most important of which was the West African Pilot, and revolutionised West African journalism by the daring and directness of his editorial and news coverage. Concentrating on racial injustices and the need for positive action to emancipate Africa, he energetically spread his message throughout the territory, nursing circulation by provincial news coverage and by efficient distribution, and establishing four provincial dailies, in Ibadan, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Kano'.<sup>29</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCE TO CHAPTER TWO

1. To classify in a more detailed manner the communications media in Africa is a complicated issue. Even to count anything African is problematic. For instance, where does Africa itself begin and end? Events, regimes, situations change with such rapidity that any analysis one makes about contemporary Africa may be out of date because of these changes and in some cases discontinuities.
2. The UNESCO way of measurement which is usually quoted does not take into account two important factors affecting the readership of the press in developing countries. (1) It disregards the actual number of readers which exceeds the circulation number due to newspaper loans and (2) it neglects the readership of papers other than dailies.
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## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

#### Introduction

An historical background provides one of the most relevant perspectives on the genesis and development of political communications in Nigeria. This chapter focuses on a general introduction to the country emphasising aspects of Nigeria's history which are relevant to the thesis: its socio-economic structure, topography, climatic conditions, press and communication development. What is needed is a detailed examination of the historic problem areas of Nigerian politics, how the press has influenced politics, and vice versa in the immediate past, the development of the Nigerian politics and the press, the relationship between the press and political parties, the political economy of Nigeria, tribal conflict, economic and social background, political and constitutional developments and their relevance to Nigerian political communications.

#### 3.1. The Beginning of Modern Nigeria

Nigeria has been described as an 'artificial creation' and even a child of British colonialism.<sup>1</sup>

But it is pertinent to mention that prior to colonial subjugation, the contemporary Nigerian formation was composed of state systems classified and described variously as empires,

kingdoms, chiefdoms, city states and village republics. These pre-colonial communities were varied in territorial size, in productive, distributive and exchange organizations, and in degrees of autonomy from and dependence upon, one another. The territories and influence of some of these systems, such as the Sokoto Caliphate and the Yoruba and Benin empires, extended beyond the boundaries of the present Nigerian state.

At first the British were foreign merchants trading in territories in which 'Nigerians' were sovereign and at Bonny and Old Calabar for example, the white traders paid custom dues for the right of trading in the domains of coastal potentates. With the efforts to replace the Slave Trade with legitimate commerce, the pattern began to alter. Trade expanded inland and the successful exploration of the River Niger in 1832 provided a water-way by which the interior could be penetrated from the Niger Delta but the early efforts sponsored by

MAP 3

Map of Nigeria showing the 21 states of the Federation  
and Abuja - the new Federal Capital Territory as at June 1991

ERIA



philanthropists were doomed to failure owing to the high incidence of death from malaria. Success was achieved by 1857 when, with the use of quinine, Dr Baikie and his men were able to go up the Niger and establish a trading post at Lokoja (now in Kwara state). For my purpose, however, the role of missionaries at that time is even more crucial.

Instigated by the yearnings of the liberated slaves who were returning from Sierra Leone to resettle at Badagry (Lagos state) and Abeokuta (Ogun state) the Methodists first came in 1842 and the Christian Missionary Society followed closely in 1843; the latter established a mission in Abeokuta in 1846 under the leadership of Reverends Henry Townsend and Ajayi Crowther (later, first African bishop). Bowen brought in the Baptist Mission in 1850. In Eastern Nigeria, the Church of Scotland was established in Old Calabar in 1846; the CMS opened its Onitsha station in 1857 and the Roman Catholic church was established also in Onitsha in 1885 although it had long had a foothold in Lagos among the Brazilian (emancipado) community there. In general, the Missionaries were enlightened enough to conceive their missions not in the narrow evangelical terms of saving souls but in the broad tradition of David Livingstone, of helping the indigenous people to develop their resources, bringing knowledge to the ignorant and medical care to the sick. The founding of the first Press and newspaper in Nigeria by the Reverend Henry Townsend at Abeokuta in 1859 was in keeping with the progressive missionary thinking at the time.

### 3.2 Constitutional and Political Development

In 1922, the colonial authorities fashioned out a constitution which introduced the principle of direct election into the Nigerian legislative council and franchise limited to Lagos and Calabar, provided for by the constitution, which itself was called the Clifford Constitution, named after Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor at the time. The granting of franchise led to the formation of Nigerian National Democratic Party and others later. The year 1946 marked the introduction of the Richards Constitution<sup>1</sup> also named after the man who was the Governor of Nigeria at the time, Sir Arthur Richards. It also marked the beginning of regionalism, which was to create many difficulties, subsequently, for Nigerian politics and political leaders. The amalgamation of 1914 was described by the late Sardauna of Sokoto and former Premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, as 'the mistake of 1914'.<sup>2</sup> Political and constitutional developments in Nigeria encouraged aggressive ethnicity and regionalism, culminating in the threats of regions to secede from the Nigerian state.

In 1950, the Northern Region threatened to secede from Nigeria if it was not granted an equal number of representatives in the Central Legislature to the Southern Regions. In 1953, the Western delegation during constitutional conferences threatened to opt out of Nigeria if Lagos the capital territory and the colony were not merged with the Western Region.<sup>3</sup> The Eastern Region was also reported by the State House Diary<sup>4</sup> to have threatened to secede after the federal elections of 1964, a threat that was later to be put into a concrete reality and practice in 1967 with the move

to establish 'a Biafra Republic', which eventually led to the three-year civil war in Nigeria.

The 1946 constitution provided for the establishment of regional assemblies in the three regions of West, East and North, into which Nigeria had been divided in 1938 but in the North and West, besides the assemblies, there was to be a House of Chiefs. Though the 1946 arrangement was supposed to last for nine years, it only survived for three. By 1949, dissatisfaction with the Richards Constitution was so widespread that changes were felt to be imperative. These changes were effected in 1951 with the 'MacPherson Constitution' which itself was described as 'a wretched compromise between federalism and unitarism'. In fact, it was not an easy task for colonial rulers to administer Nigeria on the basis of any theoretical formula. Certain strategies like 'Indirect Rule' were obviously practical necessities.

In 1954, the Lyttleton Constitution was introduced. This declared Nigeria to be a federation, provided for greater regional autonomy, the removal of powers of intervention by the central government and recognised to a limited extent the freedom of regional governments for their internal administration.

There were constitutional conferences in Lagos and London in 1957 and 1958 respectively and with the Nigerian Independence Act of 1960 passed by the British parliament, Nigeria was proclaimed an independent and sovereign nation within the Commonwealth as from October 1, 1960. A constitution, the 1960 constitution, was also enacted for its governance. With the independence proclamation, the legal status and name of the country were changed from the "Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria"

to "Nigeria". On 1st October, 1963, Nigeria decided to become a Republic by abolishing the monarchy and replacing it by a republican constitution. The Queen thus ceased to be the Queen or sovereign of Nigeria with her functions transferred to the President of the Republic. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe became the first President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria while Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who had become Nigeria's Prime Minister with the 1959 elections, now, in 1963, remained the functional head of government. A fourth Region, the mid-West, was also carved out of Western Nigeria.

But the Republic lasted only for about two years when it became engulfed by crises - census exercises of 1962 and 1963, federal elections of 1964, the location of the iron and steel complex, the revenue allocation formula, the Western Region's election crisis of 1965 and a host of other recurring issues in Nigerian government and politics.

The political process deteriorated into increasingly violent wrangles fuelled by the mass media between the different ethnic/regional factions, the Hausa/Fulani in the north, Ibo in the east and Yoruba in the west. Following a bloody coup in January 1966 the army intervened, and set up Major-General Ironsi as national leader. His regime lasted just six months, when among a host of other reasons, his attempt to impose unitary rule on the federation provoked a counter coup from which the then Lt.Col. Gowon (now a General) emerged as the new leader. Gowon restructured the administrative patterns by dividing the country into twelve states out of the former four regions. The intensification of ethnic rivalries during the following year

culminated in July 1967 in the secession of the eastern region and the 'Biafran' civil war, which dragged on for three years. After some useful post-war reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation measures, the Gowon Government began to drift into inefficiency and inaction. Allegations of corruption against his lieutenants in government, and his apparently nonchalant reactions to these allegations, only helped to worsen the situation. The first places to be seized by coup makers and their anchormen were radio stations.

In July 1975, a bloodless coup removed Gowon and General Murtala Ramat Muhammed replaced him as Head of State. Muhammed carried out significant reforms of the public services, struggled to wipe out corruption and other social vices from Nigeria, brought forward a positive programme for return to civilian government, restructured the country by dividing it into nineteen states out of the former twelve, and took a host of other bold steps to administer Nigeria. In the words of Ishichei,

"There was an energetic inquiry into corruption and inefficiency, which led to many dismissals and compulsory retirements, and confiscation of ill-gotten assets. On the whole, the measures were popular, though it is possible, perhaps likely, that some men's careers were wrecked by secret enmities and unjust accusations while much greater culprits sometimes remained unscathed."<sup>6</sup>

General Muhammed was killed in an abortive coup led by Lt. Col. Dimka on 13 February 1976. General Olusegun Obasanjo succeeded him and carried on the 'Murtala Muhammed policies' almost to the letter. He implemented the transition to civilian rule thus marking the birth of Nigeria's Second Republic in 1979.

Alhaji Shehu Uthman Aliyu Shagari assumed office as the first executive President of Nigeria under a new presidential constitution, but by the time he started his second presidential term in office, Alhaji Shagari's administration was overthrown by a military coup of Major-General Muhammadu Buhari on 31st December 1983. Corruption and national economic failure were cited as parts of the justifications for the takeover.

Buhari regime decided to bring to book all those who led the country to such a battered economic state. The administration also aimed to face up to the reality of diminished oil revenues by drastically cutting import levels and tackled corruption by extending the death penalty to a further 17 categories of crime, and launching a media campaign exhorting Nigerians to wage a "War against Indiscipline (WAI)". Repressive measures were brought in to stifle the growing tide of criticism from the press, trade unions and professional associations who protested at the soaring inflation, the scarcity of essential goods, and growing unemployment. After 20 months it became clear that the experiment in self sufficiency was causing economic devastation, and on 27 August 1985 Maj-Gen Buhari was removed from office in a bloodless coup. According to the new regime led by Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, the army was forced to intervene because Nigerians have since been under a regime that continued with those trends for which the military took over power in 1983, adding that events indicated that most of the reasons which justified the military takeover of government from the civilians still persisted.

Major General, later General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida took some steps to make himself popular immediately he took over power from Buhari. He released some politicians detained under Buhari regime, set up a political bureau to regulate national debates on political future for Nigeria, threw open the debate on IMF loan, declared that he was for the protection of human rights and repealed Decree 4 under which two journalists had been imprisoned for one year by the Buhari regime.

In the words of Babangida:

"As we do not intend to lead a country where individuals are under the fear of expressing themselves, the Public Officers Protection Against False Accusation Decree 4 of 1984 is hereby repealed. And finally, those who have been in detention under this decree are hereby unconditionally released. The responsibility of the media to disseminate information shall be exercised without undue hindrance. In that process, those responsible are expected to be forthright and to have the nation's interest as the primary consideration."

### 3.3 Nigeria's Land and People

Nigeria, an heterogeneous nation, a multi-lingual society with diverse cultures, values and religious beliefs, has a land area of 356,669 square miles (923,768 square kilometres).

The highest land is along the eastern border, with the Jos Plateau in the centre of the country the only relief from extensive lowland. The climate varies from arid and semi-arid in the north to equatorial monsoon conditions in the south. There are 21 states in the Federation, excluding the Federal Capital

Territory of Abuja. The country has over two hundred ethnic groups and over four hundred languages.

Population:

With an estimated population of about 125 million people, Nigeria, it is assumed, accounted for about one-fifth of Africa's 608.7 million people. Although, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, there is no definitive estimate of the size of the population. Of the three censuses taken since independence, two (held in 1962 and 1973) have been annulled as showing unacceptable results in terms of ethnic or regional breakdown, and all have provoked controversy and dispute. National population estimates are based on the 1963 census. Growth rates are high, at about 4 per cent a year as a result of high birth rates and immigration from poorer surrounding countries. The Babangida military government has launched a population policy in an attempt to check the annual growth rate. A census head count has also been planned for 1991.

3.4 Socio-economic development:

The development of oil production during the 1960s and 1970s brought about a rapid transformation of Nigeria from an agriculture-based economy to a major oil exporter. At the time of independence, agriculture was the most important sector of the economy in terms of production, employment and foreign exchange earnings. Since the rise of the oil industry, however, agriculture has suffered a relative decline. The percentage of workers employed in agriculture (though still representing more than half

of the labour force) has diminished, with a drift away from the land to the urban centres. The failure of agricultural production to keep pace with population growth has not only reduced the volume of crops available for export but, in recent years has made it necessary to import quantities of foodstuffs.

Past government attempts to encourage agriculture have taken the form of campaigns such as "Operation Feed The Nation" (OFTN) launched in 1976 and the "National Accelerated Food Programme" but, in terms of investment capital, agriculture has been generally neglected and industrialization and infrastructural projects have taken priority. The "Green Revolution" programme initiated in 1980 focused on nine agricultural development projects (ADPs) which have World Bank backing and aim to improve local infrastructure, teach new farming techniques and provide subsidised inputs; and on eleven River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA) schemes designed to provide irrigation facilities.

The very little improvement in the Nigerian economy from the agricultural sector since independence has been attributed to a number of factors - the inadequacy or total lack of farm credit, shortage of qualified manpower; the absence of effective storage facilities; poor condition or sometimes absence of feeder roads and other transport facilities; the problems caused by disease, pests and desertification; the constant labour shortage in the rural areas caused by increasing rural-urban migration, the lack of modern technological equipment and skilled trained personnel among others.

Nigeria's climate and fertile ground are suited to a wide variety of crops. Commercial crops are cocoa (mostly grown in the west), oil palm (concentrated in the east), rubber (mid-west-Bendel) and groundnuts and cotton in the north. However, these resources have not been harnessed and exploited for the benefit of the Nigerian people. As a result, the demand for these products outweighs their supply thus making the prices of essential commodities to skyrocket. In fact, many Nigerians find it difficult to feed themselves. Much of the domestic food output is traded on a subsistence basis outside the framework of the cash economy. The principal food crops are yams, cassava, maize, guinea corn, sorghum, rice, and millet. Livestock raising is confined largely to the north. These foodstuffs are not available thus causing incessant agitation.

TABLE 1  
THE 21 STATES OF THE FEDERATION

STATE	CAPITAL	AREA (in sq km)	POPULATION (1963 census)	1987 Estimates	1988 Estimates
Ikwa bom	Uyo	7,081	2,533,440	4,691,900	5,077,540
nambra	Enugu	17,675	3,596,618	7,647,200	7,879,900
auchi	Bauchi	64,605	2,432,296	5,169,500	5,326,800
endel	Benin	35,500	2,460,962	5,232,500	5,396,700
enue	Makurdi	45,174	2,427,017	5,160,400	5,317,500
orno	Maiduguri	116,400	2,997,498	6,373,300	6,567,200
ross iver	Calabar	20,156	944,691	2,306,400	2,505,766
ongola	Yola	91,390	2,605,263	5,539,500	5,708,200
mo	Owerri	11,850	3,672,654	7,808,900	8,046,500
aduna	Kaduna	46,053	1,653,302	3,492,800	3,689,850
ano	Kano	43,285	5,774,840	11,927,500	12,351,100
atsina	Katsina	24,192	2,445,004	5,221,100	5,389,950
wara	Ilorin	66,869	1,706,464	3,575,000	3,685,100
agos	Ikeja	3,345	1,443,568	4,370,600	4,569,400
iger	Minna	65,037	1,079,750	2,144,900	2,214,700
gun	Abeokuta	16,762	1,550,966	3,297,600	3,397,900
ndo	Akure	20,959	2,729,690	5,804,000	5,980,700
yo	Ibadan	37,705	5,208,884	11,075,300	11,412,300
Lateau	Jos	58,030	2,013,497	4,254,900	4,385,100
ivers	Port Harcourt	21,850	1,719,925	2,656,900	3,768,100
okoto	Sokoto	102,535	4,538,787	9,650,500	9,944,100
C.T.	Abuja	7,315	135,939	517,300	523,900
TOTAL		923,768	55,670,055	118,718,000	124,170,399

Source: Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, Nigeria.  
Figures were supplied by the Federal Department of Surveys, Lagos.

Nigeria's National Development plans have not been fully coordinated even on paper, and far less so in actual organisation and implementation. Even more basic, neither the planning process nor the resultant plan shows evidence of any serious attempt to make the economic targets and policies represent national goals in more than the vaguest sense. Successive Nigerian governments so far (both civilian and military) have had no detailed set of socio-political goals and, at best, a vague and ill-defined commitment to national economic welfare (as opposed to that of the narrow political class which has dominated Nigerian governmental and para-governmental structures mainly for its own power, prestige, and enrichment). Only recently, University students, workers, market women and many unemployed people demonstrated against the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the Babangida military regime. Some people lost their lives in the fracas while Universities were closed for many months. The peoples' argument is that all the measures being introduced to revamp the economy are making life more unbearable for them while the rulers (both military and civilian) continue to wallow in affluence, conspicuous consumption and maximum enjoyment. All these affect political communications, national integration and political stability.

### 3.5 The Development of Mass Media of Communication

#### The print media: the newspaper press

I stated earlier that the first newspaper in Nigeria was Iwe Irohin but with the appearance of the Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser in 1880, the era of the Lagos newspaper began and

its Motto in 1890, 'Be Just and Fear Not' might well sum up the attitude of the press up to 1900. The Press was essentially the watchdog of the people vis-a-vis the Colonial Administration. This was also the era of the rise of the private printing presses, African and Missionary, which gave assistance and support to the publishing editors by undertaking their printing. Moreover, the Churches propagated their points of view also through their own journals - In Leisure Hours (CMS), African Church Gleaner (both appeared in 1917) and The Nigerian Methodist (1925).

With the grant of the franchise in Lagos in 1922, a new impetus was given to the promotion of newspaper enterprises; electioneering provided a powerful incentive. The Lagos Daily News (1925) which under Herbert Macaulay became the organ of the Nigerian National Democratic Party, was characterized by long-winded and high-sounding phraseology but it was unmistakably critical of the Administration. On the other hand, the Nigerian Daily Times which emerged in 1926 became the first well established daily newspaper in Lagos but was distinctly conservative. In attempts to reach the masses, bilingual Daily Telegraph and vernacular papers, Eleti Ofe (1925), Eko Akete (1925), Eko Igbehin (1925) and Akede Eko (1927) joined the ranks. This period also saw the emergence of some professional and trade journals which proved to be short-lived.

In the 1930s new style journalism arrived, ushered in by the demise of the ponderous Daily News in 1936. The Service (1933) represented the young intellectuals challenging the dominance of Lagos politics by Herbert Macaulay and his Nigerian National Democratic Party and The Comet (1933) was an independent weekly

through which Duse Mohamed Ali injected objectivity and Egyptian nationalist ideas into the Lagos and Nigerian politics. Even in the Provinces, especially as Calabar also had the franchise, the scene was far from quiescent: Nigerian Observer (1929) supported by the Enitona Press in Port Harcourt; Nigerian Echo (1932) at Aba; West African Advertiser (1935) at Calabar. Be it noted also that editorship of newspapers began passing into the hands of professionals. The biggest impact during this period, however, was made by the arrival on the scene of Nnamdi Azikiwe who launched the West African Pilot as a daily newspaper in November 1937.

The era of the mass appeal had come: politics still dominated the newspaper but sports and other activities were also being reported, and in exciting terms, stressing the human aspect. The third-class clerk was as newsworthy as the upper-middle class politician or administrator and both could have their photographs in the paper. The Zik Group of Newspapers was soon formed and the provinces penetrated by its chain development; Eastern Nigeria Guardian (1940) at Port Harcourt; Nigerian Spokesman (1943) at Onitsha; Daily Comet (1945), the first newspaper in the North at Kano; Northern Nigeria Advocate (1949) at Jos. Others joined in wooing the masses; the reappearance of the Service as the Daily Service in 1938 as the organ of the Nigerian Youth Movement must be mentioned as also the development in the North with the emergence of the Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo in 1939 leading to the founding of the Nigerian Citizen in 1948, both by the Gaskiya Corporation, a Government-sponsored organization. In the Western Provinces, the Nigerian Tribune, founded by Obafemi Awolowo in 1949, followed the

Defender of the Zik Group which had reached the West in 1945 via Warri and Lagos. Inevitably the Zik Group was unpopular with the powers-that-be but when their reporters were barred from the meetings of the Legislative Council for six weeks in 1946 for allegedly contravening the Wireless Telegraph Law, their retort was to launch an appeal for help against Government persecution, and donations poured in. The Press which had emerged successfully from the trials of the Second World War, during which a West African Press delegation which included Zik himself went to Britain, was by 1945 well entrenched and its coverage was practically the whole country.

The next development came from the Government. By 1940 the need to disseminate correct information about the war effort led to the establishment of an Information Office. This was transformed into a Public Relations Office in 1944, which more correctly reflected the role of the office. It placed its facilities at the disposal of the Nigerian Press and these were used especially in the Provinces; its Press Conferences and official hand-outs proved to be valuable sources of news and its free issue of photographs helped the newspapers. Indeed, the newspapers themselves appreciated these services, judged by editorials in the Daily Service and the Pilot calling for the permanent establishment and expansion of the Public Relations Office. Thus, Government aided the general development of the Press at a critical period by establishing its own information services between 1950 and 1957 when the Federal Ministry of Information emerged.

In the First and Second Republics including the military interregna, 1960-1990, Nigeria witnessed the establishment of more

newspapers by Federal government, regional and/or state governments, political parties and politicians, religious groups, professional associations, other pressure groups and private individuals. This trend has continued with the country preparing for a return to another civilian rule - the Third Republic - in 1992. Each of the 21 states in the country now has its own newspaper.

The electronic media: radio and television

Broadcasting was introduced to Nigeria in 1932. The establishment of broadcasting in Nigeria was the result of the determination of the British colonial authorities to link the colonies with the 'mother country' - Britain. The first broadcast received in Nigeria was the relay of the BBC Empire Day Broadcast in 1932. The inauguration of the BBC Empire Service in that year actually led to the beginning of broadcasting operations in Nigeria. By 1944, there were Radio Distribution Stations in Ibadan, Lagos, Kaduna, Enugu, Calabar and Port Harcourt. Since then, broadcasting has had a most remarkable history. In fact, within five years of the RDS operation, stations had been opened in Kano, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Jos and Zaria among other places.

Between 1935 and 1950, the BEC's monitoring station at Lagos was developed into an extensive Radio Distribution Service (RDS) to serve the principal population centres in the country. It was a commercial operation owned by the government, serviced by the Post and Telegraphs (P&T) Department and managed under contract by the overseas Rediffusion Limited. In 1951, it was named the Nigerian Broadcasting Service. An Act of the Nigerian Parliament No.39 of 1956 converted the Nigerian Broadcasting

Service into a corporation and re-christened the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in 1957 and the earlier Rediffusion stations were upgraded to serve as broadcasting houses, and it is this NBC that is now known today as the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). Before this, there were NBC or 'Radio Nigeria' based in Lagos; Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Service (ENBS) in Enugu; Western Nigerian Broadcasting Service (WNBS) in Ibadan; and the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN) in Kaduna. The regionalization of Radio broadcasting was first started in Ibadan in 1959, then followed by the one in Enugu the following year, and finally, in 1962, the BCNN in Kaduna was established.

The FRCN came into being by the military decree of 1978 which centralized the control over radio. Among the corporation's objectives were:

- (1) sensitivity to local and national issues;
- (2) timely and adequate response to the above issues;
- and
- (3) impartial sense of responsibility (underlined mine) to the public?

Today many of the 21 states of the Nigerian federation have their own radio stations while the FRCN has a station each, in all the states of the federation and in Abuja, the new federal capital territory for the country. The FRCN 1983 Executive Diary lists the following further objectives as guiding principles of the policies of the corporation in an effort to make it a truly National Radio Organisation:

1. The provision of efficient broadcasting services to the entire people of the Federation of Nigeria, based on national

objectives and aspirations and to external audiences in accordance with Nigeria's foreign policy.

2. The provision of a professional and comprehensive coverage of Nigerian culture, to promote cultural growth through research and to disseminate the results of such research works for the benefit of the public.
3. The positive contribution to the development of the Nigerian society and to promote National unity by ensuring a balanced presentation of views from all parts of the country.
4. To ensure the prompt delivery of accurate information to the people.
5. To provide opportunities for the free, enlightened and responsible discussion of important issues and to provide a useful two-way contact between the public and those in authority.
6. The provision of special broadcasting services in the field of Education and in all other areas where the national policy calls for special attention.
7. To promote orderly and meaningful development of Broadcasting in the country through:
  - a. Technical improvements
  - b. The training of appropriate professional staff, and
  - c. Programme and staff exchanges, with other Broadcasting Organizations in the country, where possible.
8. To promote research into various aspects of the communications media and their effects on Nigerian society which will include: Audience research, the investigation of

fresh methods of productions and the true indigenisation of the broadcasting media.

9. To make every Nigerian feel proud of being a Nigerian.

Source: FRCN 1983 Executive Diary.

Television:

As for television, the first and oldest television station was officially commissioned in the then Western Region on 31st October, 1959. It was the first Television Station in Black Africa hence it was tagged "First in Africa". At the official opening the then Premier of the Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo said that the venture was initiated because his government was convinced that television could play a major role in increasing both the pace and standard of education which was regarded as the key to progress in all other fields. He further said that the aim of his government was to bring information about Nigeria and the outside world into the people's home so that they might benefit from the knowledge. Chief Awolowo declared:

"Television will serve as teacher and entertainer and as a stimulus to us all to transform Nigeria into a modern and prosperous nation."<sup>49</sup>

Since then, the television scene has witnessed a phenomenal development. The 'First in Africa' was followed in 1960 by the second oldest television in Nigeria established by the former Eastern Nigeria regional government and was called Eastern Nigerian Television Service (ENTV) which was based in Enugu, now

capital of Anambra State. On March 15, 1962, the Radio-Television of Kaduna (RTK) established by northern regional government, became the third television station in the country. In 1973 the Nigerian Television in Jos, Plateau State, was established and it became the first television station in Nigeria to transmit totally in colour in 1975. Decree No.24 of 1977 promulgated by the military led to the establishment of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).

Other television stations established are NTV Sokoto (1976), NTV Kano (1976), NTV Aba (1976), NTV Benin (about 1976), NTV Port Harcourt (1977) and NTV Ilorin also in 1977. Between 1978 and 1979 the NTA established stations in the following places: Bauchi, Yola, Maiduguri, Minna, Markurdi, Calabar, Akure, Abeokuta and Ikeja which took off only in September, 1981. The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) now has stations in each of the 21 states of the federation as well as in Abuja, the new federal capital territory, while some states also have their own television stations.

By the NTA Decree No.24, Nigeria had six zonal headquarters, each with a Board for the administration of television services, with the following duties:

1. It shall be the duty of the Authority to provide a public service in the interest of Nigeria, independent and impartial television broadcasting for general reception within Nigeria;
2. The Authority shall ensure that services which it provides, when considered as a whole, reflect the unity of Nigeria as a Federation and at the same time give adequate expression of the culture, characteristics and

affairs of each State, Zone or other part of the Federation;

3. The Authority shall, to the exclusion of any other broadcasting authority or any person in Nigeria, be responsible for television broadcasting in Nigeria.

Source: NTA Decree No.24, 1977.

In addition to the administration of the zones, programmes are expected to give "due regard to the distinctive culture, interests and tastes of the people of the zone on the one hand and the fulfilment of national needs on the other..." At the National level, the NTA is also guided by a policy on programmes which is specified in Section 9 of the 1977 Decree in which subsection (1) states:

- (a) that nothing is included in the programmes which is likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling, or to contain any offensive representation of, or reference to a living person;
- (b) that the programmes maintain a proper balance in their subject matter and a generally high standard of quality;
- (c) that any news given in the programme (in whatever form) is presented with accuracy, impartiality and objectivity;
- (d) that due impartiality is preserved in respect of matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy; and

(e) that subject to the provisions of sub-section (2), no matter designed to serve the interests of any political party is included in the programmes.

The Buhari regime took some steps to reduce the number of electronic media stations in Nigeria by closing some of them down and merging others together. An attempt was made in October, 1984 with the establishment of a committee on the rationalisation of the electronic media. At the inauguration of the committee, the then Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major-General Tunde Idiagbon, spoke on the urgent need to reduce radio and television services in Nigeria. He added that the Government wanted to cut down costs, offer better services, discourage 'mushroom' stations, and in their places, re-equip those in Lagos, Enugu, Ibadan, Abuja and Kaduna. General Idiagbon recalled that:

"...some politicians in an attempt to win votes engaged in an unplanned establishment of radio and television stations all over the country ... some became megaphones of political parties in power, suppressing or grossly distorting information to suit the whims and caprices of the politicians..."

However, this plan did not materialize because the regime was overthrown a year later (August 1985).

### 3.6 Conclusion

From the above historical account of Nigeria, it is clear that the country's political communications are bound to have been affected by the political, economic, social, historical, constitutional and communication development. It is safe,

therefore, to conclude that the unsteady and unstable situations of Nigeria have longstanding effects on its political communications. There has been little change in the socio-politico-economic development agenda of the country since Independence. The same experiences, the same models of development, struggles for power, ethnic chauvinism, mass media wars and inequalities seem to be repeating themselves. Nigeria emerged from its colonial tutelage with political trauma which was caused by the historical experience of the nature of nationalists' struggle in the creation of the nation state. In place of a united, strong and virile nation, the new state was plagued by regionalism instead of patriotic nationalism. Despite all efforts to create a stable democratic political community and transform the country into a strong regional and global force, the Nigerian society today is still beset with ethnic, religious, social, political, economic and communication problems in addition to poverty, under-development, ignorance, illiteracy, disease and technological dependency.<sup>12</sup> All these have serious implications for Nigerian political communications.

The history of political communications in Nigeria is interwoven with the history of colonialism, christian missionary society, political development, socio-economic structure, ownership of newspapers and other mass media of communications. During the colonial period, amalgamation, indirect rule, regional pattern of government, and a host of other colonial methods of administering the country affected Nigerian political communications. The major political parties and their newspaper spokesmen evolved from these patterns hence the political in-

fighting and strife that have rent Nigeria in recent years stem essentially from the unresolved regional, tribal, ethnic, as well as power rivalries. Nigeria has never been a truly united nation.<sup>13</sup> In the words of Lugard:

"...The local press, inspired by a ... mis-directed education, is ... doing much grievous harm ... by ... its invective against all Government action."<sup>14</sup>

An English journalist who visited Nigeria in 1945 was so alarmed by reports of mounting disaffection, that he wrote of 'a revolutionary native press which quite seriously threatens the stability of this part of the Empire.'<sup>15</sup>

In the course of an address delivered to the Legislative Council in 1946, the Governor of Nigeria had some trenchant comments to make on journalistic indiscipline in the territory under his charge:

"Our Press is free - free to abuse, to sabotage effort, to kill enthusiasm, to impute bad motives and dishonesty, to poison the springs of goodwill and foul the well of trust, to impregnate the body politic with envy, hatred and malice - in short, free to do the Devil's work."<sup>16</sup>

Socio-economic development also affects Nigerian political communications. Since 1859, the history of Nigerian mass media has been one of a rise and then rapid fall in the number of newspapers and other mass media of communications. The factors responsible for the high rate of failure and mortality have been partly economic in nature. Capital is indispensable to the growth

of mass media industry. Readership, listenership and viewership are limited. Organizational efficiency is low, infrastructural, training and other facilities are inadequate. Power is a source of wealth in Nigeria. The acquisition of power is facilitated by the use of mass media through different patterns of ownership. The primary motivation for owning mass media has been political rather than commercial.

Inequalities in Nigerian society were (and still are) very great. They seem to reflect a clear distinction between an elite comprising politicians, top civil servants, business tycoons, military men, government officials in uniform (police, customs, etc), government advisers, top managers, chief executives of companies and the masses, the rural poor, the wretched of the earth. Federalism, in the Nigerian context, has degenerated into a fight for spoils. The rural areas are neglected. In the words of Olatubosun:

"The failure of the development plans to pay adequate attention to education, social amenities and job opportunities in the rural areas is further proof of the continuation of the dichotomy between the rural and urban sectors by the Nigerian local elites who have now replaced the colonial administrators who created it."<sup>17</sup>

Many of these issues exacerbate ethnic antagonisms which have existed (are existing and will continue to exist) for long. They also encourage corruption which has been (is and will continue to be) rampant in Nigeria.

Corruption of the elite in Nigeria is facilitated, and even encouraged, by popular attitudes toward the acquisition and

ostentatious display of private wealth. As Dudley has observed, there is 'some ambivalence about corruption amongst Nigerians'. In many cases, it seems that public attitudes are shaped more by the use made of wealth than by how it is acquired. Where a 'big man' flaunts his corruptly acquired wealth, but simultaneously distributes some benefits and favours to his family and community, he is unlikely to be condemned. Condemnation from 'outsiders' is likely to be interpreted as symptomatic of jealousy or envy rather than indicative of a disinterested devotion to the public interest.<sup>18</sup>

Political and economic factors have combined to produce an environment characterised by sharp inequalities between the urban centres and the countryside, by 'public squalor and private affluence' and by apparently chronic political instability. Nigeria has been afflicted by sporadic outbreaks of communal violence as well as by the slaughter of civil war and attempted secession. The corruption, regional and ethnic bias associated with the civilian politicians of the immediate post-independence years contributed to the increasing readiness of the military to intervene in dramatic fashion. Successive military regimes have proclaimed their disinterested concern for the interests of the nation and their detestation of the narrow, self-serving and factional squabbles of politicians.

If politics in Nigeria is frequently associated with corruption, patronage and the pursuit of spoils, the purportedly non-political military rulers of Nigeria have, with one brief exception, largely been tarred with the same brush.<sup>19</sup>

Nigerian political communications system accurately reflects these socio-politico-economic conditions. At independence, there were mass media owned and controlled by federal, regional governments, political parties, politicians and private individuals. Even in the Second Republic and under various military regimes, in addition to private and political party ownership of newspapers, each state had its own ministry of information, radio broadcasting facility, television broadcasting facility, and official or government newspaper. All these media were manipulated by their owners to their own political advantage against both their local rivals and their political counterparts nationally.<sup>20</sup>

Social divisions run deep in Nigeria and any polarisation of opinion around a key issue, or exacerbation of mistrust, tends to conjure up the spectre of communal violence. There is a considerable amount of heated dispute in Nigerian politics. Much of this is conducted through the mass media, where the political atmosphere is reflected quite clearly<sup>21</sup>. A Nigerian politician or government who has no access to, or is not reported by, any news medium is at a grave disadvantage. Nigerian mass media report socio-politico-economic activities; they are also in every sense, political institutions of central importance to the functioning of Nigerian political system.

Nigeria has a pluralist mass media system. It is nevertheless a fractured kind of pluralism which reflects the political situation and in turn helps, to a large extent, to define and create the situation it reports. The mass media of Nigeria have political backers and are therefore, given a political role which

emphasizes the expression of opinion and places far less importance on the reporting of facts. Everyone wants to be heard, each party or politician wants a platform and each government in the country wants a mouthpiece.

My purpose is not to rewrite the Nigerian history. It is only to highlight the trends in the development of Nigerian political communications which I hope to support with my proposal of a theoretical model for political communications in the country. To catalogue shortcomings is one thing; to offer remedies, another. In the subsequent chapter, I have sought to analyse the theory, practice and methodology of Nigerian political communications by looking into some supportive evidences from the colonial, the independence, the First and Second Republics era in Nigeria. Such efforts seek to provide raw materials from which the ideas and ideals of a new system of political communications can be fashioned for Nigeria and from which the mass media, so vital to the survival of the Nigerian state can be owned and used more responsibly and more effectively.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### A THEORETICAL MODEL OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIA

#### Introduction

This chapter continues the discussion by proposing a theoretical model of the Nigerian political communications based on ownership of mass media in the country since the pre-independence era and by seeking to support it through an analysis of mass media coverage of selected recurring issues in post-colonial Nigeria.

#### 4.1 A Theoretical Model of Political Communications in Nigeria

The existing models of the Nigerian political communications give a false picture of what happens in the country especially during election periods, debates on sensitive national issues or a controversy that affects the interests of politicians, ethnic groups or states within the federation. I propose that the Nigerian political communications can be understood in terms of the ownership of mass media. This is partly because such a proposal has the power to explain and reveal abundantly the structure of political communications in the country. In another sense, the model tends to support the observed trends which have continued to affect media behaviour since the pre-independence era. So far, political communications in Nigeria have tended to correlate with the partisan orientation of the owners and/or controllers of the mass media, be they governments, political parties, politicians, religious groups or private individuals.<sup>1</sup>

Davison suggests that political communications generally focus on the way governments, parties and pressure groups make use of the media.<sup>2</sup>

My model is based on a two-tier concept of mass media ownership and philosophy. The first tier which I call 'Market-cum-State Ownership Model' is a classification of dominant mass media ownerships in Nigeria with a sub-division into mixed party and non-party sub-models, government monopoly and control, political party and politician as well as private non-party non-governmental ownership sub-models.

The second tier involves categorizing mass media philosophy in Nigeria into Authoritarian, Authoritarian-Government promotional, Partisan-Libertarian and socio-Commercial-Libertarian.

Market-cum-state ownership model

Based on ownership of mass media and consumers access to different media contents, that is, the possibility of choosing between various media most suitable in respect of their world views, politics and other interests, the model means a large variety of mass media - newspapers, dailies, weeklies, monthlies, radio and television stations, which are owned by the states, governments, political parties, politicians, religious organizations, trade unions, foreign or domestic capitals, university circles and private individuals among a host of others.

The Nigerian media adequately fits into this model from colonial to post-colonial periods. During the colonial period, there were colonial government media opposed vehemently by the nationalist and political party newspapers. There was also in addition an independent foreign-owned newspaper represented by the Daily Times at that time. In the same vein, during the First Republic, there were regional government media which waged wars of words against one another on the one hand, and against the federal government media and political party newspapers on the other. In fact, there was an officially recognised leader of opposition to the federal government in the person of Chief Awolowo and his party organs. Even under the military, there were media owned by each state of the federation in addition to the federal government media and trade union papers such as "Nigerian Opinion", an organ of a group of intellectuals connected with the country's premier university, the University of Ibadan. The Second Republic also witnessed media that fit into the mixed party and non-party sub-model of the main market-cum-state ownership model.

The government monopoly and control sub-model is characterized not only by complete nationalization of mass media; the government (and/or the party, if it exists) also controls and directs the media owned by it. It is also characterized by the scale of resources available to it and by the fact that it is not organized along rational business lines. Government media tend to be propaganda organs of the political parties in power. Whatever a government-owned medium does, it has to bear in mind the fact that it belongs to the government and must be careful about broadcasting or publishing news and matters that could embarrass the government.

At times it has to give prominence to some matters which it does not consider important and to play down some that it considers important - all because such matters affect the government. In a way, a government-owned medium cannot afford to be really independent in its management, opinions and its choice of materials.

Government functionaries themselves believe that government-owned media must toe the line of the government.

In a letter No. SP/S.240/174 of February 25, 1974, and signed by Mr B. Pelu of office of the Military Governor, Ibadan, the Secretary to the Military Government and Head of Service (Western State) said he was unhappy with the Sketch over a publication concerning the position of the Premier Hotel which is also owned by the Government. He warned that "as a government-sponsored paper, the Sketch must be very careful in its reporting of Government activities."<sup>8</sup>

Government ownership of mass media is problematic because the Government of the day will be using the funds of the general public to protect and advance the interest of the group which is for the time being in power. It could also put across only the views of one group to the detriment of the rest of the country.

Mass media organs owned by governments will encounter serious difficulties in getting profits. And we know a newspaper for instance derives its revenues basically from sales and advertisements. But a government newspaper may not address itself to this issue, because it is not only subsidized by government indefinitely, but also the workers in it will get their pay whether or not the paper sells.

Government ownership of mass media organisations tend to paralyse the independent management of such organisations. For instance, the Board of Directors of the Nigerian media houses owned by government are simply an extension of their sponsors. They have to report each development to their 'masters' especially when it affects their politics, policies and personalities. These Boards are very powerful. They authorise capital expenditure and debate media personnel emoluments. In many cases, the management is at their mercy if it really wants to move ahead.

In fact, personnel management in the media has been greatly affected by government ownership. Postings and promotions are determined by the owner-government. Three consequences flow from this:-

- (1) motivation suffers as not the right persons always get appointed or promoted;
- (2) lack of autonomy kills initiative; and

(3) content of broadcasts, programmes and editorials are also unduly influenced.

An illustration can be given here to buttress or corroborate my argument. In the report of an enquiry into the affairs of the Sketch in 1971, the commission wrote:

"...the greatest misfortune of the Sketch Publishing Company especially during the period covered by our terms of reference is that there was too much interference from the office of the Military Governor in the day-to-day running of the Company. The interference made the Board lamentably inept and impotent to the extent that it became a mere appendage to the Managing Director."

By owning and controlling media, the government intends to go to the people with its own ideas, its own explanations, its own plans and projects. It is also aimed at propelling Government's own image especially since non-governmental papers revelled in discomfiting the Government.

This necessity becomes all the clearer from the following words of Increase Coker in an attempt to explain some of the reasons behind the government ownership of the press:

"One newspaper group, for example, started off bang from their maiden issue with an onslaught on everything the Government ever did. In season and out of season, it ridiculed the Government and encouraged the people by every journalistic artifice to make a laughing-stock of their own freely elected representatives. No allowance was made for honest mistakes and the severely limited experience of the new rulers as compared with other advanced countries... The fact was that the emphasis, even among friendly newspapers, was generally placed on things which the Government ought to have done but was not doing."

The political party and politician ownership sub-model is self-explanatory. As the name implies, this refers to newspapers owned by political parties and/or politicians. They are usually partisan in all ramifications - coverage of news, political events and issues, editorial policies - and they usually appeal to a readership of party militants and loyalists.

The private non-party non-governmental ownership sub-model refers to the press owned by private individuals not controlled by a government or a party. It is usually for commercial purposes or for other reasons which affect the interests of the owners. A private medium could be able to maintain an independent stand, and give coverage to all sides of an issue.

It is not obliged to support any Government; it is ready and quick at all times to do whatever it thinks would bring it more readers and more revenue; and the private owner is checked in the process of publishing information since he has to obey certain laws of the newspaper industry.

It is pertinent to mention that the model I have outlined does not completely solve the problem of understanding the Nigerian political communications. I am aware for example, that the criterion of ownership may not be completely sufficient for a full characterization of the Nigerian mass media into government (state and federal), political parties, politicians and private ownerships of mass media. In fact, the patterns may overlap in some cases. Also, I am aware for example that a government medium may become a party medium if the government is run by a party; and vice versa, a party medium may become a

government medium if that party controls the government. In the same vein, state or government ownership or subsidy does not always mean that a medium is an official spokesman for the government, even though a state/government subsidy restrains media in expressing opposition views. Yet, the fact that a paper is not state-owned does not make it impossible for the state or government to influence the paper's contents. At the same time, the private individual owner or publisher may be a politician indirectly trying to carve a political niche for himself in Nigeria. So, in this case, a more important point may be the interlocking of media ownership and political ambition. For instance, the privately-owned National Concord used to be an ardent supporter of the National Party of Nigeria and until its publisher, Chief Abiola, left the party over a presidential nomination row in 1982, the National Concord newspaper had fulfilled the pledge in its flag editorial that it would support the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) "in and out" of government. A major focus of attack for the paper's vitriolic pens used to be the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). Moreover, after the Concord's publisher, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, left the NPN, the newspaper became anti-NPN overnight, stressing again the role of ownership in editorial direction and political communications.

In a discussion of the Ex-British African Media, Jeremy Tunstall seems to support my position on the influence of mass media ownership on political communications. In his celebrated work, the renowned Scholar stated that even before 1960, the owners of some newspapers wanted their west African papers to reduce political tensions, to avoid attacking those in power in general or

individual leaders in particular. In the same vein, African nationalist newspapers were knocked into line by fines, temporary suspensions or the arrest of editors; other useful weapons were colonial government advertising and the ability to stop newsprint supplies. Also, the news agency which is a section of the Ministry of Information, largely shapes what the newspapers can say; the newspapers often are government, or government party, owned as well. Tunstall added that since the media are government controlled, the politicians in practice decide the goals of the media - and, like politicians anywhere, they approach the media with their own political problems and preferences in mind. He concluded:

"However the media are formally owned in Black Africa, the government inevitably controls them. This has been quite clear even in a country like Kenya where private ownership was allowed to continue for a decade after the one-party principle was established."

These arguments reinforce rather than pull down the strength of my model. Whatever happens, it cannot be denied that ownership of mass media affects the Nigerian political communications, although, the degree of effects may vary; and that the existence of varied patterns of ownership gives ample scope for studying the media behaviour on coverage of national issues and sensitive political events.

It has been argued against the use of models that they tend to trap their originators and users within rather limited confines which they then become eager to defend against attack.<sup>7</sup> A similar risk is that a model, or even a succession of models, can tend to perpetuate some initial questionable, but fundamental,

assumptions about the components of a model or the processes at work. An example in the field of communication is the tendency to represent communication as a one-directional process in which a 'sender' deliberately tries to influence a 'receiver'. Such a representation tends to deny the circularity, negotiability and openness of much communication.

However, it should at least be remembered that there are some risks in using models, even for heuristic purposes. They are inevitably incomplete, oversimplified and involve some concealed assumptions. There is certainly no model that is suitable for all purposes and all levels of analysis and it is important to choose the correct model for the purpose one has in mind. This is exactly what I have tried to do. I have proposed this model of ownership for the purpose of analysing mass media behaviour in the Nigerian political communications against the background of the peculiar circumstances of the country at different periods in history. The model presented is not so sacred that it cannot easily be given a somewhat different shape and formulation, but at the same time, it helps a great deal in understanding political communications in Nigeria.

#### 4.2 Nigerian Media Philosophy

Based on the above model, the second tier of my proposal involves categorizing the Nigerian media philosophies into the Authoritarian, Authoritarian-Government promotional, Partisan-Libertarian and Socio-Commercial-Libertarian.

The first, Authoritarian, fits the mixed party and non-party sub-model in which there are government controls over the

media to stifle criticism and thereby maintain ruling elites on one hand, and the absence of government controls, assuring a free market place of idea and operation of self-righting process on the other hand. The second, Authoritarian-Government promotional fits the Government monopoly and control sub-model in which the media are owned and controlled by the state and governments. The main purposes of the media, under this philosophy, are to serve the state, promote, support and advance the policies of the government in power. The idea is that the political party and the private commercial newspapers are not adequately and responsibly publicising government policies, programmes and activities, hence it is necessary for the government to establish, own and control government media to do the job. There is also the belief that government has the responsibility to serve and protect the public interest through its media, while private media which are out to make profit would seek to exploit the public. In a way, the government in power equates the public interest with its own interests and uses the media to zealously pursue that goal in order to keep itself in power.

The third philosophy, Partisan-Libertarian, is for the political party and politician ownership sub-model in which competing political parties and politicians establish newspapers as their mouthpieces but at the same time assure a free market place of political ideas devoid of governmental control. The fourth philosophy, Socio-Commercial-Libertarian, is for the private non-party non-governmental ownership sub-model in which private individuals establish newspapers for purely commercial reasons, namely, to make profits which would enable them to stay in

business. But at the same time, efforts are made to ensure that all viewpoints, including those of the opposing private and/or public media, are heard. Private newspapers also try to provide the public services of news, commentary, advertising, entertainment and a forum for public debate.

Again, these philosophies may overlap depending on the circumstances or time periods. For instance, a political party newspaper with Partisan-Libertarian orientation may become government-owned and controlled if that party comes to power and at the same time, it may try to combine authoritarian-government promotional philosophy with Partisan-Libertarian philosophy. The same thing can happen to other categories but they do indicate the type of philosophies that guide the Nigerian political communications.

As a matter of fact it can be argued that the "uses and gratifications" approach which examines the reasons individuals select particular mass media of communication and content within those media would have a strong support for my model. Researchers using this approach believe that people have particular uses for media of communication content (i.e. information or entertainment) and receive particular gratifications from that content. This approach assumes that audiences actively search for self-defined gratifications from media of communication content, i.e. different receivers of political information are motivated by different expectations of it, develop different orientations toward it, and may therefore, be perceived as playing different roles in the political communication system. Investigating such orientations to political communication

FIGURE 1

A DIAGRAMMATIC PRESENTATION OF A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR POLITICAL  
COMMUNICATIONS IN NIGERIA

Ownership Model

Mixed Party and Non-Party  
Sub-model

Philosophy

Authoritarian

Government Monopoly and control  
sub-model

Authoritarian - Government  
promotional

Political Party and Politician  
ownership sub-model

Partisan - Libertarian

Private Non-Party Non-governmental  
ownership sub-model

Socio-Commercial-Libertarian

in Britain, Blumler identified four examples of the "uses and gratifications" theory that might be applicable to the political communications system of other competitive democracies.<sup>8</sup>

They include: the "monitor" looking for information about political developments relevant to his own circumstances and seeking information about features of the political environment, such as party policies, current issues and the qualities of political leaders; the "spectator", looking for excitement and other affective gratifications; the "liberal citizen", looking for help in making up his mind between posited alternatives and seeking guidance in deciding how to vote; and the "partisan", seeking a reinforcement of his existing beliefs and loyalties.

