

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

This study focuses on political reporting and electoral violence in Nigeria from 1999-2011. The study notes that crisis has become a regular characteristic feature of virtually all the post-independent elections in Nigeria to the extent that academics across disciplines have concluded that since independence on October 1, 1960, the electioneering process in Nigeria has been an experience of tears, blood and sorrow, (Akinboye, 2009; Akinfeleye, 2004; Olurode, 2011; Ologbenla, 2003; Ogbeide, 2010 & Fadakinte, 2014).

Thus far, hardly was there any election in the country that did not end in serious disputations, crisis, violence and at times, blood letting. The study is curious about this development especially why the mass media which are globally regarded as the playing field of politics could be fingered as contributory agents of electoral violence.

The study is curious about this development because if the playing field for politics suddenly develops contour, then the game of politics will be devoid of convivial and smooth playing. Besides the 1999 general elections whose conduct was internationally adjudged peaceful, all other elections covered by this study i.e. 2003, 2007 and 2011 were all characterized by monumental violence.

Whereas, the media landscape exists primarily for the purpose of gathering information, interpreting, correlating and spreading the information in an heuristic manner that will be useful for members of the public, especially in the area of planning, organizing and execution of goals either at a personal, institutional or corporate levels.

These professional and statutory duties are premised on the assumption that the media professionals have gathered reliable information on the basis of which meaningful interpretation and correlation for the political nourishment of democracy could be carried out.

A good journalistic enterprise, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century entails dissemination of fact-based stories as opposed to conjectures on happenings or occurrences in the polity which the Nigerian media are fond of doing under the current democratic dispensation in the country. During the period under review, most media owners in the country squeezed and pushed their news organizations against ethical and legal rules governing the operations of mass media.

This study attributed the above scenario to the plural media system in Nigeria in which private and state owned media co-exist. Therefore, the thesis in this study is that the plural media system in Nigeria eroded professionalism during elections and subjected political reporting to ownership manipulation. This development further brought about hijack of the media for partisan goals between 1999 and 2011. This created biased political reporting which often engender political violence.

The 1999 elections were conducted by the eight military administration in Nigeria under the leadership of General Abdulsalam Abubakar who ruled from 9<sup>th</sup> June 1998-May 29, 1999. The ten months of Abubakar's transition/reign, according to Onuoha (2002: 320) "were the shortest, most momentous and eventful, but at the same time one of the most relaxed of all the military transition programmes in terms of expectations, the content of the activities and speed which marked the hand over of political power to an elected government."

Odunewu (1999:286), after a careful perusal of the transition predicted that the Abubakar transition would put an end to “the unending merry-go round and the soldiers expensive relay race that is called transition to enduring democracy.”

The history of several military transitions in Nigeria was largely characterized by disappointment, insincerity and failure.

The first military regime was that of General Aguiyi-Ironsi. He reigned from Jan. 15, 1966 – July 29, 1966. His tenure was so brief and seriously enmeshed in crises such that he could not announce a transition programme.

The second military administration was that of General Yakubu Gowon, July 29, 1966 – July 29, 1975. According to Odunewu (1999: 232), “Gowon’s transition to civil rule was marred by institutional decay, corruption, insincerity and called off with a refrain, 1976 is not realistic.”

The third/fourth military regimes were officially regarded as one. It is popularly called Murtala/Obasanjo administration; July 29, 1975 – October 1, 1979. It was a fruitful and purposeful administration having successfully handed over power to a civilian administration led by Alhaji Sheu Shagari.

The fifth military regime was that of General Muhammadu Buhari, Dec. 31, 1983 – Aug. 27, 1985. The regime, according to Odunewu (1999: 232) made no pretence about transition to civil rule and thus did not institute any. Babatope (2013: 228 - 233) notes that right from 31 December 1983, General Buhari recognized General Ibrahim Babangida as a fifth columnist of his administration which carried out a rade on the Awolowo residence in Apapa as well as the residence of an Islamic leader, Sheik Abubakar Gumi and was ready to get rid of him through a retirement. “A gazette containing the announcement of this retirement was said to

have been authorized by Buhari. It was however leaked to Babangida on Friday, 23 August 1985. IBB, a noted coup expert within the Nigerian Army, (he took part in virtually every successful military coup in Nigeria since 29, July 1966) therefore ousted Buhari on August 27, 1985.