#### 4.3 Nigerian Ownership of Mass Media

Prior to January 1977, foreigners had ownership in many kinds of mass media of communications used in Nigeria. But with the promulgation of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree, all media institutions, except book printing, book publishing, publishing of periodicals and the mass media related business of pulp and paper milling were to be owned exclusively by Nigerians.<sup>9</sup> In each of these four exempted areas, foreigners are allowed 40 per cent ownership. In this ownership requirement, Nigeria falls in line with several other nations around the world, 14 of them in Africa south of the Sahara, including Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania and Zaire.<sup>10</sup>

The existence of this law has been regarded as a boon and a challenge to individual Nigerian businessmen to invest, in the development of the mass media. But in my judgement, the law is also a doom to Nigeria for many

reasons. First, it excludes foreign capitals which could have provided an effective neutral service the type of which was provided by the Daily Times under the ownership of the British concern, a subsidiary of the International Publishing Company IPC. Secondly, the law encourages the establishment of many more private political newspapers some of which continue to compound Nigerian ethnic problems in the way they cover national issues. Thirdly, the law does not give ownership diversification to the broadcast media. Up till today all the radio and television stations in Nigeria are still owned by the government. The point I am stressing here is that the existence of this law and ownership requirement of mass media in Nigeria is one more example of how the various groups are encouraged (directly or indirectly, consciously and/or unconsciously) to use the media to mould people's view of reality in Nigerian political communications in a direction that is consistent with the political interests of those who own and control the media.

In order to fully understand not only why this happens but also how those who control the media are prepared to go in this direction, I review a few basic points about politics, governments, and elite groups.

We are usually told that politics has to do with the struggle for the distribution of society's valued things. Some of these valued things include wealth, income, services, education, power, positions and influence. What we are not always told, however, is that there is also politics as the struggle for who decides both what these valued things should be and how they should be distributed or shared out. The struggle for "who decides" is the bigger struggle because it is this that determines how the struggle for distribution should be carried out. Thus, we have two separate but inter-connected forms of aspects of politics: the politics of

allocation (ie. the struggle for distribution); and the politics of domination (ie. the struggle for "who decides"). Those who are in power use their control of the media to portray the existing pattern of distribution as legitimate while those out of power, if they control any media, tend to use <sup>the</sup> same to discredit the existing pattern of distribution. But ownership and control of the media is not only one of the high stakes in the politics of domination, it is also a potent instrument for establishing domination or challenging an established domination. In this sense both the incumbent elite groups and their counterparts who are out of power find in the media an important resource for waging the most fundamental political struggle in the Nigerian society.

Leadership groups want to be able to mould the "political world view" of their citizens. They, as it were, want their ideas to be the ruling ideas of their age and society. They are better able to achieve this if, among other things, they have monopoly control of the mass media in their society. And challengers to this leadership group will necessarily attempt to prevent the ideas of the rulership from being the ruling ideas. Again they cannot succeed in this bid if they do not own or control some parts of the mass media, unless they have faith in the use of force.

The mass media in Nigeria have come to be one of the most important instruments through which those in power seek to influence the political thinking of their subjects and persuade them to see the government as legitimately serving the public interest and therefore deserving of public support. They do this in a number of ways:

- (1) They deliberately distort the information they disseminate to their audience, the citizens;
- (2) they knowingly exclude some vital pieces of information, especially if those pieces are likely to lead the citizens into drawing a conclusion that the leadership does not favour;
- (3) they can remain simply quiet over some crucial issues where the population is thirsting for information;  
and
- (4) they seek to divert the people's attention from very important issues by crowding the peoples' mind with trivialities.

They can couple these with trying to prevent opposition elite groups from acquiring control of some mass media for fear that those media could be used to neutralize the government's political control efforts.

Besides all these, other interests of a party or ethnic nature may also use their ownership and control of the media to champion their own narrow interests while discrediting those of their opponents. Whether such ethnic/party interests are pro-government or anti-government depends on what side of the divide they find themselves. All told, there are a variety of self-serving political interests which the ownership and control of the media can be used to serve in Nigeria.

But there are public interest political goals which the media can be used to serve. Such goals include the following: information to the public, public enlightenment, social criticism and exposing governmental arbitrariness, national integration and political education. But the more the media are used to serve the

narrow self-serving group of interests, the less able they can be used to serve the other group of public interests. For instance, if those who own or who control the media use them to champion ethnic and party interests, then the capacity of the media to promote national interest goals will suffer; if they use the media to build legitimacy for those in power (the government) then the media cannot perform well as instruments for social criticism. If the media are used to distort information in order to uphold a preferred view of reality, then the ability of the media to provide the public with accurate information for intelligent decisions will suffer. If the media are used to make people think what the government wants them to think, then the media will blunt the edge of the people's political consciousness.

However, the proliferation of government and party owned media is not the best arrangement for promoting the public interest. Party and government owned media have the major weakness that it is easy not to take them seriously because of their inherent bias even when they are saying the most serious things. This is why we should be moving in the direction of non-partisan independent mass media. These kinds of media have a greater legitimate claim for promoting the public interest. This is one reason why a government which aims at total political domination will see those kinds of media as a bigger threat than the government and party owned media.

Nevertheless, the ability of independent and non-partisan mass media to promote the public interest should not be taken for granted. After all, their owners have their own narrow self-serving interests to advance. However, their role as articulators of alternative political world views, as social critics and

as symbols of society's readiness to check political arbitrariness may be a major political asset. The effects of all these are examined in post-colonial Nigeria, but first the pre-colonial and the colonial periods.

#### **4.4 Political Communications in the Pre-Colonial Nigeria**

In all the pre-colonial Nigerian Societies, political communication was exclusively interpersonal directly and/or indirectly with religion as the principal linkages and contents in the network of relationships between kinsmen, the rulers and the ruled. Political authority structures in pre-colonial Nigeria evolved around three major ethnic groups: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Ibo in the east, and the Yoruba in the west. Islamic religion was (and still is) central to Hausa-Fulani politics and communication, while African traditional religious worships of cults and oracle organisations were common to both the Ibo and the Yoruba political communication systems. Other aspects of religion used included divinations, mythology, witchcraft, juju and cult societies. At all levels, political communication used more of informal than formal mechanisms. It was also characterised by all kinds of traditional methods of communications, face-to-face communications and there was . . . absence of modern mass media and professional communicators. For instance, a village head who was a member of the Council of Chiefs, might act as a leading politician and a communicator to his community.

This structure in varying degrees constituted the pattern of political communication in all the pre-colonial societies in Nigeria - both among the Hausa-Fulani, Ibo and Yoruba as well as the minority ethnic groups.

Traditional communications media vary from one Nigerian society to another. But generally, the following appear to have cut across all the pre-colonial Nigerian societies. They are: traditional leaders, the town crier or gongman, traditional religious groups, the age grade interpersonal networks, talking drum, hornman, visual symbols and colours, minstrel, poets and reciters, story tellers, drama, including dance, songs, mime and puppetry.

A Town crier or gongman usually hails from the household of the local chief or headman and is charged with the responsibility of delivering messages orally to elders, and the community. He is limited to what he is mandated to announce. He is an important communication link between traditional rulers, community leaders and the rest of the people in the locality. The town crier moves about on foot using the wooden gongs or the steel and has no authority to indulge in unilateral or frivolous pronouncements.

Traditional religious groups are authentic communication channels in Nigeria and they use palm fronds to summon members for important meetings. Traditional leaders such as local chiefs and village group leaders, native doctors, midwives, teachers and parents play an <sup>important</sup> / communication role for purposes of passing the word, for good governance and overall development of the Nigerian society.

The age grade bodies are the organisations or interpersonal networks of various age groupings in the community. Communication messages to age grade groups are often received as a command and they carry the stamp of sanctions for non-compliance.

Talking drums are used as veritable channels of communication, such as call signals (most radio stations have adopted this), inter-village communication, official messages from the traditional ruler or council of Elders.

The Hornman is a communicator who uses a horn for call signals and belongs to voluntary associations active in the neighbourhood. He is used in a special but limited way. The hornman is guided by the sources of his message.

Messages transmitted through visual symbols and colours are mainly moral and artistic. The impact of this channel is great. The minstrel is a communicator who operates through song often accompanied by local instruments. He seeks his audience in a homogenous group. The song has in general a hearing on particular situations; grief, pain, happiness, jubilation, etc.

Poets and Reciters are <sup>a</sup> very popular and adaptable channel of communication. Through this channel are transmitted moral, social and educational messages. It is currently popular in radio transmissions.

Story tellers are communicators who specialise in messages of educational, historical or entertainment value usually loaded with morals. Drama, including dance, songs, mime, and puppetry also convey educational, moral and social messages. This is convenient vehicle for the integration of a variety of traditional media and is capable of carrying this advantage to all types of modern media.

Social structures or social groups are forums such as market place, chief's courts, assemblies of elders, religious institutions, voluntary ward groups and cooperatives. They generate a tremendous amount of interaction as traditional communications media. They are also communal and mould control

mechanisms: norms, mores and values for communication in the Nigerian society.

For example, among the Yorubas of Akure in Western Nigeria the palace messengers are the Omode-Owas. The "chief messenger" also serves as the palace liaison officer, providing a channel by which the views of the people may be expressed to the king. Other messengers are sent by the chief on "news beats" to herald dates of traditional ceremonies, warnings of epidemics and dates for cultivation and harvesting.

In Yorubaland the village announcer or "gbohun-gbohun" post is, in most cases, an hereditary position. For example, in an Ijebu village, an announcer trains his children for the post, teaching them about the Oba's area of influence, the most productive ways to deliver the news, and the technique of using the gong.

In Benin, the Avbiogbe or chief town crier is the eldest among a group of 21 traditional chiefs in the kingdom. His special assignment is to collect the king's taxes and he assigns his colleagues to cover and disseminate the news of the kingdom. He is so important that it is illegal to insult or obstruct him; any misdemeanour on his part or on that of his colleagues result in instant dismissal and other punishment.

The village announcer in the Eziokpor village of Bendel State has been described as "the telephone line between the village chief and the villagers." Eziokpor's village gongman enriches the skeletal messages which the chief gives him with songs and riddles. His news is generally "broadcast" in the early morning and again in late evening. Occasionally, at noon, he may announce important news breaks such as the death of a key villager.

In the little village of Ashipa-Ilawo near Abeokuta in Ogun State, the village announcer is known as the Ashipa and has the status of a chief. Although he does not rule the village and is responsible to the most senior chief, the Ashipa's credibility is unquestioned. He strikes the gong often before his announcements and also plays the Gbedu drum to emphasize the importance of certain messages.

The Mai Shela, the village announcer of Hausa, is a legendary figure generally believed to have been appointed by Allah, but he is selected by the Sarki or ruler of the village. Revered and respected as a holy man, his body is inviolate and his announcements undoubted. The culmination of his yearly responsibilities is his prediction and announcement of the date and time for the sighting of the religious Ramadan moon.

The tradition of the village announcer has survived in the city of Ibadan despite the city's rapid growth, the presence of mass communication, and the rising literacy rate. The announcer is still an important servant of the Olubadan and is a familiar figure in the market squares in his traditional black "danshiki" and matching gong and cap. Among his many sacred duties are announcements of the royal proclamation of the celebration days for the religious festivals of the Egungun and the Sango.

These capsule descriptions of village announcers in various communities demonstrate that the gongman occupies an important position in the diffusion of messages within the belief systems of the rural audiences of Nigeria. He is not only respected and revered, but is perceived as authoritative and credible, and it is important that his role in the communication of rural change be

recognised by those in charge of reaching the village audiences by more "modern" means.

#### **4.5 Political Communications in Colonial Nigeria**

Media ownership in colonial Nigeria was dominated by missionaries, colonial administrators, nationalists, political parties, politicians and private foreign organisations.

During the colonial period, the press served as a medium of sustained public debate and political protest, an uncompromising advocate of administrative and political reforms, and a seething critic of the excesses of the colonial order. By its political activities, the press not only stimulated the emergence of nationalist movements but also played a prominent role in the constitutional development of modern Nigeria. During the period of nationalism, the press served as political recruiters and mobilisers. First, the party papers served as vehicles for changing political consciousness, and through them, the ideas of nationalism were propagated. Secondly, the press generally recruited people to political movements. Thirdly, they contributed to party organisation. Fourthly, the press encouraged the penetration of political activities into the provinces. In fact, the press was among the major weapons used by the nationalist leadership to gain and consolidate political power and government control.

In the campaigns for the 1923 elections, newspapers were identified to have fallen into three groups; the Pro-NNDP, exemplified by the Record, anti-

NNDP exemplified by the Spectator and the uncommitted or neutral newspapers exemplified by the Advocate.

Coming down to the 1959 elections the newspapers were religiously committed to various political parties. For instance, the Tribune and the Daily Service were the campaigning forums for the Action Group, the Pilot was committed to the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) while Dr Kingsley Mbadiwe's the Telegraph founded in 1958 was purposely to fight the federal elections of 1959 on the platform of his breakaway party the Democratic Party of Nigeria from the NCNC.

The European christian missionaries were the pioneers of newspaper ownership. As noted earlier, the Iwe Irohin was the first to be established by Reverend Townsend. In fact, for his part in Abeokuta, Rev. Townsend registered many 'firsts' of which the appearance of the Iwe Irohin was the fourth. He was the first official representative of the Anglican Communion, through the Church Missionary Society of Great Britain, to preach the gospel and convert Africans in this country to Christianity. He had arrived at Badagry in 1842 and had moved on to settle at Abeokuta a short while after. He pioneered the first attempt to provide a script for the Yoruba language in 1848, six years after the arrival of the Mission at Abeokuta. Six years later in 1854, he broke another pioneering ground by setting up the first printing press. Iwe Irohin contained items of information on such matters as building of churches, celebration of christian festivals, church meetings, the movement of church officials to and from district or parish, news of ordinations, baptisms, confirmations, deaths and births. These were meant to inform church workers in

the various outposts about the position of things at headquarters and in the organisation as a whole. It proved a very useful service in those days when mutual hostility amongst some natives and difficulties of communication, made conditions uncertain and life and property unsafe.

The Iwe Irohin was published fortnightly in English and Yoruba, each language claiming four of its eight pages. Each page was divided into columns and measured six inches wide by eight inches deep. At the time of its appearance it was estimated that about 3,000 Yorubas could read their native language. The Iwe Irohin arrived in time to help other factors which prepared the people for the publication of the first Yoruba Bible in 1862. Both newspaper and Bible, in cooperation with the earliest schools established by the missionaries, contributed largely to the promotion of literacy among the people.

After the first few months the Iwe Irohin broadened out its news coverage to include subjects other than church matters. News stories about Abeokuta and district were particularly prominent in its pages, but items from the surrounding districts of Yorubaland as well as Lagos Colony were also accommodated. The following subjects were covered by the news and editorial columns with varying degrees of prominence: commercial news about producer prices of palm-oil, etc.; announcements from local Chiefs and from the Government of Lagos Colony; news of the movement of Government and commercial representatives, including the arrival and departure of Governors or their deputies from Lagos; agricultural and craft exhibition and progress made by mission schools. A study of the issues between 1860 and 1865 reveals that the Iwe Irohin even carried advertisements from local firms and Government agencies.

It shows that it was a vigorous critic of the evils of slave trade, an ardent advocate of the diversion of trade and commerce from human beings to produce and merchandise. It was a faithful reporter and commentator on the political developments of the times, including the punitive expeditions and inter-tribal wars which plagued the surrounding Yoruba country.

In its issue of December 18, 1865, the Editor of Iwe Irohin announced that as from the following month two separate editions of the paper would be published. An English edition was henceforth to appear on the fourth day of each month, and Yoruba edition on the 20th day. Before now its fortnightly edition had frequently included a four-page English 'supplement'.

In the last three years of its existence, the political circumstances of Abeokuta and the Egbas generally were as unsettled and explosive as never since 1859. The Egbas, as reprisal against the Europeans whom they accused of aiding and abetting the people of Ibadan in their bid to by-pass the Egba commercial middlemanship and deal direct with Lagos Colony, expelled all Europeans from Abeokuta in 1867. It is believed that it was in the ensuing confusion and disorganisation of the Mission that the Iwe Irohin ceased publication in that year, after nearly eight years of existence.

The Lagos Weekly Record, a remarkably anti-colonial paper, was started by the Liberian, John Payne Jackson, in 1891. Its major target was the colonial Government, and its editorials constantly bordered on the seditious. It supported most pre-World War I protest movements in Lagos, charging its readers to resist colonial government oppression. Its attacks against Governor Lugard were extremely personal. The Lagos Weekly Record appeared and

disappeared between 1891 and 1930. This forty-year period represents the longest life lived by any single Nigerian newspaper ever since the first one - Iwe Irohin - appeared in 1859.

That the Record continued a virile existence during this period stands out as one of its greatest distinctions. But there are other features of its life which give the Record a special place of honour and merit in the Nigerian Press. One of these is its fearless nationalism. Another is its conscious and consistent policy of Pan-Africanism. The Record shares the first feature with such papers as James Bright Davies' Times of Nigeria and Herbert Macaulay's Lagos Daily News. It shares the second feature with some of the earlier newspapers, such as the Lagos Times, the Lagos Observer and the Lagos Standard.

Background to these features is found in the origins of its founder, Mr John Jackson. He was of Liberian origin and education and was greatly influenced by such Pan-Africanist thinkers as Dr Blyden (his fellow Liberian) and Dr W Du Bois of America. The Record therefore saw the up-and-coming Nigeria not in isolation as a West African country, but within the broader context of an African renaissance and as part of the movement for the emancipation of the Negro race. The background and character of the two Jacksons left their stamp on the editorial pages of the Record. Thus it played a leading part in disseminating the earliest nationalist sentiments which found part of their expression in the break-away of the 'African' churches from the established European Christian Missions. The Record also lent unqualified and consistent support to movements such as the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society. Africanist leaders, such as Dr Blyden and Herbert Macaulay, were

accorded a respectable amount of space in the Record for the propagation of their views and advocacies.

Next to African nationalism and Negro freedom crusading comes the attitude of the Lagos Weekly Record towards the local colonial administration. It made history by its courageous and uncompromising opposition to such Government measures as the land acquisition laws and their application, the Lagos Water Rate Regulations, the Seditious Offences Ordinance and the treatment meted out to traditional rulers in Lagos and elsewhere in Nigeria by the Colonial Government.

The colonial administrators became increasingly concerned about the power of the press to mobilise public opinion against alien rule. The agitational politics and criticisms of the colonial order by the nationalist newspapers led to negative reactions from the colonial government. For example, when in 1895 the colonial Governor proposed a house and land tax on the inhabitants of Lagos, the press took the government to task and whipped up local sentiments against the proposal. In response, over 5,000 Lagos citizens marched to the Government House in protest and as a result the tax measure was never enforced.<sup>11</sup>

The first reaction of the colonial authorities to curb the excesses of the anti-government press was the enactment of the 1903 Newspaper Ordinance which provided for registration of names, addresses of proprietor, publisher, editor

and printer; swearing to an affidavit, paying a deposit of £250; providing two sureties and entering into a bond before any one could publish a newspaper.<sup>12</sup>

One effect of the ordinance was to discourage people with limited resources from venturing into journalism. The ordinance was revised in 1909 and its sweeping nature proved a useful weapon in suppressing nationalist agitations.

#### Sedition ordinance

In September 1908 Herbert Macaulay published a pamphlet which denounced the colonial administration for not respecting the wishes of the ruled. Governor Macgregor used the occasion of that publication to request a sedition law:

"...which would allow reasonable freedom of discussion of government policy but which would give the government power to punish publications...designed to influence an excitable and ignorant populace the bulk of whom are absolutely under the control of Headman and Chiefs who themselves have only recently emerged from barbarism and are still actuated by the old traditions of their race."<sup>13</sup>

In 1909 the Seditions Offence Ordinance based on the Indian Penal Code was enacted. Its definition of a seditious publication against the Crown or government established by law included "all malicious endeavours to promote or tendency to promote hatred or contempt, disaffection, disloyalty or feelings of enmity".<sup>14</sup> This law was harsher and more vigorously enforced in Nigeria than in England. Professor B.O. Nwabueze provides this explanation:

"...because of the very excitability of illiterate peasants and the bitter emotions which imperialism is apt to generate in the minds of colonial peoples, it was thought unnecessary that words alleged to be seditious should have a tendency to provoke violence, as is the case in English law."<sup>15</sup>

When Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard was appointed Governor in 1912, the newspapers scrutinized his policy in a manner that provoked him beyond endurance. In a letter to his wife, dated October 16, 1913, Lugard referred to Nigerian newspapers as "scurrilous and local yellow press which exercised monstrous freedom". He described the journalists as "mission educated young men who live in the villages interfering with the native councils and acting as correspondents for the mendacious native press."<sup>16</sup>

Lugard's retaliation for the scrutiny was the enforcement of the 1909 law of sedition by which J.B. Davies, editor of Times of Nigeria, was prosecuted and convicted twice; Herbert Macaulay and Dr Caulcrick, proprietors, and J.A. Olushola, editor of the Lagos Daily News, were all convicted in 1928 for publishing a false rumour which led to public demonstrations against Macaulay's political enemies.<sup>17</sup>

Lord Lugard was very wary of newspapers. As Governor of Nigeria in 1917, he framed a law which gave him authority to appoint a censor of the Press whenever an emergency arose or he thought was about to arise. Lugard wrote into this legislation the power to seize the printing presses, confiscation of any newspapers printed and the imposition of a bond of £250 on publishers. Though London was upset when it learned of this action several weeks later when the mail ship from West Africa arrived and ordered him not to enforce such laws,

Lugard ignored these instructions. When the Colonial Office in London pressed him, he claimed that their original messages had been lost.<sup>18</sup>

But not all the newspapers were against the colonial government. The Nigerian Daily Times which started in 1926 and was owned by African and European members of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce but later purchased by the Daily Mirror Group of London in 1947, could not write anything critical about the Nigerian colonial government or expatriate officials unless definite instructions came from the very top.

Assessing the place of the Times amongst contemporary newspaper of the early 1930s, Chief Awolowo wrote:

"The Nigerian Daily Times was technically the best paper then in circulation but it was, on a strictly professional assessment, an unpardonably dull journalistic and literary product; a veritable stagnant pool of stale, colourlessness; and a musty-reservoir of articles which lacked animation, pungency and nationalist flavour. In contents and style the Nigerian Daily Telegraph under the editorship of Mr Ernest Ikoli and the Lagos Daily News were the very antithesis of the Nigerian Daily Times, and therefore much better. But most of the time, the Telegraph was printed in types so battered that only a long-suffering person could bear the ordeal of reading more than the short, bracing and thunderous editorial. The Lagos Daily News had ceased in 1934 to answer to the name of a daily paper. It published only when Herbert Macaulay... could afford to buy newsprint and ink and persuade his irregularly paid and half-starved compositors to work."<sup>19</sup>

Chief Awolowo was a reporter under the Times in 1934.

Technical improvement is one of the important contributions of the Times to the progress of the Press. But this improvement was made possible by another prerequisite contribution, namely, advanced capitalization. For the first time in the country's Press a comparatively large capital was invested in a single newspaper. This brought with it more skilled and better paid expatriate technicians and more efficient machinery, both from abroad. Technically, this meant an improvement in the physical appearance of the newspaper; better layout; in other words, better typography and mechanical typesetting, better printing.

Managerially, it meant a much more detailed and knowledgeable attention paid to the commercial or business aspects of the industry. Better quantity and quality of transport; in other words, better organization of sales and distribution throughout the country, greater circulation giving rise to better satisfaction of advertisers and greater patronage from them.

Third came the training and status of the journalist. With more money, Nigerians of higher educational qualifications were employed for training. Much greater opportunity or scope is afforded the young journalist by the foreign financed newspaper for the acquisition and development of skills.

Journalists were paid higher wages. Freelancers received some money compensation for their writing, as against the former years when they wrote free of charge mostly with a view to seeing their names in print. Higher wages and payment for published articles and illustrations also meant that only the best were accepted; therefore the journalists were induced to improve themselves and their output.

Because the Daily Times was unattached to any political group, the staff lacked the missionary or crusading spirit which motivated journalists in the indigenous papers. But it compensated for this by constituting itself into a force for the encouragement of social and professional comradeship amongst the rank and file of journalists who used to be estranged from one another by the political antagonisms of their principals or employers.

Fourthly, a wider range of reader-interests than ever before was catered for. The news and features service which increases the sources of public information and entertainment were made possible by the availability of much greater capital and the recruitment of men with higher skills from abroad and locally.

Also, the arrival and early advance of the Times marked the beginning of the end of the editor-printer or editor-proprietor, at any rate as a dominant feature of ownership and control of the Press. Its set-up showed a clear division of functions as between those who own the paper and those who produce it. Further, within the latter group there appeared a still clearer division of labour as between Editor and his staff as well as the production manager and his assistants.

As regards newspaper style and variety of reader interests, the Times was also one step forward in the march of Nigerian journalism.

It would be possible in this place to cite many more titles of the colonial newspapers used for political communications in colonial Nigeria as well as the names of their editors, owners and publishers, but this is not the purpose of this section. I have only tried to focus on those chosen to demonstrate the

varied example of ownership patterns of religious, partisan, government and private colonial media. The subsequent chapters discuss the use of the media by the owners for political communications in the first and second Nigerian republics.

### Conclusion

This chapter has sought to construct a theoretical model as a point of departure for investigating and discussing the impact of mass media ownership on political communications in Nigeria. It proposed a market-cum-state model of varying degrees of mixed party and non-party, government monopoly and control, political party and politician as well as private non-party, non-governmental ownership sub-models. These are governed by media philosophies of Authoritarian, Authoritarian-Government promotional, Partisan-Libertarian and Socio-Commercial-Libertarian orientations. The pros and cons of the model were also examined.

The reasons for owning mass media vary from one government to another and from individuals to individuals. Some people and groups establish media for altruism, power, profit, and influence or a combination of some or all the four. For instance, some owners see media ownership as profit making, as a political mouthpiece,<sup>1</sup> government propaganda organ or as something designed to give them fame, status, to provide a base for influencing public opinion and therefore, for creating opportunity for influencing political authority or a political set-up, as a business enterprise and as a public service. During the colonial era, government ownership of media was a reaction to the use of the media by the settlers' community; government perception of the press as too powerful to be left

to people who might misuse it; and government desire to use the media to provide services where the lack of profit potential would discourage private enterprise.

All told, it must be remembered that the model categories may overlap and some owners' use of mass media may not be guided by any model or philosophic guidelines but rather by reactions to Nigerian daily problems of stability, survival, ethnic interests, and national recurring issues in Nigerian government and politics.

Yet, it was noted that under colonialism, increasingly anybody who had anything to say turned to the newspapers to express their views. It was not merely the British administration or other White imports that came under attack. The rivalries of local chieftaincies and political arguments were aired and it was this period that saw what was to become a feature of the press in many parts of West Africa, particularly Nigeria - tribalism in print.

We have seen how the nationalist newspapers attacked the colonial order, how the colonial government reacted by promulgating all kinds of obnoxious anti-press laws and how the party papers were used not only to campaign for elections, but also to attack one another's political opponents. Each paper responded to socio-politico-economic issues in different ways depending on their ownership structures - the Iwe Irohin, the Lagos Weekly Record, and the Nigerian Times to mention just a few.

The next chapter continues the discussion by looking at specific media reactions to sensitive national issues and political events in Nigeria's First Republic.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. There are many types of Newspapers in Nigeria. They include the government owned (public) Newspapers, the private owned press, the political party newspapers, the religious papers, the professional bodies papers, the interest group papers, the English language and the vernacular language newspapers. Other writers on the African press have suggested different newspaper types. M.A. Grant divided owners of newspapers in Nigeria into four categories - political parties and politicians, foreign press groups, governments and small local entrepreneurs in 'Nigerian Newspaper Types', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. IX No.2, July 1981; Lateef Kayode Jakande used 'government-controlled', 'political groups', 'foreign-owned', and 'newspapers of religious and sectional interests' in 'Towards a More Virile West African Press', Dail Service (Lagos: 3 June 1961); W.A. Hachten listed four types: the 'foreign paper', 'local foreign-owned press', 'independent press', and 'government-owned papers' in 'Four Types of Newspapers', Africa Today, Vol.16, No.3, June/July 1969; and K.A.B. Jones - Quartey used 'government-promoted', 'government-run', 'pro-government', 'anti-government', 'independent', and 'foreign neutral' in 'The Ghana Press', Ibadan Seminar Report on the Press in West Africa (Ibadan: 1959).
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3. This information was gathered during an exclusive interview with a one-time general manager of the Sketch Publishing Company, Mr S.L. Bolaji.
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## CHAPTER 5

### NIGERIAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE FIRST REPUBLIC

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the ownership patterns of the mass media in Nigeria's First Republic and how these affected their coverage of national issues. At independence, Nigeria was a federation comprising a federal government and three regional governments in the East, North and West of the country. A fourth regional government, the mid-Western region, was created when the country became a republic in 1963.

The fact that the various governments, political parties and politicians which owned many of the newspapers and electronic media in the country at independence and under the republican status were local in outlook and based on affinity with specific ethnic groups had serious implications for the Nigerian press which was so vigorous during the struggle for independence.

The very process of decolonization in Nigeria had led to tensions among groups who competed for power not only to protect their group interests against possible invasion by other groups in the competitive process, but also to take over the reins of power from the colonial government and control the dispensation of allocatable resources and patronage. In fact, the momentum given to regionalism encouraged aggressive ethnicity both of which coincided very often, to create ethno-regionalism.<sup>1</sup>

Each of the regions had a dominant political party with loyal newspapers and mass media. The Eastern Region was dominated by the Ibo with their party the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), formerly, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. The region and its party had the West African Pilot, the Nigerian Outlook and the Eastern Nigerian Television (ENTV) to serve its interests.

The NCNC was formed in 1944 mainly to fill the gap left by the weakness of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which resulted from internal dissension in the movement. It was a product of a series of rallies and meetings organised by the Nigerian Union of Students and members of the defunct NYM in the bid to get an effective political leadership for the national cause in the march towards independence. At its formation in 1944, Dr A.B. Olorun-Nimbe was one of its leaders; Herbert Macaulay was its President and Dr Azikiwe, Secretary. The NCNC generally aimed at providing a medium of expression in order to secure political freedom and to win political independence for Nigeria as early as possible. At independence, however, the NCNC became identified with the Eastern Region of Nigeria under the leadership of Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The Northern Region was dominated by the Hausa-Fulani and came under the jurisdiction of the Northern People's Congress (NPC). It had the Nigerian Citizen and the Radio Kaduna Television (RKTV) as its organs. The NPC which emerged in 1949 was an off-shoot of a cultural organisation - Jamiyar Mutagen Arewa, formed by Dr R.B. Dikko. Its motto was 'one North, one People, one Destiny'.

The NPC was formed to avoid southerners dominating the politics of the country when the colonial administration ended.

The Yoruba held political power in the Western Region under the Action Group (AG) which was later engulfed by crisis in 1962. The regional mouthpieces included the Nigerian Tribune, the Daily Sketch and a radio television station - (WNBS-WNTV).

The AG was an off-shoot of the Egbe-Omo-Oduduwa established in 1945. The AG was launched at Owo in April 1951 with the aim among others of organising all Western Regional nationalists under its umbrella. It was formed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo so as to meet the need for a well organised political party first in the West and later in the whole country. Other leaders of the party were Chief Bode Thomas, Chief S.L. Akintola, Chief Shonibare, Mr Rewane, and Chief Ogun among others.

Chief Awolowo's failure to become the Prime Minister can legitimately be regarded as the original source of the Action Group crisis of 1962 and the accompanying treason trial. With the decision of Awolowo to move from the West to the federal legislature as leader of opposition, there was disagreement within the AG over who should succeed him as Premier. Against Awolowo's wish, Chief Akintola became premier and soon after he began to take control of decision making in Western Regional government - with the least possible consultation with Awolowo. Within two years of Akintola's take over of the premiership, dissension within the AG became public knowledge with the political supporters and the

newspapers which Awolowo controlled seriously criticising the policies of the Western Regional government. By May 1962 the rift had progressively got worse and led to a riot in the Western House of Assembly. The Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, instructed the police to clear the legislative chamber and lock it.

A state of emergency was declared by the federal government. The governor, premier, ministers, president of the House of Chiefs, Speaker of the House of Assembly and the Superintendent-General of Local Government Police were relieved of their posts. Dr Majekodunmi was appointed administrator for Western Region with considerable powers. A commission of inquiry into the financial and investment policies of six Western regional government statutory corporations including their relations with political parties was set up by the federal government.

The commission, headed by Justice Coker found that the Action Group received ₦1.3 million overdraft with the National Bank and that the party benefitted from NIPC investment in corporations that published pro-Action Group newspapers. On Awolowo, the commission reported:

"His scheme was to build around him with money, an empire financially formidable both in Nigeria and abroad, an empire in which dominance would be maintained by him, by the power of money which he had given out."<sup>2</sup>

Akintola was vindicated by the commission. The treason trial in which it was alleged that Awolowo and others planned to overthrow the government also found him and twenty other members of his party excluding the

Deputy Leader, Akintola, guilty and sentenced them to varying terms of imprisonment. Awolowo earned ten years imprisonment.

Before all these, Akintola and Rosiji (General Secretary of the AG) had been expelled from the party. With their supporters they formed a new political party, the United Peoples Party which later merged with a wing of the NCNC in the West to form the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP).<sup>3</sup> With the support of the Federal Government both through the administrator of the Western Region and other channels, when the Western House of Assembly reconvened on 8 April, 1963, Akintola won a vote of confidence and resumed his leadership of the region till 15 January, 1966 when the military intervened in Nigerian Government and politics.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from other personal issues which some writers have raised to the status of ideological differences,<sup>5</sup> the disagreement between Awolowo and Akintola centred primarily over the federal prime minister's idea of strengthening national unity through the formation of a coalition government to be formed by all the three major political parties. Akintola, strongly supported the proposition while Awolowo was opposed to it. After the federal elections of 1959, the NPC emerged with 148 seats, NCNC/NEPU alliance with 89 and the AG with 75 in the 312 member House of Representatives.<sup>6</sup> Even though the two southern political parties had enough number of seats to have formed a coalition government, the NCNC found it more expedient to join the NPC in a coalition with Tafawa Balewa Deputy Leader of the NPC as Prime Minister and Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the NCNC as President of the Senate and later, Governor-General (in 1963 with Nigeria becoming a Republic, Zik became President). Awolowo led

the opposition in the federal legislature. The federal government was directly in control of the Morning Post, the Nigerian Radio-Television Station (NBC-TV) and other media indirectly.

Petty jealousies afflicted these media. Their owners and editors could not perceive issues beyond the confines of party ideologies, ethnic or regional boundaries. Because none of the three major political parties had a firm footing in any region other than its home base, even though each had a considerable following in the other regions, the media could not promote national goals. Since the media were toeing party, ethnic and individual ownership lines in their coverage of events and the opinions they reflected, it became difficult, if not impossible, for the federal government in particular, to get its activities adequately covered by all media. This led to different governments, parties, politicians and individuals getting involved in media industry, a trend which has persisted till today.

## 5.2 Government Monopoly and Control of Mass Media in the First Republic

### **The Federal Government Press:**

The federal government set up the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Press which published the Morning Post and Sunday Post. I have earlier discussed the development of the NBC, but the story of the Morning Post and Sunday Post is outlined below. (See Chapter 3 for the N.B.C.).

In March 1961 the Nigerian Press Limited, publishers of the two newspapers, was incorporated under the Companies Act, with all the share-capital owned by the Government of the Federation. The Press was to be part of the

Government's public relations and publicity organisation. The board of directors of the new company were to operate under the general surveillance of the Federal Ministry of Information.

As was popularly understood, two considerations motivated the Federal Government in sponsoring the venture. Firstly, the idea was to improve the technical and journalistic standards of the indigenous Nigerian Press with a view to meeting the challenge of the non-indigenous section at the latter's own level. From 1937 to 1948, leadership of the Press in the strictly journalistic field was securely in the hands of the indigenous section, which also controlled and dictated the political and cultural aspects. Between 1948 and 1960 leadership in the technical, financial and journalistic fields was taken over by foreigners when the Daily Mirror Group of London took over control of the Daily Times. The indigenous Press raised intermittent alarms. They conducted a sustained campaign of blackmail and denigration against the 'invasion' of overseas Press barons. But all this availed nothing, especially so in view of the liberal attitude of the Government. Rather, the new arrivals waxed from strength to strength. Technically and journalistically they were certainly the leaders in the 1950s.

The second important consideration which gave rise to the Nigerian National Press, publisher of the Morning Post and Sunday Post, was the necessity for the Government to go to the people with its own ideas. It was to give the government a voice against the other media. Money was no object. It bought not only the best equipment but the best editorial staff it could find. But it was never

a success. It rapidly lost £300,000, but being government-owned that was of little consequence. In the words of Osindero:

"Towards the end of 1960 the feeling began to grow in government circles that the Federal Government was at a disadvantage in not having a national newspaper of its own..."<sup>7</sup>

The other reasons why certain leaders of the Federal Government, chief among whom were the Prime Minister and the Federal Minister of Finance, wanted a Federal Government paper was that they were highly annoyed by the strong and rather constant criticism of policies and personal behaviour which they had experienced during the first months of independence. They had accepted certain rules of the game vis a vis the press - of not directly closing the opposition paper, for example, or threatening foreign-owned firms with nationalisation. Therefore, a government-owned newspaper was the most obvious way of answering critics and hitting out at political opponents.

The Morning Post was always full of praises for the then federal government even when such praises were inappropriate. The Morning Post became defunct in early 1973. Its circulation had fallen ~~badly~~ and the Federal Government was running it at a greater deficit; the Nigerian audience of the Morning Post had eventually revolted against reading Federal Government bulletins and press releases that overtly contained only pro-government news that became characteristic of the contents of the Morning Post. The Post 'died' because it took its audience for a ride. It failed to recognise that it had a nationally-based audience, hence an element of objectivity in news content was

essential in presenting all sides of controversial issues that were quite sensitive when the nation was faced with a series of crises of identity and legitimacy. The paper itself commented on its 10th anniversary that:

"...inspired and sustained journalistic bombardments unleashed on the government during the first months of independence by units of the mass media created disintegrating forces that caused disaster for the first republic."<sup>8</sup>

### **The Regional Government Press**

The Eastern regional government converted the weekly Eastern Outlook into a daily newspaper and renamed it the Nigerian Outlook in 1960. the weekly Eastern Outlook and Cameroon Star had been launched since 1949 at Enugu by the Public Relations Department of the Government. It was the Eastern version of the Western News (Ibadan) and Nigeria Review (Lagos). On the approach of independence and the separation of Southern Cameroons from the Federation of Nigeria, the words Cameroon Star were dropped from the paper's name. It was taken over by the Eastern Nigeria Information Service, a corporation established for the purpose by the Government of Eastern Nigeria in the early fifties. On attainment of national independence the paper was converted into a daily under the new name of Nigerian Outlook.

The Nigerian Outlook became the Biafran Sun, a lively but irregularly produced paper of the Ojukwu government, during the Nigerian civil war; after the war, the new East Central State announced in mid-1970 that it would launch a new daily, Renaissance. The Renaissance was eventually

established and it replaced the Nigerian Outlook. Today, the paper is called the Daily Star.

The Northern regional government was in control of the Nigerian Citizen which had been established earlier by the Gaskiya Corporation. The Citizen was renamed New Nigerian in 1966. In the Western region, the government established the Daily Sketch.

The history of the Sketch Press Limited goes back to 1963 when the then government of the Western region conceived the idea of running a newspaper

"to inform and educate the people of Western Nigeria on the activities and achievements of the Government, so that the Government might carry the people with it in all its undertakings."<sup>9</sup>

The Sketch with its headquarters in Ibadan and branches all over Nigeria publishes the Daily Sketch, Sunday Sketch, Gboungboun, Evening Sketch, The Entertainer and the Sketch Annual. It made its appearance in the newspaper market on March 31, 1964, when its maiden issue came out. On November 18, 1965, the Sketch Publishing Company Limited was formally incorporated under the Company's Act (Cap 37) of Nigeria.

The Sketch Press Limited, formerly owned by the government of the then Western Region of Nigeria, has now become the property of the three states of Oyo, Ogun and Ondo, following the creation of more states in the country in 1967 and 1976 respectively. After the creation of more states, the Governments of the three states appointed a 'State Implementation Committee' (SIC) to

deliberate on all matters affecting their states including those that should normally have been referred to their various executive councils.

The committee was also to ensure the smooth take-off of the newly created states by effectively arranging the equitable distribution of personnel and assets.

After a series of meetings and careful consideration, the SIC decided that the Sketch Publishing Company should be left as a joint venture in order to save the new states from investing their scarce resources on the establishment of new publishing companies. This was how the Sketch remained and still remains the property of the three states of Oyo, Ogun and Ondo.

#### Political Party Press.

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe established the West African Pilot in 1937 but it survived into the period of independence, the first republic, the first, second and third coming of the military. It ceased publication in 1978. The trend of popular feeling when the West African Pilot was launched is summarized by a political opponent to its publisher, Chief Obafemi Awolowo:

"As there was no effective vehicle for the vigorous ventilation of suppressed grievances, a journalistic vacuum was thus created which Dr Azikiwe very cleverly exploited and usefully filled when he returned to the country in 1937 to establish the West African Pilot which, whatever its literary defects, was a fire-eating paper of the highest order, ranking in this regard with the Nigerian Daily Telegraph under Ikoli, and the Lagos Daily News, but much better produced."

As a result, the Chief noted, the Pilot:

"was naturally very popular, the very thing the youth of the country had been waiting for. Newspapermen in the employ of the West African Pilot were better paid and they assumed a new status in society. Civil servants, teachers and mercantile employees resigned good and pensionable posts to lend a hand in the new journalistic awakening. Some of these enthusiasts were eventually disappointed and disillusioned on other grounds but the fact of a journalistic revival or revolution was widely recognized and acknowledged."<sup>10</sup>

From the start, Zik spread banner headlines across his pages, introduced photographs, and simplified his text, Daily Mirror style, with one sentence per paragraph. A Woman's Page was started, a Gossip Column, book reviews and short stories. Within three years the paper was selling 12,000 copies daily, an unheard of circulation on the West Coast.

Though the Pilot strove for national distribution, lack of transport and communications facilities made the task nearly hopeless. In any case, Zik was very well aware of the importance of local issues to a popular newspaper, and Zik's Press Ltd. therefore embarked on the creation of a chain of newspapers, embracing the main centres of all the three regions of Nigeria. In 1940, he established the Eastern Nigerian Guardian at Port Harcourt; in 1943, the Nigerian Spokesman at Onitsha, also in the East, and the Southern Nigeria Defender at Warri, in what is now Bendel State. In 1944 he acquired The Comet on Ali's death, converted it into a daily, and in 1949 transferred it to Kano as the first daily paper in Northern Nigeria. In the same year he founded a second Northern daily at Jos, but this had later to revert to weekly publication. At one time there

were six daily newspapers in the chain, covering all the main centres of the largest, most sprawling and socially disunited country in Africa - Nigeria.

There are many qualities which distinguish the West African Pilot from other newspapers be they government, political party or private owned. First was the ownership, which was a limited liability company, the Zik's Press Ltd. Next comes the distinction of being the first Nigerian-owned newspaper to lead a healthy virile life over the years, without once going out of print for lack of financial resources.

In this connection it should be pointed out that whereas advertising patronage from foreign firms sustained the Nigerian Daily Times, the Pilot lived chiefly on sales of newspapers (circulation). That explains why the Pilot survived the withdrawal of advertising from Nigerian-owned newspapers by the expatriate firms as reprisal for the 1938 cocoa crop hold-up by the producers who responded to the instigation of the indigenous Press. Again in 1945-46 the Pilot survived the withdrawal of official advertisements by the Colonial Government as reprisal for the highly critical attitude of the newspaper.

The third contribution of the Pilot and a very important one at that, was the training ground which it afforded to young aspiring Nigerians. To begin with, Dr Azikiwe himself was a trained journalist. While operating as university lecturer in Anthropology and Political Science in America, he found time during the long vacations to pursue studies in journalism in other colleges. Not only did he obtain his professional diploma in journalism, but he worked from time to time as City Reporter or Sub-Editor for several American provincial newspapers. In addition to these, he acquired West African experience in the Gold Coast (now

Ghana) where he was Editor-in-Chief of the African Morning Post for three years before he came over to Nigeria to launch the Pilot. In the ten years of active leadership of the editorial and commercial operations of the Pilot, Zik can be said to have trained well over fifty Nigerians and other Africans who were later to be found in almost all newspaper offices which matter in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Tribune was started in 1947 by Chief Awolowo, who owned it until 1951 when the Action Group took the paper over. Together with the Daily Service, it formed the Amalgamated Press of Nigeria. The Service and the Tribune commanded a public made up of the supporters of the NYM, people opposed to Azikiwe's politics and newspapers, a large section of the Yoruba elite in Lagos, their followers in the West, and many of the followers of Yoruba traditional leaders. Their editorial staffs and financial supporters were chief among the organisers of the AG. But the Service was converted into the Daily Express in 1960. By 1958 the Amalgamated Press had obtained control of a company - Allied Press Ltd - publishing a string of small provincial dailies, so that it now grouped a whole network of papers covering all regions. Among the group's publications were The MidWest Echo, Benin, The Middle Belt Herald, Jos, and The Northern Star, Kano, in the North, and The Eastern Observer, Onitsha, and Cor Advocate, Uyo. Like their counterparts in the Zik Press Limited, all these newspapers have vanished, except <sup>for</sup> the Nigerian Tribune.

Table 2 shows the ownership structure of Nigeria's major newspapers in the First Republic.

TABLE 2  
OWNERSHIP ORIENTATIONS OF NIGERIA'S MAJOR NEWSPAPERS IN THE FIRST REPUBLIC

NEWSPAPERS	MIXED PARTY AND NON- PARTY	GOVERNMENT MONOPOLY/ CONTROL	POLITICAL PARTY/ POLITICIAN	PRIVATE NON-PARTY NON-GOVER- MENTAL	OWNER	POLITICAL AFFILIATION	READERSHIP	CIRCULATION
Citizen	*	*			Northern Nigeria Government	N.P.C.	North (including IBO Community)	8,100
Express	*		*		A.G./Over seas Group Thomson	A.G.	Lagos, West Mid-West, North (Yoruba)	52,220
Outlook	*	*			Eastern Nigeria Government	N.C.N.C.	Eastern Region	21,100
Pilot			*		Dr. N. Azikiwe	Unofficial N.C.N.C.	Sometimes National N.C.N.C. (Ibo)	23,100
Post	*	*			Federal Government	N.P.C.	Sometimes National	35,390
Sketch	*	*			Western Nigeria Government	N.N.D.P.	Government Offices & NNDP Western Region (Yoruba)	2,000
Times			*		IPC	Independent	National	108,960

### **5.3 Media and Political Communications in Nigeria's First Republic: Survey of Issues**

Nigeria had all the types of mass media represented by the market-cum-state model in the First Republic. There were mixed party and non-party media, government-owned and controlled media, political party newspaper and the press of private concerns. The impact of ownership on these media was largely reflected in their coverage of national issues of paramount importance such as census, election campaigns, regional crises, ethnic and group interests among a host of others. The leading political party newspapers were locked not only in a vicious combat, but also all the media including those of the various levels of governmental administration provided remarkable examples of over-zealous, irresponsible partisanship and recklessness. The seeds of mutual distrust, running battles and unending confrontations between regional media and the federal media on one hand and between different regional media and political party newspapers on the other hand, all of which were sown during the colonial, independence and first republic periods, are still germinating today.

### **5.4 The Press and the Politics of Census Controversy**

The census crisis was of crucial importance in the sequence of political crises that engulfed the First Republic. It sparked a bitter inter-ethnic feud and polarized the political leadership along ethno-regional frontlines. Furthermore, it not only set the stage for the controversial 1964 federal elections and the attendant constitutional stalemate but also contributed to the violent collapse of the First Republic. A meaningful analysis of press behaviour on the

crisis, however, requires an understanding of the importance of census in Nigeria's domestic and international politics and the relationship between the press and the political system defined in terms of the structure of ownership which links the mass media with the Nigerian political system. As shown earlier, the structure of media ownership was one dominantly controlled by political parties, partisan federal and regional governments. With one exception, the Daily Times, the sampled newspapers were either owned partly or wholly and controlled by or closely associated with and/or enjoyed financial subsidies from the dominant political parties and their governments. As I have tried to show in my analysis, this ownership structure has been the key factor determining the behaviour of mass media in Nigerian political communications.

The importance of accurate population figures has hardly been widely acknowledged in Nigeria. The manner in which the country has conducted its census in the past and the population figures claimed each time have never earned the respect of most people, groups and institutions. The controversy that has usually arisen about the reliability of the figures has made them suspect abroad, even though the rest of the world, for lack of any alternatives, has had to quote and use the official Nigerian figures.

There has been suspicion and criticism in Nigeria since regular census counts began in 1911. But the severest attacks were reserved for the May 1962 census figures, which were described by the Chief Federal Census Officer as false and inflated, and of which the Federal Minister of Economic Development said:

"It is useless to give out any figures to the public under the present circumstances... The fact is that

there have been inaccuracies and under no circumstances will I release false figures. I shall do my duty and if in the end we cannot arrive at any reasonably accurate figures, as the Census Officer has suggested, there can be no alternative but to do the whole thing again."<sup>11</sup>

In the end, no true and acceptable figures were produced and, following a meeting between the Prime Minister of Nigeria and the three Regional Premiers, the census figures were nullified and another count ordered for November 1963. But the results of this touched off an even fiercer controversy. Even when, in March 1964, the Prime Minister, who was also chairman of the 1963 National Census Board, declared in the House of Representatives that he had accepted the 1963 census report and preliminary figures and that this acceptance was final, a flood of protest was evoked. The Eastern Nigerian Government challenged even in the Federal Supreme Court the accuracy of the figures and the right of the Prime Minister to accept them.

The history of census in Nigeria has been one of mutual distrust, suspicion, and vehement criticism. The count has been highly politicized. Nigeria has never had a generally accepted census result. Three decades after independence, the goal of an accurate ascertainment of the Nigerian population for the purpose of economic and social planning still remains problematic and elusive. This is attested to by the fact that after independence, between 1962 and 1973, three national census exercises were conducted. When the figures obtained were not nullified as a result of a prolonged and acrimonious controversy (1962 and 1973) they were reluctantly accepted (1963) with a considerable degree of

scepticism and inter-ethnic feelings of bitterness. Another census head count is being planned in Nigeria for 1991.

It is realised that an acceptable census result is of paramount importance for Nigeria's socio-politico-economic development. As the Nigerian Federal Minister of Economic Development put it as far back as 1962:

"It is our duty as a nation to see to it that we produce population census results which have been thoroughly conducted, verified and appraised, and therefore acceptable, without any shadow of doubt, to all governments of the world and to all international bodies such as the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank, etc... The impressions of the manner in which a country conducts its affairs are one of the factors which earn for it the respect or disrespect of the rest of the world."<sup>12</sup>

Today, it is still difficult to say how many Nigerians <sup>there</sup> are in Nigeria?

What is still being used for development purposes is an estimation or a projection of what is likely to be the population of Nigeria. Issues such as revenue allocation, state creation, taxation, posting of government functionaries, appointment, promotion and the sharing of the perquisites of the 'national cake' are still being dangerously tied to the census. This has made census a highly sensitive and controversial issue. The Newspaper Press has not been left out of this controversy.

One of the political issues that arise from census figures in Nigeria has always been that it determines the relative numerical strength of each region or state in the federal legislature. Another issue is the revenue which each region/state collects from the central distributable pool.

This situation derived from the nature of the political formula of federal representation and the system of federal revenue allocation which became operative at independence. In the First Republic, the tripartite regional structures were central in the federal political life in that federal political representation and allocation of revenues were on regional basis. These, in turn, were respectively based wholly and partly on the 1953 census figures. Thus, the North, which was credited with over one-half of the total population, had over one-half - 174 - of the 312 federal legislative seats delimited on the basis of these figures. The East and the West were each allotted 73 and 62 seats and Lagos, three.<sup>13</sup> It was hoped by the southern political leaders that the 1962-63 census would alter the balance in their favour and remove the foundation for Northern power at the federal level.

The political importance of census in domestic politics also derived from the system of federal revenue allocation which was partly based also on census figures. At independence, the regional governments were financially weaker than and depended on the Federal Government for a substantial proportion of their revenues. The extent of this financial dependence, as shown in Table 3, was such that the North derived between 68.0 and 79.0 per cent of its revenues from federal statutory payments in the six-year period between 1959/60 and 1964/65. Similarly, the East derived between 61.8 and 64.5 per cent of its revenues from federal contributions while those of the West ranged between 69.0 and 80.8 per cent during the same period.

This meant an annual average federal contribution of 71.6 per cent for the North, 63.7 per cent for the East, and 74.5 per cent for the West

respectively. The factor of population was, in addition to three others, a key determining principle used in making allocations particularly from the Distributable Pool. The latter was a federal coffer into which 30 per cent of revenues collected by the Federal Government from general import duties and 30 per cent of those from mining rents and royalties were paid. Allocations from the Pool were in a fixed ratio of 40/95 to the North, 24/95 to the West, and 31/95 to the East. The bracketed figures in Table 3 show the Pool's differential contributions to regional revenues. Thus, while the North derived between 30.3 and 41.7 per cent of its total revenues from the Pool, that of the East ranged between 30.1 and 39.6 per cent and the West had between 14.2 and 33.7 per cent. This meant an annual average contribution of 27.7 to the North, 36.0 per cent to the East, and 21.1 per cent to the West.<sup>14</sup>

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF REGIONAL REVENUES FROM FEDERAL STATUTORY PAYMENTS AND THE DISTRIBUTABLE POOL, 1959-1965

Year	North	West	East
1959-60	68.6 (30.3)	78.2 (14.2)	63.1 (30.1)
1960-61	79.0 (39.6)	80.8 (21.0)	64.5 (39.6)
1961-62	76.1 (39.9)	70.9 (23.7)	64.1 (36.1)
1962-63	68.8 (41.7)	69.0 (23.6)	64.2 (36.7)
1963-64	68.8 (37.4)	74.0 (23.6)	61.8 (37.4)
1964-65	68.0	73.8	64.3

Source: O. Teriba, "Nigerian Revenue Allocation Experience 1952-1965: A Study in Intergovernmental Fiscal and Financial Relations," Nigerian Journal of Economics and Social Studies 8 (November 1966), p. 375. The bracketed figures are derivations from the Distributable Pool and calculated from p.373.

It was under this atmosphere that a two week nationwide population count began on May 13, 1962.

The conducting of censuses is on the concurrent legislative list, which means that the Federal and all the Regional governments have joint responsibility for it.<sup>15</sup> A federal census office was therefore created in Lagos in 1961, separate and distinct from the Federal Office of Statistics, and under the charge of the Federal Chief Census Officer. The Chief Federal Statistician and the Federal Office of Statistics were answerable to him for the census of the federal capital, Lagos.

Each regional Ministry of Economic Planning had its own census office under the control of a Regional Census Officer (the Chief Statistician or Senior Statistician of the Region). The funds were, however, provided by the Federal Government. The Central Census Office co-ordinated federal and regional activities. Regular preliminary meetings of the Chief Census Officer with regional officials were held, from time to time, in Lagos and the regional headquarters in rotation, to plan the conduct of the census and to agree on the uniform data required and the techniques to be used. Within this broad framework, each Regional Census Office (and the Federal Office of Statistics in Lagos) planned and organised the census in its own area, processed and analysed the figures, and sent the results to the Central Census Office.

In the regions, Census supervisors and enumerators were specially trained. Propaganda campaigns were undertaken by census officers and leading politicians. Pamphlets and posters were printed and distributed to educate the community. Talks were broadcast on national and regional radio networks, and

in many Nigerian languages, by public officials and ministers. Mass education programmes were officially sponsored and encouraged. Schools, colleges, universities, and churches were all associated with the census plans and their eventual execution.

The well orchestrated pre-enumeration publicity campaign and drive which began in late March, soon turned into a political campaign that over-emphasized the links between population figures and the provision of amenities and political representation.

This politicised and created a number of problems which ultimately destroyed the purpose of the entire exercise. For as counting began, the Nigerian people resorted to a number of dishonest acts to boost the population of their communities and indirectly their regions for economic and political advantages. These acts, which were connived at or encouraged by the politicians, ranged from double counting to census migrations and successive discovery of 'isolated and forgotten' villagers. The nationwide enumeration was completed amidst wide-ranging irregularities that left many wondering whether an accurate census was the goal.

By mid-July 1962, two months after the count, the final figures were in but as late as November, they were not released in spite of official promises to do so in early August. The delay in the release of the figures was so long that an opportunity was given for widespread rumours about attempts to inflate them; there was press speculation about political interference, and charges and counter-charges between northern and southern politicians, who accused each other of

trying to inflate the figures to ensure disproportionate political advantages in parliamentary representation.

As late as November 1962 it was alleged that census counts (which were supposed to end on 21 May) were still going on in Northern Nigeria. To this charge, an official of the Northern People's Congress replied that 20,000 Ibos living in the Gboko Division of Northern Nigeria had been recounted because during the census they had travelled home to Eastern Nigeria to be counted, so as to swell the population there to the disadvantage of Northern Nigeria.<sup>16</sup> This was a clear admission of the double counting of 20,000 people in one division alone. Similar practices were alleged in many parts of the country. The Federal Census Officer stated in his report that:

"the figures recorded throughout the greater part of Eastern Nigeria during the present census are false and have been inflated. The figures for the five divisions of Awka, Brass, Degema, Eket, and Opobo, which have recorded increases of over 100 and 120 per cent, can certainly be rejected out of hand."

On Western Nigeria, he reported that:

"of the 62 census districts ... provisional total figures are available for only five, due, in my view, to weakness in the census organisation in the Region."<sup>17</sup>

But he made no adverse comment of any kind in respect of Northern Nigeria.

In December 1962 the Ministry of Information published and distributed to members of the Senate One Hundred Facts People Must Know, in which the 1962 census figures were given as: 22m in Northern Nigeria; 12m in Eastern Nigeria; and 8m in Western (including Midwestern) Nigeria, that is, a total of 42m. On 30 January 1963, however, the Daily Times, reporting that the Federal Cabinet had disagreed on the census figures and that the Chief Census Officer had been relieved of his post, quoted the final figures submitted to the Cabinet as: 30m in Northern Nigeria, 12m in Eastern Nigeria and 10m in Western (including Midwestern) Nigeria, that is, a total of 52m. Neither the official publication of December nor the unofficial report of January were denied, and this further convinced many southerners that northern politicians were continuing to inflate their own figures.

Finally in February 1963, 10 months after the count, the Prime Minister announced to the nation that the census results had been scrapped and that a new one would be conducted later in the year.<sup>18</sup>

The repeat performance produced no better or more acceptable result. For the 1963 census, a Central Census Board was set up, which consisted of representatives of the Federal and Regional Governments, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. Although each Region arranged the enumeration of its population, the Census Board provided census inspectors who were not natives of the Region to check the returns of the enumerators in each Region, by actually conducting a sample census. Also, a larger sum of money, £2.5m as against £1.5m, in 1962 was provided by the Federal Government, which financed an increased number of enumerators and inspectors. The period of

enumeration was shortened from 17 to 4 days - 5-8 November 1963, so as to reduce the chances of multiple counting.

The preliminary figures were released in February 1964, and finally accepted at a meeting of the National Economic Council in Lagos in May 1964. The population in Nigeria was put at 55.66m, made up of 29.78m in Northern Nigeria, 12.39m in Eastern Nigeria, 10.28m in Western Nigeria, 2.53m in Midwestern Nigeria and 675,000 in Lagos.<sup>19</sup>

These figures again evoked a great deal of controversy, no less than in 1962. The Eastern and Midwestern Governments rejected them out of hand, because they alleged that, as in 1962, the Northern figures were inflated to enable that Region to continue to dominate the politics of Nigeria. The Northern and Western Governments accepted the figures, and later, the Midwestern Government as well for the sake of national unity. But the Eastern Government challenged the acceptance of the figures in the Federal Supreme Court and lost, on the technical ground that the Court had no authority to entertain the suit.

It is therefore obvious that no census of Nigeria has really enjoyed widespread acceptance, and the question, 'How many Nigerians?' still remains unanswered. Even today many Nigerian statisticians, administrators, and scholars are hesitant to accept the population total of 105m. The hope of the south breaking the predominance of the north at the Federal level through the census is still being dashed. On Sunday, April 22nd, 1990, one Major Gideon Gwarza Okar of the Nigerian Army nearly succeeded in overthrowing the military government of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. Among other reasons for staging the coup, Major Okar claimed to be taking over

"on behalf of the patriotic and well-meaning peoples of the Middle Belt and the southern parts of this country."

He added,

"I wish to happily inform you of the successful ousting of the dictatorial, corrupt, drug baronish, evil men, sadistic, deceitful, homosexually-centred, ---- unpatriotic administration of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida."<sup>20</sup>

Reflecting the continued acrimonious north-south dichotomy in the country, Major Okar directed:

"In the light of all the above and in recognition of the negativeness of the aforementioned aristocratic factor, the overall progress of the Nigerian state, a temporary decision to excise the following states namely, Sokoto, Borno, Katsina, Kano and Bauchi states from the Federal Republic of Nigeria comes into effect immediately... By the same token, all citizens of the five states already mentioned are temporarily suspended from all public and private offices in middle belt and southern parts of this country..."<sup>21</sup>

## 5.5 Press Reactions to the 1962/63 Census Crises

The Daily Times commented in an editorial that:

"there have been conflicting and disturbing speculations concerning the national census held in May this year. These speculations do not inspire confidence. First, is the fact that six months after the census was held, the results have not been

announced... The NCNC has expressed grave concern over this situation and the whole matter is to say the least disappointing."<sup>22</sup>

The newspaper then appealed to the Prime Minister to make a statement and reassure the nation that the census figures were not being mishandled.

When the 1962 census figures were finally rejected and eventually cancelled, the Daily Times wrote in its editorial comment:

"three hearty cheers to the Nigerian Patriots who decided last Tuesday to scrap the 1962 census. They have taken a decision which we trust every citizen of the land will applaud. The history of the 1962 census is a long process of confusion, bitterness, mistrust and the violent exchange of words during which even civil servants came in for serious reprimand... The decision to nullify the census figures was taken, in the words of the official communique, 'because of the loss of confidence for the figures in the various Regions'. We need hardly emphasise the dangers we would have been exposed to both at home and abroad were we to insist on parading the discredited figures. We fully endorse the taking over by the Prime Minister of complete control of the new census."<sup>23</sup>

The Federal Government, Morning Post's editor-in-chief, Aloba, known as the columnist Ebeneezer Williams, wrote a two-page spread early in March on why the 1962 census should be accepted. In it he described the Easterner:

"The dynamism of the Easterner, the growing shortage of land, the love of adventure - all of these are nothing to be ashamed of; but all of them tend to send the Easterner away from home... It is not quite the same with other tribal groups."<sup>24</sup>

The political party and regional newspapers engaged in vehement personality attacks and name-calling in their reports, comments and feature articles. The Northern Region Government paper, the Citizen spoke of Ibos as being 'so industrious, migratory... impenetrably united tribesmen'. For the census they 'fly to the East, inflate the population there and return smiling to continue to thrive affluently in the North'. It proved to be most vicious of all the papers in its attacks. One cartoon portrayed Ibos as pidgin-speaking cannibals.<sup>25</sup>

The Morning Post was extremely sensitive to and hardly tolerant of any criticism of the government's handling of the census. It condemned the NCNC/AG walk-out over the issue as 'rabble-rousing and violent expressions of... tribalistic sentiments'. It blamed the actions of the minister in charge on the 'enemies of the government' and maintained that the demand for his resignation was unjustifiable.<sup>26</sup>

The Northern Nigerian Government-owned paper, the Nigerian Citizen, declared itself 'convinced by the sincerity' of the minister's explanation and hence could not understand the NCNC furore over 'a simple and factual statement of census fraud' in the East. It condemned the NCNC walk-out on the census as 'the most reckless [act of] political irresponsibility'. It cautioned the NCNC to be 'more reasonable, if not responsible' with the reminder that the

'NPC [with a working majority of 180 members in the Federal House] CAN GO IT ALONE'.<sup>27</sup>

The Eastern Nigerian Regional Government owned paper, the Nigerian Outlook carried stereotypes of the North, particularly in the Editor-in-Chief Ajuluchuku's 'Saturday Catechism'. He spoke of the NPC leaders' 'childishness and amateurishness' by which they showed 'they are not seasoned rulers of the North'. He added:

"The North cannot afford a break-up of the Republic. They have nothing up there to eat. They have little education. Their art of government is primitive. They have no access to the sea."<sup>28</sup>

The Outlook inflated the political strength of the Ibos when it spoke of the Ibos...forced to defend themselves with stunning effectiveness against the nomadic herdsmen of the NPC. Ajuluchuku stated:

"I think the NPC leaders are merely bluffing. They know that Dr Okpara means to stand firm and that the East is ready to march, albeit constitutionally. The North cannot afford a break-up of the Republic."<sup>29</sup>

On 7 March, the day of the cartoon portraying Ibos as cannibals, the Citizen published an ultimatum to Dr Okpara written by its political correspondent telling him to accept the census or withdraw the Ibos from the North.

On March 24, the West African Pilot published an advertisement from the Ibo State Union asking Ibos to be vigilant. These attacks and pronouncements against the Ibos make it clear beyond all doubt that 'there is a well-laid plan and organised conspiracy to isolate, crush and totally annihilate or reduce all Ibos to the status of slaves in Nigeria...'<sup>30</sup>

The Daily Express disclosed unofficial figures reportedly scooped from 'reliable sources' close to the Census Office. The figures were given as 11m for the North, 10.5m for the East, 8.5m for the West and 0.6m for Lagos. These were translated into 110 federal legislative seats for the North, 95 for the East, 85 for the West, and 6 for Lagos. Far more important the paper jubilantly hinted at and described the political implications as entailing 'a major and inevitable realignment and readjustment' in the relative power positions on the three regions. In this respect, it focused exclusively on the strengthened political position of the Western region.<sup>31</sup>

The NPC reacted to the Express disclosure by expressing doubts, among others, about the announced discovery of a village with 20,000 population in the East. The party called on the Eastern region Premier, Dr Okpara to clear the air on this grand discovery of eighty-seven day old described as a 'census hoax.'<sup>32</sup>

This immediately drew a strong reaction from the Pilot. It described the NPC act as a 'deliberate and savage attack on the integrity' of the NCNC leader. Apparently sensing some foul plays in the number game, the paper concluded that the NPC was stunned by the purported census figures and became enslaved by the fear that the North would lose its federal control. It attributed

the NPC 'savage attack' to this fear and viewed this as the first step in its attempt to challenge the census results. The paper remarked with quiet satisfaction that the

"NPC can now breathe easier and the rest of Nigeria will certainly feel more comfortable that the monolith has a thin edge on them - an edge that can be upset by serious politicking."<sup>33</sup>

The situation was further exacerbated by the presentations of the Minister in charge of the census. The resultant parliamentary fiasco over his presentations and the report of the Census Officer, evoked different reactions from the sampled newspapers. The reactions of the Pilot was an admixture of disappointment and bitterness. The paper was disappointed that a full parliamentary debate of an issue of such 'supreme national significance' was not allowed after the 'outburst' of the Census Minister and therefore commended the NCNC/AG walk-out. It was particularly bitter that the Minister did not justify 'the ugly epithets, the vicious language and grave charge ... [of census fraud against the East] with facts.'<sup>34</sup>

The second census count had its own brief but significant post-enumeration moment of press speculation. This was spearheaded by the West African Pilot with the publication of the following unofficial figures: North, 15.7m; East, 13.6m; West, 10.8m; and the newly created Mid-West, 3.4m. The paper was particularly satisfied that these figures belied the previous claim of 30m for the North. Neither could it resist gleefully noting that the East had made the most

gain.<sup>35</sup> The Census Board quickly denied the accuracy of these figures, which were identical to those reported by Reuters three weeks later.

This in turn, provoked a flurry of reports from the paper that alleges 'some uneasiness' among NPC Federal Ministers and 'sweeping changes' in the Census Office.<sup>36</sup> An immediate Northern reaction from the Nigerian Citizen took the Pilot and Reuters to task. The paper believed that it was not a mere coincidence that their reported figures were almost identical. It therefore surmised that the Reuter's Nigerian correspondent must be an NCNCer and that his act was an NCNC attempt to 'rig the census'. Hence, it urged a full-scale and thorough official investigation of the source of Reuters' 'semi-official figures.'<sup>37</sup>

The significance of this exchange lies in providing the initial clue on subsequent newspapers' line-up in the acrimonious inter-ethnic confrontation that ensued after the release of the official figures. It also defined the range of the Pilot, the Outlook, and the Citizen, the Post, the Express, the Times and other newspaper actors.

The Morning Post spoke on the implications of the 1963 second census count figures for the inter-ethnic balance of political power in the following words:

"... the main reason for the present controversy is that the Hausas are supremely delighted by the results of the census; the Yorubas are extremely happy about those results; but the Ibos are bitterly pained by the political implications of the outcome of the exercise. Yet neither the happiness of the North nor the joys of the West nor the sorrows of the East have a foundation in the love of the nation or in the desire to rebuild it. Whatever the reception the census has received has been motivated by the hidden resolve to

encourage discrimination (maybe to different degrees) in favour of 'my townsman' in loyalty to the clan."<sup>38</sup>

Thereafter, the Post harped on the theme of catering to the welfare and happiness of the people. And donning the garb of an apostle of national unity and peace, the paper enjoined 'all men of goodwill' to join hands towards that end. It soon realized, however, the falsity of its assertion about 'all the good that [had] been done by a frank exchange of opinions' on the census. Instead, this exchange of questionable frankness had actually sown the 'seeds of hate, of political discord and regional disaffection'<sup>39</sup> and fouled the political atmosphere with inter-ethnic recriminations, mistrust, and animosities. In this setting, the process of achieving the 'ultimate end' of socio-economic improvements, national unity, and peace became stultified as the very foundation of political order became endangered.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The analysis in this thesis so far has illustrated the vulnerability of Nigeria's highly politicised mass media to political passions in the country's fragile political process.

When Nigeria attained independence in 1960, the mass media orientation shifted towards reinforcing tribal and sectional loyalties in preference to the goal of national unity, identity and integration. The press and other media

became parochial in their content. They dedicated themselves to the articulation of particular ethnic interests.

When the Nigerian devastating crises of the 1960's occurred, all the national press instantly took sides with their regional governments. Of course, such a course seems to be a natural tendency anywhere in the world. Failure to support one's national or ethnic line of action, particularly during crisis situations may expose one to being labelled a saboteur and an unpatriotic element.

During the First Republic, the Federal Government press, the Morning Post was an uncompromising mouthpiece of the owner-government in all issues that concerned it. In the same vein, the regional government-owned newspapers, the Nigerian Outlook (East); the Sketch (West); the Nigerian Citizen (North) were also in favour of the owner-governments while the political party newspapers - the West African Pilot, the Tribune, the Express and the Service protected the interests of their owners.

The prevailing mood of the time was that even those newspapers which had some claims to being independent were expected to get involved in partisan politics. As a renowned, seasoned and leading journalist, Lateef Kayode Jakande put it:

"A foreign-owned newspaper which wants to continue in business for long must play ball with the ruling party or parties and with the government of the country where it is making a profit."<sup>40</sup>

In emphasising the structure of ownership and its impact as well as the role of the political conditions under which the media operate, Elaigwu notes:

"... one realizes very often that the socio-political and ideological milieu in which media men operate colour their perspectives, and to some extent dictates the language used."<sup>41</sup>

From the Nigerian experience, several degrees or forms of government ownership of mass media can be identified. First, there is the direct government ownership which is effected in two ways:

- a. by means of a limited liability company whose shares are subscribed wholly by the Government; and
- b. by establishing papers directly administered and controlled by the Government Ministry of Information.

The first form of direct ownership is well illustrated by the Nigerian National press Limited, a printing and publishing company incorporated under the Companies Act in 1961. This Company prints and publishes the Morning Post (daily) and the Sunday Post. The second type of direct ownership is illustrated by the old Nigerian Review or its offshoots in the East and West. Another example is to be found in the establishment of the Daily Sketch in 1964 by the Government of Western Nigeria. For the first six months the Chief Information Officer of the Western Ministry of Information was also the General Manager of the newspaper, and the initial expenses of the newspaper were borne direct by the Regional Treasury. Later the Government was replaced by the Sketch Publishing Company Limited and now it is Sketch Press Ltd.

Another form of Government ownership or control is indirect. Again, there are two types of the indirect form. First, Government newspapers

published by the statutory corporations. Notable examples are the Gaskiya Corporation of the North and the Information Service Corporation of the East. The second type of indirect control is by means of injecting capital into newspaper organisations from Government sources. In a public tribunal held in 1956, it was shown that a small part of £2,000,000 deposited by the Regional Government in a bank from the funds of the Regional Marketing Board was taken up as loans or investments to help meet the financial requirements of the West African Pilot. In 1962 during the public sitting of the Coker Inquiry, it was also shown that two newspaper groups received large sums of money as capital help indirectly from the funds of the Western Nigeria Marketing Board through the agency of the Western Government. One group was the Amalgamated Press of Nigeria, printers and publishers of the Daily Express and Sunday Express in which the Roy Thomson newspaper group of Britain and Canada had interests. The other group was the Allied Newspapers of Nigeria, publishers of the Service Magazine (formerly Daily Service), Nigerian Tribune and Irohin Yoruba.

The analysis of the press behaviour on the census controversy shows that the head count and population matters in Nigeria were primarily interpreted in political terms because of its importance as a key variable in the political formula of governance. It further shows that press behaviour towards the crisis was decisively shaped by the factor of ownership. This factor is expressed in terms of how the drastic alteration in the existent inter-ethnic balance of political power affected either the ethno-regional interests and political fortunes or corporate economic interests of their respective proprietors. In fact,

it was this very consideration that determined the acceptance or rejection of the figure among the proprietors themselves.

Thus, the Nigerian Citizen, the Morning Post and the Daily Express were supportive of the figures because they favoured the political fortunes and ethno-regional interests of the NPC and the AG respectively. The three papers behaved differently toward the nullified 1962 figures. At that time, the Express fought hard to prevent the nullification simply because of the beneficial economic and political effects of the figures on Western Nigerian. Similarly, the Citizen and the Post were most vocal in their support for nullification because of the perceived adverse economic and political effects on the Northern region.

This consideration was equally evident in the case of the West African Pilot and the Nigerian Outlook. Both papers rejected the 1963 figures because they adversely affected the political fortunes and ethno-regional interests of the Eastern region. In the 1962 exercise, the Pilot was undisguisedly delighted about the revelations that the North, via the NPC, might lose its federal control. The same sentiments were noticeable in its reactions to the initial speculations regarding the 1964 returns. At that time, the paper even noted that the East had made the most gain in population which, given the weaker political position of the AG, would have enabled the NCNC to play a dominant federal role.

But it is equally evident from the above that press behaviour towards the crisis was significantly influenced also by the conflictive nature of inter-ethnic relationship. Although this derived from the shift in balance of political power and the perceived beneficial or adverse implications therefrom, it was exacerbated by the pre-existing strains in relationship. This factor was

expressed with varied degree of explicitness but does not necessarily detract from its importance in shaping press behaviour.

The Citizen defined the issue in both political and inter-ethnic terms and its analysed behaviour focused exclusively on the strained and conflictive Hausa-Fulani/Ibo relationship. Its discussion consisted mainly of personal vilification of the Ibo leadership and blistering attack on everything that was Ibo. It depicted and cartooned the Ibos as a race of 'nudes and cannibals [with] recent or no historical background [and to whom] cow's meat and clothes were foreign.'<sup>42</sup>

The Morning Post similarly showed clear indication of this factor in its scurrilous ethnic remarks, its choice of a truce text from the NPC pamphlet, and veiled attacks on the Ibo leadership. Likewise, the Outlook gave explicit indications of the influence of this factor. It most frequently described the Hausa-Fulani either as 'nomadic herdsmen and cattle-rearing' or as 'feudalistic, backward looking desert tribesmen'. This frequent use of ethnic epithets was symptomatic of and had its origins in the strained inter-ethnic relationship and characterised the channels of political communication between the two via the NPC and the NCNC.<sup>43</sup>

These issues are directly related to the process of national integration insofar as they involve the distributive question of power and authority as well as their perquisites among the constituent groups in the society. This is particularly a fundamental question which may well determine the fate of national integration as well as the possibilities of socio-economic development and orderly political processes. That this question still represents a potential disintegrative

force derives from the fact that it is often posed with the issue of equity. And, depending, upon how it is managed, the Nigerian State finds its legitimacy questioned each time and consequently it becomes weakened and/or threatened with disintegration, the most recent case of which occurred on April 22, 1990 when the abortive coup leader announced that Nigeria was to be disintegrated. The partisan nature of the press and the tone of its language of political communication have not been helpful.

As the foregoing analysis shows, the press over-indulgence in reckless language of political communication not only exacerbates the political disagreement in Nigeria but also makes the process of accommodation and compromise extremely difficult. It also bequeaths to the Nigerian political communication system a legacy of bitterness, which tends to perpetuate and widen the gulf of inter-ethnic animosities and mistrust and thereby stultifies the process of national integration. As a result of the press wars during the first republic, some regional and local governments enacted by-laws banning the circulation of some newspapers from their areas of jurisdiction. Vendors were killed or maimed for merchandising some papers and not others. Some newspaper executives were attacked and their properties destroyed; others sought police protection for 24 hours daily.

Banning of newspapers was started by the Onitsha Urban County Council on 20 October 1965, when it forbade the hawking, buying or reading of seven papers with which it disagreed. A few days later, Onitsha was followed by the Enugu Municipal Council, and within a fortnight several other local government councils had done the same. They included Port Harcourt, Aba and

Owerri, all in Eastern Nigeria. The newspapers concerned were the Daily Times and Sunday Times, the Daily Express and Sunday Express, the Morning Post and Sunday Post, Daily Sketch and the Nigerian Citizen. Local government councils in Western Nigeria took similar actions. Led by the Ibadan City Council, they passed resolutions banning newspapers which favoured the party or alliance in control of the East. The papers this time included the West African Pilot and Daily Telegraph based in Lagos, the Nigerian Tribune and the Irohin Yoruba both of Ibadan. The Ibadan City Council went further than its Onitsha or Enugu counterpart by attempting to forbid citizens in its area of jurisdiction tuning their radio sets to Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service.<sup>44</sup> The Nigerian Outlook and four other papers including the Daily Times were banned by the Ibadan City Council. Anyone caught reading the papers was liable to a £100 fine or six months in jail, and anyone caught listening to the Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service was liable to a £25 fine or two months in jail. The Ikare District Council Management Committee also prohibited four dailies and a weekly.<sup>45</sup>

The first military coup which took place in January 1966 rectified the situation, albeit temporarily, when the military government under General Ironsi instructed all the government authorities to lift all locally imposed bans on Nigerian newspapers and mass media. However, in January 1967 the military government of Eastern Nigeria excluded the Daily Times, the Sunday Times, the Morning Post and the Sunday Post from the Region, and in May the Western Government banned the Morning and Sunday Post.<sup>46</sup>

Reacting to the bans, Mr Peter Enahoro, writing in his column under the name of Peter Pan in the Daily Times of 8 November 1965, gave an

opinion held by most journalists but one which very few dared to express publicly in print. He said:

"The ban on the Daily Times, the Daily Express, the Morning Post and the Daily Sketch, is tantamount to censorship. It is a usurpation of the people's free and independent right to read what literature they like. (I am paying no attention to the revenge in the West where certain copy cats have imitated the East. This retaliation harms the image of the national newspapers. We are not the Press of the West and we don't need this kind of aid).

"If Easterners feel genuinely aggrieved, it is not an official ban on newspapers that will show it, but an appreciable fall in circulation. There is no greater rebuke to a newspaper than cutting your supply from the vendor. You stop reading the paper and the paper misses your clientele. It may not go broke, but if sufficient numbers feel the same way and boycott the newspaper, then the pinch will soon become irritable somewhere upstairs in the boardroom. During the June strike last year, a certain national newspaper suffered disastrous consequences from which it has never quite recovered. There was no ban. Democracy was not offended. But the people had spoken with their threepences..."<sup>47</sup>

Recurrent allegations of Press responsibility for violence must be treated with extreme caution however. It is true that, in a situation already inflamed with mistrust, a single report may have disastrous repercussions. Some people claim, for example, that the riots of late September and early October 1966 were spontaneous outbreaks provoked by the news that Northerners had been killed in the Eastern Region; this information, first broadcast by Radio Cotonou and later relayed by Radio Kaduna, is alleged to have sent Northern mobs rampaging through the streets in search of revenge. Something of the kind may have happened but the case cannot be said to have been proved. Given the

complexity of events which precede a civil disturbance it is difficult to locate a first cause, even assuming that it is realistic to think in such terms. The mass media are often singled out for blame simply because the message which they carry can be isolated from the multitude of informal communications taking place simultaneously. Only a detailed investigation of all the circumstances surrounding a particular incident can produce an accurate apportionment of responsibility. Very often such an investigation becomes completely impossible after the event. And, even if one could say with certainty that a specific disturbance was unleashed by a specific report, the finding might be of little real significance. Presumably the news of attacks on Northerners would have reached the urban centres of the North sooner or later, even if the mass media had attempted to suppress the information.

Of far greater practical importance is the question of the part played by the media in creating the general preconditions for violence within a society. Historians have made some progress in recording the development of the Nigerian Press during the century of its existence but little has been done to relate changing patterns of ownership, control, production, and distribution to the broader framework of the social environment.

A country of the size and complexity of Nigeria will not stumble into unity by accident. Those in power must continually create and recreate a balance between interests which are in chronic disequilibrium. They operate at a grave disadvantage unless they are able to monitor responses to earlier measures and anticipate future causes of stress. Naturally they have other sources of intelligence

but the Press should represent an important element in a genuinely reciprocal communications flow.

The Press can contribute to national unity or disunity, socio-politico-economic stability or instability, social integration or disintegration through its coverage of national issues and events.

The power of the pen is a reality but ought not to be exaggerated. Because papers are usually purchased by those in sympathy with their views, a great deal of their energy is devoted to preaching to the converted, while their influence upon uncommitted or hostile readers is far less dramatic than they would have us believe. Most people would agree with the conclusion of the Royal Commission on the British Press that:

"...it is not possible for a newspaper or group of newspapers to swing public opinion overnight in any particular direction, whether by tendentious presentation of news or by direct expressions of opinions. The influence of the Press is more gradual and takes the form of a subtle conditioning of opinion to the acceptance or rejection of particular approaches to social and political problems."<sup>48</sup>

Whatever the pros and cons of the press behaviour, it cannot be denied that the structure of mass media ownership has had some impact on the Nigerian political communications. Ownership also influences, to a great extent, the thinking of newspaper editors.

The following dialogue between two newspaper giants, one, a southerner and the other, a northerner, will show clearly that different Nigerian ethnic groups, had been thinking differently even before independence; and this diametrically opposed thinking has continued till today. In 1943, there was a West

African press delegation to London. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, founder and editor-in-Chief of the West African Pilot and Alhaji Abubakar Imam, then Editor of GASKIYA TA FI KWABO, were members of the delegation among others. While in the boat that took them to London, Dr Azikiwe drew up a memorandum on post-war reforms to which a few of the delegates, excluding Malam Abubakar Imam, appended their signatures.

When the memorandum was published in the West African Pilot, it attracted considerable interest and support from Nigerian progressives, and when these groups learnt that Malam Abubakar Imam did not sign the document, he met with individual and press hostility on his return to Nigeria.

In order to clear the air, Malam Abubakar Imam published the memorandum in his paper - the Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo, and his reasons for refusing to sign it. This provided the first opportunity for the readers to know that Nigeria was far from being one country.

Dr Azikiwe, in that memorandum, had suggested two basic stages for the handover of power from the British to Nigerians.

By 1953, he said, Nigeria should be a self-governing territory and five years later (1958) it should be completely independent. This meant, said Malam Abubakar Imam, that all whitemen would leave Nigeria by that time.

Since he was a press delegate representing Northern Nigeria, he did not feel mandated by the Northerners to accept such a resolution. He wrote "You [Northerners] never told us that you are worried by the whitemen living in this country, so that I should sign and say that you want them to go after 15 years".

"However", he continued, "you ought to know, if we send away the 'red' whitemen surely we will get 'black' whitemen [southerners] who went to England and learnt that kind of work done by the 'red' whitemen. If we haven't got one here in the North, we shall have to seek one in the South".

Thus, the whole attitude of the North at that time towards the independence of this country stemmed from the ideas expressed by this powerful individual who influenced Northern thinking and political awareness through his popular paper, Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo.

It is not surprising therefore that when Chief Anthony Enahoro, then an Action Group Member of Parliament, tabled a motion in 1953, that Nigeria demanded independence in 1956, two years earlier than Zik proposed in 1943, the North rejected it outright, proposing that independence should come "as soon as practicable".

Regarding the freedom of the press, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe wrote in his memorandum that Nigerians should be allowed to install printing presses without obtaining permission to print their newspapers, and write what they like in them, so long as they do not break the law.

Malam Imam's reply to this was short and cryptic. He wrote:

"No one up here in the North ever complained to us that the whitemen or government had prevented him from buying a printing press."

On minimum wages, Dr Azikiwe suggested in his memorandum that every labourer ought to receive a salary of not less than £6.00 per month: a skilled

and literate worker, who knows his job, should receive not less than £6.00 a month.

Again, Malam Imam had an answer to this. He wrote: "This suggestion is correct. We all want it so. We may even be glad if it were more than £6.00".

"But reflect carefully", he wrote: "With us here in the North, at the moment, a person receiving a salary of £6 a month is among the highly ranked workers.

"Well, if a labourer is raised to £6 the highly ranked workers will without doubt, say they want salaries to be raised to £15, up to £20.00.

"The reason is because the office workers or highly ranked workers, will most probably, not agree to see a labourer who sweeps their offices receiving £6, and they themselves being paid £2.00, £3.00, etc.

"You should also note that for every salaried worker you come across, there are 100 who receive no salaries.

"Well, are we to increase the taxes of the non-salaried workers so that the salaried may have increases in their pays?

"And would the farmer agree to be pinned down labouring for one year on the field so as to sell his produce for £3.00 whereas the labourer gets £6.00 in one month."<sup>49</sup>

Each group or owner in the media protects its group interests by carrying news in favour of its owners and/or against other groups.

More recent examples of this trend are given in the analysis of the press behaviour on the coverage of election campaigns in Nigeria's Second Republic, but first an examination of the Nigerian press under the military.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Ethno-regionalism is used to refer to the crystallization of the identity of the major ethnic groups with the regional administrative boundaries. In Nigeria, there were three major ethno-regional groups; the Hausa-Fulani in the North, Ibos in the East and the Yoruba in the Western Region. In such situations the desire to protect regional interests implicitly involves the desire to protect the interests of the major ethnic group in that region - in competition with those from other regions. The region as an administrative unit becomes the base for competition with other ethnic groups.
2. See Report of the Coker Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of certain Statutory Corporations in Western Nigeria, 1962 (Lagos: Ministry of Information, 1962).
3. NNDP was the name used by Herbert Macaulay's group between 1920 and the early forties.
4. The Federal Government backing of Chief Akintola throughout the Western Region Crisis could be seen as a manifestation of disappointment in Awolowo's behaviour as the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Legislature.
5. Post, K., and Vickers, M., Structure and Conflicts in Nigeria: 1960-65 (London: Heinemann, 1973).
6. See Post, K., The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) for full details.
7. 'Report of an Inquiry into the Finances of the Nigerian National Press Ltd by Mr E.A. Osindero, 1964. Unpublished and marked 'secret'.
8. See Elias, T.O. (ed.), Nigerian Press Law (London: Evans Brothers, 1969).
9. Interview with a former General Manager of the Sketch, Mr Bolaji.

10. Awolowo, O., Awo: An Autobiography (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960).
11. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, in Federation of Nigeria Parliamentary Debates House of Representatives. (Lagos: 1962).
12. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, in Federation of Nigeria Parliamentary Debates, 1962.
13. Federation of Nigeria, Report of the Constituency Delimitation Commission (Lagos: Federal Government Printer 1958), pp.19-23.
14. The other principles of allocation from the Pool were the basic responsibilities of each regional government, the need for continuity in regional public services, and the need for balanced development of the federation. Since then, 'revenue allocation' has been one of the recurring issues contributing to the 'inevitability of instability' in Nigerian government and politics. Many committees have been set up to resolve the issue to no avail, including Okigbo and Aboyade Technical Committee which failed to produce a generally acceptable formula to all Nigerian government and people.
15. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Lagos: 1963).
16. Daily Times, 21 February 1963.
17. Chief Federal Census Officer's Report, 18 July 1962. It was read and quoted in the House of Representatives but the report was not published by the Federal Government.
18. See Debates: House of Representatives, 1963.
19. The Nigerian Morning Post (Lagos, 25 February, 1964; See also Debates: House of Representatives, 3 April 1964).
20. National Concord Tuesday, April 24, 1990, p.9.
21. National Concord April 24, 1990. Also see West Africa 30 April 1990, pp.696-698.

21. National Concord April 24, 1990. Also see West Africa 30 April 1990, pp.696-698.
22. Daily Times, 27 November, 1962.
23. Daily Times, 20 February, 1963.
24. Nigerian Morning Post, 4 March, 1964.
25. Nigerian Citizen, 21 March, 1964.
26. Morning Post, 4 August, 1962, p.5; 31 October, 1962, p.5; 2 November, 1962, p.5; and 10 December, 1962, pp.1 and 10.
27. Nigerian Citizen, 5 December 1962, p.6; and 12 December, 1962, p.8.
28. Nigerian Outlook, 21 March, 1964.
29. Nigerian Outlook, 18 March 1964.
30. West African Pilot, 24 March, 1964.
31. Daily Express, 2 August, 1962, p.1.
32. West African Pilot, 3 August, 1962, p.1.
33. West African Pilot, 4 August, 1962, p.6.
34. West African Pilot, 7 December, 1962, p.6; 8 December, 1962, p.6; 10 December, 1962, p.6; 11 December, 1962, pp.6 and 8; and 7 March, 1963, p.1.
35. West African Pilot, 24 December, 1963, p.1.

37. Nigerian Citizen, 22 January, 1964, p.1.
38. Morning Post, 4 March, 1964, p.8.
39. Morning Post, 6 March, 1964, p.1.
40. Jakande, L.K., "Towards a more Virile African Press" Daily Service, Lagos, 3 June, 1961.
41. Elangwu, J., "Mass Media and Politics: The Challenge of Nation Building" The Nigerian Standard, Monday, January 26, 1981.
42. See for example, NC, 25 March 1964, p.11; 28 January, 1964, p.1; 22 February, 1964, p.1; 7 March, 1964, p.1; WAP, 2 March, 1964, p.1; NO, 2 March 1964, p.3; 9 March, 1964, p.3; 18 March, 1964, p.3; 28 March 1964, p.4; and MP, 21 July 1964, p.3.
43. See for example, WAP, 31 March 1964, p.1; NO, 20 June 1964, p.3.
44. Hachten, Muffled Drums, 1971; Coker, Landmarks of the Nigerian Press, among others.
45. On the general problem of the relationship between the ownership of mass media and their credibility, see J.D. Chick and A.A. Mazrui 'The Role of Mass Media in Situations of Cultural Pluralism', paper presented to UNESCO Meeting of the Role of Mass Media in a Multi-racial Society (Paris, December 1969).
46. The 1967 bans were imposed despite the fact that the military regime had, by means of the circulation of Newspapers Decree of 1966, prohibited restrictions on newspaper distribution: the banning edicts were never challenged in the courts. See T.O., Elias, (ed.), Nigerian Press Law (Lagos, 1969), 133-4. However, similar bans imposed on Imole Owuro and the Sunday Star in 1968 were declared invalid by the High Court in Ibadan. For details of the relevant case, see West Africa London 6 and 13 June 1970.
47. Enahoro, A., Fugitive Offender (London: Cassell, 1965).

For details of the relevant case, see West Africa London 6 and 13 June 1970.

47. Enahoro, A., Fugitive Offender (London: Cassell, 1965).
48. Report of the Royal Commission on the Press (London: 1962) p.18.
49. Adamu, H., "Power of the Press" in The Story of the Daily Times (Lagos: Daily Times of Nigeria Ltd; 1976), pp.69-73.

## CHAPTER 6

### NIGERIAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS UNDER MILITARY REGIMES

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the impact of mass media ownership on Nigerian political communications under military rule. It is possible to argue about 'what is political'<sup>1</sup> in the use of the press under the military since during such periods, the constitution is suspended, political parties are abolished, houses of parliament are dissolved and democratically elected representatives of the people are sacked. But the fact that Nigeria has been ruled by soldiers for more than twenty years in the thirty years existence of the country as an independent nation cannot be overlooked. More importantly the Nigerian press under the military provided a very good example of 'Authoritarian-Government-promotional' media philosophy in which there is government monopoly and control of the mass media.

During the period under review, there was a noticeable proliferation of national mass media, making the formal channels of communication overwhelmingly owned by government. There was near complete government control of all instruments of mass communication. The major newspapers, all radio and television stations, the News Agency of Nigeria, and the extensive government information service - all were under official control and directly accountable to the military regimes. Even the 'independent' newspapers were subjected to direct interference. In such a situation, it will be interesting to know

what happens in a total ownership, complete monopoly and overwhelmingly direct control of the channels of communication.

Equally important is the fact that since the military rules by decrees and/or edicts and in the absence of a democratically elected parliament, the mass media were found not only performing the functions of interest articulation, interest aggregation, political socialization and political communications, but they were also playing the role of a deliberative assembly reflecting the feelings of the people, their peccadilloes, their likes and dislikes of government policies and actions and the conduct of the people who run the government. Government leaders themselves were looking to the mass media as instruments of tension management and government media in particular were expected to perform the primary function of system maintenance through the reporting of public, ethnic, social, political, economic and a host of other national issues in a non-controversial tone. The Press under this section is treated from the first coming of the military on January 15, 1966 to the fifth military rule under Babangida, (August, 1985 to 1992?)

#### 6.1 The First Coming of the Military: The Ironsi Regime

A military coup d'etat - the sudden and illegal replacement of a country's legitimate government through the use or threat of violence by a small group of conspirators drawn from within the armed forces - took place in Nigeria for the first time on January 15, 1966. Since then, the country has been faced with the seeming inevitability of military coups occurring and recurring as if there is no end in sight. As at 1990, Nigeria has recorded five known coups and three

announced abortive coups with increasing rumours of coups and demand for coups.<sup>2</sup>

The January 15, 1966 coup marked the demise of the First Republic in Nigeria and the beginning of military intervention in Nigerian government and politics. Many leading politicians, political leaders of the First Republic and some military officers were killed in the coup.<sup>3</sup> General Ironsi became the new head of state although the coup had been planned and executed by some junior army officers mainly the majors.

Led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, the reasons given for staging the coup included the extreme tribalism, nepotism, regionalism and high level corruption in the country:

"Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 per cent, those that seek to keep the country permanently divided so that they can remain in office as Ministers and VIPS at least, the tribalists, the nepotists... those that have corrupted our society..."<sup>4</sup>

However, this does not imply that within the military organisation, there were no discontents among the rank and file. As much as the young army officers wanted to get rid of rotten and corrupt ministers, political parties, trade unions and the whole clumsy apparatus of federal system, they hated their top ranking army officers. What were seen as ills of Nigerian society were all embracing from the civilian political systems to her military organisation.

The discontent and tribalism within the army was voiced by Major Okafor, who was said to have been buried alive during the counter-coup. He, once, feared that he would be dismissed from the army by Brigadier Z. Maimalari because he punished a 'Northern Nigeria soldier who went absent without leave'. Also Major Anuforo condemned Colonel Yakubu Pam, the Adjutant General and a Northerner from Jos for being brutal to TIV rioters of Northern Nigeria while he was in charge of operations there, as commander of the Third Battalion ... an officer who had caused the death of so many people should be punished.<sup>5</sup>

Huntington's explanation of military intervention in domestic politics appears applicable to the Nigerian situation since 1966. From his viewpoint, military interventions in developing countries are only one specific manifestation of general politicization of social forces and institutions. Societies where most social forces and institutions are highly politicised have political clergy, political universities, political bureaucracies, political labour unions, political corporations and of course political armed forces. All these specialised groups tend to become involved both in political issues which affect their particular interest or groups and also issues which affect society as a whole. Huntington's contention is that:

"Military explanations do not explain military interventions and that the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political."<sup>6</sup>

By 1966, it had become difficult for the Nigerian army to be completely immune from all the centrifugal forces in the Nigerian society. There

were ethnic and regional conflicts, civil violence, census controversy, election crises, politicisation of recruitment and promotion in the army, tribalism, socio-politico-economic inequalities - all of which provided the immediate stimulus for the January 1966 coup.<sup>7</sup>

The Major's coup attempt, to be sure, was initially popular with the majority of Nigerians. However, because it was not guided by a popular peoples' organisation or anchored directly on their aspirations, its popularity was soon eroded by the dynamics of the increasingly bitter intra-elite feud as well as by ethnic and regional contradictions in the polity. There was no doubt that the officers had good intentions about the need to alter the nature of Nigerian politics and held strong patriotic sentiments, in spite of what some people might think about them. Rather than view the defeat of the Majors and the eventual ascension to power of General Ironsi as part of an initial and deliberate so-called 'Ibo conspiracy' at national hegemony, it should be stated that they were victims of their own incorrect strategy. As Ademoyega's first hand account shows, they wished to replace a system of ethnic and regional preferment with a meritocratic system. They expected to solve problems for the people and to win their support but had no direct contact with them.<sup>8</sup>

The coup planners got control of the North but they failed to get control of some Southern parts of Nigeria hence Nzeogwu was later persuaded to stop further action. Dr Azikiwe who was then the country's president was away overseas for medical treatment. This led to Nwafor Orizu, Acting President, making a nationwide broadcast on 16th January, 1966 in which he announced the unanimous decision of the Council of Ministers to hand over the country's

administration to the armed forces of the Republic with immediate effect and then called on the General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army, General Aguyi Ironsi to make a statement to the nation.

General Ironsi's first step taken on coming to power was the suspension of the legislative and executive bodies at the centre (in Lagos) and in the regions.<sup>9</sup> Under Decree No.1, 1966, the new Federal Military Government acquired the 'power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Nigeria or any part thereof with respect to any matter whatsoever.' Federal laws attained expression in decrees while state laws were called edicts.

Political communications under the military have been without a clear picture and the press has suffered untold hardship, harassment, and banning through various decrees promulgated by the military juntas. Immediately after the coup of January 15th 1966, there were debates as to what would now be the role of the press since the military regime was being witnessed for the first time. Prior to that period, the Nigerian press had taken active part in nationalist activities, attainment of independence, census controversy, election campaigns and a host of other national and international issues.