The sixth military regime was that of General Ibrahim Babangida, (Aug. 27, 1985 – Aug. 27, 1993). He instituted what Larry Diamond et al (1997: xv) described as “one of the most ambitious, imaginative, complex and expensive transitions... so frequently and fundamentally were its time tables and ground rules changed, so staggering were the corruption, abuse of powers and cult of personality surrounding it that most Nigerians came to doubt it would ever be completed... of course, it did come to an end in exactly the way it began”. One of the reasons given for ousting the Buhari’s regime, according to Nugent (2004: 421), was that the Buhari regime failed to come up with detailed plans for a return to civilian rule.

The seventh military regime, that of General Sani Abacha ruled from Nov. 17,1993 – June 8, 1998. Like his predecessor in office, he manipulated his transition programme and was about to succeed himself in office through a transition which began in 1995. The programme collapsed with his administration when he died on June 8, 1998.

The eight military regime had General Abdulsalami Abubakar as head. He came and purely rolled out a transition programme which produced an elected administration on May 29, 1999. Nigeria has since had a civilian-to-civilian transition in 2003, 2007, 2011 with another one scheduled to hold in 2015.

The four general elections covered by this study produced Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, who was first elected in 1999 and was re-elected in 2003; Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar’Adua who

was elected President in 2007 but died in office on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2010; his vice, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan succeeded him and was later elected President in 2011. They were all elected on the platform of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).

A horrifying and distasteful scenario, which has characterized electioneering process in Nigeria since independence in 1960, is that of violence. Most of the post-independent elections in Nigeria were held with blood letting. The magnitude of the problem is such that one could conclude that organizing a hitch-free transition election is a jinx, yet to be completely broken since independence. Nigeria attempted it in 1964/65; it ended in military take over of government. Another attempt was made at organizing similar transitory election in 1983, again, it ended in violence and military take over of government. Ten years later, in 1993, the freest ever conducted election took place and yet it ended in serious violence. With these antecedents, Nigerians approached the 1999 elections with lot of fear and apprehension. This fear heightened in 2003 against the backdrop of skepticisms and doubts in some quarters over the fact that all the previous years which ended with figure '3' brought one calamity or the other to the nation in 1963, 1973, 1983 and 1993

To avoid blood letting and political calamities of the past which rocked Nigeria in those years ending with figure '3', controversial politician, Sen. Francis Arthur Nzeribe flew a kite in 2001, asking leaders of the then three political parties in the country, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All People's Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD) to adopt President Obasanjo as their common Presidential candidate. The *Patriots*, an elitist group of eminent leaders of thought in the South-East and South-West on its part advised the President against seeking a second term ticket. They believed the advice would help to avert

violence during the elections. None of these suggestions worked. The elections were held according to the INEC time table with serious acts of violence during and after the polls.

## 1.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Electoral violence remains a major threat to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. From the 1959 general elections which ushered in independence on October 1, 1960 to the first post-independent elections of 1964/65 during Nigeria's First Republic to the Second, Third and Fourth Republics till date, electoral violence has no doubt become a national malaise.

Thus far, hardly was there any organized election in the country in which tempers, fear and insecurity did not pervade the land with political tension at the highest level. Top pre-election stories in the media during electioneering periods are usually on the negative side. It is either some political aspirants have been killed, kidnapped, campaign rallies bombed or political thugs armed with charms and dangerous weapons attacked political opponents.

In a piece entitled: "History of political violence in Nigeria", Ali (2003:32) states that before the attainment of independence, reports of political violence have been with us. Those who were old enough at that time would remember the myriad of political violence that attended the general elections of 1964".

The defunct Western Region in Nigeria acquired the epithet – Wild Wild West due to violence which characterized the conduct of the October 1965 parliamentary election in the region. Prior to the election, Anifowose (1982: 206) observed that regional elections had taken place in 1951, 1956, and 1960 while Federal Elections were held in 1954, 1959 and 1964.

Quoting Mackintosh (1970), Anifowose (1982:201) described political parties in Nigeria as agencies for winning power but having taken hold of power at any level, they are reluctant to defend their position by argument and the creation of an electoral machinery.