One of the greatest problems Ironsi had was that of communication and this plagued him throughout his tenure of office. Gowon was later to have the same problem of communication when the press started a series of attacks on his lieutenants on questions of public morality, probity and rectitude. Gowon's nine years in office were later to be described as nine years of misrule and failure.

As I noted earlier, some local councils and regional governments banned the circulations of certain newspapers and forbade listening to certain

broadcasting stations prior to the January 1966 coup. As a result, the press became dull and less critical on national issues of paramount importance. However, General Ironsi on coming to power declared null and void various regional laws banning the circulation of newspapers. By promulgating decree No.2 of 1966, General Ironsi not only made it free for newspapers to circulate anywhere in Nigeria but he also vested the regulation of the activities of the newspapers on the federal military government:

"Any person who after the coming into force of this Decree, whether alone or with any other person, and whether as a member of a municipal authority or otherwise, does anything calculated to prevent or restrict the distribution or general sale of any newspaper in any part of Nigeria shall be guilty of an offence and be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or both."<sup>10</sup>

This was a welcome step as far as the newspapers and other mass media practitioners were concerned.

With this decree, the press could now start to comment on national issues as it had before the military take-over. The first press comment on government action and public morality came with the Daily Times comments criticising the military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, Lt.Col. Ojukwu over two appointments. Lieutenant Colonel Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu had appointed his father to membership of two public corporations, appointments which the Daily Times believed were one too many. When the Press was becoming too critical of the government actions, the federal military government reacted with the harsh Defamatory and Offensive Publications Decree Number 44 of 1966. This decree

was aimed at publications - newspapers, leaflets, periodicals, or posters - that could provoke disaffection in any section of the community. A publisher could be arrested, without warrant, by any police officer or any member of the armed forces in uniform. The author of the offending publication could be fined a maximum of £50 or sent to jail for three months or both. The court was also empowered to confiscate the offending material.

This measure did not stop the press from making unfavourable comments on government activities and challenging military decisions. In particular, the Nigerian Citizen, which had just changed its name to New Nigerian, gave expressions to the feelings in the North that the January 1966 coup was an Ibo coup. Under this situation, there was a communication gap between the military rulers and the people and the press which could have been used to explain policies of the government to the people was not in good terms with the military authorities. For example, Ironsi could not explain his indecision on what to do with the coup plotters. The Northerners who initially welcomed the coup, later saw the coup plotters as murderers while the Southerners saw them as heroes. Trying the plotters legally would have meant the pleasing of the North and the displeasing of the South. Ironsi detained them instead. The North suspected Ironsi as being part of the coup while the South saw him as trying to betray the interests of the January coup plotters.

On May 24, 1966, General Ironsi announced his programme to restructure the country, by his Decree No.34, 1966 which made Nigeria a unitary state:

"Nigeria shall on the 24th May, 1966... cease to be a federation and shall accordingly as from that day be

a republic by the name of the Republic of Nigeria, consisting of the whole territory which immediately before that day was comprised in a federation."<sup>11</sup>

With this unification Decree, came also the move to rotate civil servants, Nigerian federal status was abolished and converted to a unitary form of government. Regions were abolished and constituted into groups of provinces under the control of the Military Governors appointed by the National Military Government. All the offices in the civil service of the Republic (except the office of the Attorney General of the Republic and group of provinces) became offices in a single service - the National Public Service.

All this infuriated the Northerners who regarded these moves as an attempt to subject them to the more educated Southerners.

So the Northerners decided to take revenge. Many Ibos living in the North were massacred within a month of the new Decree. The fury thus unleashed could be contained only after the Federal Military Governor's Office had given definite assurances that the Unification Decree was a temporary measure taken by the military regime for the sake of a more convenient administration of the country and that, as soon as the army regime had achieved its purpose, the people would be allowed to make their own decision in a referendum.

In July 1966, Major General Ironsi embarked on another plan designed to rotate the Military Governors. He was still considering the matter, when he was overthrown in the counter-coup of July 29, 1966. In that coup Lt.

Colonel Fajuyi, Major General Ironsi and many Ibo officers lost their lives. Fajuyi was then Governor of Western Nigeria.

Lt. Colonel Gowon then assumed control and, within a few days, restored order in the army. In August 1966, he revoked the Unification Decree, and the Regions regained the status they had before the May 1966 Decree.

After the July coup, while the country was gradually settling down, another wave of violence erupted in the North and many Ibos were attacked and killed. The people of Eastern Nigeria were so incensed by these outrages that they decided to recall all their people from the various Regions. Most trooped back. Many Northerners living in the East were also manhandled and some were killed in retaliation. That was the beginning of the drift to total separation which eventually, in May 1967, led Eastern Nigeria to declare secession.

## 6.2 The Press Under the Second Coming of the Military: The Gowon Era

As noted earlier, the nature of the January 1966 coup was very suspicious and this <sup>exacerbated the</sup> sense of distrust and ethnic hatred and chauvinism among many people and institutions including the army. In fact, the Northern Army Officers were so bitter about the coup and the subsequent steps of General Ironsi that they no longer trusted the southerners especially the Ibo and even the Yoruba. The Northern Army officers were not ready to take the leadership of the Yoruba or the Ibo. The Northern officers also wanted secession.<sup>12</sup>

To forestall any possible secession, the Federal Government under Lt Colonel Gowon created twelve states out of the existing Regions. Lt. Colonel Gowon felt that the fears nurtured by the minority tribes would be allayed by the

creation of states and that the grievances of the Southern parties over the regional imbalance would be removed. This gesture failed to impress the Eastern Government, and three days later, on May 30, 1967, it made its perilous declaration of secession.

The Federal Government was not prepared to accept this encroachment on the country's territorial integrity. There was a war of words followed by a war of nerves, which ultimately developed into a full-scale war that went on for about two and a half years. In January 1970, the rebellion was finally crushed and ended in the surrender of the Biafran Army under the leadership of Lt. Col. Effiong.

Two main sources of the sour relationships between Ojukwu and Gowon could be identified. First was Col. Ojukwu's claim that as a member of the supreme military council, he was not consulted for the appointment of Lt. Col. Gowon as the Supreme Commander of the Nigerian Armed Forces and the Head of State after the assassination of General Ironsi. The second was Col. Ojukwu's insistence that then (now late) Brigadier Ogundipe was the next most senior army officer and should succeed Ironsi as Nigeria's Head of State and Government. It was later learnt that the Northern junior army officers rejected the leadership of Brigadier Ogundipe or that of any senior military officer from the south.

When the civil war eventually broke out, there were peace moves that failed - Aburi talks of 1967 prior to the war, Kampala talks of May 1968 and Addis Ababa move of August 1968. The Organisation of African Unity passed a resolution supporting one Nigeria but this was rejected by 'Biafra'. Five countries later recognised 'Biafra' as a sovereign state during the war - Gabon, Ivory Coast,

Zambia, Tanzania and Haiti. About 3,000 people died in the war while the Federal Government spent about N600m to prosecute the war.

The role of the Nigerian press and the influence of mass media ownership on political communication can be seen from the following exchanges of the Nigerian military rulers at the Aburi meeting (referred to earlier) convened to find solutions to the civil war. The degree of the involvement of the Nigerian press and its partisan stance in Nigeria's fragile political process during that critical period could also be deduced:

**Lt.Col. Gowon:** On the Government Information Media I think all the Government Information Media in the country have done terribly bad. Emeka would say the New Nigerian has been very unkind to the East.

**Lt.Col. Ojukwu:** And the Post which I pay for.

**Lt.Col. Gowon:** All the other information media have done a lot.

When the Information Media in a country completely closed their eyes to what was happening, I think it is a dangerous thing.

**Major Johnson:** Let us agree it is the situation.

**Lt.Col. Ejoor:** All of them have committed one crime or the other.

**Lt.Col. Hassan:** The Outlook is the worst of them.

**Lt.Col. Ojukwu:** The Outlook is not the worst, the Post which we all in fact pay for is the worst followed closely by the New Nigerian.

**Mr T. Omo-Bare:** Let us make a general statement on all of them,

no distinction.

**Lt.Col. Gowon:** I think we agreed that all Government Information Media should desist from making inflammatory publications that would worsen the situation in the country.<sup>13</sup>

It was the general belief of the Nigerian military regimes that unrestricted circulation of newspapers could constitute a danger to their governance. Hence they promulgated all kinds of decrees to gag the press. These decrees however, could not stop the press from commenting on many of the wrong-doings under the military. The Gowon era provides a good example of open confrontation between the press and military rulers and this eventually contributed to the fall of Gowon in 1975. In the words of Panter-Brick:

"The press played a vital role in preparing the ground for removing Gowon's government, through reporting views of the government's opposers and showing its own dissatisfaction. This was especially true of the New Nigerian (before its nationalization by the federal government) in spite of the fact that it was owned by governments of six northern states."<sup>14</sup>

A manifestation of the press-government relationship under Gowon can be depicted through selected Nigerian newspaper headlines of the period such as the following: 'ADEBAYO BANS MORNING STAR AND IMOLE OWURO' (Daily Times 1, 1967); 'REPORTERS/CAMERAMEN ORDERED OUT OF GOWON'S PLANE' (Morning Post August 13, 1969); 'POLICE SWOOP ON TIMES OFFICE' (New Nigerian and Nigerian Observer, July 11, 1969); 'ARMED

POLICEMEN BESIEGE TIMES OFFICE', 'TIMES PRESS SEALED OFF' (Daily Sketch, September 7, 1967); 'EDITOR DETAINED' (Daily Sketch September 12, 1969); 'AYO ADEDUN ... DETAINED BY ARMY CAPTAIN' (Daily Sketch, September 13, 1970); 'NEW NIGERIAN EDITOR ARRESTED' (New Nigerian, April 10, 1970); 'TRIBUNE OFFICE SEARCHED' (Daily Times, December 5, 1972); etc.

In 1967, the federal military government under Gowon promulgated the Newspapers Prohibition of Circulation Decree Number 17 to prohibit the free circulation of newspapers in Nigeria. The decree made the following provisions:

Whereas the Head of the Federal Military Government if satisfied that the unrestricted circulation in Nigeria of a newspaper is or may be detrimental to the interest of the Federation or of any state thereof, he may by order... prohibit the circulation in the Federation or in any state thereof as the case may require, of any newspaper; and unless any other period is prescribed in the order, the prohibition shall continue for a period of twelve months unless sooner revoked or extended, as the case may require.

The penalty for non-compliance with the above Provisions of the decree includes the following:

- (a) A fine of not less than fifty pounds or not more than one hundred pounds, or an imprisonment of not less than six months for an individual offender. If he commits the offence twice "the penalty shall be double that prescribed for a first offender."

(b) For any other person, there shall be a fine of not less than five hundred pounds or not more than one thousand pounds.<sup>15</sup>

The first victim of the decree was the New Breed Magazine whose publications and circulation were banned. The magazine was published by the Newbreed Organization of Lagos, Nigeria but printed in London. Security men seized 50,000 copies of the magazine as they arrived at Lagos airport. The publisher/editor and two other staff writers were called in for the inevitable "chat" (convenient euphemism for preventive detention) by the military authorities.

The mid-June 1978 issue of the same magazine was seized by police. When the editor-in-chief, Chris Okolie, called for the release of the seized magazines, a halt to airport searches of his staff and an end to censorship of their publications including unnecessary visits to the premises of the organization and residences of its editorial staff, the government reacted by banning the magazine for two years.

Earlier in 1967, the Western Nigerian regional government headed by Adeyinka Adebayo but also under Gowon complained that the Morning Post was misrepresenting facts about the Western State. Consequently Adebayo imposed a ban on the circulation of the Morning Post within the jurisdiction of the former region. The ban was, however, lifted after two months.

Other decrees promulgated under Gowon which directly and/or indirectly affected the press and Nigerian political communications were the Armed Forces and Police (Special Powers) Decree Number 24 and the Trade Dispute Decree Number 53, both of 1967. These decrees were meant among

other purposes, to keep the soldiers in power with little or no questioning of their policies, to help maintain an atmosphere in which a war could be executed with minimal difficulty and to maintain if not a good image for the soldiers, at least not to make them appear worse than they actually were.

The Police (Special Powers) Decree 24 of 1967 empowered the Inspector General of Police and the Army Chief of Staff to detain without trial and for an indefinite period any one considered to be a 'security risk'. This decree provided a pretext for extensive abuse of power as people's liberties were wantonly reduced. The decree was extensively used to muzzle opinions which the authorities considered unfavourable. Between January 1973 and June 1975, application of Decree 24 of 1967 resulted in 44 recorded cases of arbitrary arrests, detention and a few actual cases of physical abuse of journalists and those who write in papers.<sup>16</sup>

Notable among the arrests and detentions were those of the editor of the Renaissance Henry Onyedike, and his literary correspondent, Agwu Okpanku, for publishing an article titled 'Killing Biafra'. The article commented on the decree that changed the name of the Bight of Biafra into the Bight of Benin. The two men were not only jailed without trial but were also deprived of their salaries while in detention.

As one observer pointed out, 'it symbolized the highest concentration in one hand of all the paraphernalia of governmental powers which embrace the legislative, the executive and the judicial, and that one hand was the executive as personified by the Supreme Military Council'. For good measure, and to tighten its grip on 'trouble makers', the government passed the Trade

Dispute Decree Number 53 of 1967. It forbade the press to publish anything that 'is likely to cause public alarm or industrial unrest'. Any infringement could earn the offender a prison term of three years.

By 1973 General Gowon, though still declaring the intention of the military to return to their barracks by 1976, had shifted his ground. He said that only an administration which included the military could guarantee political stability, and he suggested a 'diarchy' civilian-military government to succeed the soldiers.

By 1974 bitterness between the press and the military was at a peak. The Christian Science Monitor news service reported: 'A new crisis of confidence has developed between the Nigerian police and the Press.'<sup>17</sup>

The soldiers who had come to power to eliminate corruption were now as crooked as the civilians they had ousted - more crooked, for Nigeria's oil wealth was beginning to flow, bringing in wealth undreamed of by any other Black State.

The Nigerian mass media left no stone unturned in ensuring that all cases of corruption, mismanagement and abuse of office under Gowon were reported. One newspaper alleged that soldiers who had joined the army virtual paupers had in a few years become millionaires.<sup>18</sup> With much of the oil revenue going on major public works projects, thousands of millions of dollars were spent importing building materials like cement. Such international deals eased the way for illicit fortunes to be acquired outside of the country - the 'just in case money' - as it is known in Africa.

Another newspaper spoke of 'vast wealth hidden abroad, especially in Swiss banks'.<sup>19</sup> The military high command reacted to these attacks by warning the press to behave or face the consequences.

Alhadji Kam Salem, Inspector General of Police, told a press conference:

"The press has recently mounted a campaign against the Federal Government, putting pressure on it to institute an inquiry into the conduct of certain government functionaries and levelling accusations against individuals. The Federal Government will no longer tolerate press indiscipline and calculated attempts to undermine its authority. It may be forced to take drastic and unpleasant measures to curb the excess of the press."<sup>20</sup>

The Nigerian Tribune challenged the government to substantiate its charge that the press had attempted to blackmail the authorities by publishing misleading stories; what the press was doing, said the Tribune was mounting a campaign against corruption in line with the declared policy of the government.

Recalling that the rooting out of corruption had been the principal reason why the military had seized power, the Tribune said:

"It will be damaging to the reputation and good name of the Federal Military Government if, instead of encouraging the press to expose this evil, it imposes restrictions on the freedom of the press and the personal liberty of journalists."<sup>21</sup>

Also under Gowon military rule was what has now become known as the 'Amakiri Case'. It involved a press report that teachers throughout the

Rivers State were threatening to resign en masse if their working conditions were not examined. On July 30, 1973, the Nigerian Observer, under the headline "Rivers Teachers On The War Path", published a report that dealt with school teachers' grievances in Rivers State. The report was filed by Minere Amakiri, the paper's correspondent in Port Harcourt, capital of Rivers State. Coincidentally, it was published on the 31st birthday of the state military governor, Alfred Diette-Spiff. Amakiri was promptly arrested and detained for 27 hours in the guard room of State House, Port Harcourt, where his hair and beard were shaved off and he was given 24 strokes with a cane. Official explanation that the story embarrassed the governor because it coincided with his birthday celebration seemed puerile. Nobody ever <sup>claimed</sup> that the published story was false.

Every newspaperman in the country, every journalists' association, the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, the Guild of Editors, the Association of Radio and Television Journalists (all Government employees) demanded action.

'Amakiri: Press Fury on the Rise', said a Daily Express headline. 'We Call For Freedom, Justice', said a story in the Daily Times. 'The Port Harcourt Scandal', said the leading article in the Nigerian Observer, which describing the incident as 'jungle-style manhandling' commented:

"It amounts no less to a primitive attempt to muzzle the truth and compromise an elemental right - the freedom of the press."<sup>22</sup>

For this transgression, he was clean shaven and caned. Encouraged by other media men, the correspondent Minere Amakiri, sued and was in 1974 awarded N10,750 in damages. The presiding judge reminded the defendants that the

Fundamental Human Rights clause in the 1963 Constitution was still intact. 'The meaning of the rule of law in practical terms', he said, 'is that no person is beyond the law while those concerned with the law should act with the fear of God.'<sup>23</sup>

The Amakiri case turned into a watershed in government-press relations. But it did nothing to diminish the ardour for confrontation among law enforcement agents. Between 1973 and 1975, according to one count, there were 50 cases of government harassment of journalists.<sup>24</sup>

Nineteen seventy four was a bad year for editors and reporters. On January 31, a correspondent of the New Nigerian, a government newspaper. David Atalase, was arrested for reporting that prisoners had escaped from a local prison. On March 18, a managing editor of the New Nigerian, Tukur Uthman, was invited to the Supreme Headquarters to disclose the source of a story that reported the suspension of two senior army officers. Another example is the detention, for about a week, of a Daily Times reporter, Chinaka Finecountry, for the false news that a marijuana pedlar was in Nigeria.

The following day, March 19, the acting editor of the Daily Sketch, a state government paper, Emmanuel Olofin, was whisked away from his office for a story that alleged shady cement and milk deals on the high seas. He spent a day in custody. Seventeen hours earlier, his Lagos city editor had been released after five days in police custody.<sup>25</sup>

Soon after the Amakiri affair, three journalists on the Daily Express, Fola Ashiru (chief sub-editor), Miss Toyin Johnson (features editor) and Goody Emegokwue (feature writer) were charged with sedition. When they came to court, the director of prosecutions withdrew the case and they were discharged.

No doubt mindful of the outcry and the substantial damages in the Amakiri case the governors of the country's States were now a little more circumspect in their handling of errant journalists. When Femi Ogunleye, Daily Times, and John Anishere, Daily Sketch, who worked in the Kano offices of their newspapers, fell foul of the Kano State Military Governor, Audu Bako, he simply deported them out of the State. The Daily Sketch commented:

"The mind boggles at the prospect of what would happen to a Nigerian journalist who has been declared **persona non grata** in all the states of the Federation",<sup>26</sup>

and a columnist in the same paper said that but for the deterrent effect of the High Court decision in the Amakiri case, the two journalists barred from Kano State,

"would have suffered worse personal indignity than ~~Minister~~ Amakiri."<sup>27</sup>

On 9th April 1975, thirty journalists from different Lagos newspapers marched in protest on the office of Edwin Clark, the Federal Information Commissioner and handed over a letter calling on General Yakubu Gowon, the Head of State, to make a policy statement on the press. A few days earlier the Army Chief of Staff, Major General David Ejoor, had told an interviewer that the military government held 'the strong view that Nigerian journalists are corrupt not only in terms of money but also politically'.<sup>28</sup> This allegation was not proved however, when he was challenged by journalists.

Relations between the press and the military government of Gowon were at a very low point. Each was accusing the other of corruption. In August 1974, General Gowon returned from a State visit abroad and dismissed the waiting Nigerian pressmen at the airport with 'get out of my sight'. Meanwhile, the Nigerian mass media continued to report cases of corruption under his regime. Cases reported included those of Dr Mbadiwe's Ijora land deal, the mentioning of the name of Brigadiers Adekunle and Sotomi by Iyabo Olorunkoya, who was jailed in London on March 5, 1974 on charges of importing hemp to Britain, the Aper Aku versus Joseph Gomwalk affair, the Daboh-Tarka case, and Gowon's declaration of 1976 as 'unrealistic' for a return to civil rule.<sup>28</sup> The mood for confrontation between the press and the military government persisted.

But on his return from the 1975 Jamaica Commonwealth Conference, on May 14, General Yakubu Gowon, Head of State, sued for reconciliation between the press and the government. He declared correctly that they both needed each other and promised not to make things difficult for newsmen.

Not long after this peace plea, a group of tough-talking combat-tested officers, overthrew the Gowon government on July 29, the ninth anniversary of his coming to power. They accused its leader of 'inaccessibility to the people' and 'disregard for responsible opinion'. The coup was led by Brigadier Murtala Ramat Muhammed.

### 6.3 The Third Coming of the Military: The Muhammed/Obasanjo Regime

In 1975, Murtala Ramat Mohammed replaced General Yakubu Gowon's government in a coup. Murtala's brief but eventful rule captured the popular imagination of many Nigerians for six months before he was struck down by an assassin's bullet in an abortive coup attempt on 13 February 1976. The July 29 coup marked the ~~third~~<sup>129</sup> coming of the military into the Nigerian government and politics. The military anchorman Col. Garba, who announced the coup said that:

"In view of events in the past few months, the Nigerian Armed Forces have decided to effect a change of leadership of the Federal Military Government, and from now General Yakubu Gowon ceases to be the Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria."<sup>130</sup>

In his broadcast of July 30, 1975, the new Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Brigadier Murtala Ramat Mohammed, recalled the past few years and how 'the government has not been able to fulfil the legitimate expectations of our people'. He pointed out that:

"Nigeria has been left to drift. This situation if not arrested, would inevitably have resulted in chaos and even bloodshed... The armed forces having examined the situation came to the conclusion that certain changes were inevitable."<sup>131</sup>

The new leader went further in analysing the weaknesses of his predecessor

"After the civil war, the affairs of the state, hitherto a collective responsibility, became characterised by lack of consultation, indecision, indiscipline, and even, neglect. Indeed the public at large became disillusioned and disappointed by these developments. This trend was clearly incompatible with the philosophy and image of a corrective regime... Responsible opinion, including advice by eminent Nigerians, traditional rulers, intellectuals, etc., was similarly discarded. The leadership either by design or default, had become too insensitive to the true feelings and yearnings of the people. The nation was thus being plunged inexorably into chaos."<sup>27</sup>

In the light of above issues, the armed forces, he announced, took a number of decisions, to grant the nation 'a new lease of life...' General Gowon was removed as Head of Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces; and was retired from the Armed Forces 'in his present rank of General with full benefits, in recognition of his past services to the Nation.'<sup>28</sup>

Murtala Muhammed's major commitment after coming to power in 1975 was to return the country to civilian rule by 1979. To achieve this goal a time table was drawn up. Although, Muhammed was killed in the Dimka-led abortive coup of February 13, 1976, his successor, Obasanjo, followed the time table meticulously and handed over power to the civilians in October, 1979 - thus marking the inception of Nigeria's second republic.

The first major step taken by Muhammed/Obasanjo regime on the Nigerian press and political communications was the acquisition of a majority of

equity of 60% shares in the Daily Times and the total takeover (ownership) of the New Nigerian by 31st August 1975.

The government said the reason for its decision to participate in the ownership of the Daily Times was to 'provide a channel of communication with the public without...having to set up an additional newspaper in competition with the established press'. However, it is interesting to note that the Federal Government has not had any newspaper of its own, quite unlike the state governments, since the demise of its Morning Post. Also, although the Times was originally a foreign financed newspaper, by 1974, Nigerians had bought up all its shares and the London Daily Mirror was paid off. The Times, over the years, had grown to be the largest circulating newspaper in Nigeria due to its neutrality and non-allegiance to any political party before the takeover. As to the New Nigerian ownership, the government said it would like to see the newspaper expand its activities to cover more effectively all parts of the country.

The statement announcing the takeover also said that government wished to underline its policy of full support for press freedom and its objective of serving the national interest at all times. It added that:

"the newspapers would be expected to make constructive criticisms in their comments, but it was hoped that they too would see it necessary to serve the national interest and that they and other Nigerian news media would take into consideration, at all times, in their reportage and commentary, the sensitivities of the Nigerian community."<sup>24</sup>

Two months later, the federal commissioner for information Major General I.B.M Haruna announced that 'the federal government is to take over all

the radio and television networks in the country... so as to prevent proliferation of the networks at the expense of the tax payers' money'. A second reason given by the commissioner for the take over was government's wish 'to effectively participate in the country's mass media to supplement its giant programmes in educating the masses'. He said that these moves 'should not be construed to mean a design by the government to stifle public opinion against the government'. 'All we are doing is to harness our limited resources of capital and manpower to our best advantage and if we can establish a credible and meaningful television network to the benefit of the people... we are doing the right thing.'<sup>25</sup>

Changes in ownership began immediately to have impacts on the mass media. For instance, the Daily Times since its takeover in 1975, started to reflect Federal Government views, in a number of ways,<sup>26</sup> its Managing Director was appointed by the Federal Government. For example, in an issue of the Daily Times published on February 20, 1976 over the alleged involvement of Gowon in the Dimka-led abortive coup affair, the paper reported that there were sporadic reactions in the country 'immediately it was known General Gowon was involved in the abortive coup of last Friday'.<sup>26</sup> It claimed that various groups had paraded the Lagos Streets, after the Federal Government statement, demanding that:

- i) the Federal Government should do all it could to bring Gowon back to the country;
- ii) Gowon should be dismissed at once from the Nigerian Army and that his entitlements should be stopped;

- iii) all those military governors, police and military officers who had been close to the Gowon regime and who had been retired should be detained immediately; and
- iv) all those involved in the abortive coup should be paraded in the cities for people to see them before they were publicly executed.<sup>27</sup>

The Daily Times went on to quote the Federal Government statement which implicated Gowon. Although the Times was supposedly reporting events, its manner of reportage shows that it was raising public expectations and feeling the pulse of the public on issues <sup>on which</sup> the Federal Government ~~was~~ about to take major decisions.

In its editorial entitled 'A Plotter For All Seasons', the Daily Times stated:

"This nation must be shocked by the news of General Yakubu Gowon's complicity in last Friday's abortive coup in which the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Murtala Mohammed was assassinated."<sup>28</sup>

The editorial went on to express further shock occasioned by the inordinate ambition of a man who after nine years of rule and 'a dismal record of officially encouraged corruption, graft, nepotism and ineptitude' wanted to return to power. It wondered how after all the concessions made to General Gowon, he could still plot against the government. The editorial added that it was unknown to most Nigerians that as of then, Gowon's 'cooks, stewards, gardeners, etc.' were

maintained through the 'sweat of the Nigerian people'. It added that, 'General Gowon has betrayed Nigeria. The law of the land stipulates death penalty for treason. General Gowon should face charges of treason...'<sup>39</sup>

Many other Nigerian newspapers also reacted in similar fashion, notably the New Nigerian, the Nigerian Standard and the Nigerian Herald among others.

The New Nigerian under the caption 'Gowon's Blood-Stained Hands' wrote:

"... We call on the Federal Military Government to seek extradition of Gowon for complicity in a most foul murder. He should be put on trial for his vile deeds. Gowon has been quick to say his hands are clean and his conscience is clear. His hands are blood-stained. As for his conscience, we cannot see it."<sup>40</sup>

In its own editorial, the Nigerian Standard stated:

"General Gowon should be prepared to accept full responsibilities for the bloody abortive coup of last Friday which claimed the life of the Head of State, General Murtala Mohammed, and threatened to engulf the country in another major upheaval. And he should be ashamed of himself. No one grudges him the right to seek the leadership of his country. But his vaulting ambitions should not have carried him to the extent of planning to do so over the dead bodies of his fellow Nigerians, especially those who have proved within seven months of taking office that they are better leaders than he."<sup>41</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that the taking over of the major mass media organisations under the Mohammed/Obsanjo regime did not prevent some newspapers from making comments on some policies of the government hence the military administration had to promulgate a decree in 1976 to gag the press. In that year, the government had empanelled a public complaints commission so that citizens could tell all they knew about corrupt officials. It turned into a boomerang. A lecturer in law at the University of Lagos insinuated in a magazine article that the Head of State himself was corrupt. He challenged him in that article, published in Spark, to declare his personal assets. To forestall such 'impertinences,' the government came up with Decree Number 11 of 1976, otherwise known as Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusations) Decree. It took retroactive effect from July 29, 1975, and provided in part that:

(A) "Any person who publishes or reproduces in any form whether written or otherwise, any statement, rumour or report alleging or intended to be understood as alleging that a public officer has in any manner been engaged in corrupt practices or has in any manner corruptly enriched himself or any other person, being a statement, rumour or report which is false in any material particular, shall be guilty of an offence under this Decree and liable on conviction to be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, without the option of a fine.

(B) In any prosecution for an offence under this Decree the burden of proving that the statement, rumour or report which is the subject matter of the charge is true in every material particular shall, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any enactment or rule of law, lie on the person charged."<sup>42</sup>

The decree defined a public officer to include:

- (a) any member of the Supreme Military Council, the National Council of States or the Federal Council, the Military Governor of a State, any commissioner in the Government of the Federation or a State;
- (b) any member of the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Navy, the Nigerian Air Force or the Nigerian Police; and
- (c) any person who holds any office in (i) the public service of the Federation or of a State within the meaning of the Constitution of the Federation or a State; (ii) the service of a body whether corporate or unincorporate established under a Federal or State Law; or (iii) a company in which any of the Governments in the Federation has controlling interest.

One important observation here is that under this decree, corruption was shielded. Very few newspapers, if any, took the risk of conducting

investigative reporting. Having added this decree, the government seemed to possess everything necessary to hold in check a vigorous press and courageous citizen. With its rigorous demands, testifying against a public official became a less tempting avocation.

This was the position of the Nigerian Press and political communication under the military before the handover of power to civilians in 1979. There was no further development except the creation of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) and the establishment of the Nigerian Press Council both in 1978. The Nigerian press and political communications during the Second Republic are treated in Chapter Seven. Before it however, I examine the press behaviour under the remaining periods of the military - the Buhari and Babangida regimes.

#### **6.4 The Fourth Coming of the Military: The Buhari Regime**

By 1983, the Nigerian economic crisis had started in earnest. The political situation was also worsening with the police and the courts growing increasingly more repressive. The deepening economic and political crises led to considerable disillusionment in the society. The opposition's unconvincing attempt to take advantage of this was roundly defeated by the NPN which, through its control of FEDECO and the Police, was best placed to manipulate the electoral facade of 1983 to its advantage. It took for itself direct control of 13 out of Nigeria's 19 states and gave itself a large governing majority in the Senate and Federal House of Representatives in a bid to establish its untrammelled political hegemony. This created deep political tension within the ruling class not

dissimilar to that of 1964-66. The state was losing its legitimacy, the politicians were highly discredited. This provided the background for the coup of 31 December 1983 in which the government of Shehu Shagari was overthrown by senior military officers led by Major-General Muhammad Buhari.

The coup which was first announced by a military anchorman Brigadier (now General) Sanni Abacha, was seen by many Nigerians as a welcome relief hence they jubilated and demonstrated their support for it on the streets of the country. The new Head of State, Major-General Muhammad Buhari claimed that he took over power to avert a bloody coup from junior military officers, adding that the civilian regime from 1979-1983 was very corrupt and inefficient. However, the jubilation of Nigerians was short-lived following the high-handedness and repression of the new regime. Social critics were imprisoned, journalists were incarcerated and new repressive decrees were promulgated.

The first negative move of the Buhari regime on the Nigerian press and political communications was the promulgation of the notorious and obnoxious decree on 'Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) of 1984 otherwise known as Decree Number 4 which has the following basic provisions:

1. "Any person who publishes in any form whether written or otherwise, any message, rumour, report or statement, being a message, rumour, statement or report which is false in any material particular or which brings or is calculated to bring the Federal Military Government or the Government of a State or a public

officer to ridicule or disrepute, shall be guilty of an offence under this Decree.

2. Any station for wireless telegraphy which conveys or transmits any sound or visual message, rumour, report or statement, being a message, rumour, report or statement which is false in any material particular or which brings or is calculated to bring the Federal Military Government or the Government of a State or a public officer to ridicule or disrepute, shall be guilty of an offence under this Decree.
3. It shall be an offence under this Decree for a newspaper or wireless telegraphy station in Nigeria to publish or transmit any message, rumour, report or statement which is false in any material particular stating that any public officer has in any manner been engaged in corrupt practices or has in any manner corruptly enriched himself or any other person." <sup>43</sup>

The decree also empowered the Head of State to prohibit the circulation in the entire country of any newspaper that may be detrimental to the interest of the country. The prohibition order was for twelve months unless it was revoked earlier or extended at the expiration of the twelve months. It also empowered him to either revoke the license granted to any wireless telegraphy station or order the closure or forfeiture to the Federal Government of the wire

telegraphy station concerned. The decree also established a tribunal whose membership shall consist of a serving or retired High Court Judge as its chairman and the members of the Armed Forces whose ranks were not below that of an army major or its equivalent in either the navy or the air force.

The decree provided stiff penalties for any contravention of its provisions. Any person who was tried and found guilty under it would be sentenced to a term not exceeding two years without any option of fine. In the case of a corporate body, a fine of not less than N10,000.00 was to be imposed.

Besides, the tribunal was vested with the powers to order for all or any of the equipment of either the newspaper or wireless telegraphy station with which the offence was committed to be forfeited to the Federal Government. The decision of the tribunal was final. Its decision was not to be appealed against in any court of law.

This decree led to the celebrated trial of two Guardian reporters: Nduka Irabor, assistant news editor, and Tunde Thompson, diplomatic correspondent. During the trial, the Attorney-General of the federation made the Federal Government presentations, while the Guardian and its reporters were defended by a prominent Lagos-based lawyer. The appearance of the Federal Attorney-General signified the determination of the Federal authorities to win a case they saw as a big apple. When judgement was pronounced after the case had lasted for weeks, the two journalists were found guilty and each sentenced to one year imprisonment. The Guardian newspaper was itself fined N50,000.00. The tribunal was presided over by Justice J.O. Ayinde.

The two Guardian journalists were accused of publishing statements that contravened Decree No.4. The offending statements were:

"Eleven Missions to be closed."

"Eight Military Chiefs Tipped as Ambassadors."

and

"Haruna to replace Hannaniya as UK Envoy."

A career diplomat and M. George Edwin, a permanent secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs were among the principal witnesses that appeared for the prosecution. They affirmed that the articles were substantially correct, ie. Mr Edwin said that 10 out of 11 Foreign Missions were to be closed and the report on Eight Military Chiefs tipped for Ambassadorial appointment was also correct. And on the report that Major General Haruna was to replace Major General Hannaniya as UK Envoy, permanent secretary Edwin said that the report was not correct.

The Guardian newspaper filed an appeal on this judgement and failed. The Nigerian union of Journalists (NUJ) filed another separate suit against Decree No.4, they too lost the case.

The reaction of the Federal Government that culminated in the promulgation of the decree under which the two Guardian reporters and their newspaper were tried was surprising. In many circles, the government was condemned for an over-reaction and intimidating the rest of the country's journalists by using <sup>the</sup> Guardian and its reporters as examples of what the military

government had in store for them. In defence of its action against negative public opinion, of its prosecution of the reporters, the Federal Government explained that its action was based on the so-called sensitive nature of the diplomatic list the newspaper had made a public consumption. It said the newspaper had no right at all to have made it public when it (ie. the Federal Government) was yet to hear from the prospective foreign governments, the ambassadors and high commissions were being assigned to. Also, it was speculated that somebody who was looking forward to being appointed as an ambassador might have been disappointed when he did not see his name on the list. The speculators went further to suspect that the frustrated prospective ambassador could have influenced the prior publication of the list by the Guardian so as to force the Federal Government to withdraw it, as the alternate list likely had his name on it.

Some media critics also found it hard to agree with the Guardian that what it had published was anything but a scoop. The newspaper's news judgement was questioned. The question the critics asked was when did ambassadorial appointments become a national issue to warrant a prior publication of list of prospective appointees when the government was yet to make it public. Also, the rationale for the news judgement was further questioned at the time when a bag of 50 kilograms of rice was costing from \$500 to \$650 in open markets. While the Federal Government did not escape public indictment for reacting in such a harsh manner, irrespective of the 'sensitivity' of the list, neither was the Guardian nor were its reporters found less guilty of promoting sensational journalism on trivial issues that serious-minded newspaper managers and editors would rebuke a reporter for wasting a whole day prying on

government files that contained lists of prospective ambassadors and high commissioners.

However, the fact remains that the Guardian carried a report other national newspapers in the country had similarly carried at one time or the other in the political history of the country. Also, until politicians and retired military officers stop influencing the press and until the newspaper public in Nigeria opts for more serious news items than what it currently pays for and gets, the Federal and State Governments in the country might as well begin to ignore some of the frivolities the newspapers carry as news.

Decree 4 was the major issue on the Nigerian press and political communication under the Buhari administration. However, according to that regime, the Decree was meant to 'maintain order and safeguard State security'. But many people saw it as a further instrument of maintaining political control. What this decree did was to circumscribe the power of the media professionals, while making them adopt roles that protected the interests of Government by censoring the kind of information that was to be disseminated. Decree No.4 was also regarded as a mechanism that protected top government functionaries from criticism for whatever they did or said. With this Decree, no form of 'speculative' journalism was permitted. In fact, more Nigerian journalists found themselves jailed when they acted contrary to the stipulations of the decree.

In comparison with Section 36 of the 1979 Nigerian Constitution, Decree No.4 of 1984 if given another interpretation, had the conception of freedom implicit in it - freedom to tell the 'truth' and avoidance of mere speculation that ended up as mere rumour. In this way, the Decree could be

considered as making provision for detailed research on the part of the media personnel before disseminating any information. From public reaction, this Decree proved very unpopular, a further indication that it was mainly out to serve the interest of the Buhari administration.

Although the Buhari regime introduced a number of measures to solve some of the economic, political and social problems confronting the country, such measures such as the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) were hampered by lack of effective communication through the mass media.

On Tuesday October 23, 1984, the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon announced the intention of the Federal Military Government to close down all the FRCN radio stations that were established during the Shagari administration. He complained bitterly about the poor and unprofessional performance of the radio stations particularly during the civilian administration.

Of all the 48 FRCN stations only five <sup>would</sup> ~~were~~ be allowed to function. According to the military announcement, the five stations <sup>were</sup> ~~would~~ the original FRCN stations in Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Kaduna and (now) Abuja. This plan was yet to be implemented when the Buhari regime was overthrown on the 27th August, 1985.

## 6.5 The Fifth Coming of the Military: The Babangida Regime

The coup which brought Major-General (now General) Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida to power was announced by Brigadier Dogonyaro and later confirmed by Major-General (now General) Sanni Abacha. The first step taken

on coming to power was the abrogation of Decree Number 4, the release of politicians imprisoned under Buhari regime, the conversion of death penalty for cocaine pushers to life imprisonment and a promise to respect citizens' rights. The press was relieved, and a long honeymoon with the new government started during which President Babangida seemed ready to bend <sup>over</sup> ~~backwards~~ to please media practitioners, allow open national debates of issues (the IMF loan, the type of political order for Nigeria in 1990s and beyond, among others), while the press was so fulsome in its praise that some sections of the public began to complain about journalists being overwhelmed by their gratitude for the abrogation of Decree 4.

The Babangida regime made use of mass media to disseminate some of its programmes and policies such as the programme of mass mobilization for self-reliance, social justice, and economic recovery - (MAMSER). The media coverage of such programmes shows that types of ownerships played significant parts. For example, while the federal and state-government owned media were reporting evidence of the success of the MAMSER programme, the privately-owned newspapers tended to focus more on the problems of implementation encountered by the National Directorate for Social Mobilization charged with the responsibility for executing the MAMSER programme.

However, the honeymoon between the press and <sup>the</sup> Babangida regime has come to an end. And following the bloody but abortive coup of April 22, 1990 against the regime, some journalists were accused of causing disaffection and incitement. The Punch Newspaper, a privately-owned venture, was sealed up, journalists were arrested, the General Manager and Director of Programmes,

FRCN in KwaYa State were suspended among others, <sup>the</sup> Newswatch reporter was banned from Dodan Barracks, some university staff such as Professor Obaro Ikime, Professor of History at Ibadan University were detained, Dr Bala Usman, another history lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria was sacked, former politicians - lawyer Tunji Braithwaite, Paul Unongo among a host of others were imprisoned for commenting on the coup and on other national issues.

Relations between the press and Babangida regime deteriorated over several issues - the government's economic policies, which made the rich, richer and the poor, poorer, the treatment of politicians of the second republic, many of whom were appointed to big positions in the government; government decisions on religious issues especially those that affect the Christians and the Muslims; government's handling of the students' crisis and demonstrations, many university students were killed in the process while their campuses and those of other colleges and polytechnics were closed down for many months; government's sacking of ministers and state governors which had some subterranean ethnic, tribal and religious undertones; the murder of Dele Giwa by a parcel bomb when he was Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine and the proscription of the Newswatch itself for six months for its detailed exposé on the Cookey Political Bureau report titled: "Third Republic: A New Political Agenda".

The Babangida military regime also promulgated many decrees to curb political communication activities and gag the press, despite the administration's euphoria and attempts to wear a human rights face. As pointed out earlier, journalists were imprisoned, newspapers/magazines were proscribed, university teachers were sacked, social critics were arrested and jailed, students

were massacred and a press council was established, all of which were still being criticized as at June 1991.

Ownership has continued to affect political communications in the country while many of the issues were still reflecting the long running and deep-rooted tension between North and South. As a matter of fact, one of the main reasons of the coup makers of April 22, 1990 for staging their coup against the Babangida regime was to save the people of the Middle-Belt and Southern part of Nigeria from the domination of the Northerners. It is also pertinent to mention that while privately-owned newspaper and magazines were being proscribed or sealed off, no government-owned newspapers was proscribed under the Babangida regime.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This section has examined the Nigerian press and political communications under the Nigerian military regimes. Judging from the ferocity of enactments and persistence of pursuits, the military periods appeared more restrictive than the civilian era. The military mustered enough decrees to keep the boldest journalists in check. Yet, Nigerian press was still able to come up with criticisms of government policies. But largely, the Nigerian mass media was employed constantly to exhort the public to support the military government including Operation Feed the Nation and Mass Mobilisation.

The government-owned media carried no direct criticism of the military leadership. They served not only as the 'ideological' spokesmen of the military government but also as the publicizers of the military's 'great campaigns', as well as legitimizers of illegal military regimes. As a result the Nigerian mass media

under the military failed to provide adequately informed and intelligent reports of current public issues for the people; news relevant to peoples' lives, sufficient useful information, cultural news and criticisms, adequate economic and fiscal information for government agencies and businesses as well as the necessary feedbacks to the military governments on public opinion.

Perhaps more restricting than all the decrees promulgated under the military was <sup>that covering</sup> the ownership pattern. Of more than 33 newspapers that were published in the country under the military, the federal and the state military governments between them owned and controlled at least more than 22 of them. And all the radio and television stations were owned exclusively by the government because the law did not permit private ownership. The appointment of chief executives and editors of these media was almost always political. Merit seemed to be of secondary consideration. Not many workers of these media could afford to be independent minded and carry stories that were fit to be carried. Criticism of the military government was taboo. A few media practitioners who tried their hands at it were either sacked or redeployed to sinecure offices. Mortality rate appeared to be highest in the media compared with other institutions in the country. It was rare for editors and media executives in Nigeria to retire after years of meritorious service. They were either forced to resign or they were removed because of political and boardroom power-play, interference in editorial policies or simply because they did not belong to the ruling group because of the accident of their place of birth, religion and/or political persuasion.

Even considering the severe constraints within which the Nigerian press has to operate under the military, there are a number of things the media can still do better in political communications. For instance, the media could be more effective if they carry more news and information of direct importance and relevance to the daily lives and political interests of the people. This could be more easily accomplished if there are more local mass media. In Nigeria today, most news media try to be national in scope, but by trying to serve everyone, they end up serving only a few in the capital. If there are more local news media which use local languages, the media, now largely an urban phenomenon, could begin to serve more the neglected rural poor of Nigeria by making them participate more effectively in political communications.

So far, I have treated Nigerian political communications during the colonial era, the independence period, the post-independence period, the First Republic and the five military interregna between 1966 and 1991. What remains to be done is an examination of political communications in Nigeria's Second Republic and the lessons that can be learnt to guide the character of the Nigerian political communications in the Third Republic - 1990s and beyond. This is the subject matter of the ensuing chapters.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. When a question is said to be a 'political' question, when a cabinet minister or an official is said to be a 'political' official, or when a decision is said to be 'politically' determined, what is always meant is that interests in the distribution, maintenance, or transfer of power are decisive for answering the questions and determining the decision or the official's sphere of activity. He who is active in politics strives for power either as a man in serving other aims, ideal or egoistic, or as 'power for power's sake', that is, in order to enjoy the prestige feeling that power gives.
2. Literature on the Military in Politics abounds but I shall not be going into details in this area. Details of the military intervention in politics generally and particularly on the role of the military in Nigerian government and politics, are available in the following texts among others:

Luckham, R., The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt: 1960-67, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Miners, N.J. The Nigerian Army 1956-1966, (London: Methuen, 1971); Dent, M., 'The Military and Politics: A Study of the Relation between the Army and the Political Process in Nigeria', in Kirkwood, Kenneth (ed.), St. Anthony's Papers (London: Clarendon Press, No.2, 1970, pp.113-139); Jemibewon, D., A Combatant in Government (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, Nigeria Ltd., 1978); Decalo, Samuel, Coups in Africa (New Haven, Yale University, 1976); Finer, S., The Man on Horseback (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962); Nordling, E., 'Soldiers in Mufti: The Impact of Military Rule Upon Economic and Social Change in the Non-Western States', in American Political Science Review, LXIV, 4 December, 1970) pp.1131-1148; Welch, C. (jr.), and Smith, A.K., Military Role and Military Rule (North Scituate: Duxbury Press, 1974); O'Kane, R.H.T., The Likelihood of Coups (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987); First, R., The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1970); David, S.R., Defending Third World Regimes from Coups d'Etat (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1985); Thompson, W.R., The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973); Daadler, H., The Role of the Military in Emerging Countries (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962); Gutteridge, W., Military Institutions and Power in the New States (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964); Huntington, S., The Soldier and the State: The

Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957); Pye, L., 'Armies in the Process of Political Modernisation'; and Shils, E., 'The Military in the Political Development of the New States', both in The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries, Johnson, J.J. (ed.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); and Janowitz, M., The Military in the Political Development of New Nations: An Essay in Comparative Analysis, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); to mention just a few.

3. Among politicians killed were the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa (North), Federal Minister of Finance, Chief Festus Okotie Eboh (Midwest); the Premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello (North), the Premier of Western Region, Chief Samuel L. Akintola (West, and in political alliance with the NPC).

The Military Officers were Brigadier Zachariya Maimalari (North); Lt. Col. Yakubu Pam (North); Brigadier Ademulegun (West); Col. Shodeinde (West); Lt. Col. Abogo Largema (North); Col. Kur Mohammed (North) and Lt. Col. Unegbe (Ibo speaking Mid-westerner).

4. Ademoyega, W., Why We Struck (Ibadan: 1981). Madiebo, A., The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War (Enugu: F.D.P., 1980).
5. Ademoyega, W., Why We Struck (Passim); Kirk-Greene, A.H.M., Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, 1966-1970, vol.1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971). Gbulie, B., Nigeria's Five Majors: Coup D'etat of 15th January, 1966 First Inside Account, (Onitsha: Africana Publishers, 1981).
6. Huntington, S.P. Political Order in Changing Societies, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) p.194. Janowitz has also put forward what is now labelled "the internal characteristics model" to explain military intervention in politics. He suggests that the social background of the officers, the skill structure and career lines, internal social cohesion and cleavages, professional and political ideology within the military are important factors which help to explain direct military intervention in politics. For details, see Janowitz, M., The Military in the Political Development of New Nations: A Comparative Analysis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) pp.27-29.

7. Luckham, A.R., "The Nigerian Military: Disintegration or Integration?" in Panter-Brick, K. (ed.), Nigerian Politics and Military Rule (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1970), p.63.
8. Ademoyega, W., Why We Struck (Passim). See also Obasanjo, O., Nzeogwu: An Intimate Portrait of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1987) pp.79-105.
9. Federal Republic of Nigeria, 'Constitution (Suspension and Modification) Decree (1966, No.1)' in the Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Lagos: Government Printer, 1966, pp.A3-A11, January 17, 1966).
10. See Ekwelie, S.A., 'The Nigerian Press under Military Rule', GAZETTE Vol. XXV, 1979, pp.219-232.
11. Federal Republic of Nigeria, 'Constitution (Suspension and Modification) (No.5)' Decree No.34, 1966, in Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Lagos: Government Printer, 1966, p.A153).
12. For full details of mutual distrust generated in the Armed Forces and the various ethnic groups, see Elaigwu, J. Isawa, Gowon: The Biography of a Soldier-Statesman (Ibadan: West Books Publisher Limited, 1986), pp.39-153.
13. See Jorre, J., The Nigerian Civil War (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1972), p.345.
14. Panter-Brick, (ed.), Nigerian Politics and Military Rule (Passim).
15. See Elias, T.O. The Nigerian Press Law, 1969, Passim.
16. 'Press Freedom in Africa: A Huge Joke' Afriscope 5 (1975): 20-21.
17. Agadah, H., 'Time to End Police, Press Friction' Nigerian Herald, May 10, 1974.  
Also, see Barton, F. The Press of Africa (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979)

18. Ainslie, The Press of Africa (London: Gollancz Ltd., 1966)
19. Barton, F. The press of Africa
20. Barton, The Press of Africa
21. Nigerian Tribune, Ibadan, Nigeria.
22. Nigerian Observer, Benin, Nigeria
23. See Bojuwade (ed.), Journalism and Society  
(Lagos: Evans, 1987)
24. Ekwelie, 'The Nigerian Press under Military Rule'  
GAZETTE Vol. XXV, 1979, pp.219-232
25. Ekwelie, 'The Nigerian Press under Military Rule'
26. Sketch Press Ltd., Ibadan, Nigeria
27. Sketch Press Ltd.
28. Barton, The Press of Africa

29. For details on some of these cases, see Jose, I.B. Walking a Tight Rope: Power Play in Daily Times, pp.341-356.
30. West Africa, 4th August, 1975, p.912.
31. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Drift and Chaos Arrested: Text of First Broadcast to the Nation by His Excellency Brigadier Murtala Mohammed, HFMG and C-in-C of the Armed Forces, July 30, 1975, (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, n.d.). p.5.
32. Drift and Chaos Arrested, pp.5-6.
33. Drift and Chaos Arrested, p.6.
34. West Africa, September 8, 1975.  
Daily Times, September 3, 1975.
35. Daily Times, November 10, 1975.
36. Daily Times, February 20, 1976, p.1.
37. Daily Times, February 20, 1976.
38. Daily Times, February 20, 1976, p.3.
39. Daily Times, February 20, 1976, p.3.
40. New Nigerian, February 20, 1976, p.1.
41. The Nigerian Standard, February 20, 1976, p.1.
42. Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree No.11.
43. Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree No.4, 1984.

## CHAPTER 7

# NIGERIAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC: THE FIRST PHASE

### Introduction

This chapter examines the behaviour of the Nigerian mass media on political communications in the Second Republic. However, the full political influence of the Nigerian press on Nigeria's politics during the Second Republic cannot be understood without a brief recapitulation of Nigeria's political setting and its attendant intrigues. Since the attainment of independence in 1960, Nigeria's political administration, as previously stated has been fiercely contested and dominated by three prominent ethnic groups: the Hausa Fulani of the Muslim North, the Yoruba of the Muslim cum Christian West and the Ibo of the Christian East. Political parties have always evolved along ethnic lines in which their solidarity depended on ethnic loyalty. Consequently, it has not been possible for any of the three dominant ethnic groups, because of their tribal orientation and affiliation, to command national consensus and mandate at any of the general elections. The result has always been uneasy political alliances that lead to coalition governments, culminating into political instability each time the alliances break up. This section therefore begins with an overview of the background to the Second Republic, the emergence of political parties and presidential candidates during the period and then goes on to examine the ownership and

control of the mass media by the federal government, the state governments, political parties and politicians, the private 'independent' newspaper owners and their implications for the coverage of general elections and a host of other issues germane to the Nigerian political communications in the Second Republic.

### **7.1 The Background to the Second Republic**

"The coming months would pose testing challenges not only to the participants in the ensuing political activities, but also to the mass media who have the responsibility of interpreting and informing the public of the issues, as well as correctly conveying the public mood to those vying for political leadership. I am sure you will rise to the occasion and not let the nation down".<sup>1</sup>

The swearing-in on October 1, 1979 of Nigeria's First Executive President was a milestone in the political and governmental history of the nation - second only perhaps to the achievement of independence in 1960. It marked the end of over thirteen years of military administration in the country since the coup d'état of January 15, 1966 which marked the demise of the first Republic, and a definite departure from the 'cabinet', 'Westminster model' system of government inherited from Britain on independence, to a Presidential form of government with close parallels to the American system of government, in which there is a clear separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government.

The stage was set in 1975 by the then Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General Murtala Ramat Muhammed,

who declared that the transition to an elected government would be effected not a day later than October 1st, 1979 and that pledge was treated as binding by the Obasanjo government as from 1976 when General Muhammed was assassinated in an abortive coup led by Dimka on February 13, 1976.

The Muhammed coup which brought the Gowon regime to an end on the ninth anniversary of its coming into power halted the political degeneracy of that regime and provided a new vista of life. Immediately after the coup, in a broadcast to the nation on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of Nigeria's independence on 1st October 1975, the new head of state, General Murtala Ramat Mohammed stressed the need to 'correct the mistakes of the past, and to apply firm, and in some cases drastic, measures in order to set the stage for healthier and more efficient society. Towards that end General Mohammed outlined the major 'political programmes' of the regime which culminated in a return to civil rule on 1st October 1979. The main highlights of the political programme of transition to civil rule were:

- (1) the creation of more states in the federation as a means of ensuring even development;
- (2) the systematic and deliberate nationwide reorganisation of the local government set up as a means to bring government close to the people;
- (3) constitutional review - the setting up of a constitution drafting committee, followed by a constituent assembly to adopt a new constitution;
- (4) the lifting of the ban on political activities, the formation of national political parties and preparations for elections;

(5) state and federal elections to usher in a democratically elected government by 1st October 1979.<sup>2</sup>

Having accepted the report of the panel appointed to inquire into and recommend the creation of new states and boundaries adjustments on 22nd December 1975,<sup>3</sup> seven new states were created with effect from 1st April 1976, increasing the number of states from 12 to 19.

Other steps taken were the composition and inauguration of the Constitution Drafting Committee (C.D.C.), the establishment of the Constituent Assembly (C.A.) and the creation of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). In short, the process which culminated in the establishment of the Second Republic in Nigeria is divisible into three analytical categories: the formative constitutional period from September 1975 through April 1977 (dominated by the C.D.C. deliberations); the pivotal middle-decision-making phase from May 1977 through September 1978 (dominated by the Federal Military Government F.M.G.); and the final electoral politics period from October 1978 through September 1979 (dominated by FEDECO acting in a regulatory role).

In a broadcast on 21 September 1978, General Olusegun Obasanjo blew the whistle for the game of politics to begin by lifting the ban prohibiting the formation of political parties - the emergency decree of May 1967. The national state of emergency was also lifted. Taking into consideration the time-lag between the lifting of the ban on the formation of political parties and the holding of the general elections, some nine months, and coupled with the vastness of the country,

both the politicians and the electorate needed the mass media. The politicians needed the media to reach the electorate, to sell their political party manifestos and programmes, among others, while the electorate needed the media for information dissemination and political communication so as to be able to make voting decisions. As McGaughey observed:

"Coverage of election campaigns by the press is assumed to be a rather critical component of the political election process. With it, an electorate can make its decisions about political leaders from a variety of comment and information".<sup>4</sup>

Although, one might argue that it is usually easier to mobilise the urban masses than the rural electorate; that the concentration of the mass media and better communication and transport facilities in the urban areas make such mobilisation more rewarding; and that the percentage of those who are exposed to the media is infinitesimal. While some of these arguments may be true to a certain extent, it is also true that they are sometimes a misleading index of penetration. Apart from the fact that single copies of newspapers are passed from hand to hand and items of news are often read aloud or relayed to friends in the course of conversation, the electronic media - radio and television - to some extent, convey messages which are accessible to people from a wide variety of social backgrounds. Also, those exposed to the media (however small their number) do serve as opinion leaders to others who may not be exposed. Lazarfeld, Berelson and Gaudet suggested the possibility that:

"... ideas flow from radio and print to the opinion leaders and from them to the less active section of the population".<sup>5</sup>

## **7.2 The Political Parties and Presidential Candidates of the Second Republic**

The lifting of the ban on political activities precipitated an explosion of 'political parties' and a plethora of political associations formed or announcements to that effect were made. Some writers say about 52 parties were formed while others contend that by the end of 1978, some 150 parties were supposed to have been formed.<sup>6</sup> By the provisions of the Electoral Decree (and the Constitution) no association by whatever name could function as a political party unless it was registered as a political party by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO).<sup>7</sup>

Out of the myriad of the political associations formed in the name of political parties, only five (5) qualified for registration by FEDECO and were so registered for the 1979 general elections. These were the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples' Party (GNPP) and the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP). In 1983, one other political party, the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) qualified for FEDECO's registration thus making a total of six political parties which contested the 1983 general elections.

In its election manifesto the NPN claimed that it was the only party formed out of nationwide consultation and consensus by Nigerians. The party promised to promote social justice, social welfare, equality of opportunity for all citizens of Nigeria, the Unity of Nigeria, personal liberty, fundamental rights and

freedoms of citizens, the supremacy of the will of the people democratically expressed, self-respect and self-reliance. It also promised 'qualitative' education, food and agriculture, rural development, creation of states among others.

The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the first political party to be announced, promised free education at all levels, free medical and health services, integrated rural development and full employment opportunities for all. It also promised an agricultural revolution which would make Nigeria self-sufficient in terms of her food needs within the space of five years.

The Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP) promised to be part and parcel of the people's every day life, be continually informed and educated about their hopes and aspirations, to preserve the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, promote and sustain the unity of the country, work towards free and high quality education at all levels, and fight relentlessly against poverty, disease, ignorance, intolerance, indiscipline, feudalism, racism, neo-colonialism and unjust exploitation of man by man.

The Great Nigeria Peoples' Party (GNPP) promised to play politics without bitterness, promote the just and equitable distribution of the fruits of economic development among persons and states of Nigeria, to work towards free and high quality education at all levels and free and better health services, create a society free of violence and ignorance and give the Nigerian people a government that will be committed to a fairer distribution of wealth, amenities and power; among others.

The Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) claimed to be the organised vanguard of the Nigerian people and stressed collective leadership. Its manifesto

contained the party's practical solutions to the nation's political, economic, social and diplomatic problems, drawn up in the light of Nigeria's reality and in accordance with the general principles contained in the party's general programme.

### **The Presidential Candidates**

According to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979, a candidate for the office of the Presidency must be a Nigerian citizen by birth; he has to be at least 35 years old and must not have any characteristics which would have disqualified him from contesting to be a member of the Senate. The President holds office for a term of four years after which he must vacate the office. No one can hold office for a period exceeding two terms. To be considered to have been duly elected, a candidate for the office of President, even where he is the only candidate nominated, will still be required to poll a majority of Yes over No votes and not less than 25 percent of the votes cast at the election in each of at least two-thirds of the states.<sup>8</sup>

The formation of political parties and the selection of presidential candidates for Nigeria's Second Republic election race showed that history has repeated itself with considerable éclat in Nigeria. Although none of the political parties claimed any link to the pre-military era parties, nevertheless, it was obvious both in composition and ideology (if any), that the registered political parties and their presidential candidates were/caricatures of the political organisations and actors of the First Republic. With the re-emergence of the old politicians on the Nigerian political scene, especially the presidential candidates like Azikiwe,

Awolowo, Aminu Kano, Shagari and Waziri Ibrahim, many people argued that Nigeria was now back to square one. The widespread feeling was that those who emerged as presidential candidates were the same politicians who had featured prominently in and survived the first Republic. It was also argued that nothing had changed, no lesson had been learnt and that no new charismatic political leader had emerged - despite all efforts at newness, at re-combinations, at stringent standards and controls.<sup>9</sup>

The only differences, perhaps, were that the First Republic elections were conducted on the basis of three and four regions in 1959 and 1964 respectively, while the Second Republic elections (1979 and 1983) were based on a nineteen-state federation.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, there were conditions laid down for the formation of political parties and the selection of presidential candidates in an attempt to encourage national spread. But despite these differences, important as they are, each of the five presidential candidates chosen or ratified by national party conventions had figured prominently in the First Republic period.

Chief Jeremiah Oyeniyi Obafemi Awolowo, the UPN presidential candidate, had been a veteran politician of the First Republic, a founder and leader of the subsequently banned Action Group, (AG); first Premier of the Government of Western Nigeria, leader of the Opposition in the Federal House of Representatives from 1960 to 1962 after which he was jailed for felonious treason.<sup>11</sup>

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the NPP's Presidential Candidate, was leader of the NCNC, first Premier of Eastern region, first Nigerian Governor-General of the Federation, and first President of the Republic.<sup>12</sup> Both Alhajis Shehu Uthman

Aliyu Shagari<sup>13</sup> and Waziri Ibrahim,<sup>14</sup> Presidential candidates of the NPN and GNPP respectively served as federal ministers during the First Republic while Malam Alhaji Muhammed Aminu Kano, PRP Presidential candidate had been the leader of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU).<sup>15</sup> In the 1983 general elections, all the five registered political parties and presidential candidates contested again with the exception of Malam Aminu Kano, who was replaced, because of his death, by Alhaji Hassan Yusuf, as PRP Presidential candidate.<sup>16</sup> A sixth political party was also registered by FEDECO under the name of Nigeria Advance Party (NAP). With its motto: "Together we take the destiny of Nigeria in our hands", NAP presented a Lagos lawyer, Mr Tunji Braithwaite, as its Presidential Candidate for the 1983 general elections.<sup>17</sup>

It is pertinent to mention however, that two of the presidential candidates in the 1979 general elections - Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Malam Aminu Kano - faced the problem of disqualification by FEDECO on account of the alleged non-payment and evasion of taxes. Although, the case was taken to court and the alleged irregularities in tax payments were later sorted out, most of the election process had already elapsed before the electorate could know for sure who the Presidential Candidates of the NPP and PRP would be to vie for the presidential office. The political party characteristics are shown in the following table.

TABLE 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA'S SECOND REPUBLIC

	NPN <sup>1</sup>	UPN <sup>2</sup>	NPP <sup>3</sup>	PRP <sup>4</sup>	GNPP <sup>5</sup>
Regional Base of support	North	West	East	North	North-east
Presidential Candidate	Alhaji Shehu SHAGARI	Chief Obafemi AWOLOWO	Dr Nnamdi AZIKIWE	Malam Alhaji Aminu KANO	Alhaji Waziri IBRAHIM
Ethnic Identification	Hausa-Fulani	Yoruba	Ibo	Hausa	Kanuri
Programmes	"Conservative": Moderate - promises; favours an open market economy without much state interference; emphasizes stability and status quo	"Progressive": Concrete objectives; free education at all levels for all; free medical treatment; a progressive program of development of roads, schools, and government services	"Centrist": stresses continuation of the progress made by the military	"Populist-Socialist": real welfare state; considers itself most radical	"Welfare Capitalist"

SOURCES: New York Times, March 6, 1979; Africa, no. 87, Nov. 1978; Financial Times of London, March 1979' Issue, 1/2 Spring/Summer, 1981.

1. National Party of Nigeria
2. Unity Party of Nigeria
3. Nigeria People's Party

4. People's Redemption Party
5. Great Nigeria People's Party

### **7.3 Ownership and Control of the Nigerian Mass Media in the Second Republic**

The transition programmes which culminated in the advent of Nigeria's Second Republic involved public discussions focused by the Nigerian Press. Apart from the military leaders' acknowledgement of mass media responsibility of interpreting and informing the electorate of the issues, the 1979 Constitution also requires special obligations from the press on Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of state policy. In fact, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) recognized the role of the press in election campaign communication when it decided in its guidelines for party registration that whatever amount spent by registered political parties on political communications through the mass media would be one of the factors to be taken into consideration for the purpose of determining election expenses such as:

"the cost of advertisements of all types in connection with, or pertaining to, the election including - advertisements by means of radio and television broadcasting, cinematograph, newspapers, hand-bills and posters and in any other form whatsoever".<sup>18</sup>

If the quantity of newspapers and the fearlessness of their editorial opinions and reportage are taken as measurements of level of political awareness and consciousness prevailing in a country at any given period, then the growth of the newspaper industry in Nigeria, between 1979 and 1983, the period of the duration of the Second Republic, could aptly be said to represent a high level of political participation and interest articulation in a democracy. Every political pressure group established its own newspaper as a medium of putting its message

across the political spectrum and seeking entry and recognition into the political decision-making process. With the exception of the well edited broadsheet Weekly Democrat that made its debut in January 1984, and quickly disappeared,

the following newspapers developed to represent one form of political interest group or the other: National Concord, Satellite, Guardian, Nigerian Call, Eagle, Okigwe Voice, Trumpet, Daily Nation, Echo, Daily News, Record, Stamp, Advocate, Premier, Hope, Graphic, Sun and People's News. Ralph Waldo Emerson's observation that in the United States of his time they had the newspapers that did their best to make every square acre of land and sea give an account of themselves at one's breakfast time<sup>19</sup> is just an appropriate political epigram to describe the proliferation of the newspaper industry during Nigeria's Second Republic.

### Government Monopoly and Control of the Media

#### The Federal and State Government Media

During the Second Republic, the Federal Government owned and controlled the Daily Times, the New Nigerian, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and the Nigerian Television Authority. After the 1979 elections, these media were still owned by the Federal Government which was however, under the control of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

All the state government media were owned and controlled by the respective state military governments - except the Sketch Press Limited which was owned and controlled by the governments of Oyo, Ogun and Ondo States. After the 1979 elections, the Sketch was owned by Oyo, Ogun and Ondo States

controlled by the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). The Standard, the Star, and the Statesman were owned by Plateau, Anambra and Imo states controlled by the Nigerian People's Party (NPP), the Observer was owned by the Bendel State controlled by the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Herald was owned by the ~~Kwara~~ State controlled by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). But after the 1983 elections, the Herald was owned by the Kwara State controlled by the UPN, while the Star was owned by the Anambra State controlled by the NPN.

### Political Party Newspapers

In addition to the existing political party newspapers such as the Tribune, owned by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Presidential Candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria, there were Waziri Ibrahim's "The Nationalist", Augustus Akinloye's "Sunday Advocate", Kingsley Mbadiwe's "The Eagle", Alex Ekweme's "The Trumpet", Victor Akan's "The Call", Jim Nwobodo's "Satellite", Nwakanma Okoro's "The Nation", and Anthony Enahoro's "The Sun", to mention just a few most of which are now defunct. The National Concord which is still being published today was founded by Chief M.K.O. Abiola in 1980 to support the policies of the NPN. The paper's philosophy however changed when its owner Chief Abiola, quit politics.

### The Independent Press

The Punch was the only newspaper that could be described as 'independent' during the Second Republic, since its owner and publisher, Chief Olu Aboderin was with no known political affiliation then. He was however,

known to be close to chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the UPN. In the strict sense of the word, the so-called 'independent' newspapers were not so independent. They subjected their readers to all kinds of publicity about the politics, ideology and culture of their owners or of those who are close to them.

There were other newspapers founded during the tail end of the second Republic and after the demise of that Republic. They included the Guardian of Alex Ibru, the Lagos News of Lateef Jakande, the Vanguard of Sam Amuka-Pemu, the Democrat of Alhaji Ahmed/Joda, Philip Asiodu, Alhaji Shehu Malami and Alhaji Mal Sango among other owners, the Mail of Dr Clarkson Majomi, the Patriot of Mr Amos Onanuga, the Reporter of retired Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'adua and the Republic of Chief Williams Olufemi Ajayi which was started in the middle of 1987, to mention just a few.

#### 7.4 Nigerian Mass Media, Political Communications and the Coverage of the Campaigns that led to the general elections of the Second Republic

Two phases of the campaigns that led to the general elections in the Second Republic can be identified. The first phase was between 1978 and 1979 when the mass media were under <sup>supervision</sup> military and the 1979 elections were conducted with the military playing some supervisory role. The last phase was between 1982 and 1983 when the mass media were owned by governments controlled by political parties of the Second Republic. In the first phase, there were other factors that contributed to the press bias in the coverage of election campaigns in addition to the ownership and control factors, while in the last phase, ownership was the main predominant factor that dictated the direction of

election campaign coverage. But first, we analyse .. how the press covered the 1979 election campaigns.

### The Daily Times

An analysis of 49,785 column centimetres of news stories was carried out in the Daily Times. Out of this figure, 43,135 news stories were classified as favourable, 637 as unfavourable while 6,013 were found neutral. Of the 43,135 favourable news stories, the GNPP had 5807 (13.5%); NPN got 11,373 (26.5%); NPP 8513 (19.7%); PRP 4541 (10.4%); and UPN got 12,901 (29.9%). This is shown clearly in Table 5 with percentages scored by each party indicated.

**Table 5: Favourable Coverage Given by the Daily Times**

Parties	Front Pages	Back Pages	Inside (Other) Pages	Special Pages	Edit-orial	Total	%
GNPP	749	996	2962	1100	-	5807	13.5
NPN	1376	1482	6604	1911	-	11373	26.5
NPP	1158	1643	4309	1403	-	8513	19.7
PRP	644	834	2408	655	-	4541	10.4
UPN	2259	1925	6272	2445	-	12901	29.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>6186</b>	<b>6880</b>	<b>22555</b>	<b>7514</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>43135</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London  
My own derivation and calculations from the Microfilm and the papers.  
(See Ref. MC 1796).

The Daily Times, as can be seen from the above table, gave the highest favourable coverage to the UPN followed by the NPN, the NPP, GNPP while the PRP received the least favourable coverage. All things being equal the expected coverage for each party should be 20 percent. In performing a chi-square statistic to find out whether the content of the above table differs significantly from chance, we used the percentages indicated in column seven of the above Table 5 as observed frequency ( $O_f$ ) while 20 percent was used as expected frequency ( $E_f$ ). The total for both the observed frequency and the expected frequency is 100%. The 100% can vary within the five categories (the five registered parties). The frequencies for any four of the categories are free to vary within the 100% but once four of the categories are fixed, the fifth category is not free to vary; thus the degree of freedom ( $d_f$ ) = 4. The result indicates that the observed coverage differs significantly from the expected coverage meaning that the null hypothesis can be rejected at 1% significant level. With the total of ( $O_f$ ) 100, the parties stood at 13.5; 26.5, 19.7; 10.4; and 29.9 respectively. With the total of ( $E_f$ ) 100, we had expected 20 percent for each of the parties.  $X^2 = 13.4255$   $df = 4$ . The inference is that the UPN received the most favourable coverage from the Daily Times and the party also had its programmes brought to the electorate by the Times more than the other four parties combined.

The following are some of the "live illustrations" of favourable news stories carried by the Daily Times on the election campaigns of the Second Republic. The first story carried by the Daily Times on the 1979 election campaigns was favourable to the UPN. The news story, which was also the

headline for the day, reported that barely twenty four hours after the ban on politics was lifted, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, announced the 'Four Cardinal Programmes of his party'.<sup>20</sup>

**Daily Times, December 29, 1978 - Front Page Headline:**

**'AWO ASSURES ALL THE PUPILS'**

**Story:**

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo has come up with a new election promise and it is again in respect of education. By 1980, he said every qualified child would be given admission into Secondary School, if the Unity Party of Nigeria wins the election.

Chief Awolowo was addressing a rally of his party at Ilishan in Remo Local Government area of Ogun State on Wednesday".

**Daily Times, January 3, 1979 - Front Page Headline:**

**UPN WILL WIN 15 STATES**

**Story:**

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo claimed yesterday that the Unity Party of Nigeria has already captured majority of the states in the North. These states are Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Niger, Gongola and Benue.

By that, he pointed out, the UPN was sure to win 15 states in the coming elections".

**Daily Times, January 2, 1979**

**SHAGARI RESUMES TOUR**

**Story:**

"The Presidential Candidate of the National Party of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, continues his whistle-stop nationwide campaign tour today after the New Year break.

He will address a rally at campus square, Lagos, at 4pm today. Tomorrow he will leave Lagos for Akure and Benin to "show-the-flag" of the NPN.

On Thursday, Alhaji Shehu and his campaign team will travel to Calabar by air."

These favourable stories were directed to the electorate in order to get votes for the political parties being reported.

**UNFAVOURABLE STORIES IN THE DAILY TIMES**

The Daily Times gave 637 unfavourable new stories. Out of the coverage, the GNPP got 26 (4%); NPN had 203 (40%); NPP 171 (26%); PRP 40 (6%) and UPN 197 (24%). The result of chi-square test performed as in Table 5 indicates significant difference at the 1% confidence level.  $X^2 = 50.28$  df = 4. This shows that the null hypothesis can be rejected at 1% confidence level. Table 6 shows this clearly.

**Table 6: Unfavourable Coverage in the Daily Times**

Parties	Front Pages	Back Pages	Inside (Other) Pages	Special Pages	Edit-orial	Total	%
GNPP	-	-	26	-	-	26	4.0
NPN	77	-	126	-	-	203	40.0
NPP	-	56	115	-	-	171	26.0
PRP	-	35	5	-	-	40	6.0
UPN	28	23	146	-	-	197	24.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** The British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London  
(My own derivation and calculations).

Some of the unfavourable stories on the UPN were attacks on its Free Education Programme. For instance a former Commissioner for Education during Gowon regime, commenting on UPN's free Education Programme, argued that "Free Education at all levels should not be an issue for political campaign in any party.<sup>21</sup> Also, attacking UPN's ideology, Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya was quoted as saying "any vote cast for UPN by the people of Lagos State would be a disservice to the nation".<sup>22</sup>

In a story titled "Crisis latest - NPP Secretariat shut down",<sup>23</sup> it was reported that the national secretariat of the party at Lagos was shut down by splinter group of the party led by Chief Akanbi Onitiri. Significantly, this story was the headline for that day. Another story reported that the election of Ogoja

senatorial candidate for the NPP could not take place, as two members of the party engaged in exchange' of hot words.<sup>24</sup> The launching ceremony of the party in Gombe Bauchi State did not succeed as the Chief launcher did not arrive on time.<sup>25</sup>

The unfavourable stories on the People's Redemption Party (PRP) and the Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP) again centred on crises or lack of organisation in both parties. For instance, a story titled "Crisis in Anambra PRP deepens" reported serious problems within the PRP in Anambra State, while another story titled "shocker for Waziri"<sup>26</sup> aired the view that the GNPP presidential candidate was shocked as his Governorship candidate for Anambra State was not in Enugu to receive him during his tour of the state. In a story titled "Party Boss changes Camp", it was reported that the secretary of the NPN in a local government area of Borno State resigned his membership of the Party to join the GNPP.<sup>27</sup>

#### NEUTRAL COVERAGE IN THE DAILY TIMES

The Daily Times reported 6,013 neutral news stories. Out of this figure, the GNPP received 1026 (17.0%); the NPN received 1146 (19.1%) column-centimetres; the NPP 2089 (34.7%); the PRP 1105 (18.4%); and the UPN got 647 (10.8%). When the Chi-square test was performed on the observed frequency ( $O_f$ ) and the expected frequency of 20% each ( $E_f$ ), the data yielded a high value. This shows that the null hypothesis can be rejected at more than 1% significant level.  $X^2 = 15.63$  df = 4. Table 7 shows this clearly.

**Table 7: Neutral Coverage in the Daily Times**

Parties	Front Pages	Back Pages	Inside (Other) Pages	Special Pages	Edit-orial	Total	%
GNPP	225	97	704	-	-	1026	17.0
NPN	32	326	728	60	-	1146	19.1
NPP	344	376	983	326	60	2089	34.7
PRP	459	289	357	-	-	1105	18.4
UPN	31	157	342	57	60	647	10.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1091</b>	<b>1245</b>	<b>3114</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>6013</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.  
(My own derivation and calculations from the Microfilm and papers).

#### THE NEW NIGERIAN

A total of 26,878 column centimetres of news stories were analyzed in the New Nigerian. Out of this figure, 22,684 were classified as favourable, 1113 column centimetres news stories as unfavourable and 3081 as neutral. Of the 22,684 favourable news stories, 3163 (13.9%) was reported on GNPP; NPN received 7055 (31%); NPP got 3881 (17%); PRP had 2609 (11.5%) while the UPN received 5976 (26.6%). A Chi-square test performed on the observed frequency ( $O_f$ ) and the expected frequency of 20% for each party ( $E_f$ ) indicated the rejection of the null hypothesis at 1% confidence level.  $X^2 = 14.148$  (df) = 4. This is shown clearly in Table 8.

**Table 8: Favourable Coverage in the New Nigerian**

Parties	Front Pages	Back Pages	Inside (Other) Pages	Special Pages	Edit-orial	Total	%
GNPP	161	60	2742	200	-	3163	13.9
NPN	262	230	5540	1023	-	7055	31.0
NPP	10	177	2611	1083	-	3881	17.0
PRP	42	-	1996	571	-	2609	11.5
UPN	460	113	4973	430	-	5976	26.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>17862</b>	<b>3307</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22684</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** The British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London. (My own calculations from Ref. MC 1796 H and NP 1385).

The following news stories represent few examples of "live illustration" of the New Nigerian Favourable Coverage:

**New Nigerian, April 18, 1979 - Front Page Headline**

**NPN PLANS 'GREEN REVOLUTION'**

**Story:**

"National Party of Nigeria (NPN) intends to usher 'the Green Revolution' into the country if voted into power.

The party's Presidential Candidate, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, made this known yesterday at the first press luncheon for Presidential Candidates organised by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria (NPAN)".

Many of the favourable stories of the New Nigerian on the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) concentrated on the party's programmes, described its Presidential Candidate, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, "as the most qualified living Nigerian for the exalted post of the country's first executive President",<sup>28</sup> and projected the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), as the Party "committed to the unity and stability of Nigeria".<sup>29</sup> The paper also carried news stories advertising, "selling" the NPN programmes and urging the electorate to cast votes for the party.

One of the New Nigerian stories favourable to the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) reported the opening of the party's secretariat shortly after the ban on politics was lifted.<sup>30</sup>

#### UNFAVOURABLE STORIES IN THE NEW NIGERIAN

A total of 1113 column centimetres news stories was classified as unfavourable in the New Nigerian. Out of this figure, the GNPP received 136 (17%); the NPN got 76 (6.5%); the NPP had 377 (32%); the PRP got 83 (7%); while the UPN received 441 (37.5%). A Chi-square analysis performed on the variables of observed frequency ( $O_f$ ) and the expected frequency of 20% for each party ( $E_f$ ) shows a significant difference at the 1% confidence level.  $X^2 = 40.525$   $df = 4$ . This shows the rejection of the null hypothesis at 1% significant level. Table 9 gives the details. This is followed by "live illustration" of column centimetre news stories as few examples of unfavourable coverage by the New Nigerian Newspaper.

Table 9: Unfavourable Coverage in the New Nigerian

Parties	Front Pages	Back Pages	Inside (Other) Pages	Special Pages	Edit-orial	Total	%
GNPP	105	-	31	-	-	136	17.0
NPN	-	-	76	-	-	76	6.5
NPP	76	65	236	-	-	377	32.0
PRP	-	-	27	56	-	83	7.0
UPN	-	-	128	313	-	441	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

New Nigerian, January 25, 1979 - Back Page Headline

UPN WON'T PUT KOBO ON ABUJA PROJECT UNTIL ... - AWO

Story:

"A Government of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) will not spend a kobo to develop the new federal capital at Abuja until all its four cardinal programmes are fully implemented.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, UPN leader and Presidential Candidate, told journalists that if voted into power, he would have more worthwhile things to do with money than pumping it into the development of a new capital".

He was addressing newsmen in Sokoto last Tuesday on the last phase of his current political campaigns in the northern states."

New Nigerian, April 16, 1979 - Front Page Headline

**ZIK, AMINU OUT OF RACE**

[NB: This story was also carried as Front Page Headline of New Nigerian on 21st April 1979]

**Story:**

"Dr Nnamdi Azikwe, presidential candidate of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) is virtually out of the presidential race in this year's general elections. So also is Alhaji Aminu Kano, Presidential Candidate of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). This is because the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) has informed the federal military Government on the tax position of all the five presidential candidates and only two of them were still to get letter of clearance from Government, a reliable source has said."

There were also some few unfavourable stories on the NPN in the New Nigerian. For example, the story titled "pressmen inspect goods" was unfavourable on the party as it appeared at a prominent back page position. The story reported that members of the press were taken to the baggage hall at Murtala Mohammed Airport to inspect six trunk boxes and four cartons containing textile, window curtains, party brochures smuggled into the country by NPN.<sup>31</sup> Another story titled "Chief Abiola and three others in court" which incidentally occupied a prominent back page position also reported that a national executive member of the NPN Chief M.K.O. Abiola and three others were arraigned before a Chief Magistrate court for taking part in an unlawful assembly at Abeokuta.<sup>32</sup> There was another story which reported that the NPN rally in Minna ended in confusion because Alhaji Shehu Shagari insisted that the state gubernatorial candidate Alhaji Anwal Ibrahim must be presented before the

crowd. The story was further elaborated to indicate that as the confusion rose, the party's presidential candidate, the Chairman of the party and other officials at the rally left the scene to their respective lodgings.<sup>33</sup> Apart from the fact that this story is unfavourable, it reveals some weakness of organisation in the party.

The New Nigerian's unfavourable coverage of the Unity Party of Nigeria either accused its leader of being tribal or attacked the party's programmes. For example, in a story titled "On Programmes and Ideologies", it is reported that "the most fundamental inconsistency of the UPN's programme is its commitment to socialism as an ideology for governing this country".<sup>34</sup> Chief Obafemi Awolowo was once urged to retire from politics "that being the only honourable cause opened to him".<sup>35</sup> Women were also called upon to reject Chief Awolowo's regressive stand on family planning.<sup>36</sup>

New Nigerian unfavourable stories on NPP reported leadership tussle in the party, issue of people decamping or breaking away from the party and other crises which the party had. One of such stories blamed Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe "as the major brain behind the crisis in the party"<sup>37</sup> Another story described the NPP as a party born out of treachery and bound to collapse one day.<sup>38</sup> Commenting on the effects of the party breaking into two factions, a story titled "Leadership crisis hits NPP" reported that the leadership crisis within the party took a new dimension as the "Akinfosile - Azikwe faction of the party dramatically moved the Party's national secretariat from its original site to a new place".<sup>39</sup>

Also, problems of decamping and lack of principle constituted the topic for some of the unfavourable stories of the New Nigerian on both GNPP

and PRP. In a story titled "The return of the Prodigal Son" Alhaji Waziri of the GNPP was described as "having been used all the time to give semblance of legitimacy to the ambition of a more ambitious man",<sup>40</sup> while another story titled "PRP: After the disqualification of Aminu Kano, its presidential candidate from contesting the presidential elections, the party was disarrayed."<sup>41</sup>

#### **NEUTRAL COVERAGE IN THE NEW NIGERIAN**

A total of 3081 column centimetre news stories was classified as neutral in the New Nigerian. Out of this figure, the GNPP received 348 (9.4%); the NPN got 927 (30.7%); the NPP had 731 (24.3%); the PRP received 561 (18.6%); while the UPN got 514 (17%). A Chi-square test was performed on the percentage coverage given to the parties ( $O_f$ ) and the expected coverage of 20% for each of the parties ( $E_f$ ). The result is  $X^2 = 12.815$  and  $df = 4$ , and this shows the rejection of the null hypothesis at 5% significant level. This is shown clearly in Table 10:

Table 10: Neutral Coverage in the New Nigerian

Parties	Front Pages	Back Pages	Inside (Other) Pages	Special Pages	Edit-orial	Total	%
GNPP	-	-	284	-	64	648	9.4
NPN	86	23	818	-	-	927	30.7
NPP	239	-	443	16	33	731	24.3
PRP	84	-	460	17	-	561	18.6
UPN	-	-	467	47	-	514	17.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2472</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>3081</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.  
(My own calculations from the Microfilm and the papers).

A New Nigerian story titled "Parties Programmes and Pointers"

which commented on the programmes of each of the parties and made a neutral assessment of each of the presidential candidate and their programmes is an example of a neutral story. While it is unhelpful for UPN to stress education without a concomitant appraisal of its implications and wider ramifications for the society, the story says', the PRP, NPN, NPP and the GNPP talk of bolstering co-operatives which shows that there has been no clear examination of the issues raised by the programmes of these parties. On the Presidential candidates the story described Chief Awolowo as one who seems better than the others "but his controversial streak may be a handicap. While Aminu Kano has not been tested in a position of leadership, Alhaji Waziri may wonder what to do with his newly

acquired power if voted in. Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe is a man of compromise but this quality is not necessarily the best for an executive president; even though Alhaji Shehu Shagari looks a good statesman and the most national of the presidential aspirants, but the main problem is: Can he deliver? the story queried. Noting that none of the parties seemed to have any new approach, the story argued that on the whole most of the party manifestos are vague. "It is either we will encourage this or we will promote that: To an audience which has listened for years to such unfulfilled promises that come with every budget speech, such statements mean nothing".<sup>42</sup>

To give a clearer picture of the column-centimetre news stories carried by the two papers and the amount of coverage received by each of the five registered political parties, we put the total favourable, unfavourable and neutral news stories together. The Chi-square statistic performed indicated that the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 5% significant level. Looking at the observed frequency and expected frequency of 20% each for the political parties, we obtained the following results:

Daily Times =  $X^2$  = 10.204 df = 4;

New Nigerian =  $X^2$  = 12.10 df = 4

The following tables show clearly the total amount of coverage and their percentages:

**Table 11: Total Amount of Coverage (Favourable, Unfavourable, Neutral)**

**Received by the Parties**

<b>Parties</b>	<b>Daily Times</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>New Nigerian</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
GNPP	6859	13.8	3647	13.5	10506	13.7
NPN	12722	25.6	8058	30.0	20780	27.8
NPP	10773	21.6	4989	18.6	15762	20.1
PRP	5686	11.4	3253	12.1	8939	11.7
UPN	13745	27.6	6931	25.8	20676	26.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>49785</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26878</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76663</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** The British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London  
(My own calculations from the Microfilm).

**The Daily Sketch, The Star and Punch**

Apart from the federal newspapers - the Daily Times and the New Nigerian - the way the state newspapers paid attention to the 1979 electioneering campaign of the five registered political parties under the military showed that greater attention was given to political parties strongest in the locations of those newspapers. For example, the Daily Sketch and The Punch gave the highest coverage to the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) while the Daily Star reported the campaign activities of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) overwhelmingly.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo who came second both in the nationwide newspaper coverage and the presidential election got his worst votes from Imo (7,335 votes) and Anambra (9,063 votes) the area where Daily Star which placed

UPN last in its preferential coverage of the electioneering campaigns, is mostly read. He, however, came first in Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Lagos and Bendel states and took second in Kwara state where the Daily Sketch and Punch which gave him the best coverage are mostly patronised.

**Table 12 Parties and Newspapers**

Parties	Sketch	Star	Punch
GNPP	10.6%	13.8%	6.5%
NPN	29.5%	21.3%	28.7%
NPP	16.7%	33.1%	24.5%
PRP	12.7%	21.3%	6.5%
UPN	30.5%	10.5%	33.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** The Universities of Ibadan and Lagos Libraries, the Sketch Library, Nigeria, and the British Library at Colindale, London, NW9 5HE. (My own calculations).

#### 7.5 Conclusion

This section has examined Nigerian political communications in the first phase of the Second Republic. It also analyzed the press coverage of the campaigns that led to the 1979 general elections. Although the media were under the military government, yet, they were favourable to some political parties and unfavourable to others. It was assumed that since the military was supposed to be neutral, the media under its ownership and control would also be neutral, be more

responsible in providing truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events, serving as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, in projecting a representative picture of the constituent groups in society and in the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society.

However the state media paid the greatest attention to the coverage of the electioneering campaigns of those political parties strongest in their locations while the federal press which was supposed to be 'national' in 'coverage character' did not give equal amount of coverage to the registered political parties; also, the federal press did not behave "nationally"; the papers neither conformed to the requirements of the theory of a socially responsible press nor upheld the constitutional provisions on the obligations of the mass media, and all these have had serious implications for the Nigerian political communication system.

Given the amount of coverage received by the five registered political parties, their performance in the various elections and the consequent results of the 1979 general elections, there is evidence to suggest a high positive correlation between election campaign coverage and election performance of the parties and their candidates. For instance, the NPN which had the highest nationwide mass media coverage than all other political parties came first in the 1979 elections. The UPN which had the second highest media coverage came second, Dr Azikiwe and his NPP came third both in the nationwide mass media coverage and the presidential elections. In fact, Dr Azikiwe took the first position in Imo and Anambra where Daily Star which gave him the best coverage is best

read. Other presidential candidates - Awolowo, Shagari - also came first in coverage and elections in their catchment areas namely, the West and the North.

Malam Aminu Kano who was given the fourth best nationwide newspaper coverage also took fourth in the presidential election. The same is true of Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri who came last both in newspaper coverage and the 1979 presidential elections.

When the Federal Electoral Commission declared the presidential candidate of the NPN, Shehu Shagari, winner of the presidency, the UPN presidential candidate, Obafemi Awolowo, together with the leader of the GNPP, Ibrahim Waziri, went to the Supreme Court of Nigeria where its justices surprisingly upheld the submission of the NPN's leading counsel who argued that mathematically, two-thirds of nineteen was twelve, and two-thirds (12 $\frac{2}{3}$ ). Despite its victory that was upheld by the Supreme Court, the NPN could still not form its Federal cabinet because it did not have enough Senators and members in the House of Representatives in the National Assembly to pass any of the President's bills and other legislative requests. It therefore had to enter into a political alliance with the NPP, led by Nnamdi Azikiwe. But the alliance did not last as both the contracting parties accused each other of a series of violations of the accord and bad faith.

The NPN, however, continued in power until the 1983 general elections were held. The fuller implications of the influence of media ownership on Nigerian political communications will be better appreciated when I examine the press coverage of the campaigns that led to the last phase of the Second Republic - the 1983 general elections and this is the focus of Chapter 8.

In analyzing the Daily Times and the New Nigerian - between December, 1978 and July, 1979, we examined a total of 76,663 column-centimetres of news stories, which were also categorized into favourable, unfavourable and neutral front, back, special, editorial and inside (other) pages of the newspapers.<sup>43</sup> (See Tables 13 and 14).

The period covered was from the date the five recognised political parties were registered to the eve of the first elections: that is from December 22, 1978 to July 10, 1979. This involved analyzing the contents of a total of 341 issues of the newspapers.

The Sketch, Star and Punch Newspapers were also analyzed on the basis of ownership. The Sketch was owned by the governments of Oyo, Ogun and Ondo States, the Star was owned by the Anambra State Government while the Punch was a privately-owned newspaper during the period under study.

The Sketch sells most in the western states of the country. Out of its daily sale of 83,000 copies, 66,000 are sold in the five western states - Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Ogun and Bendel. It is located in Ibadan.

The Star is read most in the eastern states of the country. Of its daily circulation of 150,000 copies, 113,850 are sold in the four eastern states - Cross River, Rivers, Imo and Anambra. Its headquarters is at Enugu.

The Punch, located in Lagos, tries to maintain some neutrality. It concentrates on sales in Lagos and some other more easily accessible centres, presumably to maximise advertising revenue and reduce overheads. It had a daily circulation of 120,000 copies during the period under study.

In analyzing the three papers two issues each were analyzed per week making 6 newspapers every week. On the whole 39 weeks were used and a content analysis of 390 editions of the three newspapers was carried out. The study covered the day the ban on politics was lifted - September 21, 1978 - to the day of the presidential elections on August 4, 1979. The last two weeks of September 1978 and all the weeks from October 1978 to July 1979 as well as the first week of August 1979 were included in the study.

TABLE 13

A TABULAR PRESENTATION OF THE TOTAL COLUMN CENTIMETRES OF NEWS STORIES ANALYZED IN THE DAILY TIMES

PARTIES	F+	F-	F	B+	B-	B	O+	O-	O	S+	S-	S	E+	E-	E	TOTAL	PERCENT
GNPP	749	-	225	996	-	97	2962	26	704	1100	-	-	-	-	-	6859	13.8
NPN	1376	77	32	1482	-	326	6604	126	728	1911	-	60	-	-	-	12722	25.6
NPP	1158	-	344	1643	56	376	4309	115	983	1403	-	326	-	-	60	10773	21.6
PRP	644	-	459	834	35	289	2408	5	357	655	-	-	-	-	-	5686	11.4
UPN	2259	28	31	1925	23	157	6272	146	342	2445	-	57	-	-	60	13745	27.6
TOTAL	6186	105	1091	6880	114	1245	22555	418	3114	7514	-	443	-	-	120	49785	100

TABLE 14

A TABULAR PRESENTATION OF THE TOTAL COLUMN CENTIMETRES OF NEWS STORIES ANALYZED IN THE NEW NIGERIAN

PARTIES	F+	F-	F	B+	B-	B	0+	0-	0	S+	S-	S	E+	E-	E	TOTAL	%
GNPP	161	105	-	60	-	-	2742	31	284	200	-	-	-	-	64	3647	13.5
NPN	262	-	86	230	-	23	5540	76	818	1023	-	-	-	-	-	8058	30.0
NPP	10	76	239	177	65	-	2611	236	443	1083	-	16	-	-	33	4989	18.6
PRP	42	-	84	-	-	-	1996	27	460	571	56	17	-	-	-	3253	12.1
UPN	460	-	-	113	-	-	4973	128	467	430	313	47	-	-	-	6931	25.8
TOTAL	935	181	409	580	65	23	17862	498	2472	3307	369	80	-	-	97	26878	100

**KEY TO TABLES 13 AND 14**

F+	=	Favourable Front Page
F-	=	Unfavourable Front Page
F	=	Neutral Front Page
B+	=	Favourable Back Page
B-	=	Unfavourable Back Page
B	=	Neutral Back Page
O+	=	Favourable Other Page
O-	=	Unfavourable Other Pages
O	=	Neutral Other Pages
S+	=	Favourable Special Pages
S-	=	Unfavourable Special Pages
S	=	Neutral Special Pages
E+	=	Favourable Editorials
E-	=	Unfavourable Editorials
E	=	Neutral Editorials

TABLE 15

NIGERIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS 1979 - THE OVERALL PARTY POSITIONS

PARTY	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 449			SENATE 95		STATE ASSEMBLIES 1347			STATE GOVERNORS 19		PRESIDEN- TIAL ELECTION	AGGREGATE AVERAGE
	A	B	C	A	B	A	B	C	A	B		
NPN	37%	168	16	38%	36	36%	487	17	36%	7	34%	36%
UPN	25%	111	9	30%	28	25%	333	11	26%	5	29%	27%
NPP	17%	78	9	17%	16	17%	226	10	16%	3	17%	16%
PRP	11%	49	2	7%	7	11%	144	5	11%	2	10%	10%
GNPP	10%	43	7	8%	8	11%	157	13	11%	2	10%	10%

Key: a - Percentage of Seats Won  
b - Total Number of Seats Won  
c - Number of States (19) in which Seats Won

Source: Nigeria Since 1970, Kirk-Greene and Rimmer, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, p.41).

## NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. General Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Head of the Federal Military Government, made this statement while lifting the ban on the game of politics on Tuesday, September 21, 1978. For more details, see The Nigeria Year Book, 1979, pp. 9-20.
2. See the Text of a message broadcast to the nation by General Murtala Ramat Muhammed on the occasion of Nigeria's 15th Independence anniversary, 1 October, 1975 (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1975.)
3. Ayo Irikefe et al., 'Report of the Panel on the creation of States' (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1976.)
4. McGaughey, Robert H: "1972 American Elections" (PhD Thesis, Ohio University, 1972).
5. Lazafeld, Paul F. et al; The Peoples Choice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948).
6. According to a Report on the Operation of the Federal Electoral Commission FEDECO (Lagos: Nigeria, FEDECO, 1979) pp. 51-4, a total of 52 political associations publicized their intention to form political parties. Of these 52 organizations, 40 requested registration forms from the Electoral Commission, but only 19 officially applied for registration as political parties by the December 18, 1978 deadline.

FEDECO's report broke down the list of the 52 organizations into the three categories of announced, requested forms, and applied for registration. Only five of the parties were adjudged by FEDECO to have satisfied the laid down criteria. The five registered parties being:

- (1) the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP);
- (2) the National Party of Nigeria (NPN);
- (3) the Nigerian People's Party (NPP);
- (4) the People's Redemption Party (PRP); and
- (5) Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

7. The Electoral Decree (Decree No. 73 of 1977) provided guidelines for the formation and registration of parties, defining a political party as 'any association of persons whose activities include canvassing for votes in support for a candidate for election to the office of President, Vice-President, Governor, Deputy Governor or membership of a Legislative House of a Local Government', with the qualification added that 'no association other than a political party shall canvass for votes for any candidate at an election or contribute to the funds of any political party or the election expenses of any candidate at any election'. The Decree also provided that no association shall function as a political party unless
  - (a) the names and addresses of its national officers are registered with the Electoral Commission;
  - (b) its membership is open to every Nigerian citizen irrespective of his place of origin, religion, ethnic group or sex;
  - (c) a copy of its constitution is registered in the principal office of the Electoral Commission;

(d) has established party offices in 13 of the 19 states of the federation: (a) its objectives conformed with Chapter II of the 1979 constitution on The Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy; among a host of other criteria.

For more details on the background to the Second Republic and the 1979 Elections in Nigeria, see:

Dudley, Billy J., "The Nigerian Elections of 1979: The Voting Decision" Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, vol. XIX, Number 3, November, 1981, pp. 276-297;

Joseph, Richard, "Political Parties and Ideology in Nigeria" Review of African Political Economy, No. 13 May-August, 1978, pp. 78-90;

Joseph, Richard, "The Ethnic Trap: Notes on the Nigerian Campaign and Elections, 1978-79". Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Opinion 1/2, Spring/Summer, 1981, pp. 17-23.

Phillips, Claude S, "Nigeria's New Political Institutions, 1975 - The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1980, pp. 1-22;

Koehn, Peter, "Prelude to Civilian Rule: The Nigerian Elections of 1979" Africa Today Vol.28, No.1, 1 June, 1981, pp.17-45; and

Graf, William, "Issues and substance in the prescription of Liberal-Democratic forms for Nigeria's Third Republic" in African Affairs, Vol. 88, No. 350 January 1989, pp. 91-100; to mention just a few.

8. See The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979 (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, 1979).
9. All five presidential candidates had previously occupied high positions in the federal government, two of them (Awolowo and Shagari) also served as deputy chairmen of the Executive Council, and hence as leading civilian politicians in the military government in 1967-71 and 1971-75, respectively. Alhaji, Mallam Aminu Kano also served as Federal Commissioner for Health under the military while Alhaji Waziri and Dr Azikiwe were Minister and President respectively in the First Republic. In short, all the five presidential candidates have participated actively in Nigerian government and politics for a very long time. For an account of politics during the First Republic see Post, K.W.J. and Vickers, Michael, Structure and Conflict in Nigeria, 1960-65 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973); Sklar, Richard L: Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation. (Princeton, N.J.:Princeton University Press, 1963).
10. Nigeria today is composed of 21 states excluding the Federal Capital territory of Abuja. At the time of independence in 1960, there were three regions of the East, the North and the West. In 1963, the Mid-Western Region was created thus making Four Regions. In 1967, the military regime under Gowon created twelve states out of the former four regions. These were Kwara, Benue-plateau, North-West, North-Central, North-East, Kano, East-Central, South-East, Rivers, Lagos, West and Mid-West. In 1976, further creation of more states resulted in a division of the country into nineteen states under the military administration of Murtala

Muhammed. Benue-Plateau became two separate states of Benue and Plateau; North-East was broken into Sokoto and Niger; and North-Central became Kaduna State. In the East, East-Central was divided into Imo and Anambra, Cross River was carved out from Rivers State, while the Western State was split into Oyo, Ondo and Ogun. In 1988, the military government under Babangida created two more states - Katsina from Kaduna State and Akwa-Ibom from Cross River State - thus making 21 states in the Nigerian Federation.

It is pertinent to say that there is the likelihood of more states being created, judging by the recommendations of various committees set up on the issue, the Political Bureau Report and the incessant vehement demands for the creation of more states. More and more agitations are being advertised and canvassing for states has now become a political issue.

11. A barrister-at-law, politician, journalist, author, ex-Federal Commissioner for Finance and Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council under the Gowon military regime, late Chief Jeremiah Oyeniyi Obafemi Awolowo was born at Ikenne in Remo Division of Ogun State on March 6, 1909.
12. A political scientist, author, journalist, educationalist, orator, first president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and first indigenous Governor-General of Nigeria, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe was born at Sungeru, Niger State on 16 November, 1904.
13. A teacher, politician and former cabinet minister in the civilian regime of the First Republic and Federal Commissioner for Finance in Gowon's military government, Alhaji Shehu Uthman Aliyu Shagari was born in 1925 at Shagari Village, Sokoto State.
14. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim was born at Yerwa, Maiduguri, Borno State on February 26, 1926.
15. A teacher, politician, member of the Constituent Assembly, former Federal Commissioner for Health under Gowon's military government, late Alhaji Muhammed Aminu Kano was born in Kano on August 8, 1920.
16. Alhaji Hassan Yusuf, PRP Presidential Candidate in the 1983 General Elections was born to an area Court Judge at Biu, Borno State in 1937.
17. Mr Tunji Braithwaite, the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) Presidential Candidate was born on September 17, 1934.
18. See Guidelines For the Registration of Parties, The Nigeria Year Book, 1979, pp. 23-24.
19. Emerson, R.W; "Newspapers in Using Good English ed by John E. Brown Summit (New Jersey: Laidlaw Brothers Publishers, 1962) p.2.
20. "Parties Take Off", Daily Times, 23rd September 1978.
21. "Clark attacks Free Education Advocation", Daily Times 4 December, 1978.

22. "Ogunsanya warns on voting for UPN", Daily Times 13th February 1979.
23. Daily Times, 5th June 1979.
24. "Mbu-Ogon Exchange Hot Words", Daily Times, 21st May, 1979.
25. "NPP Lauching almost Flopps", Daily Times, 17 November, 1978.
26. Daily Times, 15th February, 1979.
27. Daily Times, 13th February, 1979.
28. "Shehu Shagari most qualified for Presidency", New Nigerian 28 April 1979.
29. "NPN is Committed to Unity", New Nigerian, 2nd January, 1979.
30. "UPN's Secretariat Opened, New Nigerian, 28th September, 1978.
31. New Nigerian, 6th March, 1979.
32. New Nigerian, 22nd January, 1979.
33. "NPN rally in Minna ends in Confusion", New Nigerian, 22 January, 1979.
34. New Nigerian, 9th October, 1978.
35. New Nigerian, 28th March 1979.
36. New Nigerian, 23rd October, 1978.
37. "NPP Crisis blamed on Zik", New Nigerian, 25th November, 1978.
38. "NPN man predicts collapse of NPP", New Nigerian, 6th February, 1979.
39. New Nigerian, 5th June, 1979.
40. New Nigerian, 5th September, 1979.
41. New Nigerian, 5th September, 1979.
41. New Nigerian, 3rd July, 1979.
42. "Parties, programmes and pointers", New Nigerian, 6 March, 1979, p.7.
43. In collecting part of the data for content-analyses of the Daily Times and the New Nigerian Newspapers, we used the British Newspaper Library, Colindale Avenue, Colindale, London, NW9 5HE. For details of the Daily Times analysed, see Daily Times by the University of Chicago, The Joseph Regenstein Library, Dept. of Photoduplication, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637. Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Project, Sponsored by The Association of Research Libraries, Ref. MC 1796. For details of the New Nigerian analysed, see New Nigerian NP 1385, Micro-filmed by the Library of Congress photoduplication service, 1980 Ref. MC1796 H.

## CHAPTER 8

### NIGERIAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC: THE LAST PHASE

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the influence of media ownership on Nigerian political communications during the last phase of the Second Republic, the 1983 general elections. It analyses the coverage of the campaigns leading to the elections by looking at the contents of the news stories carried by the state and federal government newspapers, newspapers owned by political parties, politicians and private 'independent' owners as well as the coverage of the elections by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (F.R.C.N.), the Nigerian Television Authority (N.T.A.), the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (B.C.O.S.) among a host of other allied electronic media.

By October 1979 when the politicians who won the elections of the Second Republic were sworn in, ruling political parties at the Federal and State levels in control of governments automatically took over the ownership and control of the print and electronic media under their jurisdictions. This situation helped in the intensification of old ethnic antagonisms and the atmosphere of political communication seethed with bitter rivalry and enmity. The press became completely immersed in the vortex of partisan politics and was in no position to

prepare the people for the challenges of the new presidential system of government.

The press openly supported one political party against the other, fuelled embers of tribalism, sectionalism, and ethnic chauvinism all of which culminated in fragmentation and disintegration that again threatened the unity and stability of the Nigerian state. The media were unable to develop the required ethos of professionalism - impartiality, responsibility, objectivity, and balance in reporting political events, national issues, campaigns and activities - as social commentators, tools of political communication, watch-dogs, and path-finders for the public. This partisan political coloration of the media incapacitated and prevented them from performing their functions of educating, informing and entertaining the public. The veracity of the media and the credibility of their practitioners became questionable. This was one of the contributory factors to the fall of the Second Republic in December 1983.

By the time the 1983 election campaigns began, it was difficult to distinguish between the ruling political parties and the mass media under them. Each political party made use of its own press; personalities were attacked while the "real" campaign issues and principles were ignored. There were allegations that many media practitioners during the period were on sale. Some were said to have been on secret pay-rolls of politicians, some analyzed issues and events from the point of view of their political mentors, some reported press conferences they never attended, while some carried releases that were never issued. Whereas, media practitioners are expected to seek the truth, teach the truth and preserve the truth, some of the media practitioners became blinded by the maxim: "facts

are sacred, comments are free". Thus, campaigns for elections which in Nigeria as elsewhere, are crucial to national survival and political stability, caused serious problems in Nigeria's Second Republic - internal rioting, arson, assassination, vandalism, hooliganism and exacerbated ethnic distrust and antagonism.

The consequences of all these were disastrous for the country. a similar Nigeria again began to manifest drift and hopelessness which preceded the collapse of the First Republic's experiment in democratic rule and over twenty years of military intervention. The signs were obvious and ominous: intense and violent political rivalry, unguarded and inflammatory public statements, deliberate destruction of public and private properties as well as brigandage. Eventually, the military intervened again.

### 8.1 The Newspapers

The Nigerian mass media's coverage of political campaigns is examined in this section by analyzing stories on the campaign leading to the 1983 general elections as published by 13 'national' newspapers. These are the Daily Times, the New Nigerian, Herald, the Nigerian Observer, the Nigerian Standard, the Sketch, the Daily Star, the Nigerian Statesman, the Nigerian Tide, the Punch, the National Concord, the Satellite and the Nigerian Tribune.

The emergent picture in the content-analyses of these papers depicts the press ownership pattern of this phase of the Second Republic in which 32 per cent of the campaign stories were published in NPN-affiliated newspapers, 29.4 per cent in UPN-affiliated newspapers, 27.3 per cent in NPP-affiliated newspapers with only 11.3 per cent published in newspapers whose owners were neither

members of nor pledged any alliance officially to one of the competing political parties. It is pertinent to mention that the G.N.P.P., the N.A.P. and the P.R.P. did not own or control any national newspapers during the 1983 election campaigns.

On the whole, the 13 newspapers concentrated on the NPN, the UPN and the NPP more than they did on the other three remaining parties - the GNPP, the NAP and the PRP. 36.1 per cent of the 1,504 stories analyzed focused on the NPN, followed closely by the UPN with 34.2 per cent; the NPP got 18.8 per cent, with a very sharp drop to NAP's 2.8 per cent, PRP 2.1 per cent and GNPP 1.1 per cent. The rest of the stories focused on all the parties (2.3 per cent) on none of the parties (0.5 per cent) and 2.1 per cent on the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA).<sup>1</sup>

Of all the campaign stories 11 per cent appeared in the Tribune, followed by Satellite (with 10.6 per cent), Times (10.2 per cent), Observer (9.4 per cent), Sketch (8.8 per cent), Herald (8.3 per cent), New Nigerian (7.8 per cent), Statesman (7.6 per cent), Concord (6.9 per cent), Star (5.7 per cent), Tide (5.3 per cent), Punch (4.6 per cent) and Standard (3.5 per cent).

There was also an apparent lopsidedness relating to where the stories were published and where the stories originated. For instance, 21.7 per cent of the stories were published in Lagos, 19.9 per cent in Ibadan, 16.3 per cent at Enugu, followed by Benin (9.4 per cent), Ilorin (8.3 per cent), Kaduna (7.8 per cent), Owerri (7.6 per cent), Port Harcourt (5.3 per cent) and Jos (3.5 per cent). Using the popular ethnic classificatory method to divide the country into North (Hausa-Fulani), West (Yoruba), East (Ibo) and "minorities", 41.6 per cent of the

stories were published in the West, 26.6 per cent in the "minority" areas, 23.9 per cent in the East and 7.8 per cent in the North.

Moreover, 19.1 per cent of the stories originated from Lagos State, followed by Bendel (11.4 per cent), Anambra (8.5 per cent), Kano (6.6 per cent), Oyo (6.5 per cent), Cross River (5.9 per cent), Ogun (5.8 per cent), Imo (5.7 per cent), Plateau (5.1 per cent), Rivers (3.7 per cent), Kwara (3.2 per cent), Benue (2.8 per cent), Gongola (2.8 per cent), Kaduna (2.4 per cent), Ondo (2.3 per cent), Bauchi (1.2 per cent), Borno (0.9 per cent), Niger (0.9 per cent, Sokoto (0.2 per cent), and outside Nigeria (0.1 per cent). Stories whose origins were not indicated were 5 per cent of the total. (See Pages 2 and 84 for the Maps of Nigeria)

Another general picture that emerged was that the campaigns as reflected in the newspapers were uneducative and there was a concentration on personalities. For instance, only 1.9 per cent of the campaign stories had which focused on the "real" issues, educative content, the rest (98.1 per cent) consisted of uneducative news items about events. Moreover, 52.3 per cent of the stories concentrated on the personality of the politicians, followed by 11.6 per cent which focused on the economy. Other themes focused on were announcements of campaign movements (11 per cent), violence (8.4 per cent), religion (5.1 per cent), education (3.5 per cent), health (2.3 per cent), housing (1.7 per cent), stability (1.5 per cent), agriculture (1.3 per cent), minorities (0.7 per cent), foreign policy (0.4 per cent), state creation (0.2 per cent) and others (0.1 per cent).

Major sources of such stories were campaign fields (34.8 per cent), police (0.8 per cent), news conferences (7.6 per cent), press statements (31.4 per cent), official engagements of candidate (0.9 per cent), candidate in transit (10.1

per cent), non-staff of paper (6.0 per cent), and others (5.7 per cent). The sources of the rest of the stories (2.7 per cent) were not indicated.

It is important to note that 31.4 per cent of campaign stories in the newspapers were got from press statements, when compared to the amount got from outdoor campaigns which was (34.8 per cent).

## **8.2 The National Concord**

The National Concord is worth singling out again because it shows a very good example of how political party newspapers were used to attack political opponents. In the same vein, it is also a good example of how a political party press could become 'non-partisan' and 'independent' overnight when its owner is no longer tied to the apron strings of a political party or ideology. When its publisher and owner, Chief M.K.O. Abiola was still a 'strong' member of the NPN, the National Concord took to printing stories alleging that Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his UPN supporters had hatched a plot to subvert the constitution and were about to launch this plan over the radio by courtesy of a foreign radio station. The Kaduna-based Hausa language newspaper Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo ('The Truth is Worth More than a Penny'), took this allegation further by quoting from a leading Kaduna State politician:

"The secret aims of the UPN continue to be exposed in relation to the plot and intrigue to destabilise the Federal Government of this country, to create disturbances, strife and civil war which will please Odumewgu Ojukwu, former Biafran secessionist leader, no end.

The Deputy Leader of the Kaduna State House of Assembly, Alhaji Maccido Muhammad made this statement in Kaduna recently. He said that, as things stand at the moment, the UPN has sought assistance from organisations outside this country in a plan to prevent the Federal Government of this country from importing foodstuffs and to plot to create strife between the different communities of the country"<sup>2</sup>

Also, in a series of investigative journalism reports, the National Concord revealed how Awolowo, the leader of the UPN, had "immorally" acquired 360 plots of land in reservation areas of Maroko Village of Lagos at a paltry purchase price of \$1.5 million. This revelation of Awolowo's capitalistic tendency constituted a political embarrassment to his image and credibility as a presidential aspirant who fancied and advocated socialism and its unquestionable acceptance in Nigeria. The Nigerian public, influenced by the National Concord's expose on Awolowo, began to doubt his sincerity and commitment to the masses if he had such an insatiable capitalistic urge. The public confidence in Awolowo's integrity for the highest public office in the land<sup>wrs</sup> further eroded when his political party's director of research and publicity said that Awolowo "had a right to own property...The fact that the UPN leader was preaching socialism did not mean that he should be a poor man".<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the National Party of Nigeria, the arch-rival of the UPN, in a reaction to the Maroko land scandal, observed that Awolowo was "wearing a toga of deceit, wanting the nation to see him as a socialist while he was busy perpetuating capitalist ideas".<sup>4</sup> When confronted by journalists to defend himself on the land scandal, Awolowo said that the issue was strictly personal and that the National Concord's expose had not had any effect on his political career. But at a later press conference, Awolowo told reporters

that he had ceased to own the lands (360 plots) since February, 1976, when he transferred the land to his family company, Dideolu Estate Limited, which, he said, was a private limited liability company "in which the only shareholders are myself, my wife and our children."<sup>5</sup>

The National Concord, bent on smearing Awolowo's political image, career and ambition and to prevent him from winning the presidency, questioned his probity in a series of editorials relating to the land scandal. These are some excerpts from two of such numerous editorials:

By multiple acts which can hardly pass moral, legal or ethical tests, chief Awolowo or Dideolu Estate Limited has held 360 plots of prime land, and we do not think this is good enough for someone who claims to be the most qualified person to be the President of Nigeria.<sup>6</sup>

The picture one gets from the Chief's defence is not one of a socialist but a greedy, egocentric leader who however engaged in acts of philanthropy whenever his conscience pricks him.<sup>7</sup>

The credibility of the National Concord as an authoritative, respectable and non-tribal newspaper began to erode when it made a surprising U-turn to support the presidential candidature of Awolowo whom it had set out to discredit and destroy politically, as evidenced from the preceding pages. When the National Party of Nigeria, at a hurried party convention on June 12, 1982, renominated Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the incumbent President of Nigeria then as its flag-bearer for the 1983 general and presidential elections, the National Concord believed that its publisher, Abiola, had been jilted by an ungrateful party machinery. It thought that it was the turn of a Yoruba to be the party's flag-

bearer for the 1983 general elections in accordance with the party's zoning policy. Its publisher, Abiola, ought to have been the choice. It was in preparation for Abiola's presidential race, among other reasons, that the newspaper was established. And to accomplish that objective of becoming a serious presidential candidate capable of defeating UPN's Chief Awolowo, the National Concord had to expose what it believed to be Awolowo's political scandals to tarnish his political image. Also, Awolowo hailed from the same Ogun state with Abiola, his fellow tribesman. Frustrated by denial of party nomination as a presidential candidate for the NPN, Abiola, at a press conference, announced his withdrawal from active and partisan politics. He also renounced his membership of the NPN and said that he did not plan to join any other party. He accused the Hausa-Fulani (Northern) politicians in the NPN of treating the rest of the country as second class citizens. He vowed to reject the leadership of anybody whom he did not consider to be as "competent" as himself and "who cannot show that he has contributed more as an individual to Nigeria."<sup>8</sup> The leader of the UPN, Awolowo, sent him a telegram, congratulating him for having left darkness (NPN) and that the light he had just seen would make him free.

Its publisher, having left the NPN, the National Concord, in an editorial that tacitly endorsed the presidential candidature of Awolowo of the UPN, whom its previous editorials and exposé on the Maroko land episode had ridiculed, humiliated and scandalised, wrote in part:

"Chief Awolowo, veteran Nigerian politician and UPN leader, turned 74 on March 6, 1983. The elder statesman of Nigerian politics has cause to rejoice in the manner he has done in the last few days...When

in 1981 the chief stridently ~~raise~~<sup>raised</sup> the alarm bell to warn the nation of the clouds gathering around her economy, he was accused of playing politics with the economy. Subsequent events proved him right. That has led to the perception of him in certain quarters as a far-sighted leader who could bail out our economy from the downturn in which it is now. It is a new Awo who is conciliatory to his opponents and is prepared to recognise the religious, ethnic and geographical complexities of Nigeria. He certainly has come a long way since 1970. New vistas seem to be opening up for the UPN. The party hitherto perceived as a tribal outfit has made impressive gains in Cross River, Rivers, Kwara, Sokoto and Gongola states. The vistas opening for the chief and his UPN have already led to talks of the Mitterand principle operating in his favour this year. French President Mitterand got elected after so many tries. If Awo should be that lucky, it would certainly be a fitting crowning of the efforts of dogged and principled fighter who refused to permit the accident of his birth to keep him down... Awo's grandfather, in the world beyond, would be proud of him. So is Nigeria. We rejoice with Awo on his 74th birthday."<sup>9</sup>

The contradictions of the National Concord and its adaptation to the intrigues of the Nigerian politics are aptly summarised by a critic, thus:

"The image of the UPN leader which the Concord sold to the reading public is best summarised in the following attitudinal words and phrases which the newspaper used to describe Awolowo in many of its editorials: "aged and faded; truculent and irascible; naked; anarchist; tribalist; dictatorial; holier-than-thou; inconsistent; power monger; illusionist; false image; and mischievous." After its publisher had left the NPN, the image of Awolowo in the Concord changed to the following: 'far-sighted; dogged and principled fighter; democratic; consistent."<sup>10</sup>

Within the same period, the National Concord carried the following editorials that derided the person of the former President, Shagari, whose administration and actions it had previously defended against mounting opposition from the other political parties, particularly the UPN and NPP. The editorials, in part, read:

Since 1979 President Shagari has tried to put on the garb of an innocent, pious, humble, honest gentleman of honour who was always being persecuted by opponents. Now it seems the real Shagari is breaking out of his shell.<sup>11</sup>

President Shagari has in the last fortnight given the country a cause for concern by his utterances which must not escape comment. Apart from claiming to have built hundreds of unnamed schools in (American) "Time" magazine, he also said he believed "there is a lot of corruption in the private sector." As if that was not enough insult to the intelligence of the generality of Nigerians, he also claimed there was nothing like food scarcity in the country...The President must not leave the impression that he has little respect for facts. How could anyone in his position dare say there is no food scarcity at a time food and other items cost 300 per cent more than when he took office? How could he leave the impression that corruption is limited to the private sector when public buildings and other property running into scores of millions have gone up in flames in order to cover shady financial deals, when his cabinet and party men are widely being accused of having amassed wealth by virtue of their positions?"<sup>12</sup>

The above editorial excerpts typify the chicanery of the National Concord each time Nigeria's political fortunes did not favour the interests of its publisher. These editorials that appeared four months to the elections were

undoubtedly aimed at influencing public opinion which would affect the outcome of the elections.

At a time when the public began to question what the National Concord really stood for as it suddenly switched to support the presidential candidature of its publisher's fellow tribesman, some political thugs were suspected to have set ablaze the newspaper's warehouse that housed its newsprints. The newspaper lost substantial bundles of its newsprints in the blaze. This happened when the 1983 general elections were about to begin. The public sympathy and support for the National Concord and its publisher were quite tremendous and encouraging. It was widely believed that some politicians who were being frustrated by Concord's editorials and news coverage, decided to burn down the entire newsprints so that the newspaper would have nothing to print on as the NPN central government would not grant it import license to enable it place orders for newsprints.

The publisher of the National Concord was also involved in another political intrigue that had an international ramification, barely two months after the fire incident. The Nigerian Tribune and Daily Sketch, two influential pro-Awolowo and UPN newspapers, with Awolowo the owner of the former, carried an alarming news story in their respective editions that appeared the same day. Their identical new story had alleged that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had concluded plans to "solve before the general elections the problems posed by the UPN leader, Awolowo, and Chief Abiola through operations 'heartburn and headache' in which Abiola and Awolowo would be killed."<sup>13</sup> The U.S. embassy promptly denied it. The Federal Nigerian Government set up a

one-man investigative panel. The editors of the two newspapers, Tribune and Sketch, sought and got court order not to testify and disclose the source and authenticity of their report. Some people blamed the Russian KGB for planting the news story in the two media establishments. But a more plausible explanation seemed to be that the UPN leader, Awolowo, and his party hierarchy masterminded the whole episode in order to draw Abiola and his National Concord closer to his side and the UPN. Identification of a common enemy that threatened to eliminate both of them physically, it was probably thought, would offer the gimmick and opportunity to win Abiola and his newspaper.

Following the bad example of the National Concord, other newspapers supporting one or other of the six registered political parties in the 1983 elections reported a series of allegations against their rivals. For instance, the Nigerian Observer was owned by Bendel State government controlled by the UPN in 1979. But immediately after the 1983 elections and Dr. S. Ogbemidia, the state NPN gubernatorial candidate was declared the winner, the Observer changed its policies against the UPN and now in favour of the NPN. In the same vein, the Nigerian Herald owned by the Kwara State government controlled by the NPN in 1979 changed its policies against the NPN and in favour of the UPN when the UPN gubernatorial candidate Senator C. Adebayo was declared winner in the 1983 elections. Also, the Star of Anambra owned by government controlled by NPP in 1979 changed policies in favour of NPN and against the NPP when the State NPN gubernatorial candidate Chief C. Onoh was declared winner in the 1983 elections.

The 1983 elections were not only rigged, but false and bogus election figures were also released over the Federal Government-owned media and those of the states the NPN controlled. The opposition parties in control of the other states also released their own election result figures that conflicted with those of the NPN, through the media they also controlled. As a matter of fact, the then governor of Imo State, Samuel Mbakwe, without waiting for the Federal Electoral Commission to officially announce and release the gubernatorial election result for Imo State, went and seized both the radio and television studios his government owned and controlled, to make a live broadcast declaring himself winner. The Imo Television had just been built few months prior to the 1983 general elections. The following day, the Imo State Government-owned newspaper, the Nigerian Statesman, <sup>like</sup> ~~unstatesman~~ carried the election results as declared by the then governor Mbakwe. Governor Mbakwe took the Federal Electoral Commission, FEDECO, and the Federal media unawares. He outfoxed them. He had suspected a foul play. His fears were not unfounded as numerous court cases and judgments that followed the elections nullified some election results and reverted them to what the courts thought to be the real result. Some appeal courts over-ruled the judgments of the lower courts. The Federal Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, also did over-rule and uphold some of the rulings of the Appeal Courts. In Ondo State, an angry mob burned down the Nigerian Television Authority station, Akure, for allegedly declaring falsified results that made the incumbent governor the loser. Eventually, the incumbent governor of Ondo State emerged the winner after numerous court verdicts and counter-verdicts.

Many houses, vehicles were burnt while many people were killed during the elections.

In analyzing the 13 national newspapers, a content-analysis of 1,504 stories was carried out on the campaign leading to the 1983 general elections. The starting point for our analysis was the month of March, 1983, by which time all the contending political parties had officially launched their campaigns for the elections. The People's Redemption Party (PRP) was the last party to launch its election bid, and it did this in Kaduna, Kaduna State on 27 February. Before this, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) had opened the campaign race in Gboko, Benue State, on Saturday, 22 January, followed by the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) in Sokoto, Sokoto State, the next day, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in Lagos on 29 January, the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) in Kano and the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) in Bauchi - both on Sunday, 26 February. The terminal date for analysis was 3 August.

The Electoral Act decreed a campaign truce between 3 and 6 August, when the Presidential election was held. Subsequent campaigns were mainly summaries of earlier positions, hence nothing is lost by not considering the period of the elections themselves.

Since the last launching by individual parties was on February 26, it was decided that two months would be randomly picked from subsequent months up to July, 1983. The two months randomly selected by balloting were March and May. For each of these two months, issues of the 13 newspapers for the first 15 days were used for analysis. This gave a sample size of 30 editions for each newspaper, and a total of 390 editions for all the papers.

TABLE 16

OWNERSHIP ORIENTATIONS OF NIGERIA'S MAJOR NEWSPAPERS IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC

NEWSPAPERS	MIXED PARTY AND NON- PARTY	GOVERNMENT MONOPOLY/ CONTROL	POLITICAL PARTY/ POLITICIAN	PRIVATE NON-PARTY NON-GOVER- MENTAL	OWNER	POLITICAL AFFILIATION	READERSHIP	CIRCULATION
Concord			*		Chief M.K.O. Abiola	N.P.N. (later private)	National	400,000
Herald	*	*			Kwara State Govt.	N.P.N. (later UPN)	National	75,000
New Nigerian	*	*			Federal Government	N.P.N.	National	150,000
Observer	*	*			Bendel State Govt.	U.P.N. (later N.P.N.)	National	100,000
Punch				*	Chief O. Aboderin	Independent	National	150,000
Satellite			*		Chief Nwobodo	N.P.P.	Eastern Region	20,000
Sketch	*	*			Oyo, Ogun, Ondo State Governments	U.P.N.	National	240,000
Standard	*	*			Plateau State Govt.	N.P.P.	National	50,000
Star	*	*			Anambra State Govt.	N.P.P. (later N.P.N.)	National	75,000
Statesman	*	*			Imo State Government	N.P.P.	National	80,000
Tide	*	*			Rivers State Govt.	N.P.N.	National	50,000
Times	*	*			Federal Government	N.P.N.	National	425,000

TABLE 17

NIGERIAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS AS AT 1991

NEWSPAPER'S NAME	PLACE OF PUBLICATION	OWNER	CIRCULATION
Daily Times	Lagos	60% Federal Government	400,000
Evening Times	Lagos	60% Federal Government	100,000
New Nigerian	Kaduna	Federal Government	150,000
The Trumpeter	Bauchi	Bauchi State Government	20,000
National Concord	Ikeja, Lagos	Chief M.K.O. Abiola	400,000
The Guardian	Isole Read, Oshodi, Lagos	Chief Ibru	250,000
Guardian Express (Evening)	Isolo Read, Oshodi, Lagos	Chief Ibru	50,000
The Punch	Ikeja, Lagos	Chief Aboderin	150,000
Evening Punch	Ikeja, Lagos	Chief Aboderin	50,000
Daily Sketch	Ibadan	Governments of Oyo, Ogun and Ondo	240,000
Evening Sketch	Ibadan	Governments of Oyo, Ogun and Ondo	100,000
Nigerian Herald	Ilorin	Kwara State Government	75,000
Nigerian Tribune	Ibadan	Chief O. Awelewe	65,000
The Satellite	Enugu	Private	20,000
Daily Star	Enugu	Anambra State Government	75,000
Evening Star	Enugu	Anambra State Government	25,000
Nigerian Observer	Benin City	Bendel State Government	100,000
The Scope	Yola	Gongola State Government	20,000
Nigerian Chronicle	Calabar	Cross River State Government	50,000
Nigerian Statesman	Owerri	Imo State Government	80,000
Nigerian Standard	Jes	Plateau State Government	50,000
Nigerian Tide	Pert-Harcourt	Rivers State Government	50,000
The Vanguard	Lagos	Private (Sam Amuka-Pemu)	65,000
Triumph	Kane	Kane State Government	50,000
The Reporter	Kaduna	Rtd. General Musa Shehu Yar'adua	20,000
Daily News	Lagos	Alhaji L. Jakande	20,000
The Nigerian Voice	Makurdi	Benue State Government	20,500
Lagos State Newspaper (Lagos News)	Ikeja, Lagos	Lagos State Government	25,000
The Republic	Lagos	Private - Chief W. Femi Ajayi	20,000
Newsline	Minna	Niger State Government	20,000

### 8.3 The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

By the time the 1983 election campaigns took off,<sup>14</sup> there were about 40 radio stations in Nigeria and about 30 television stations. Out of the 40 radio stations, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was controlling 28, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) had 5, the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) 3, the Great Nigeria Peoples' Party (GNPP) turned UPN/NPP governments of Gongola and Borno States were controlling one each with the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) turned NPP governments of Kano and Kaduna also controlling one each.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, out of the 30 television stations in the country, the NPN Federal Government owned 22, the UPN State governments owned 5, the NPP 2, and one was owned by the PRP turned NPP government of Kano State.

With this ownership structure, it was to be expected that the media would become megaphones (mouthpieces) of their owners during the elections, thus reflecting the influence of media ownership on political communications in Nigeria's 1983 general elections. The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) carried news bulletins of various kinds between January and December, 1983. These included National News Summary comprising 06.00, 08.00, 11.00, 14.00, 17.00, 20.00, 21.00, 23.00 and ~~24~~0.00 hours bulletins. National Network News Bulletins at 22.00, 07.00 and 16.00 hours were also carried by the Corporation, as well as News Panorama, Editorial Reviews and External News Bulletins.

Between January and December 1983, the FRCN carried a total of 21,468 news stories, making and average of 1,789 news stories monthly. Out of the 1,789 stories carried in January, 1983, about 739 or 41.3 per cent were on

elections. Out of the 739 elections stories, 43 or 5.81 per cent were for the GNPP, 27 or 3.65 per cent for NAP, 452 or 61.16 per cent for NPN, 96 or 12.99 per cent for NPP, 20 or 2.70 per cent for PRP and 101 or 13.66 per cent for the UPN.

In February of the same year, a total of 1,098 stories were carried on elections. Out of this number, the GNPP had 70 or 6.37 per cent, NAP 67 or 6.10 per cent, NPN 564 or 51.41 per cent, NPP 124 or 11.29 per cent, PRP 53 or 4.82 per cent and 220 stories or 20.03 per cent were carried on the UPN.

In March, 1983, 1,097 news stories were carried by the FRCN out of this number, 103 or 9.38 per cent election stories were carried in favour of the GNPP, NAP had 109 or 9.93 per cent, NPN 503 or 48.83 per cent, NPP 142 or 12.94 per cent, PRP 90 or 8.19 per cent and the UPN recorded 150 or 13.67 per cent election stories.

In April, 1,320 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 133 or 10.07 per cent, the NAP 137 or 10.37 per cent, the NPN 570 or 43.18 per cent, the NPP 154 or 11.66 per cent, the PRP 109 or 8.25 per cent and the UPN 217 or 16.43 per cent.

The figures for the month of May on election stories are 1,476 total election stories, GNPP 148 or 10.02 per cent, NAP 170 or 11.51 per cent, NPN 592 or 40.10 per cent, NPP 173 or 11.72 per cent, PRP 122 or 8.26 per cent and the UPN 271 or 18.36 per cent.

In June, 1,371 election stories were carried and the share per parties were, GNPP 147 or 10.72 per cent, NAP 168 or 12.25 per cent, NPN 506 or 36.90

TABLE 18

OWNERSHIP OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA BY COMPETING POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 1983 GENERAL ELECTIONS  
IN NIGERIA, THE LAST PHASE OF THE COUNTRY'S SECOND REPUBLIC

	TOTAL	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
RADIO STATIONS	40	02	5.0	NIL	0.0	28	70.00	03	7.5	02	5.0	05	12.5
TELEVISION STATIONS	30	NIL	0.0	NIL	0.0	22	73.33	02	6.66	01	3.33	05	16.66
TOTAL ELECTRONIC MEDIA	70	02	2.85	NIL	0.0	50	71.43	05	7.14	03	4.28	10	14.28

per cent, NPP 198 or 14.44 per cent, PRP 129 or 9.40 per cent and the UPN 233 or 16.26 per cent. In July, 1,531 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 172 or 11.23%, NAP 171 or 11.16%, NPN 558 or 36.44%, NPP 204 or 13.32%, PRP 149 or 9.73% and UPN 277 or 8.09%.

In August, 1,765 election stories were carried by the FRCN out of this number, the GNPP had 204 or 11.55 per cent, NAP 270 or 15.29 per cent, NPN 592 or 33.54 per cent, NPP 223 or 12.63 per cent, PRP 191 or 10.82 per cent, and UPN 285 or 16.14 per cent.

In September, 373 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 20 or 5.36 per cent, NAP 17 or 4.55 per cent, NPN 204 or 56.03 per cent, PRP 14 or 3.75 per cent, NPP 45 or 12.06 per cent, and the UPN 73 or 19.57 per cent.

The October figures are 347 election stories, GNPP 18 or 5.18 per cent, NAP 19 or 5.47 per cent, NPN 200 or 57.63 per cent, NPP 33 or 9.51 per cent, PRP 11 or 3.17 per cent and UPN 66 or 19.02 per cent.

In November, 197 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 12 or 6.09 per cent, NAP 14 or 7.10 per cent, NPN 101 or 51.26 per cent, NPP 21 or 10.65 per cent, PRP 9 or 4.56 per cent and UPN 40 or 20.30 per cent.

Before the military take-over on December 31st, 1983, 151 stories had been carried on elections. Out of this number, the GNPP had 9 or 5.96 per cent, the NAP 7 or 4.63 per cent, the NPN 87 or 57.61 per cent, the NPP 20 or 13.25 per cent, the PRP 4 or 2.64 per cent and the UPN 24 or 15.89 per cent.

It is no exaggeration to say that going through the amount of election stories carried on the NPN compared with those stories carried in favour of other parties, the FRCN, because of the ownership factor by the then NPN controlled federal government, demonstrated open support for the coverage of the NPN campaign activities and programmes thus giving preferential treatment to the party on political communications in the 1983 general election.

It is pertinent and valuable to give some 'live illustrations' of some of the kinds of stories carried on the political parties. Prior to the 22nd January 1983, the day on which campaigns for the election actually started, we noticed that most of the news stories were carried by the FRCN to prepare the minds of the electorate for the election. For instance, on January 14, the FRCN carried the following news story as part of political communication with the people on the general elections.

#### Elections

"Political parties in the country have been called upon to ensure a peaceful atmosphere during the campaigns for the forthcoming general election.

The call was made by the Bendel State Publicity Secretary of the UPN crusade Chief Sunny Omorogbe while speaking to Newsmen in Benin.

He said that the country could no longer afford a situation where political opponents saw themselves as enemies.

Chief Omorogbe pointed out that Nigeria would only continue to be a leading African nation if its experiment in democracy was successful.

He therefore, called on the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) to ensure a free and fair elections".

Also, we noticed that very close to the elections the FRCN embarked upon some educative, informative and persuasive broadcasts, jingles and stories. The following are some of the 'live examples' of such bulletins:

July 30, 1983 Count Down '83

"By this time next week, we must have cast our votes in the first election.

Don't be used for thuggery and confusion".

"The beginning of the general election is six days away. Ensure that you conduct yourself peacefully on the voting day and throughout the period of elections".

Although the FRCN organised a programme of 'political broadcasts' for all political parties, the NPN got preferential treatment in the process of headline casting, news story placement, actuality allotment as well as the quality and quantity of political communication stories on the elections. Stories were carried obviously to campaign openly for the NPN even when the campaign period had not started.

For example, the FRCN carried a news story as a campaign strategy for the NPN on 10/1/83 - thus:

"The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) has again been described as the only political party that is national in character and capable of bringing about the much needed unity and development in Nigeria.

This assertion was made in Lagos yesterday (9/1/83) by Chief Francis Ijewere while talking with an FRCN correspondent during his fiftieth birthday celebration.

Chief Ijewere who is a senatorial aspirant in Agbazilo local government area of Bendel State also said that any political party founded on tribal basis with clannish inclination can never stand the test of time."

Our research has also discovered that out of every 10 news stories carried by the FRCN on elections, 5 were always on the NPN and the NPN controlled Federal Government, 2 for the UPN, 1 for the NPP, 1 for the GNPP, and 1 shared by the PRP and NAP.

By the time the campaigns started officially on elections on 22 January, 1983, more news stories on elections were carried. The higher the number of the news stories, the higher the amount of stories carried in favour of the NPN activities and party programmes.

Immediately the NPN launched its campaign on 22 January, 1983, the FRCN made it a point of duty to say something positive and favourable to the NPN in all the news bulletins - morning, afternoon and evening. The following are some 'live illustrations':

23/1/83

"President Shehu Shagari has enumerated some of the achievements of his administration since its inception in 1979.

He was speaking at the launching of the NPN General Election Campaign in Gboko, Benue State, yesterday.

They include paving way for the creation of more states this year.

In this connection, the President called on all other political parties to join with the National Party of

Nigeria (NPN) in its crusade for more states in a more elastic democracy".

Gboko '83

"President Shehu Shagari has in Gboko reiterated his party's determination to ensure that more states are created in the country this year.

Speaking at the launching of the party's campaign for the elections, President Shagari invited other political parties to join the NPN in the crusade.

'On defence, he said that the law enforcement agencies had taken steps to check some activities designed to impair the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

"President Shehu Shagari has called on all members of the National Party of Nigeria to sink their differences to enable the party to succeed at this year's polls.

He made the call yesterday at the launching of the NPN General Election Campaign in Gboko, Benue State.

The President said that each member of the party should strive to be an agent of peace and harmony among their brethren".

Such preferential treatments of political communication on the election were not meted out to other political parties. Instead, most of the news stories carried by the NPN-owned FRCN in 1983 on other competing political parties were either to ridicule them or curry favour for the NPN. In fact, stories carried on these other parties were manifestations of naked suppression of their activities or at best dissemination of half-truth, mis-truth, jaundiced reporting and total 'black out' of the campaign endeavours of such parties.

For example, the very day the UPN campaign was launched in Lagos 29/1/83, the following story was carried by the FRCN on the UPN:

29/1/83 Decampees - Oyo

"Members of the Afolabi and Omisade factions of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in Oyo State have formally declared for the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

The ceremony which took place at the Iyaganku Press Centre, during a news conference was witnessed by about three thousand decampees from the UPN.

Addressing the News Conference on behalf of the two factions, Mr. Babatunde Babalola from Ejigbo Local Government area gave reasons why they were decamping from the UPN.

Mr. Babalola stated that the principle of democracy, justice and fair play which was in line with the UPN policy has been thrown overboard by the party's leadership".

Immediately the result of the Presidential election was announced and Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the NPN was declared the winner for the second term of office, the FRCN political communication news stories changed to congratulatory messages galore for the re-election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. For example, the following news stories were carried by the radio station:

11/8/83 President Shagari Re-Elected

"President Shehu Shagari has been re-elected for a second term of office.

He won last Presidential election with 12,047,648 votes on the platform of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

President Shagari also won twenty-five per cent or more of the total votes cast in sixteen states.

His closest opponent Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) came second with 7,885,434 total votes.

Chief Awolowo won twenty-five per cent or more in seven states".

13/8/83 Shagari

"President Shehu Shagari has received more messages of congratulations on his re-election for a second term in office.

In his message, President Todor Zhivkov of Bulgaria, expressed the confidence that relations between Nigeria and his country would develop and strengthen.

And from Seoul, President Chun Doo Hwan, of South Korea welcomed the re-election of President Shagari and invited him to visit that country.

In another message, Nigeria's Ambassador to Ivory Coast, Mr. Dennis Ukeme, described President Shagari's victory in the Presidential election as an assurance of continued peace and progress in the country".

13/8/83 - Dikko

"The director-general of the Presidential campaign team, Dr. Umaru Dikko, has attributed the landslide victory of the NPN to the determination of Nigerians to have honest and sincere leadership which they have found in President Shehu Shagari.

Dr. Dikko has also attributed the victory to the dedication and hard work of the members of the NPN and the sterling qualities of Mr. President".

12/8/83 - Election

"Commenting on the re-election of President Shehu Shagari, two British Newspapers - The Times and The Guardian, expressed satisfaction at the peaceful atmosphere which prevailed during the poll.

On its part, the Times said President Shagari's personal honesty and dedication to the cause of Nigerian unity was above reproach".

21/8/83 - Congratulation Message

"The National Chairman of the NPN, Chief Adisa Akinloye has said that the re-election of President Shehu Shagari has emphasised the determination of Nigerians to do away with tribal and clannish politics.

Chief Akinloye stated this in a congratulatory message to the President on his victory in the Presidential election.

He said the victory of the NPN in thirteen states in the gubernatorial election showed that the people had embraced the notion of unity and stability of the country".

The FRCN was also used by the NPN to warn media organisations and people of the unpalatable consequences of incitement and rioting because of the results of the 1983 general elections. Below are some 'live illustrations' of such stories:

23/8/83 - Media:

"Media practitioners have been advised not to be involved in the incitement of any section of the country to violence and bloodshed.

They are also told to refrain from aiding or abetting any act capable of disturbing the peace of the country.

The Minister of Information, Mallam Garba Wushishi gave the advice in a letter he sent to the General Managers of all radio and television stations and Editors of all newspapers.

He remarked that some Governors who disputed the results of the Gubernatorial election had used their state-owned radio and television media and newspapers to fan the embers of crisis, by making inciting and unpatriotic statements to the people.

This has given rise to sporadic incidents of arson, looting, rioting and violence in those states.

Mallam Garba Wushishi pointed out that while the affected Governors exploited their immunities under the law to commit a breach of the peace, media practitioners could be liable for carrying out unlawful orders.

He therefore appealed to media practitioners whether in the electronic or print media either in the employ of the state or Federal Government to uphold the tenets and ethics of their profession.

The Minister then appealed to the Nigeria Union of Journalists and other professional bodies connected with the media to impress on their fieldmen, to help in diffusing tension and maintaining peace, order, tranquility and the unity of the country".

19/8/83 - Oyo/Ondo:

"Here is the government statement on the political situation in Oyo and Ondo States.

The Federal Government views with displeasure, the acts of thuggery and hooliganism that have been unleashed on parts of Oyo and Ondo states as a result of the outcome of the governorship elections.

Government is satisfied that the generality of the people are law-abiding and, in fact, that most parts of

the two states have been peaceful. The senseless destruction of life and property is essentially limited to Ilesha/Ife senatorial zone in Oyo state, and Akure/Ondo/Okitipupa areas of Ondo state.

Government is concerned that the wanton acts of arson and thuggery have been initiated and encouraged by a few highly-placed political leaders in the country.

Some political leaders themselves adequately protected by immunity, have unfortunately called upon their supporters to kill and commit other acts of illegality.

All citizens should be warned that they will hold themselves (not their mentors) responsible for all illegal acts committed by them. Government is determined to maintain peace and order in the few areas affected and indeed throughout the country.

Appropriate directives have been issued to the security agencies to ensure that the generality of the people go about their normal business unmolested.

Government appeals to all citizens in their interests to remain law-abiding and to cooperate with the security agencies to safeguard the lives and properties of their fellow citizens".

#### 19/8/83 Radio Nigeria

"The statement by the Minister of Communications Mr. Audu Ogbe:

"For some time now, particularly since the conduct of the gubernatorial elections and the announcement of the results by FEDECO, certain individuals some of them, state Governors who lost in the elections, have gone on radio or television or both in some parts of the country inciting their supporters to riot, commit arson, loot and generally to act in a manner inconsistent with public order and public safety.

The state governor, went to the extent of inciting supporters on radio and television, and I quote "Kill repeat kill", all returning officers of FEDECO".

I must invite your attention to the fact that the statutory power to issue licence to operate your station for the purposes of the wireless telegraph act is vested in the Federal government.

It was in pursuance of that power that licence was issued to your station to operate.

Needless to say, you have no unrestricted power to operate.

You must operate in a manner consistent with the provisions of the constitution of Nigeria particularly sections thirty-six and forty-one.

You must also operate in accordance with the provisions of wireless telegraph Act No.31 of 1961 and of the various regulations made under that Act.

The Federal Government will not stand by and watch radio and television stations for whose operations, it has had the instruments of subversion and destruction of the nation.

I want to make it absolutely clear, that the sustenance and continuance of public order and public safety in this country will not be compromised under any circumstances.

It is in the light of the foregoing provisions and recognising that government has a responsibility to enforce laws for the good governance of the country and particularly for safety and security of life and property, that this administration had decided to apply the laws as they are and as they relate to the use of radio and television stations and broadcasting.

In the present circumstances and to further prevent any continued illegal use of radio and television stations for the purpose of incitement, to violence and crime, I Audu Ogbe, Minister of Communications, by the powers conferred upon me by the wireless telegraphy, Act No.31 of 1961 sections 36 and 41 of the constitutions, do hereby warn that any broadcasting station whether Federal or State-owned that shall be used for the promotion of violence and disruption of the peace, shall have its

licence revoked and be closed down immediately by law enforcement agencies.

Your operations are being closely watched and monitored for this purpose.

Please, ensure strict compliance with the terms of your licence, to avoid loss of same".

We noticed that the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) behaved in the same manner of favouring the NPN in its news dissemination and programmes production in all the 19 states of the federation.

In point of fact, the national network news of the FRCN at 7.00 a.m., 1.00 p.m., 4.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. were usually hooked up to by all the states with FRCN stations thus disseminating more information on the NPN campaigns, activities and party programmes to the people.

The State FRCN stations were also highly partisan in their local programmes to the grass roots. They were nothing more than political propaganda machinery for the NPN and the party's local politicians left no stone unturned in making use of the stations for political speech-making and incessant campaigns.

All these tend to show the influence of ownership of the FRCN by the NPN Federal government on the use of the station for political communication in the 1983 general elections.

It follows that the FRCN because of its ownership was bound to tell only partial truths on the elections; whereas the Corporation was being maintained by public funds which ought to have made it mandatory for the radio station to

give equal opportunities of coverage, access and programme exposure to all political parties.

#### **8.4 The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)**

In 1983, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was owned and controlled by the NPN controlled Federal government. As a matter of fact, the NPN appointed one of its members, an historian who knew little or nothing about television journalism and broadcasting as the Director-general of the NTA. This appointment provoked some criticisms from the public. And to justify the appointment, the NPN used the FRCN and the NTA to react to the public criticisms. On 10/1/83, the following news story was carried by the FRCN and the NTA:

"The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) says President Shehu Shagari has a constitutional right to make appointments to political offices to ensure the smooth running of the government.

The National Publicity Secretary of the Party, Mr. Simon Shango, stated this while addressing a News Conference in Lagos today - (10/1/83).

He was reacting to recent criticisms of the President on the appointment of Professor Walter Ofonagoro as the Director-General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Alhaji Suleman Takuma as Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs".

To make the matter worse, the NTA branch of the NUJ issued an official statement in support of the appointment of Ofonagoro in an open display

of partisanship. The supportive news story was carried by both the NTA and the FRCN. An illustration will suffice:

"The NTA headquarters chapel of the NUJ has congratulated President Shehu Shagari for the recent changes in the management of the Nigerian Television Authority.

The Union in a statement by its Chairman and Secretary, explained that the action would make the authority more responsive to public opinion and attuned to the mood of the nation.

It urged the new Director-General Professor Walter Ofonagoro to strive and restore the lost image of the corporation". (10/1/83)

It is pertinent at this juncture, to mention that our research on the NTA focuses mainly on the Network News carried by the Corporation between January and December 1983. It is equally pertinent to point out that all the NTA stations in state capitals hooked up to the Network news at 9.00 p.m. and 11.00 p.m. as a policy. The state-owned television stations controlled by the NPN in simultaneously. 1983 also hooked to the Network News / This explains why the state-owned television stations of Anambra and Oyo States started to hook up to the Network news of the NTA immediately the states were taken over by the NPN after the results of the gubernatorial elections.

Between January and December, 1983, the NTA Network News carried a total of 6,908 Network news stories. Out of this, 4,646 were on elections. We found that the NPN was favoured throughout the period in the coverage of events, party programmes and activities, while other parties were

given little attention or totally blacked out in news coverage. The NTA political programme of 'Verdict 83' was no exception.

The following table shows the number of election stories carried during the period under review and the percentages of news stories carried on each of the competing political parties in the 1983 elections.

### **8.5 The Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS)**

In unequivocal terms, the Oyo State Edict No.10 of 1977, which established the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (otherwise known as Radio O-Y-O) repealed its predecessor, the Western Nigeria Government Law No.48 of 1959 which established the then Western Nigeria Government Broadcasting Corporation.

The Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State was one of the three radio stations that sprang from the radio service of the defunct Western Nigeria Government Broadcasting Corporation (WNGBC). The other two are Ogun Radio and Ondo Radio. This development followed the take-over of all television stations by the Federal Government and the creation of more states in the country resulting in the splitting of the former Western State into three states, Ogun, Ondo and Oyo, states and the eventual replication of WNBS.

The three radio stations ran a network schedule, each contributing staff and programme materials in the first instance. The arrangement worked smoothly until 9 December, 1977 when the Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation went on air, and withdrew from the Network arrangement thereby

leaving Oyo and Ondo State Radio Services to run the Network programmes until 31. March, 1978.

On the 1. April, 1978 the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State began independent programming with the 'on air' name Radio O-Y-O for all broadcast hours.

Prior to the 1983 general elections, the BCOS was under the UPN government which had come to power in 1979.<sup>7</sup> As it will be seen from the news bulletins of the Corporation content-analyzed as documented in the documentation unit of the News and ~~C~~ Current Affairs Division of the Corporation, the BCOS was all out to serve the UPN in the political communication processes of the 1983 general elections as the party's propaganda machinery.

The BCOS also assisted immensely in covering the UPN activities at the National level. All UPN campaign rallies were profusely covered and used while 'live political programmes and interviews were arranged for UPN stalwarts. Some Current Affairs programmes such as 'Governors to-be', Guest of the month, meeting point, highlight, (Ela loro, Bi Ijoba ba bo sowo wa, E da soro y, Idi oro) (English and Yoruba discussion and interview programmes), and a host of others featured the UPN members prominently while members of other parties were seldom used for the programmes.

The UPN government of Oyo State set up a Directorate of Information under the leadership of : Mr. Yemi Farounbi, a former General Manager of the NTA Ibadan who was also the Oyo State Special Adviser on Information and broadcasting matters to the then Governor of Oyo State, Chief Bola Ige.

The directorate was saddled with the responsibility of using the BCOS for campaign purposes of the UPN in the 1983 elections. It was also to ensure that the image of the UPN was projected in all the news items of media houses in and outside the state.

In fact, as a result of the directives from 'the top', the then Acting Director of the News and Current Affairs division of the BCOS issued a guideline that would dictate/determine the types of news to be carried on elections by editors of the Corporation. (Source: As a Senior Editor at the B.C.O.S at the time, I was at the meeting held to give the order)

In the guideline, it was stated that in every news item, the highest percentage must be allotted to the UPN, followed by the Oyo State Government, the personalities and officials of the UPN throughout the federation, followed by the activities of the other UPN controlled states, the federal government and news from other parts of the country, the African continent and the world in that order.

All the UPN campaigns for the 1983 elections were covered "live" by the BCOS using the outside broadcast van and crew (OB).

The BCOS carried a total of 32,208 news stories out of which 17,155 were election stories between January and December, 1983. These consists of 06.00 a.m., 08.00 a.m., 09.00 a.m., 10.00 a.m., 11.00 a.m., 12.00 p.m., 13.00 p.m., 15.00 p.m., 16.00 p.m., 17.00 p.m., 18.00 p.m., 21.00 p.m., 23.00 p.m., ~~00~~.00 p.m. and 00.55 hours news bulletins. That is, news on the hour, National News, World News, Oyo State News, News at 5.00, provincial news, Newscope and News summary with their Yoruba translations.

All UPN campaigns and election stories were made headlines while the NPN stories were either not carried or when carried at all belatedly as stale news. Such news were only to damage the image of the party.

As a matter of fact, former Governor Bola Ige was furious with the BCOS for favourably using an NPN story as <sup>the</sup> headline. He ordered that the News Division should be revamped and resuscitated under a new leadership. The editor on duty that day was also to be sacked. After all pleas from high quarters, Chief Ige later posted one Mr. Peter Ajayi from the Sketch to the BCOS for three months to oversee, direct, coordinate, plan and supervise whatever news bulletins were being produced before they were to be broadcast.

Our research discovered that Chief Ige made use of BCOS for campaign purposes in 1983 general elections. And before the election results were released, Governor Ige made <sup>a</sup> series of live broadcasts for consecutive days, saying that should the results to be declared fail to favour him and the UPN, people should reject such results in the belief that the peoples votes must have been stolen. In fact, BCOS carried and announced its own election results without the approval of FEDECO. And true to the broadcast, there were riots, demonstrations, civil disobedience, spontaneous and sporadic uprising in many parts of Oyo State after the elections.

Places like Iwo, Ibadan, Ilesha, Oshogbo, Ikorodu, to mention just a few, recorded gigantic losses of lives and properties. They also witnessed arson, murder and vandalism of the highest and worst order.

Many jingles were produced and profusely used by the BCOS to campaign for the UPN on its political programmes. Examples of such jingles are:

"Free education, in Oyo State, Education is free, take advantage, send your child to school".

"Eko ofe, ni ipinle Oyo, eko ti di ofe, je anfani eko ofe." = (Yoruba translation of the above jingle).

Going through the news stories carried by the BCOS during the elections and after, one would readily see the influence of media ownership on political communication. When the UPN was still in power, the BCOS recorded the highest percentage of election stories for the UPN, followed by 'party friends' of the UPN, factions of the GNPP, PRP and NPP which together formed the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA). The Corporation was an open and avowed antagonist of the NPN in the coverage of election campaign activities.

But as soon as NPN took over the government of Oyo State after the gubernatorial elections, the BCOS changed its 'gear' and started to give the highest number of stories and maximum coverage to the NPN - thus buttressing the influence of media ownership on political communication.

The NPN itself exercised this almighty power of ownership. the party under Governor Omololu Olunloyo appointed a Sole Administrator for the BCOS (Radio and Television Services) of Oyo State.

The Sole Administrator Alhaji Oyedele, who was a strong member of the NPN, took over total control of the station. The former campaign Manager and Director of Publicity for Governor Olunloyo during the gubernatorial campaign period, Mr. Lanre Yusuf, was also appointed Manager of News and Acting Director of News and Current Affairs of the BCOS.

Later, Governor Olunloyo appointed Mr. Bode Alalade, a senior official of the NTA Headquarters, Victoria Island, Lagos, as the General Manager of BCOS (Radio and Television stations). From then on, the BCOS became the propaganda machinery of the NPN while the UPN had passed into the oblivion..

It is pertinent at this juncture to give some live illustrations of the news stories carried by the BCOS when the UPN government was its owner and how this subsequently influenced political communication in the 1983 general elections.

The first strategy of the BCOS, like the FRCN did for the NPN, was to sell out the UPN as the only party in the country capable of solving the people and the country's social, economic and political problems.

On 26/1/83 before the UPN launched its campaign activities on 29/1/83, the BCOS had started its own political communication campaign for the UPN:

26/1/83 - 06.30 hours

"The masses of this country have accepted the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) as the only party capable of solving Nigeria's economic problems.

This remark was made in Ibadan yesterday by the Ogun State Deputy Governor chief Sesan Soluade while answering questions on a TSOS Current Affairs programme "View Point".

He attributed the financial problem of the party to the uneven distribution of the National Revenue emanating from the mismanagement by the government at the centre.

On the achievements of the UPN controlled Ogun State government, the Deputy Governor pointed out that his government had provided social amenities such as water, electricity, construction of roads apart from the free education and free health programmes of the party.

Chief Soluade emphasised the need for free and fair election so as to avoid the problems arising from election rigging".

UPN election stories were carried by the BCOS usually weeks to the actual event of the party activities. Whereas, news stories on other parties were either carried belatedly or not carried at all.

Some 'live illustrations' will suffice here:

06.30 hours 25/1/83

"The UPN will launch its 1983 electioneering campaigns at a rally to be held at the Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos on Saturday (29/1/83).

According to a statement by the party, the National President and Presidential candidate, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and leaders of the party from the nineteen states of the federation would address the rally.

A one-day meeting of the National Executive Council of the party to be held on Thursday in Lagos will precede the rally, it added.

It said that the NEC would discuss arrangement for the launching of the campaigns and also examine crucial issues facing the nation.

The Party's National Director of Organisation, Mr. Babatope added that Chief Awolowo would later lead the UPN team to Port Harcourt on Sunday.

The UPN leader will campaign in Rivers from January thirty first to February six.

Chief Awolowo will also tour Rivers from February eight to thirteen and later move to Bendel on February sixteen where the team will remain until February twenty four".

Another strategy used by the BCOS to campaign for the UPN in the political communication processes in the 1983 general elections was to carry news stories capable of damaging the NPN and weakening its chances of electoral successes. The following are 'live examples' of such stories:

30/7/83 - 13.00 hours

"All Yoruba leaders in the NPN have been called upon to quit the party without further delay.

In a release in Ibadan, an NPP senatorial candidate in Oyo State, Mr. Solomon Adeoba, said this action would save their faces from public disgrace that would soon befall the party.

Mr. Adeoba referred to the exit of chiefs M.K.O. Abiola, Harold Sodipo, Olu Adebajo and Niyi Adegbemi from the NPN adding that this was an evidence that the party had no future".

28/07/83 21.00 hours

"Plans by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) to rig this year's election have been unveiled by Alhaji Bola Ayaniyi.

Alhaji Ayaniyi who is a leading member of the UPN in Ibadan said in a release today, that the plans were in two categories.

In the first category of rigging, he said, ballot papers identical in design to the ones to be used by FEDECO, had been distributed to NPN candidates all over the country.

He also added that all NPN candidates had completed their voting and were ready to hand over ballot boxes to FEDECO.

Alhaji Ayaniyi alerted the nation on plans by the NPN to use boxes with special opening and locking devices to deceive polling agents and the electorate.

In the second category of rigging, Alhaji Ayaniyi explained that duplicated voters cards - identical in number and names had been made for each constituency in the country.

He said the NPN plans to hire people, to use the cards, to vote very early in the morning, and once their cards had been accepted for voting, genuine voters cards would be disqualified.

Alhaji Ayaniyi then appealed to the NPN to shelve the plan, for the sake of the survival of Nigeria as a nation ".

Even the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was not left out of the attack. Stories were carried in the political communication processes of the 1983 general elections to discredit the body and portray it as an agent of the NPN. The following are some 'live illustrations':

28/07/83 - 21.00 hours

"The Chairman of the Oyo State Directorate of Information, Mr. Yemi Farounbi has criticised the figures released by FEDECO in the voters lists.

Mr. Farounbi observed that Plateau State had a decrease in voters when compared with the 1979 figures.

Mr. Farounbi then wondered how a state like Benue, which had witnessed an emigration, because of lack of job opportunities, and incessant delay in salaries of workers could score an increase.

Mr. Farounbi then said that the sixty-five million voters was unrealistic, since it signified that eighty per cent (80%) of Nigerians were eighteen and above.

He said that the sixty-five million figures released are probably not human beings".

27/7/83 - 18.00 hours

"The Oyo State Governor, Chief Bola Ige has called for the immediate removal of the administrative secretary of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) in the state, Mr. Stephen Ajibade.

According to the Governor, "there can be no peaceful elections in the state with Ajibade around".

Chief Ige made the remark in Ibadan today while receiving the new Federal electoral commissioner in the state, Alhaji Liman Umaru.

The Governor said the FEDECO Secretary has become a controversial character "by marriage, place of birth, and inclination".

Chief Ige said the new FEDECO Commissioner will be running a great risk if he retained Mr. Ajibade as his administrative Secretary.

Speaking on the readiness of the Federal Electoral Commission for the August sixth elections, Chief Ige expressed doubts if any elections can take place in Oyo State this year because of the shoddiness of FEDECO.

Earlier, the new FEDECO Commissioner Alhaji Liman had sought the assistance of the government and all political parties in ensuring hitch-free elections."

Whenever the BCOS carried the NPN activities at all, such coverage was usually calculated at blackmailing the party. The following is a 'live illustration':

24/1/83 - 13.00 hours World News

"The National Party of Nigeria campaign launched in Gboko in Benue State over the weekend witnessed a drama following a demonstration staged by teachers in the state who have not been paid since October last year.

The teachers who carried placards and thronged the venue of the meeting called for the immediate payment of their salaries.

They were reported to have arrived there early so that they could catch the attention of President Shagari.

Some of the placards carried by the teachers read "fringe benefits are a mirage to school teachers in Benue State".

The Chairman of the Benue State Union of Teachers Mr. John Gbande later told newsmen that the teachers staged the demonstration to express their dissatisfaction at the non-challant attitude of the state government on the matter".

In the following tabular illustration of the BCOS coverage of party campaigns and production of election stories, it is seen that the BCOS concentrated on the UPN, and members of the PPA viz: the factions of the GNPP, PRP and NPP, in its dissemination of election news stories until September 1983 when the NPN took over Oyo State after the gubernatorial election results. The BCOS changed immediately from giving the highest percentage of party coverage to the UPN and shifted its concentration on the NPN.

### Allied Electronic Media

By Allied Electronic Media, reference is made to radio and television stations owned by respective state governments and how such stations were influenced by their ownership in the coverage of political communication processes in the 1983 Nigerian general elections.

Before the 1983 elections, the UPN was controlling Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Bendel and Lagos States and each of these states had its own television and radio stations. From our analysis of the media behaviour of the FRCN, NTA and BCOS, one would see that there was no difference in the way the media of these "LOOBO states" as they were called, that is, the UPN controlled states in the South, performed their functions of informing, educating and entertaining the electorate. These media of the UPN controlled governments were all out to sell the UPN programmes to the masses and to destroy the NPN and also absorb other parties in the PPA.

Also the NPP which controlled Anambra, Imo and Plateau States used the electronic media of these states to project the image of the party, attack the NPN and work in collaboration with the other parties to ensure an electoral victory in favour of the party.

In the same vein, electronic media of the GNPP - controlled states of Borno and Gongola as well as those of the PRP controlled states of Kano and Kaduna used such media for the projection of the image of their parties and members of the PPA. It was during this time that the "nine progressive governors" and later "twelve progressive governors" had field days holding meetings which were covered live by the media of the state governments at the

meetings. The NAP which controlled no state, no television and no radio station was thus left at the mercy of the media in the country.

All these support the thesis that media ownership influenced political communication in the 1983 general elections. The media only danced to the music/tune of their owners at the time following the thesis that 'He who pays the piper dictates the tune'.

In analyzing the electronic media in their coverage of the campaigns that led to the 1983 general elections in Nigeria, a content-analysis of 60,584 news stories were carried out as broadcast by the FRCN; BCOS and NTA radio and television stations. The period of analysis was between January and December, 1983. The following tables show the amount and percentage of election stories carried by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN); the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) on each of the six competing political parties, GNPP, NAP, NPN, NPP, PRP and UPN, in the 1983 Nigerian general elections - the last phase of the Second Republic.

TABLE 19

SHOWING THE NUMBER OF ELECTION STORIES CARRIED BY THE F.R.C.N. BETWEEN JANUARY AND DECEMBER 1983  
AND THE PERCENTAGE OF ELECTION STORIES CARRIED ON THE COMPETING PARTIES

	ELECTION STORIES	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
	JANUARY	739	43	5.81	27	3.65	452	61.16	96	12.99	20	2.70	101
FEBRUARY	1098	70	6.37	67	6.10	564	51.41	124	11.29	53	4.82	220	20.03
MARCH	1097	103	9.38	109	9.93	503	48.85	142	12.94	90	8.19	150	13.67
APRIL	1320	133	10.07	137	10.37	570	43.18	154	11.66	109	8.25	217	16.43
MAY	1476	148	10.02	170	11.51	592	40.10	173	11.72	122	8.26	271	18.36
JUNE	1371	147	10.72	168	12.25	506	36.90	198	14.44	129	9.40	223	16.26
JULY	1531	172	11.23	171	11.16	558	36.44	204	13.32	149	9.73	277	18.09
AUGUST	1765	204	11.55	270	15.29	592	33.54	223	12.63	191	10.82	285	16.14
SEPTEMBER	373	20	5.36	17	4.55	204	56.03	45	12.06	14	3.75	73	19.57
OCTOBER	347	18	5.18	19	5.47	200	57.63	33	9.51	11	3.17	66	19.02
NOVEMBER	197	12	6.09	14	7.10	101	51.26	21	10.65	09	4.56	40	20.30
DECEMBER	151	09	5.96	07	4.63	87	57.61	20	13.24	04	2.64	24	15.89

SOURCE: NEWS INFORMATION OFFICE, F.R.C.N. IKOYI LAGOS

TABLE 20

ELECTION STORIES CARRIED BY THE N.T.A. NETWORK NEWS AND THE PERCENTAGE PER COMPETING PARTIES

	TOTAL ELECTION STORIES	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
		297	10	3.36	21	7.07	118	39.73	62	20.87	18	6.06	68
FEBRUARY	360	18	5.00	31	8.61	145	40.27	69	19.16	21	5.83	76	21.11
MARCH	468	19	4.05	35	7.47	239	51.06	67	14.31	37	7.90	71	15.17
APRIL	468	15	3.20	39	8.33	246	52.56	67	14.31	41	8.76	60	12.82
MAY	468	17	3.63	37	7.90	253	54.05	61	13.03	45	9.61	55	11.75
JUNE	520	29	5.57	38	7.30	277	43.65	72	13.84	43	8.26	61	11.73
JULY	520	27	5.19	35	6.73	292	56.15	68	13.07	41	7.88	57	10.96
AUGUST	520	23	4.42	31	5.96	318	61.15	61	11.73	37	7.11	50	9.61
SEPTEMBER	468	25	5.34	29	6.19	286	61.11	47	10.04	41	8.76	40	8.54
OCTOBER	297	05	1.68	11	3.70	193	64.98	42	14.14	08	2.69	38	12.79
NOVEMBER	130	03	2.30	07	5.38	101	77.69	04	3.07	05	3.84	10	7.60
DECEMBER	130	07	5.38	11	8.46	88	67.69	07	5.38	05	3.84	12	19.23

SOURCE: NEWS LIBRARY, N.T.A. VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS

TABLE 21

ELECTION STORIES CARRIED BY THE B.C.O.S. AND THE PERCENTAGE PER COMPETING PARTIES

JANUARY	TOTAL ELECTION STORIES	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
	924	82	8.87	30	3.24	18	1.94	6.2	6.70	84	9.09	648	70.12
FEBRUARY	1205	104	8.63	48	3.98	28	2.32	78	6.47	108	8.96	839	69.62
MARCH	1468	140	9.53	57	3.88	32	2.17	93	6.33	142	9.67	1004	68.39
APRIL	1606	131	8.15	48	2.98	32	1.99	107	6.66	130	8.09	1158	72.10
MAY	1968	130	6.60	41	2.08	19	0.96	92	4.67	136	6.91	1550	78.76
JUNE	2005	93	4.63	30	1.49	15	0.74	87	4.33	101	5.03	1679	83.74
JULY	2047	95	4.64	34	1.66	17	0.83	88	4.29	104	5.08	1709	83.48
AUGUST	2099	87	4.14	33	1.57	27	1.28	59	2.81	87	4.14	1806	86.04
SEPTEMBER	2109	52	2.46	69	3.27	1730	82.02	107	5.07	67	3.17	84	3.98
OCTOBER	1101	10	0.90	10	0.90	1009	91.64	41	3.72	10	0.90	21	1.90
NOVEMBER	421	17	4.03	19	4.51	311	73.87	38	9.02	21	4.98	15	3.56
DECEMBER	202	10	4.95	10	4.95	140	69.30	20	9.90	10	4.95	12	5.94

SOURCE: DOCUMENTATION UNIT/LIBRARY B.C.O.S. ORITA BASORUN, IBADAN.

TABLE 22

RADIO STATIONS IN NIGERIA AS AT 1991

Name of Radio	Place of Operation	Owner	Audience Reach
F.R.C.N.	Lagos	Federal Govt.	The whole country ESP at Network News Times
"	Ibadan	" "	"
"	Abeokuta	" "	"
"	Akure	" "	"
"	Benin	" "	"
"	Enugu	" "	"
"	Owerri	" "	"
"	Calabar	" "	"
"	Akwa Ibom	" "	"
"	Port-Harcourt	" "	"
"	Kaduna	" "	"
"	Kano	" "	"
"	Katsina	" "	"
"	Sokoto	" "	"
"	Bauchi	" "	"
"	Yola	" "	"
"	Minna	" "	"
"	Abuja	" "	"
"	Jos	" "	"
"	Maiduguri	" "	"
"	Ilorin	" "	"
Radio Lagos	Ikeja	Lagos State Govt.	
B.C.O.S. (Radio O-Y-O)	Ibadan	Oyo State Govt.	Oyo State Areas Lagos State Areas, Ogun State Areas, some parts of Ondo and Bendel States, Kwara State Areas

TABLE 22 (Continued)

RADIO STATIONS IN NIGERIA AS AT 1991

Name of Radio	Place of Operation	Owner	Audience Reach
Ogun Radio	Abeokuta	Ogun State Govt.	Ogun State Areas Oyo State Areas Lagos State Areas Benin Republic
Ondo Radio	Akure	Ondo State Govt.	Ondo State Areas, some parts of Ondo
Radio Bendel	Benin	Bendel State Govt.	Bendel State Areas, some parts of Ondo
Rima Radio	Sokoto	Sokoto State Govt.	Sokoto State Areas
Borno Radio	Maiduguri	Borno State Govt.	Borno State Areas
Radio Kwara	Ilorin	Kwara State Govt.	Kwara State Areas
Anambra Radio	Enugu	Anambra State Govt.	Anambra State Areas
Imo Radio	Owerri	Imo State Govt.	Imo State Areas
Calabar Radio	Calabar	Cross River State Govt.	Rivers State Areas
Kaduna Radio	Kaduna	Kaduna State Govt.	Kaduna State Areas, many parts of Nigeria
Kano Radio	Kano	Kano State Govt.	Kano State Areas
Bauchi Radio	Bauchi	Bauchi State Govt.	Bauchi State Areas
Gongola Radio	Yola	Gongola State Govt.	Gongola State Areas
Niger Radio	Minna	Niger State Govt.	Niger State Areas
Radio Plateau	Jos	Plateau State Govt.	Plateau State Areas
Radio Benue	Markurdi	Benue State Govt.	Benue State Areas

TABLE 23

TELEVISION STATIONS IN NIGERIA AS AT 1991

Name of Television	Place of Operation	Owner	Audience Reach
N.T.A. (Channel 10)	Lagos, Victoria Island	Federal Govt.	The whole country esp. at Network News and Programmes
N.T.A. (Channel 7)	Ikeja	Federal Govt.	Lagos, Oyo and Ogun States Areas
N.T.A. (Channel 5)	Lagos	Federal Govt.	Lagos State Area
N.T.A.	Ibadan	Federal Govt.	Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Kwara, Lagos States Areas
"	Abeokuta	Federal Govt.	Ogun, Oyo, Lagos States
"	Akure	Federal Govt.	Ondo, Bendel, Oyo States
"	Akwa Ibom	Federal Govt.	Akwa Ibom, Cross River States
"	Benin	Federal Govt.	Bendel, Ondo States
"	Enugu	Federal Govt.	Anambra, Imo States
"	Sokoto	Federal Govt.	Sokoto, Niger States
"	Kaduna	Federal Govt.	Kaduna, Katsina, Kwara States
"	Calabar	Federal Govt.	Cross River, Akwa Ibom States
"	Aba	Federal Govt.	Imo, Anambra States
"	Port- Harcourt	Federal Govt.	Rivers, Cross River States
"	Kano	Federal Govt.	Kano, Kaduna, Katsina States
"	Bauchi	Federal Govt.	Bauchi State Areas
"	Minna	Federal Govt.	Niger, Sokoto States
"	Yola	Federal Govt.	Gongola State Areas
"	Jos	Federal Govt.	Plateau, Benue States

TABLE 23

TELEVISION STATIONS IN NIGERIA AS AT 1991

Name of Television	Place of Operation	Owner	Audience Reach
N.T.A.	Maiduguri	Federal Govt.	Borno State Areas
"	Abuja	Federal Govt.	Kwara, Oyo States
"	Owerri	Federal Govt.	Benue, Plateau States
L.T.V.	Ikeja	Lagos State	Lagos State Areas, some parts of Ogun, Oyo States and Benin Republic
T.S.O.S. (B.C.O.S.)	Ibadan	Oyo State	Oyo, Ogun, Kwara States Areas
O.G.T.V.	Abeokuta	Ogun State	Ogun, Lagos, Oyo State Areas
O.D.T.V.	Akure	Ondo State	Ondo and Bendel States areas
B.T.V.	Ekpoma	Bendel State	Bendel State
P.T.V.	Jos	Plateau State	Plateau State Areas
A.T.V.	Enugu	Anambra State	Anambra State Areas
K.T.V.	Kano	Kano State	Kano State Areas
I.T.V.	Owerri	Imo State	Imo State Areas

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the political affiliation of media ownership determined, to a large extent, the editorial direction of Nigerian mass media in their coverage of political parties and the campaigns that led to the 1983 general elections, the last phase of Nigeria's Second Republic. I have shown how the various types of media - state and federal governments types, political party and politicians' varieties and the so-called private press, were influenced by their ownership factors in the stories they carried. From the sequence of news, total number of news, relative percentage, quality and quantity of news, relative closeness to peak hours, actuality utilisation, headline casting, to frequency of coverage of the party programmes and campaigns, respective political parties and/or governments which owned the media during the elections were favoured. This resulted in many problems including the production of 'biased' election stories, the prevention of the media from performing properly and in a neutral manner the functions of informing and educating the electorate on the elections as well as the hampering of the media upholding their professional, journalistic ethics of impartiality and balancing.

... A democratic society largely relies on the mass communication network to inform the electorate adequately and on equal terms on the programmes and policies of different political parties and office contenders. Professor Blumler regards election campaigns as processes that live or die, gather momentum or falter, via the heavy and insistent streams of messages that are prepared for delivery during them to all quarters of the body politic. As he puts it:

"It is through campaign communication that impulses to participate are energized, issues are defined, and choices for voting decisions are conveyed"<sup>16</sup>

In the same vein, John Carey argues that:

"An election campaign exists in the public consciousness largely the way it exists in mass media presentation of campaign events".<sup>17</sup>

The history of Nigerian political communications particularly during the electioneering campaigns has shown that the pattern of media ownership and behaviour has remained <sup>much</sup> the same since the country's independence 30 years ago.

A communiqué issued by some state governors of political parties opposed to the NPN in March 1981 captures the trend vividly:

"The governors considered what might have been the motive of the NPN Federal Government in wanting to monopolise the control of radio, television and newspapers. They recalled that in 1965, when elections were held into the then Western House of Assembly, the NNDP Government of the day announced false results and compelled all the mass media to carry false results...This led to a violent reaction by the people and to the collapse of the first republic. The governors noted that the authors of that incident are now in the leadership of the NPN. There is no doubt that if they gain control of all the mass media, they will repeat their trick of 1965 in 1983, by announcing false results, declaring themselves winners fraudulently and then proceeding to form the next government. The governors decided that the public must be alerted to the dangers inherent in the steps being taken by the Federal Government to monopolise the mass media so that public opinion may be mobilised to stop the NPN

from plunging this great nation into another period of darkness."<sup>18</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that the federal mass media under the government controlled by the NPN then were not the only ones guilty of misuse of media ownership in political communications. All other media under the governments controlled by other parties were also guilty of the evil effect of ownership, monopoly and control for which they accused the NPN of. To be sure, ownership is not the only factor in this media bias coverage but it is the most important factor in the Nigerian context. Other factors explaining the anatomy of mass media bias in Nigerian political communications are examined in the concluding section of this thesis.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

1. The Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) was made up of the NPP, UPN, PRP and GNPP. The major objective was to present a common front against the NPN, the party at the centre, with the assumption that a merger of some sort or at least a common candidature at the elections could defeat the NPN in the 1983 general elections. However, the alliance died shortly because the leaders of the parties could not agree on the sharing of political offices and party portfolios assuming they won the elections. Some members of the alliance sought registration as the Progressive Peoples Party (PPP) but they were turned down by FEDECO.
2. See Gaskiya ta Fi kwabo, 26th September 1980.
3. Nigerian Tribune, May 13, 1980.
4. Nigerian Herald, July 7, 1980.
5. Nigerian Tribune, April 28, 1980.
6. National Concord, July 14, 1980.
7. Ibid., July 11, 1980.
8. Ibid., January 19, 1983.
9. "Will Awo be another Mitterand?" National Concord, March 9, 1983.
10. Olatunde Akande, "Influence of Publisher's Political Orientation on the Coverage of National Issues" Unpublished research project for the M.Sc. thesis, University of Lagos, 1984.
11. National Concord, March 22, 1983.
12. "Shagari's cheap shots." National Concord, April 27.
13. Daily Sketch and Nigerian Tribune, April 13, 1983.
14. As noted earlier, the campaign race for the 1983 general elections was opened by the NPN in Gboko, Benue State, on Saturday, 22 January, 1983. It was followed by the GNPP in Sokoto on the 23rd of January, the UPN in Lagos on 29th of January, the NPP in Kano and NAP in Bauchi on 26th February and the PRP was the last Party to launch its election bid in Kaduna, Kaduna State, on 27th February 1983.
15. The election year came against a background of deepening rifts within the PRP and the GNPP which led to the State Governors Crossing to the NPP,

or the UPN and joining the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) and the 'Progressive Governors'.

16. Blumler, Jay G. (ed.), Communicating to Voters: Television in the First European Parliamentary Elections (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1983). Also, see Blumler, Jay G., 'Communication in the European Elections: The Case of British Broadcasting', Government and Opposition 14(4): 1979 PP. 508-30.
17. John Carey, "Setting the Political Agenda: How Media Shape Campaigns". Journal of Communication 26 (Spring 1976). PP. 50-57.
18. See West Africa, April 6th, 1981.

## CONCLUSION: THE ANATOMY OF MASS MEDIA BIAS IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

### 1. Introduction

This thesis began with a set of research questions relating basically to the structure, behaviour, coloration and operation of political communications in the unique socio-economic and political context of Nigeria. In historical, constitutional, legal, qualitative, quantitative, theoretical, methodological and practical terms, this study has sought to provide answers to these questions about the Nigerian political communications, the patterns of mass media ownership, the role of the Nigerian mass media in the coverage of national issues and the implications of all these for national integration and/or disintegration, political stability and/or instability in the country. The major concern of this study has been the examination of the Nigerian political communications and the explanation of a wide range of issues through the analysis of mass media ownership. The thesis has analyzed the impact of media ownership on the development of political communications in Nigeria from the colonial period, to the first republic, the first and last phases of the second republic and the military interregna.

In addition to the analysis of the problem of media ownership, this dissertation has also sought to highlight a host of other problems which Nigerian political communications have posed and continue to pose - class, elitism, ethnicity, religion, tribalism, literacy, constitutionalism, legal limitations, military interventionism, economic chaos, poverty, inequality, linguistic fragmentation and

political instability. What was (and is still) distinctive about Nigerian Political Communications - has been the central quest of this inquiry.

Nigeria today stands at cross roads. Is there a truly national press in Nigerian society today that is supportive of the standards and ethics of journalism and as well as capable of contributing to the evolution of a stable, dynamic and united socio-political entity? What values, cultures and ideals do the media promote in Nigeria today and how do these affect national integration and political stability? In the expectations and words of a Nigerian Head of State; he said:

"I expect the Nigerian media to promote national stability and national identity, I expect the Nigerian media to espouse those causes which promote and reinforce the collective will of our people. I expect you to promote the need for national survival."<sup>1</sup>

Since independence in 1960, successive governments have been seeking ways to forge a national identity for Nigerians. The goal of national integration has been a conscious priority of all national development plans implemented since political leadership fell into Nigerian hands. The use of slogans<sup>2</sup>, such as "To keep Nigeria One Is A Task That Must Be Done," "Go On With One Nigeria," and "One Nation, One Destiny," illustrates the prominence of the national unity objective on the federal government's development agenda.

The media have been a major vehicle through which Nigeria's federal government hopes to achieve national integration. According to Tony Momoh, Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture:

as the national interest overrides any other interest, the press (which was defined to include newspapers, magazines, radio and television) has a duty to win, maintain, and perpetuate support for the nation as the apex of the collective vested interests of the operators within the pyramid.<sup>3</sup>

Further evidence showing the relationship between mass media and national integration has been provided by a host of scholars including Abraham Bass<sup>4</sup> and Elihu Katz<sup>5</sup>.

However, attempts to use the mass media to achieve national unity in Nigeria have been frustrating. Although media campaigns have led to minor successes in areas such as the promotion of inter-ethnic economic relations, literacy, urbanization and social well-being, it is clearly apparent, after thirty years of independence, that Nigeria has not evolved from tribal communities into a 'modern' state of nationhood.<sup>6</sup> The structure of ethnic divisions which existed in the colonial era has continued to remain and is still being preserved today, making a pre-civil war US News and World Reports statement that 'Nigeria, like its neighbours, is turning out to be more of a nation on paper than it is in fact'<sup>7</sup> truer today than it has ever been.

The Nigerian political communication experience, as it has been demonstrated in this thesis, gives credence to the belief that who pays the piper dictates the tune. Ethnic, regional, state and tribal antagonisms have been fuelled (and are still being fuelled) by the Nigerian mass media as a result of the patterns of ownership. Whether a mass medium is managed by a board of directors appointed by private owners or by a public corporation established by the government, the medium has a policy set down by the board or corporation to

which it must adhere. Apart from policies defining day-to-day and long-term operations, media owners control the media through their decisions to invest or not to invest more funds, decisions which often determine the health and growth or the illness and atrophy of the media.

A common theme that one easily discerns from this study is the trend towards 'a market cum state model' of political communications in which there are mixed party and non-party media ownerships, government monopoly and control, political party and politician as well as private independent press ownerships with their concomitant peculiarly distinctive media philosophy.

Perhaps, the way modern mass communication systems evolved in Nigeria hampered their neutrality in mass politics and constructive criticism of the

political system. This was largely due to parochial interests and tribal loyalties as the media championed the cause of their tribesmen. Also, the British colonial administrators and their policies were the main targets of opposition by the early Nigerian press.

When the British left, after Nigeria's independence the media had to look for someone or something to oppose because the style had been geared towards insulting, ludicrous and unsubstantiated accusations and sensationalism!

The evolution of the modern mass media systems leads to an inescapable conclusion that the media originated from the political structure of the country; hence their integration with the politics and interests of the various ethnic constituencies within the nation. The media were not neutral during the various national debates, census, elections, and the Nigerian Civil War. They actively supported the government of their geographical locations. They also

acted as the leading organs of the regional and state governments in the articulation of the interests and needs of their constituencies in the federation.

It must be pointed out though, that the difficulty associated with the use of mass media for political communications in Nigeria especially for the accomplishment of national integration, is not restricted to media ownership. Other factors such as ethnicity, economic position, religion, literacy, legal limitations, and linguistic pluralism, have worked in collaboration with media ownership to make the development of a 'socially responsible' press in Nigerian political communications an enormously difficult problem in the country. As I have argued in this thesis, the criterion of ownership is not only the key factor which determines how the mass media are used for moulding the citizen's perception of political reality in Nigeria, but it is also a more precise means of understanding and investigating the role of the Nigerian press in political communication and national integration. It is also a potent yardstick for the critical appraisal of the structures and performance of the Nigerian mass media and their relationships with the nation's political, economic, ethnic, tribal, religious, and cultural structures.

Roston and Breed have found not only that control does go with ownership, but they have also shown how the wishes of the owner and top management, even when not directly expressed as orders, are still reflected in the performance of the enterprise.<sup>8</sup>

However, it is pertinent to assert that the evidence of the consequences of different ownership patterns is highly fragmentary. [Levin, 1960; Rarick and Hartman, 1966; Litwin and Wroth, 1969; Toogood, 1969; Wedell,

1969; Brown, 1970; Grotta, 1970; Wolf, 1971; Anderson, 1971; 1972]. There are those who believe that ownership of the press does not <sup>inevitably</sup> affect media coverage of national issues while there are others who argue that ownership has an adverse effect on the performance and competence of the press. For instance, Wagenberd and Soderlung, investigating the influence of chain ownership on the coverage of certain key-issues on editorial pages of Canadian newspapers, have found no effect of concentration on the coverage of those issues.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps one of the earliest and most notable work done in the area of the effect of ownership is that of Karl Marx (1848), who contends that the ownership and control of the means of production determine the relations of production:

"In all stages of human life, the ownership of the forms or conditions of production determine the structure of society. Thus "the handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist". "The structure of society will in turn breed attitudes, actions, and civilisations. Therefore, "all the social political and intellectual relations, all religious and legal systems, all the theoretical outlooks which emerge in the course of history, are derived from the ownership of the material conditions of life".<sup>10</sup>

Karl Marx also relates the concept of ownership to how a state is administered. He believes that the dominant class which owns and controls the state uses the power of ownership to oppress the governed:

"As soon as mankind emerges from the primitive communist state, it is seen that at every stage of

society a particular class gets control and exploits the rest. "The class which exercises ownership of the means of production will dominate the rest. When, for instance, the most important factor in the forces of production is agricultural, land-owners will be the ruling class. The dominant class alone has freedom, and to preserve this must act the part of oppressors. They therefore, create an executive and repressive instrument by the use of which they hope to maintain their position and which is called the state. "Ownership or control by force is, then, the *raison d'être* of the state, repression its characteristic".<sup>11</sup>

The Commission on Freedom of the press also comments on how media ownership affects media contents "protection against government is not now enough to guarantee that a man who has something to say shall have a chance to say it. The owners and managers of the press determine which persons, which facts, which versions of these facts, shall reach the public".<sup>12</sup>

Crosland, Hall and Garnham buttress the marxist position on the impact of ownership and control. Crosland contends that ownership and particularly institutional ownership is sufficiently concentrated to ensure control; that owner-control is reinforced by an elaborate system of interlocking directorates, and that even managers who exercise control do so in the interests of the owning class.<sup>13</sup> For Hall, media production is always and everywhere subject to control,<sup>14</sup> while Garnham laments:

"There is no such thing as unmanipulated writing, filming or broadcasting; the question is, therefore, not whether the media are manipulated but who manipulates them".<sup>15</sup>

William Robson seems to disagree by laying down a number of objectives that constitute the purpose of government/public ownership in his book - Nationalised Industry and Public Ownership. The objectives are: (1) providing the best possible service at the least real cost to the community; (2) improving the wages and conditions of employment for the workers; (3) attaining a higher degree of equality; (4) ensuring increased public control over the economic system; (5) maintaining full and stable employment and (6) increasing industrial democracy by means of greater opportunities for joint consultation.<sup>16</sup>

In brief, our position is that research evidences abound generally showing that when the ownership of a country's media of communication is vested in government, political party or concentrated in the hands of a group or a coterie of a few individuals, the media tend to become mere megaphones of those in control. Instead of performing the functions of surveying the environment, correlating parts of that environment and transmitting culture, which Lasswell<sup>17</sup> says are the basic tasks of the media, or providing entertainment, according to Wright,<sup>18</sup> the media are turned into 'indispensable tools' for retaining power by those controlling them.<sup>19</sup> In developing countries they even tend to shirk their responsibility of serving as agents of modernisation.<sup>20</sup> Jose has also talked about how most media in Africa have 'petered into slavish and almost sycophantic government megaphones'.<sup>21</sup>

In Nigeria, ownership and control structures of the media are dictated by the political, economic, social, cultural and historical settings of the country. Nigeria is an heterogeneous country with a diversity of ethnicity, culture, language, ideological orientation, political and religious beliefs.

The country operates a federal system of government and a mixed economy.

There are various types of media in operation but the most common are the print media, the electronic media, the political party press, the private 'independent' press, traditional media or 'oramedia', the ministries of information, the government media and the News Agency of Nigeria. These media operate in all the 21 states of the Federation. However, no one individual has an electronic medium in private control. Although the constitution makes provision for anybody who wishes to own an electronic medium to apply and be considered for a licence by the President, no such licence has to date been granted.

#### **Ethnic and Religious Factors of press bias in Nigerian political communications:**

Another factor that can be employed to explain the anatomy of press bias in Nigerian political communications is ethnicity and religion. Many Nigerian rulers are aware of the damage these canker-worms could do to the political existence of the nation and have warned people times without number in their political speechifying to guard against the menace of ethnicity and religion. In his opening address to members of the Constitution Drafting Committee (C.D.C.) on 18 October, 1975, the then head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, declared:

"It is important that we avoid a reopening of the deep splits which caused trauma in the country."<sup>22</sup>

The splits he was referring to are ethnic, regional and religious in nature.

In the same vein, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, who succeeded General Muhammed and handed over power to civilians of the Second Republic, warned against the evils of ethnicity in his New Year message to the nation, on January 1, 1979. He said:

"One major cause of failure of civil administration in this country was that our leaders then concentrated on the part and ignored the whole, hence regionalism, tribalism, sectionalism and ethnicity became the order of the day." Let us now correct that which has failed us. Let our political aspirants look upon the whole not the part; let us remember the past and look forward hopefully to the future; let us march forward in solidarity and unity of purpose and together build a nation ever more united, greater and stronger."<sup>23</sup>

Both President Shehu Shagari and former First Military head of State General Ironsi also attributed the demise of the First Republic to ethnicity. According to General Ironsi, his military administration would be committed to creating a nation where "all Nigerians everywhere in Nigeria would regard one another not as strangers but as Nigerians with common nationality irrespective of their tribe or place of origin".<sup>24</sup> In his own assessment, President Shagari declared:

"The first six years of post-independence rule, and even more so, the last six years of pre-independence rule, were characterised by ignorance and unfamiliarity, and therefore, fear and mistrust, among

the various ethnic groups - or, to be more accurate, the nationalities - which inhabit Nigeria."<sup>25</sup>

In relation to political communications, there is abundant evidence to suggest that the ethnic and religious factors are major forces shaping press behaviours generally and particularly when faced with competition for political power, that political competition follows ethnic lines and exacerbates ethnic conflicts, and that media houses and/or personnel tend to be representatives of specific ethnic groups which make use of media houses they own and/or control or in which they work to enhance their ethnic groups' interest in the competition for resources, acquisition, distribution, sharing and shaping of power.

In fact, this idea of ethnic politics and ethnicity of political communications in Nigeria is empirically supported not only by our findings, but also by the election results and researches of other writers on Nigeria. In his Communication policies in Nigeria, Ugboaja opines that:

"ownership may not be as strong as geographical location in moulding newspaper opinion and reportage in the Nigerian circumstance ... the newspapers' attitude is usually a function of geographical location more than ownership and certainly guided by the ethnic constituencies the papers serve".<sup>27</sup>

Writing on the 1979 elections, Labanji Bolaji observes that just as the voting trend in the elections took on a "strong ethnic coloration", much of the country's press reflected the same pigmentation in their reports and comments.<sup>27</sup> Idang has also noted that:

"press partisanship is not even confined to editorial opinion, the newspaper editors are often tribalistic and narrow-minded, while the press itself is not innocent of the evils of corruption, nepotism and tribalism which continue to plague all aspects of Nigerian society."<sup>28</sup>

Also, Adamu Ciroma, one time editor of the New Nigerian, identifies the ethnic factor in Nigerian press freedom when he writes:

"the press is free in Nigeria in spite of the fact that they are owned by various governments and in spite of the ethnic factor which filters and beclouds its objectivity ... the press owned by one ethnic group could expose wrong doings by others from a different ethnic unit."<sup>29</sup>

Each ethnic group in the media protects its ethnic group interests by carrying news in favour of its own ethnic group and against other ethnic groups. During the First Republic, for example, when rumours had it that the Yoruba would form a new cultural organisation and then a political party to the detriment of the NCNC, The Nigerian Post commanded: 'Leave them alone',

'The Yorubas, after all, constitute one of the smallest groups in the Republic, their coming together cannot constitute an obstacle to the forward march of the nation ... if there are those who believe that the Yorubas, acting together, can force any change in the balance of political power in the country, then let them admit also that such a change will be to the extent which it is ordained and inescapable for the good of all'.<sup>30</sup>

As pointed out earlier, The Outlook of the Eastern Nigeria carried stereotypes of the North, particularly in the Editor-in-Chief Ajuluchuku's 'Saturday Catechism'. He spoke of the NPC leaders' 'childishness and amateurishness' by which they showed 'they are not seasoned rulers of the North'. He added:

"The North cannot afford a break-up of the Republic. They have nothing up there to eat. They have little education. Their art of government is primitive. They have no access to the sea.<sup>31</sup>

When Chief Awolowo criticised the Pilot for its emphasis on publicising Ibos, he was talking as much about class as ethnicity:

The Ibos in particular were given inordinate publicity on the pages of the paper. Perhaps this was as it should be. The Ibo had never had a share in newspaper publicity before the advent of the PILOT. But equally so, no Yoruba man of the class of the Ibos publicised in the PILOT every day had a share in any paper either. In those days one had to be an outstanding politician, a big shot in society, or a well-connected person for one's name to appear in the NIGERIAN DAILY TIMES, NIGERIAN TELEGRAPH and LAGOS DAILY NEWS.<sup>32</sup>

Explaining the reasons behind the establishment of newspapers by various governments, political parties, politicians and private owners and their use for tribal attacks and ethnic wars especially between the Northern and Southern media, a former editor of the New Nigerian said:

The orientation of the North was rather different from that of the South. The North believed in controlled modernisation and emphasised the need for the changing society to adopt modern methods without destroying its own qualities. The South believed in an unthinking gallop towards everything European and Western, without considering its relevance or its dangers to the community. In this caution ... of Western methods, notably education, lay a source of danger to the Northern region, because the North became educationally backward, and thus was likely to suffer in the distribution of national jobs. The then Northern Government was subjected to pressure by the Northern elite not to let the North suffer. The North therefore had to have a voice to put across. It was a society with an old history and revered administrative and legal traditions, which the South (and the colonialists) neither understood nor liked. But in the new Nigeria, where paper qualifications were the primary criteria in the distribution of jobs, the North was at a great disadvantage. So a government paper, the New Nigerian, was necessary to (i) get across the views of the Northern elite and mobilise them in order to achieve its goals; (ii) fight the Northern case in all disputes at the centre.<sup>33</sup>

Nigeria is an extremely diverse nation. With approximately 250 ethnic groups speaking a multiplicity of languages, she is perhaps the most diverse nation in the world.

The origin of ethnic diversity lies in Nigeria's historical past. Prior to British colonization, there was no geopolitical entity known as Nigeria. The area now called Nigeria occupied many 'nationalities,' each entity having its own politics, culture, language and religion, and maintaining only limited contact with other nationalities.<sup>34</sup>

Britain created Nigeria in the 1900's. But, the colonial administration did not attempt to weld the peoples of the various nationalities into a single, if artificial, political unit. According to The Economist:

Nigeria was patched together in 1900 for the convenience of its foreign administrators, not of its own people, and was governed for 60 years on the principle of 'indirect rule', which did not do much for national unity.<sup>35</sup>

This policy of indirect rule did not do much for national unity because rather than forge an integrated society, it aided the intensification of existing cultural divisions.<sup>36</sup> As the cultural divisions deepened, a political climate characterized by ethnic distrust and rivalries developed, and it is against this backdrop of ethnic protection that the media have embarked on the futile task of arousing nationalism.

Ethnic diversity has been the greatest challenge to using the media for achieving Nigerian unity. Due to the dictates of ethnic diversity, federal and state newspapers radio and television stations have not been able to mobilize the nation towards a monolithic national goal. Hence, while federal stations attempt to promote a sense of nationhood among Nigerians, state stations are used 'as powerful political instruments for regional integration, cultivation of regional loyalty and awareness to the detriment of national integration.<sup>37</sup> As Osabuohien Amienyi explains:

Television [and radio] have continued to play the role of the devil's advocate in the Nigerian society. From independence (or is it dependence?) till now, television [and radio have] continued to contribute significantly to the disintegration of Nigeria. Television [and radio] managers use the media to promote the Nigerian society's weaker linkages: tribe, ethnicity and religion. They tend to emphasize

alienation and polarization rather than unity through the telecast of tribal and religious programmes.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, ethnic diversity has continued to stymie the federal government's objective of using <sup>the media</sup> to create an institutional base for national unity in Nigeria. And this has happened so much that not even the federal government's takeover of all television stations and the restriction of all radio stations, except the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, ~~on~~ medium-wave have salvaged the effort.<sup>39</sup>

In a discussion of the ethnic nature of newspaper partisanship in Nigeria, Brynin argues that 'just as the press in developed countries might reflect the class structure of these societies, the press in Nigeria reflected the country's ethnic foundations'.<sup>40</sup> Under the single term of 'tribalism', he labelled the ethnic contents of the Nigerian newspaper and split them up according to degrees into 'tribalism', 'discussion of regions', 'unity-regionalism' and 'unity'.<sup>41\*</sup> The following figures in average daily column inches illustrate the categories vividly.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 24 - Tribalist Content in Individual Newspapers (in col. inches)**

**1950—1964**

	<b>Tribalism</b>	<b>Discussion of Regions</b>	<b>Unity- Regionalism</b>	<b>Unity</b>	<b>Independ- ence</b>
Pilot '50	2.3	10.4	1.7	4.0	58.6
Tribune '50	12.5	19.6	1.6	4.1	23.6
Outlook '54	0.3	1.5	1.3	3.7	-
Tribune '58	43.4	4.7	7.1	9.5	2.9
Outlook '59	3.8	20.0	0.7	13.7	11.7
Tribune '59	11.3	61.3	0.7	1.6	-
Service '59	21.2	16.9	8.3	8.1	2.3
Telegraph '59	27.8	4.5	13.7	7.0	-
Citizen '59	4.9	1.9	0.7	1.2	2.3
Outlook '64	57.7	-	22.5	41.3	0.3
Citizen '64	37.3	21.9	6.6	16.8	-
Sketch '64	104.0	-	-	17.8	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326.5</b>	<b>162.7</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>128.8</b>	<b>101.7</b>

**Table 25: Tribalist Content in the Citizen (in col inches)**

	<b>Tribalism</b>	<b>Northern -isation</b>	<b>Discussion of Regions</b>	<b>Unity- Regional -isation</b>	<b>Unity</b>	<b>Independ- ence</b>
1959	4.6	14.1	1.9	0.7	1.2	2.3
1964	37.3	7.6	21.9	6.6	16.8	-

The Citizen's rabid support of the Northernisation programme significantly added to the tribalist-nature of the paper.

**Table 26: Average Tribalist Content in the Press (in col. inches) 1950—64**

	Tribalism/ Discussion of Regions	Unity- Regionalism	Unity/ Independence
1950 <sup>2</sup>	22.4	1.6	45.6
1954/8 <sup>3</sup>	24.9	4.2	8.0
1959 <sup>4</sup>	37.5	4.8	9.6
1964 <sup>5</sup>	76.2	9.7	25.4

**Notes**

1. Including Northernisation
2. Two newspapers
3. Two newspapers
4. Five newspapers
5. Three newspapers

**1950—64**

**Table 27: Tribalist Content in Three Newspapers over time (in col. inches)**

	Tribalism <sup>1</sup> / Discussion of Regions	Unity- Regionalism	Unity/ Independence
<b>Tribune</b>			
1950	32.1	1.6	27.7
1958	48.1	7.1	12.4
1959	72.6	0.7	1.6
<b>Outlook</b>			
1954	1.8	1.3	3.7
1959	23.8	0.7	25.4
1961	0.3	-	3.4
1964	57.7	22.5	41.6
<b>Citizen</b>			
1959	20.9	0.7	3.5
1964	66.8	0.6	16.8

**Notes:**

1. Including Northernisation in the Citizen.

At this juncture, some 'live' illustrations of ethnic contents in some of the Nigerian newspapers are pertinent. In an editorial published on 20-9-1950, the Nigerian Tribune said:

"The West will not rest until the Yorubas under the Northern yoke are emancipated and grouped with their kith and kin in the West for administrative purposes, even if it is necessary to do so on the dead bodies of the Northern people."<sup>43</sup>

For instance, in an editorial in Western Nigeria's Tribune of 1958 headed 'Ibo-Imperialism', concerning evidence given to the Minorities Commission, the paper stated that the evidence from people

"vehemently protesting against being left in the same camp with the Ibos, goes to prove that the NCNC is simply an Ibo cult, aiming, with the help of a handful of misguided, disgruntled or food-seeking quislings from other tribes, to achieve the complete domination of this country."<sup>44</sup>

Sometimes the oppressors were Ibos, sometimes the Hausa and Fulani. A certain degree of artifice in these journalistic attacks is apparent.

Most communal demands and complaints in the Nigerian Citizen were ethnic and anti-Ibo, and they were often concerned with jobs (usually elite jobs), as in the following front-page editorial, which complained that the federal government's Nigerian National Press Ltd. had only ten northerners in a staff of 300. The editorial claimed that "Northern Nigeria had been cheated. The Region has paid an expensive price for Nigerian unity." It criticised the "neglect and ineptitude"<sup>45</sup> of the federal government under Sir Abubakar as if he, belonging to the NPC, had a primary duty to help Northerners acquire federal jobs! In the same issue the 'political correspondent' in the half-page article head-lined "Scandalous! Treacherous!! Wicked!!! North's infinitesimal Role, a dangerous

abnormality," complained that there were only six Northerners in the 433 senior staff of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, and no more than 50 out of the 4,000 permanent junior staff. He also claimed (untruthfully) that the North contributed over 70% of federal revenues, but got back less than 35% in development spending.<sup>46</sup>

Ethnic antagonism was also reflected in the letter columns. One, for instance, from a clerk in a building firm, demanded that only Northerners should be staff managers in private firms.

"Unless this is done, the Ibos will be conspiring with and dictating to the foreigners who have given their whole hearts to the Ibos and who are enslaving the Northerners to the Ibos. I can say I am doing my utmost best to the company, but still I am regarded as inferior to my Southern counterparts."<sup>47</sup>

Southerners accused the British of favouring the North politically. Northerners accused the British of favouring Southerners for employment. Both were right. The tone of the above letter expresses well the fear felt by Northerners of Southern competition for employment. While such feeling was widespread, and itself encouraged the Northern government's racial propaganda, this does not mean everyone accepted this propaganda.

The Nigerian Outlook in a political commentary stated:

"Where are all of you Ibo people?... You may not know it but you are 'wanted persons'. Wanted by intensely pathological and incurable tribalists, namely the NPC and (more so) the NNDP."<sup>48</sup>

This justification of tribalism achieved religious sanctity in a political commentary in the Daily Sketch

"Self-love is not a sin. It is, in fact, according to the gospels, the yardstick by which one's affections for his brother must be measured. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', writes St. Matthew. It is a sacred duty, for individuals no less than for the groups to which they belong, to fight for self-preservation which is said to be the first law even in heaven. This is the spiritual basis for tribalism as a 'pragmatic instrument of national unity'...<sup>49</sup>

Just as in the North, the core of tribalism was the concern for jobs, especially elite jobs. One article, for instance, claimed that:

"Barely nine months since the Management of the Nigerian Railway Corporation rocked Nigeria with shocking and glaring acts of nepotism and Ibo preferential treatment in making appointments into the top cadre of the Railway Service, darker and more frightening scandals have now been exposed in the Nigerian Railways.....the Nigerian Railway Corporation is the seat of Ibo tribalism in Nigeria".

The article lists the management and other posts apparently held by Ibos and then quotes the Ibo chairman of the Railway Board as saying "This is my kingdom and I rule it as I like."<sup>50</sup> This concern for elite jobs was also associated with a concern for elite education; thus an NNDP leader claimed in the paper that 400 out of 700 recent federal government scholarships had gone to the Ibos, "leaving 300 to the rest of the country."<sup>51</sup>

The anti-Ibo propaganda of the paper achieved an intensity comparable to the savage anti-Ibo behaviour of the Northern legislators. The onslaught was master-minded by Akintola- "the great apostle of Yoruba family unity"<sup>52</sup>- who warned the Yoruba against trusting the Ibo:

"Immediately the unsuspecting Yorubas gave them the support, the Ibo would come out in their true wolf's clothing devouring the Yorubas and getting every good thing for themselves."<sup>53</sup>

The paper called for the unity of the Yoruba against the Ibo.

"For how long will the Yorubas vegetate in the cesspool of internecine squabbles and perennial stagnation?.... The NNDP is a party for the Yorubas and other suppressed peoples..... Today the Yoruba man needs unity and reconstruction more than anything else"<sup>54</sup>

for, according to an NNDP member quoted in the paper, "the NCNC had no other plan but the total annihilation of the Yoruba West."<sup>55</sup> Student supporters of the NNDP spoke of "Iboism, Ibocracy, and Ibophism".<sup>56</sup>

The most extreme anti-Ibo statements came not from outside sources but from one of the paper's regular columnists, Ejion'gboro, who had an effective, if rather repulsive, style.

"Them Ibo boys've been talking..... They ain't got no fight with Yoruba people..... How come 300 jobs open in the New Railways and them non-fighting, non-tribalist Ibo-boys just manage to corner 259?"<sup>57</sup>

In another article, in which he refers to members of the UPGA as "Ibo-jerks" the same writer brings in religion again.

"The Lord God, He likes to build.... All God's children they like to build. But them UPGA fellows, like Satan.... they like to SACK....All they know is Sack! Evict, oust, dislodge, dispossess.... (Oh my, where is my lexicon? ah, here are some more UPGA favourites) displace, kick downstairs.... fire, blast, can, break, bust.... They do the real thing. They fight. This means fists and cudgels. And machetes, guns, and dynamite. And pistols, shot-guns and pineapples. The more dead the better. Like they used to say in them story-books, dead men don't tell no tales. Simple dead candidates don't win no flipping elections."<sup>58</sup>

To be sure, critics of the ethnic factor in Nigerian political communications have argued that some of the things referred to as 'ethnic' are 'geographic' and not ethnic and that much of the theorising on this issue has itself been informed by a large dose of ethnicity. In other words, the theory of ethnic factor in Nigerian political communications is a function of the 'ethnicity of theory'. They argue, for example, that developments in ethnic theorising since the seminal work by Barth and others<sup>59</sup> have pointed to the non-immutability of ethnic boundaries, calling to question earlier attempts to treat ethnic groups as immutable ascriptive givens.

It is now suggested that:

"the genesis and persistence of ethnic boundaries, the incorporation of ethnic populations, and the organisation of inter-ethnic relations are generally

related to factors affecting the competition for environmental resources"....<sup>60</sup>

Competition for resources is thus the focus for ethnic studies which look on such competition as the determining variable in the genesis and form of the ethnic group.<sup>61</sup>

Given the tendency for ethnic group boundaries to change, contemporary ethnic studies now talk of varying degrees of ethnicity instead of ethnic groups, with a switch from the ethnic group as a social category to ethnicity as a process.<sup>62</sup> A process, of course, results from and is indicative of other factors and it can play a causal role only to the extent that contributory factors germane to its own genesis and enhancement allow. In fact, the tendency of ethnic boundaries to change proves that ethnicity is not the primordial force that earlier perspectives indicated.<sup>63</sup>

Ethnicity has tended to perform an instrumentalist role as a mask for class privilege and as a mechanism through which members of the ruling class struggle for power, obtain power, control power and maintain themselves in power.<sup>64</sup> Obviously, then, ethnicity as a mechanism for achieving power becomes an active agent only to the extent that its manipulators so wish. In the words of Magubane,<sup>65</sup> 'an emphasis on ethnicity beclouds serious analysis of African societies because such an emphasis ignores the ownership of the material production forces, the material basis of society and the nature of the social system'. However, Tatarian insists that:

"many young states are still too fragile, too deficient in literacy and established institutions, and their

people more loyal to racial, religious or tribal communities than to the new concept of statehood".<sup>66</sup>

Religious affiliation has also been a very serious problem for communication and politics in Nigeria. In fact, religion has often been made to serve as an effective vehicle for both the communication and realisation of political ambitions. Issues that affect Muslims - the Shariah, the Organisation of Islamic Conferences (OIC), the holy pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina (Hajj) and the question of Muslim rights in the Constitution - were/are often treated with levity, derision and contempt by the media, most of which are dominated by Christians. In the same vein, one or two Nigerian media which have Muslims on their editorial boards do retaliate by being critical of anything Christian. Religious crises ~~wee~~ <sup>are</sup> becoming so rampant in the country that Federal Government had to set up a Religious Advisory Council. If not handled carefully, religious controversy could once again present a major difficulty during the proposed return to civilian rule in 1992.

Nigeria's Muslims easily constitute the largest Muslim community in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria itself, in many of the 21 states, including the out-going capital - Lagos and the new capital territory - Abuja, Muslims are in a majority.

Considered from the perspective of the Muslims, the situation in Nigeria probably looks something like this. Although they are in a majority the country since independence has been governed by its rulers, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, and its intellectual and business elite, as if it were a non-Muslim country. The symbols and trappings of state, the style of diplomacy, the direction of foreign policy, the political, legal, economic and education systems, the

structures of the working week, are all seen to be based on a western, secular, albeit once Christian, model.

At these and other levels Muslims observe a clear continuity between the old colonial state and the 'new' Nigeria in which they, the largest group in the country, are supposed to actively participate and do so without attempting to change or restructure it along Islamic lines. And it has to be said that rumour, rhetoric and misinformation apart, there is nothing in the Muslim demands which support the more alarmist, non-Muslim interpretation of them, nor is there anything any Muslim-led Nigerian administration has done to date that would lend credence to such interpretation.<sup>67</sup> As mentioned earlier, Mohammed Haruna, managing director of the Federal Government owned New Nigerian Newspapers Limited, spent a night in June 1987 with security agents for authorising the publication in the New Nigerian of an advertisement by the Council of Ulamaa which enjoined Muslims to take steps to protect themselves saying that the government and the security agents, including the armed forces, had failed to protect them as citizens of Nigeria.

Religion is a very critical factor which hampers media efforts at achieving national unity. In the northern part of the country, practically everyone is Hausa and of the Muslim religion except in the middle-belt. In the south-east, where the Ibo people are predominant, the religion is primarily Catholic. In the south-west where the majority of the people are Yoruba, there is a mixture of mosques and churches and followers of various African Ethnic Religions. For instance, religious diversity has led to a misinterpretation of the concept of local programming in broadcasting. As a result of religious diversity, broadcasters have

misinterpreted the concept of local programming to mean the presentation of programmes to the taste of the predominant ethnic group in the area of coverage. This misinterpretation has meant that programmes which adulate a religion and others in vernacular constitute more than 60% of local programmes on television today. Whereas, in a setting where taste is cosmopolitan (especially where such cosmopolitanism results from ethnic diversity), the media should endeavour to find a common denominator so as to accommodate all. Since religious diversity has been an important consideration in deciding media objectives, the challenge that religious diversity poses to the use of the media for the creation of integration is clearly apparent and quite ominous.

Nigerian politicians also do employ religion as a campaign strategy. Chief Awolowo, in an attempt to get himself accepted by the Northern Muslims boasted during his campaign tours that his government established the First Pilgrims Welfare Board in Nigeria, the Western Nigeria Pilgrims Welfare Board, and that it was he who sent his sister, Alhaja Awofeso on the holy pilgrimage to Mecca adding that all these point to his love for Islam and Muslims. There are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. As for religions, see the following Table 28.

**Table 28: Population by Religion and Sex**

**Federal Republic of Nigeria**

**Total**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>TOTAL Population</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>MALES Population</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FEMALES Population</b>	<b>%</b>
Moslems	26,276,496	47.2	13,397,054	47.7	12,879,442	46.7
Christians	19,207,144	34.5	10,077,436	35.8	9,129,708	33.1
Others	10,186,415	18.3	4,637,362	16.5	5,549,053	20.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55,670,055</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28,111,852</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27,558,203</b>	<b>100</b>

**Urban**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>TOTAL Population</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>MALES Populatio n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FEMALES Population</b>	<b>%</b>
Moslems	4,488,043	50.0	2,330,614	48.6	2,157,429	51.7
Christians	3,985,157	44.4	2,235,093	46.6	1,750,064	41.9
Others	498,264	5.6	231,644	4.8	266,620	6.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,971 464</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,797,351</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,174,113</b>	<b>100</b>

RURAL

Religion	TOTAL Population	%	MALES Population	%	FEMALES Population	%
Moslems	21,788,453	46.7	11,066,440	47.5	10,722,013	45.9
Christians	15,221,987	32.6	7,842,343	33.6	7,379,644	31.5
Others	9,688,151	20.7	4,405,718	18.9	5,282,433	22.6
TOTAL	46,698,591	100	23,314,501	100	23,384,090	100

Source: *Population Census of Nigeria, 1963 Federal Republic of Nigeria, Combined National Figures, Vol. III (Lagos: Federal Office of Statistics, July 1968).*

Regimes both civilian and military have failed woefully in their efforts to revamp the economy. Selfishness, excessive materialism, poor management, weak leadership, bad planning and lack of patriotism have been partly responsible for the abysmal failure. In fact, corruption and bribery have become the order of the day as a result of economic problems to the extent that these evils are still found today:

"in hospitals where nurses require a fee from every in-patient before the prescribed medicine is given, and even the ward servants must have their 'dash' before bringing the bed-pan; it is known to be rife in the police Motor Traffic Unit, which has unrivalled opportunities on account of the common practice of over-loading vehicles; pay clerks make a deduction from wages of daily paid staff; produce examiners exact a fee from the produce buyer for every bag that is graded and sealed; domestic servants pay a proportion of their wages to the senior of them, besides often having paid a lump sum to buy the job".<sup>68</sup>

These are the sad but stark realities of the Nigerian situation today. The soldiers use the power of gun to amass wealth and commit all kinds of atrocities, and go with such atrocities unpunished. Uniformed men - the men and women of Customs and Excise Department, the police and other government officials aid and abet smuggling, armed robbery, corruption, bribery in order to accumulate wealth.

These economic problems are very vital to an understanding of political communication in Nigeria. They affect all aspects of it, including the remuneration of those engaged in the business, their careers and the input and output of the media. As a result of these and a host of other problems - uncertainties in emolument, retrenchment, job insecurity, lack of promotion opportunities - the more you can spend for the press, the more you are likely to be 'advertised' or 'sold' and the more your image and issues are focused. In the Second Republic, some press personnel were on the secret pay-roll of some political parties while others were accused of being on sale for taking 'brown' envelopes before carrying a news item.

Under the economic factor which also affects newspaper management as well as Radio and Television Management is the country's wage structure, unemployment as well as industrial disputes by workers.

The wage structure tells who will purchase the newspapers steadily and regularly. The constant buyer of the dailies, weeklies and monthlies is an important element in building readership. The average reader does not exist, he has to be created and sustained. But to sustain <sup>reading</sup> will have to depend on his income and education; another variable in economic factor affecting management of the media.

In Nigeria, wage structure is unsteady and unemployment has increased since the oil boom was over, and Nigeria was having its worst economic depression since the end of the second World War. Many people were compulsorily retired from work at both government, public and private services. This meant loss of income, and consequently loss of patronage for the newspaper industries. Television sets were costly to purchase, and the cost of radio sets was exorbitantly high and not within the reach of low income segment of the society. This meant a drastic reduction in listenership and viewership.

Nigeria practises both laissez-faire economy and state ownership of some basic means of production. However, the state is richer than any private sector. It is therefore not surprising to find the government-owned media thriving whilst privately-owned media are dying, resulting from economic hardship. When shortage of newsprint occurred some years ago, while the government-owned newspapers hardly felt it, some privately-owned newspapers reduced the number of pages they normally produced to the barest minimum so as to survive. Also,

before the establishment of newsprint manufacturing in the country the private media owners used to pay heavy custom duties to import newsprint from abroad.

### **Problems of Freedom and Legal Limitations**

The Nigerian mass media and their practitioners are also confronted with the problem of freedom, restrictive regulations, legal limitations, decrees and a host of other 'modus operandi' of gagging the media.

From the colonial era, to the independence period, military interregna and successive civilian republics, the Nigerian political system has employed various measures to curb the political communication activities of the media. These include subsidies to favourite publishers, favouritism in the allocation of tightly controlled papers stocks and newsprint, manipulation of access to news, limitation to what may be published or broadcast, threats of incarceration and proscription, the frequent use of treason and sedition laws to control media output, the shielding of sensitive governmental proceedings, and the protection of what are regarded as individual reputations and privacy.

About 25 such enactments have been identified which severely constrain communication in Nigerian politics. For instance, we have sedition laws, an Official Secrets Act, the Criminal Codes, decrees 2, 4 and 11, and laws of obscenity, defamation and a host of other extra-legal and non-legal restrictive laws to media freedom, including emergency regulations. Details of these limitations have been given in the earlier sections of this thesis.

## Literacy and Linguistic Barriers in Information Dissemination and Political Communications:

Literacy and linguistic barriers affect Nigerian political communications. Literacy is defined as the ability to read, write and understand a short statement. The inability to read in English Language alienates majority of the Nigerian people from the newspaper press especially the rural dwellers. According to UNESCO Statistics, in 1985 one in four adults were illiterate, 95 per cent of those were in the developing world. While Asia has the largest aggregate number of illiterates, in proportion to the population, Africa leads the global league table. Nigeria alone accounts for 27 million illiterates, and follows India, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh, with the fifth worst illiteracy total in the world. In Nigeria in 1985, 58 per cent of men were illiterate, and 67 per cent of women. UNESCO says "illiteracy is not a disease, to be eradicated like yellow fever, but rather a complex cultural condition linked to expectations and circumstances rooted in the environment".<sup>69</sup>

These factors affect the circulation of newspapers and audience

reach of the electronic media.

There are also problems of a lack of low cost and rapid transportation, prohibitive costs of purchasing and maintaining vehicles as well as abject poverty all of which affect distribution. As a result, the media have remained largely urban in orientation, thus excluding rural dwellers, who form the majority, from political communication. Issues frequently highlighted on communication and politics are those that concern the interests of the elites, thus rendering the media as megaphones of the elite, by the elite for the elite.

In fact, lack of literacy is a big problem militating against communication and politics in Nigeria. Literacy was and is still unevenly distributed in the country. The effect of high levels of illiteracy is obvious, but this problem is exacerbated by language fragmentation. A large rural population also inhibits the spread of newspapers. Low per capita income restricts the purchase of papers by the public, and also limits advertising revenue.

Also, the importance of language as a medium of communication cannot be over-emphasized. Most of the mass media carry out their educative and informative enterprises through the English language, which is still the official language of communication, government, business and commerce in Nigeria today. The three Nigerian languages officially recognised - Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba - are still in the process of being developed for political communication by the media.

The questions then are: how many can read, write and understand English to be able to appreciate the media's role in communication and politics? How many Nigerian languages can be used for information dissemination?

The actual number of languages that exist presently in Nigeria is uncertain. Some estimates <sup>70</sup> put the number of languages at 178, some believe that there are as many languages as there are ethnic groups in Nigeria - 250,<sup>71</sup> and others argue that there may be as many as 300 languages. Despite the disagreement between various estimates, it is evident that linguistic pluralism is a Nigerian reality, that is presenting a very serious challenge to the cultivation of national unity through the media.

Describing the underlying challenge that broadcasting faces, Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first president of Nigeria noted: 'The central problem of federalism in Nigeria is how to coexist in harmony.'<sup>72</sup> Asking 'how can people who speak diverse tongues and have inherited different cultural traditions cultivate national spirit of oneness?',<sup>73</sup> Azikiwe implied that linguistic pluralism must be overcome if Nigeria's desires for nationhood are to materialize.

Though English is Nigeria's official lingua franca, radio and television stations cannot broadcast exclusively in English.

Only a tiny number of Nigerian elite, mostly foreign educated lawyers, civil servants, academics and business people, use English for everyday purposes in their homes. As a result, broadcast stations have had no choice but to program in vernacular languages, even though programming in vernacular languages has led more than anything else to the growing divisions among the many cultures of Nigeria, which English is supposed to unite.

Presently, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria broadcasts in 45 vernacular languages about forty per cent of the time. The state and regional stations use local languages and dialects ninety per cent of the time. The federal stations, perhaps in following patterns established by the federal government, use the criteria of population to decide which local language to use in broadcasts and which to ignore. Thus, Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba are the most widely used local languages. However, the emphasis placed on the language of these so-called majority ethnic groups has led to protests by 'minority' groups for equal recognition.

Bode Alalade recalls the enormous criticisms he received when he tried to create an educational programme that focused on words and concepts derived from the languages of three so-called 'major' ethnic groups. He writes:

"I have tried many gimmicks to make this programme more generally acceptable but I appear to have drawn a blank. The viewing public, rather than being sympathetic, is hostile. I have personally been at the receiving end of vitriolics from even enlightened members of the public who asserted that I must be sick in the head to think that Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba were the three main languages in the country. As far as they were concerned, the dialects spoken in their little villages had more complete orthography than my so-called three main Nigerian languages."<sup>74</sup>

From this excerpt, it is clear that local language broadcasts, especially those focusing on a limited number of languages, will manifest ethnic antagonisms. Such efforts, as Patrick Connolly observes, will surely make people who do not understand English or Hausa or Yoruba or Ibo or the other languages used, request avenues through which to communicate for their gratification.<sup>75</sup>

Our findings show, first of all, that Nigerian political communications have operated within a very unique historical context. To begin with, the Nigerian political communications developed from circumstances different from those of the developed societies. Also, the philosophical assumptions underlying the media systems in Nigeria (as I argued in Chapter 4), are different from those of the Western world although some similarities may be found. Equally important are the functions the media perform in developing and developed societies. While the

media in Nigeria, for instance, are expected to perform the task of unifying and integrating the different segments of the heterogenous society, the media of the developed world do not have to play that role to the same extent. The impact of mass media ownership on the coverage of national issues and the problems of a host of other factors of media bias in Nigerian political communications as explained, are not as acute in the developed societies.

Based on the key factor of mass media ownership communication and politics have always been closely inter-connected in Nigeria, although the nature of their relationship has changed with time. Depending on the issues, personalities, ethnic groups, and media institutions involved, political communication has contributed at one time or another to integration and disintegration, unity and disunity, internal rioting, arson, vandalism, assassination, exacerbated ethnic distrust, antagonism, coups and counter-coups, abortive coups, rumours of coups, demand for coups, general violent, political disagreement, civil war, national reconciliation, reconstruction, rehabilitation, social mobilization and peace, national integration or disintegration. As I explained in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, communication and politics will continue to play either mutually functional, complementary and supplementary roles, or mutually dysfunctional, antagonistic, diametrically opposed and counter-productive roles in Nigeria's socio-politico-economic development.

The findings from the empirical examination and content-analysis of various types of federal and state governments media, political party and private newspapers tend to confirm the research problem investigated namely that

ownership pattern of the media affects the way they are used for political communications in Nigeria (see Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 above).

A critical assessment of the dimension of the political importance and role of the mass media shows that although research has undergone many stages on this issue, it is, nevertheless, still inconclusive. Despite this inconclusiveness and in spite of the fact that mass media determine voting behaviour of people in collaboration with many other intervening variables, yet, political communication researchers seem to agree that all functions performed in the political systems are by means of communication; that political stories in the mass media are very significant in furnishing raw materials for the formation of political images; that there are functional (positive and/or negative) relationships between communication and politics; and that campaign communications energize impulses to participate, define issues and convey choices for voting decisions.

In this thesis, we have attempted contributions to knowledge in the areas of the theory, practice and methodology of political communications. Theoretically, we attempted a description and critique of the theories and models of the press and communications systems, (political communications) found them inadequate for the situation in developing societies, especially those of Africa, and suggested an alternative model for explaining the political communications behaviour and the anatomy of press bias in the election campaigns and coverage of national issues in the developing countries especially those of Africa with Nigeria as a case study. Methodologically, we sought a fruitful marriage between qualitative and quantitative tools in political communication analysis and used in a major way, content analysis of the newspapers and other mass media to

demonstrate the quantity or amount of coverage for the different political parties, state, regional, federal governments and ethnic groups, the nature of the news stories about them - whether they are favourable, unfavourable or neutral and the importance accorded the news stories in terms of positioning. Practically, we attempted a contribution to empirical knowledge on the political implications of the contents and contexts of mass media of communications in an African socio-political formation, the Nigerian political communication example, from 1900 to the present period and with explanations and predictions for post-1992 political communications order; these are periods that no study has yet fully covered and in which no study in Nigerian political communications has looked at the influence of media ownership on media contents.

We have seen how the 'mixed party and non-party' media were used by their owners in the coverage of sensitive national issues in Nigeria - census controversy, election campaigns, ethnic conflicts, religious issues and regional interests. (see Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 above). In addition to the various media laws and their use by government agencies, the governments in Nigeria applied a host of other means to control the media on political communications in Nigeria - excessive secrecy, bribery, subtle influence, licensing, postal and tariff restrictions, censorship, open and implied threats, bannings, seizures, prohibitions and restrictions, expulsions, arrests and imprisonments. In particular, military coup d'etats and subsequent military rules have had tremendous impacts on the structure, administration and contents of the Nigerian mass media. In most instances the military impacts on the mass media have been overwhelmingly negative. For instance, there was not any occasion when, during any civilian

administration, a Nigerian newspaper was forcibly closed down. But under the military regimes, such incidents became a common occurrence (see Chapter 6 above). All the Nigerian military governments have always preferred a fawning press to a critical press. They have always been reluctant to allow free flow of information, they were interested in controlling the media both print and electronic and they would even want to exclude private involvement in the print media because of their (the military governments) dislike for the truth.

In the same vein, the civilian governments have used the media to favour themselves especially during election campaigns in Nigeria. Ordinarily, elections serve as instruments through which the masses pass their verdict on the governments or incumbent elites. Quite naturally the governments because they have been guilty of poor and incompetent leadership have always suspected the verdict the people will pass on them hence they therefore, quickly move in to manipulate that verdict and this is one idea behind the use of the media to influence people's perception of political candidate's image, party programmes and constant rigging of elections and announcement of false election results.

It is true that while each government - state, regional and/or federal, operates a form of censorship over the media it owns and controls, such censorship does not necessarily block the free flow of information. What one newspaper will not print another paper may be very happy to publish; what one state radio may silence may well be carried by another. A politician denied access to one television studio might find another welcoming him very readily. And the audience of a state radio station is not entirely limited to that state.

But as Nigeria approaches a third attempt at democratic rule in socio-economic conditions which are less propitious than on the past occasions, it will be all the more important for the Nigerian press to operate in a way which contributes to political stability and national integration rather than undermines attempts at national unity and federal survival. We have exactly attempted a contribution to this lofty objective. We suggest that if the Nigerian press behaves more responsibly and tries to understand, appreciate the history, politics, economy, cultures and contradictions of the Nigerian society and strives hard to harmonize these diversities in a positive manner, without exacerbating ethnic, religious or tribal differences in its coverage of events, national integration, unity and stability may be achieved. In the words of Jose, Momoh and Kirk-Greene at different places:

"... Nigeria today stands dangerously on the brink of the precipice of disaster. The geographical, economic and political entity which the British and Nigerians have built over the years is cracking so badly that there are now grave signs that it will sooner or later - perhaps sooner than later - collapse and shatter to pieces".<sup>76</sup>

"A duty is imposed on the press to ensure that the political objectives of Nigeria are achieved in accordance with its motto which is 'Unity and Faith, peace and progress'.<sup>77</sup> "Patriotism must in the end take precedence over parochialism and particularism. The whole must remain greater than the parts; to reverse the priority was the fatal flaw of Nigeria's First Republic".<sup>78</sup>

Whatever the pattern of media ownership, the Nigerian media practitioners should strive to maintain the continued existence of Nigeria as a federation in the way they cover events, issues and activities of politicians in the Nigerian political communications 1992 and beyond. Scholars who have studied federations that have failed, have come to the conclusion that what is important is that:

".... the leaders and their followers, must 'feel federal'; they must be moved to think of themselves as one people, with one common self-interest capable, where necessary, of over-riding most other considerations of small group interest. It is not enough that the units of a potential federation have the same idea of 'the Good' but that 'the Good' for any one must be consciously subordinate to or compatible with 'the Good' for all. This, then, is tantamount to an ideological commitment not to federation only as a means such as, for example, a means to gain independence or financial stability, to utilize secondary and tertiary factors, but to federation as an end, as good for its own sake, for the sake of "answering the summons of history".<sup>79</sup>

And this type of commitment can only be generated if the right type of leadership emerges - the type of leadership which, according to Pierre Trudeau, is dedicated to creating a national Image which would make any image of a separatist group unattractive - a leadership must make all citizens 'feel that it is only within the framework of the federal state that their language, culture, institutions, sacred traditions and standard of living can be protected from external attack and internal strife'.<sup>80</sup>

There is a need to regulate media practice in Nigerian political communications by establishing a Communication Media Advisory Council, as an arm of the National Electoral Commission or of a National Communication Commission with responsibility for monitoring press responsibility in political communications and for setting the media agenda of the coverage of national issues. **The Commission should have powers to enforce its authority.**

There is also a need to re-organize the structure of mass media ownership and control in Nigeria with a view to ensure private ownership of electronic media and diffusion and to regulate against monopoly in order to prevent the misuse of the media by a few rich, powerful individual owners, groups of Nigerians or governments, with its attendant undesirable consequences.

Nigerian governments should also encourage direct public and private investment in community based media in the rural areas. And finally, the Nigerian mass media should at all times remain consistent with the national ideals of realising:

- a united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- a great and dynamic economy;
- a just and egalitarian society;
- a land of bright and equal opportunities for all citizens;
- a free and democratic society;
- social justice, economic recovery and self-reliance and uphold the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy - political, economic, social, educational and foreign policy objectives of Nigeria.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES TO THE CONCLUSION

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2. Several slogans have been used by various Nigerian governments to illustrate the necessity for developing and maintaining a united Nigerian nation. Those listed here appeared at critical stages of Nigeria's history. For example, 'To Keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done' was used during the Nigerian civil war to motivate federal forces. 'Go on with one Nigeria' appeared immediately after the war and expressed popular support for the admittance of Biafra back into the union. Lastly, 'One nation, one destiny' was a civilian regime slogan which was used to give the impression of the existence of national unity in Nigeria.
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'Tribalism' applies to apparent incitement of tribal hatred. There can be some objection to this in that one of the major ethnic groups at least (the Hausa) could not be called a tribe, if this vague term is to retain any meaning. Perhaps other terms, such as 'linguistic' or 'cultural' group, would be more appropriate. On the other hand, the conflict that occurred between these groups can be called tribalist; this was a term often used by Nigerians themselves at the time, in the press and elsewhere; furthermore, the main 'reference group', the Ibos, are generally considered a tribe. So,

whether it is Northerners speaking against Ibos, or Ibos denouncing Northerners, 'tribalism' enters into the conflict. Whatever the accuracy of the term to denote ethnic conflict, it can conveniently be used to describe the most intense forms of ethnic antagonism. 'Discussion of regions' refers to content which lacks overt tribalism but which dwells on the same subject matter: for instance, content which discusses tribal or regional differences. 'Unity-regionalism' describes content which pleads for national unity but in the process emphasises the regional conflict, often by blaming other regions for tribalism. There is an inherent ambivalence in this category. Often the call for unity is a disguise for the further incitement of tribal hatred. 'Unity' applies to content expressing a plea for unity unambiguously.

42. Brynin, pp.187-189.
43. Nigerian Tribune: (editorial 20-9-50)
44. Nigerian Tribune: (14-1-58)
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Text of Message Broadcast to the Nation by General Murtala Ramat Muhammed on the Occasion of Nigeria's 15th Independence Anniversary, 1st October, 1975 (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1975).

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Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Decrees 4 and 11.

Report of an Inquiry into the Finances of the Nigerian National Press, by Mr E.A. Osindero, 1964.

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Broadcast to the Nation, Lagos: 1 October, 1981 (Presidential Press Release).

Report of the Enquiry into the Affairs of the Sketch (Ibadan: Typewritten, 1971).

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Report on the National Communication Policy Seminar Organised by the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture held at the ASCON, Topo, Badagry, 2nd-7th February, 1987 (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1987). *passim*. The author was a member of the Co-ordinating Panel of Experts which prepared the Report for the Federal Government of Nigeria. He also presented a paper at the Seminar; the paper was entitled "Communication, Politics and Political Communications: Suggestions on a National Communication Policy for Nigeria".

**E. JOURNALS, NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

African Affairs

Annals of International Studies

ASCON Journal of Management

Africa Today

African Concord

Africa Media Monograph Series

American Political Science Review

African Media Review

African Studies Review

Communication Year Book

Communication Research

Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science

Comparative Politics

Comparative Studies in Society and History

Daily Express

Concord

Herald

Observer

Punch

Satellite

Daily Times

Standard

Statesman

Star

Daily Sketch

European Journal of Communication

Ethnic and Racial Studies

Gazette

Islamic Quarterly

Issue

Journal of Communication

Journal of Modern History

Journalism Quarterly

Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs

Journal of Modern African Studies

Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics

Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies

Journalism Studies Review

Law and Contemporary Problems

Nigerian Citizen

New Nigerian

Newswatch

Nigerian Tribune

Nigerian Outlook

Nigerian Morning Post

Oyo State Year Book and Who's Who

Public Opinion Quarterly

Review of African Political Economy

West African Pilot

World Politics

West African Review

West Africa Magazine

**F. MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES:**

Research work and field trip in Nigeria, 1986-1989.

Interview with Presidential Candidates of the Second Republic, Reporters, Electorate and Top Media Executives, including Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, Alhaji (Dr.) I. Babatunde Jose and Alhaji Aliko Muhammed to mention a few.

Materials from Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Offices, in the U.K., U.S., Nigerian Medium Houses among a host of other sources.

## APPENDIX 1:-

# NIGERIAN PRESS ORGANISATION

## CODE OF CONDUCT

## PREAMBLE

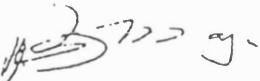
1. Abuse of the rights of the Press are punishable by law. Indeed, the Law of Libel, civil as well as criminal and the Law of Contempt, deal adequately with such abuse.
2. Any abuse of the rights of the Press, therefore, cannot be the objective of declaration.
3. But experience has shown many lapses in the practice of the profession and it has for long become apparent that a code of conduct must be established as among practising journalists themselves, if they must fulfil their true functions and if a standard below which journalists may not be expected to fall, may be laid down.

It is in pursuance of these objectives that we hereby solemnly declare:

1. That the public is entitled to the truth and that only correct information can form the basis for sound journalism and ensure the confidence of the people.
2. That it is the moral duty of every journalist to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth and to the best of his knowledge.
3. That it is the duty of the journalist to publish only facts; never to suppress such facts as he knows; never to falsify either to suit his own purposes, or any other purposes.
4. That it is the duty of the journalist to refuse any reward for publishing or suppressing news or comments, other than salary and allowances legitimately earned in the discharge of his professional duties.
5. That the journalist shall employ all legitimate means in the collection of news and he shall defend at all times the right to free access, provided that due regard is paid to the privacy of individuals.
6. That once information has been collected and published the journalist shall observe the universally accepted principle of secrecy and shall not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.
7. That it is the duty of the journalist to regard plagiarism as unethical.
8. That it is the duty of every journalist to correct any published information found to be incorrect

  
 ALHAJI LATEEF JAKANDE  
 President, (NPAN)

  
 CHIEF CHRIS OKOLIE  
 President, (NGE)

  
 CHIEF MICHAEL ASAJU  
 President, (NUJ)

Daily Times, January 20, 1979 - Front Page Headline:**AWOLOWO SHOWS HIS PLAN TO NEWSMEN**Story

"The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) Presidential Candidate, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, on Wednesday turned a press conference in Maiduguri into what looked like a sound tutorial class.

It all began when a journalist asked Chief Awolowo how his party could accomplish its political programmes in view of the present financial constraint of the country.

The UPN leader summoned one of his aides around for his box containing documents.

Chief Awolowo filled conference table with prepared documents on various commitments, the costing of such projects, projections, and methods of implementation and time schedule".

Daily Times, March 29, 1979 - Front Page Headline:**NO SPECIAL TAX FOR UPE - AWO**Story

"A Government of the Unity Party of Nigeria will not levy any tax on the citizens to raise funds for its free education-at-all-levels scheme.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo said in Lagos yesterday that his party sincerely desired to alleviate the sufferings of the people."

**Daily Times, Wednesday 11th April, 1979 - Front Page Headline :****GNPP SCHOOL IS A JOKE - SHAGARI**  
**Wonders why people shout Awo****Story:**

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) Presidential Candidate, has described the Great Nigeria Peoples' Party's (GNPP) School for ideological studies at Gembu as a "huge joke".

He told a rally at Numan, Gongola State, that he did not believe the school existed as such.

"I was in Gembu a few days ago. I was shown some buildings which I was told were the school premises, but I saw only about 30 cows roaming the premises, and no people. ..."

A few people shouted 'Awo' when the entourage entered Numan, Alhaji Shagari wondered why anybody should bother about someone who had been deserted even by his ablest and most trusted lieutenants".

**Daily Times, May 22, 1979 - Front Page Headline:****UPN TO LIFT BAN ON GOODS - AWO****Story:**

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo said yesterday that the law banning importation of goods and controlling prices had done more harm to many people than the good it did to a few."

"In the circumstances, the Unity Party of Nigeria, (UPN) on assumption of power, will have no hesitation at all, in lifting all the bans on imports", he said.

**Daily Times, Tuesday May 1, 1979 - Back Page Headline:****OUR GOAL, BY AWO****Story:**

"There is no social justice in Nigeria the Presidential Candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) Chief Obafemi Awolowo said yesterday.

Addressing a rally near Isolo fly-over, Mushin, Lagos State, on the second leg of his campaign tour, Chief Awolowo said if there was any social justice at all, the few rich in our midst would not be spending their wealth recklessly while a majority of our people lived in penury".

**Daily Times, May 12, 1979 - Back Page Headline****WHY I AM NOT IN UPN  
Shagari talks with students****Story:**

"Alhaji Shehu Shagari has spoken about why he is not in the same political camp with Chief Obafemi Awolowo. He told a group of University students that he was not in the UPN because he did not take part in its formation."

**Daily Times, May 14, 1979 - Front Page Headline:****UPN WON'T CONTROL BIRTH - AWO****Story:**

"A UPN government will encourage families to bear and rear children as much as they wish, the party's touch-bearer, Chief Obafemi Awolowo has said.

Chief Awolowo, addressing a rally at Iware, near Ibadan, Oyo State, said: "It is the policy of our party that you should continue to bear and rear children."

**Daily Times, May 28, 1979 - Front Page Headline****LET YOUR WIVES VOTE - NPN CHIEF  
Shagari on importance of women****Story:**

"All married men in Jega, Sokoto State, have been advised to allow their wives to vote during the coming elections.

The Presidential Candidate of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Alhaji Shehu Shagari, told a rally in the town that women are vital to the elections because they constitute the bulk of voters."

**Daily Times, Thursday May 31, 1979 - Back Page Headline:****NO COUP, NO WAR IF I WIN  
Awo allays fears****Story:**

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo yesterday predicted a coup-free Nigeria under his rule.

There will also be no civil war, he promised his supporters in Uromi, Bendel State.

Chief Awolowo, on a 45-day country-wide tour, his second round-the-nation trip since October last year, said he had heard of fears that there would be confusion after the elections".

**Daily Times, June 1, 1979 - Back Page Headline****SOCIALISM DOESN'T MEAN POVERTY - AWO****Story:**

"The Presidential Candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) Chief Obafemi Awolowo, on Wednesday turned a political rally into a lecture on socialism.

It was at Auchi, Bendel State, during his 43-day campaign tour of the country. He told the people that socialism did not mean poverty.

After quoting references on socialism in Russia and China, the UPN leader said "socialism means having equal access to all the good things of life".

**Daily Times, June 4, 1979 - Back Page Headline**

**SHAGARI WARNS PROPHETS OF DOOM**

**Story:**

Alhaji Shehu Shagari campaigning for the presidency in Kano State, has lashed out at people he called crisis dreamers.

He said he had been told of one of them boasting that "the world will crumble" unless a particular presidential candidate wins.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) Presidential Candidate said such people were bent on causing trouble because events do not seem to favour them".

**Daily Times, June 12, 1979 - Back Page Headline**

**NPN EXISTS TO UNITE NIGERIANS says Shagari**

**Story:**

Alhaji Shehu Shagari in Abeokuta campaigning for the presidency, said his party was formed mainly to unite Nigerians.

The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) Presidential candidate said the country's problems stemmed from disunity among her different peoples.

Alhaji Shehu said the NPN could unite Nigerians because it had done it in its own house.

Daily Times, June 16, 1979 - Back Page Headline**A UPN GOVERNMENT WILL DO WONDERS - AWO**Story:

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo has said that the Unity Party of Nigeria would perform a feat should it be voted into power in October.

The UPN Presidential Candidate, addressing a huge rally at Bokoko, near Jos, mentioned free education at all levels as part of the party's "package" for the nation."

Daily Times, Wednesday July 4, 1979 - Front Page Headline

**I'M YOURS, TRY ME ...  
AWO rounds off rally in Lagos**

Story:

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo, rounded off his 43-day tour of the country yesterday with an appeal to the electorate to vote solidly for the Unity Party of Nigeria, (UPN).

He said he was familiar with their "sufferings and privation" and it was only the UPN that could bring them salvation."

Daily Times, July 3, 1979 - Front Page Headline**NPN PLEDGES HONEST SERVICE**Story:

"The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) yesterday offered its service, to the nation 'on a solid and honest platform of peace, unity and stability'.

It also promised a social, political and economic programme aimed at building a prosperous, progressive, dynamic and contented society based on equal opportunity, fairness and justice.

Announcing 'the NPN framework for a new Nigeria' in Lagos yesterday, its presidential aspirant, Alhaji Shehu Shagari called for massive support for the party".

**Daily Times, January 10, 1979 - Headline**

**UPN WILL MODERNISE RAIL SYSTEM - AWO**

**Story:**

"Chief Obafemi Awolowo has said that the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) would modernise our railway system if voted into power.

A UPN government will construct a double track rail line from Lagos to Kano, Kaduna to Enugu and Benin, he told thousands of his party supporters in Kano.

The UPN leader, in continuation of his nationwide campaign tour, also told the people about the party's four cardinal programmes - free education at all levels, rural development, free medical care and employment for all".

**NPN TO FOSTER NATIONAL UNITY**

**Story:**

"The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) will ensure that north and south dichotomy is removed from Nigerian politics. Alhaji Shehu Shagari has said.

The NPN Presidential candidate said in Enugu that the most important issue in the country today was national unity".

Daily Times, January 1, 1979

## AWO IN ILISHAN

Story:

"The Presidential Candidate of the UPN, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (arrowed) speaks to the people of Ilisan in Remo Division of Ogun State in one of his end-of-the-year campaigns".

## SHAGARI CALLS FOR CLEAN POLITICS

Story:

"Alhaji Shehu Shagari has appealed to his party's supporters to respect the pledge made by the leaders of the country's political parties to ensure a free and fair election next year.

The Presidential candidate for the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), believed the excesses and over-zealousness of party supporters could wreck any good intentions of political leaders."

## WHAT MAY BRING BACK THE ARMY - BY WAZIRI

Story:

"Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim has said that he would be inviting the military back to power if a wrong party was elected.

The GNPP leader told a political rally in Michika Local Government area of Gongola State that the First Republic could not have collapsed but for tribalism, nepotism, religious differences and intolerance". He said the GNPP 'is a common man's party'.

The Presidential candidate said that, 'politics without bitterness was the watchword of the GNPP adding that with bitterness the party would not achieve anything".

**APPENDIX III: L I S T   O F   T H O S E   I N T E R V I E W E D****(A) P O L I T C I A N S   A N D   S O L D I E R S.**

- 1) **Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, Presidential Candidate of the GNPP in the Second Republic general elections and a former Minister in the First Republic.**
- 2) **Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Presidential Candidate of the NPP in the 1979 and 1983 general elections and one time President of Nigeria in the First Republic.**
- 3) **Alhaji Shehu Shagari, President of Nigeria during the Second Republic and an active participant in the politics of the First Republic.**
- 4) **Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Presidential Candidate of the UPN in the Second Republic elections and Leader of Opposition in the First Republic.**
- 5) **Alhaji Mallam Aminu Kano, Presidential Candidate of the PRP in the Second Republic and a one time Federal Minister.**
- 6) **Chief A.M.A. Akinloye, National Chairman of the defunct NPN.**
- 7) **Chief Bola Ige, former UPN Governor of Oyo State.**
- 8) **Professor Ambrose Alli, former UPN Governor of Bendel State.**
- 9) **Chief Adekunle Ajasin, former UPN Governor of Ondo State.**
- 10) **Alhaji Lateef Jakande, former UPN Governor of Lagos State.**
- 11) **Alhaji Aba Musa Rimi, former PRP Governor of Kaduna State.**
- 12) **Dr. Garba Nadama, former NPN Governor of Sokoto State.**
- 13) **Alhaji Mohammed Goni, former GNPP Governor of Borno State.**
- 14) **Chief Senator C. Adebayo, former UPN Governor of Kwara State.**
- 15) **Chief Mrs. Janet Akinrinade, former NPP Minister of the Second Republic**
- 16) **Alhaji Olatunji Muhammed, former NPN Minority Leader and Deputy Governor of Oyo State.**
- 17) **Chief T. Akinyele, former Director of Budget.**
- 18) **Dr. Yakubu Gowon, former Military Head of State.**
- 19) **Dr. Samuel Ogbemudia, former military and later NPN Governor of Bendel State.**
- 20) **Alhaji Umaru Omolowo, former Commissioner of Police in Oyo State.**

(B) MASS MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

- 1) Alhaji Chief Dr. Babatunde Jose, former Chairman and Managing Director of the Daily Times of Nigeria.
- 2) Alhaji Aliko Muhammed, also a former Chairman of the Daily Times.
- 3) Mr. S.L Labanji Bolaji, former General Manager of the Sketch, Tribune, and former Managing Director of the Punch, and Editorial Member of the Concord.
- 4) Mr. Felix Adenaike, Managing Director of the Tribune and former General Manager of the Sketch.
- 5) Mallam Muhammed Ibrahim, former Managing Director of the New Nigerian.
- 6) Chief Areoye Oyebola, former Editor of the Daily Times.
- 7) Mr. Shola Oyegbemi, Managing Director of the Sketch.
- 8) Mr. Bola Aragbaiye, Editor of the Sunday Sketch.
- 9) Alhaji Lateef Jakande, Publisher of the Lagos News, and former President of the International Press Institute.
- 10) Mr. G. Izobo, former President of the Nigerian Union of Journalists.
- 11) Prince Bayo Sanda, General Manager of the Nigerian Television Authority Ibadan.
- 12) Prince Tony Momoh, former Minister for Information.

In addition to those listed, I also interviewed 30 Journalists, politicians, academicians who served under both military and civilian regimes, media academicians, military men, voters, election officials and a host of other relevant people who do not wish to be named. I have therefore, used information of such anonymous interviewees as part of my unattributable sources.