Pre – voting utterances of political elites in the Region confirmed Mackintosh’s declaration. Quoting the Premier of the Region, Chief S.L. Akintola through a press statement, Anifowose (1982:201) noted that Chief Akintola pointed out to his critics the fact that in the pervious fifteen years, no regional government had lost an election.

Anifowose contends further that during the campaigns which preceded the October 11 poll, the Premier, Chief Akintola and his Deputy, Chief Fani-Kayode were alleged to have boasted that whether the people voted for them or not, their party – the NNDP would be returned to power. The political tension in the region was so high before the day of election such that President Azikiwe as quoted by Anifowose (1982:207) warned that “the country was heading for troubles worse than the Congo” While describing politics in the region as a ‘deadly’ serious business, Anifowose further states that “the abuse, violence, bribery and viciousness of the election campaign were so outrageous”. Ali (2003:32) further noted that “the general elections of 1979, those of 1983, 1993 and 1999 were not without blood letting.

Onuoha (2004:38) identified composition of electoral commission as part of the root causes of electoral violence in Nigeria. He observed that from Nigeria’s First Republic till date, the electoral body has never been independent. “Instead, incumbents are tempted to appoint their loyalists into the commission who will ensure their hold onto power”. The implication is that they are always biased. Hence, Onuoha (2004:77) advocated for a truly independent electoral commission that is independent of any of the organs of government so as to avoid anything that could precipitate violence during elections.

On prognosis as to why people resort to political violence, scholars, statesmen, clerics and even journalists have paid much attention. Ali (2003:33-35) for instance, identified the under listed six major factors:

- (i) **Intolerance:** He described this as a major disease responsible for inability of political elites to accommodate contrary opinions or views of political opponents.
- (ii) Unemployment and idleness of able-bodied young men and women. This could make them ready materials for political violence.
- (iii) Complicity and partisanship of security agents is another factor. “If a political hoodlum knows that he will not be treated with kid gloves if caught in the act of political violence, he will never dare to be part of such political activities.
- (iv) Faithlessness of politicians in the different religions they profess. “If truly they believe and profess that power belongs to the Almighty and that He gives it to whom He wishes and takes it from whom He wishes, then there would be no reason for internecine struggle for power.
- (v) Election rigging. He described this as a ‘political cancer. He noted that from recent history, the orgies of violence that greeted the gubernatorial elections in the old Ondo and Oyo states in 1983 were predicated on the alleged rigging of those elections by those who were declared winners by FEDECO, the then electoral body responsible for the conduct of the elections.
- (vi) Tribalism and nepotism. He described this as hydra headed disease which promotes, to certain extent electoral violence in Nigeria, moreso that the major political parties were regionally based.

Ogundiya (2003:63-65) similarly identified other causes of electoral violence to include:



- (i) Poor Electoral Administration, especially as it concerns inadequate control mechanisms, poor logistics, poor level of preparations and insincerity of electoral officers. The implication is that election can be manipulated through electoral fraud or through the rules of the game that reduce the chance for fairness.
- (ii) Lack of well-defined political ideology and politics of ethnicity. He was of the view that absence of coherent political ideology made it easy for politicians to cross carpet from one party to another. This accentuates political bitterness. Furthermore, close alliance of political parties with major ethnic groups increases the level of political conflict.

These are part of the reasons why some analysts contend that democratization project in Nigeria is not on course. Rather than learning from past mistakes, politicians tend to deepen their rigging plots. Ogundiya (2003:62), quoting Tamuno (1991) cited the criminal manipulation of the electoral register in 1983 to buttress this assertion. He stated that “the voters’ list as released by FEDECO to the public on July 27, 1983 contained 65.3 million names against 46.5 million for 1979”. He further observed that “the rigging resulted into uncontrollable violence in some states like Ondo, Oyo and part of Anambra states.

*The reaction of the electorates was spontaneous and destructive. For instance, in Ondo state, the destruction to lives and private properties were enormous to the extent that the country was brought to a stand still. Expectedly, the military seized the opportunity of the electoral violence to terminate the Nigerian second experiment of democratic rule. (Ogundiya, 2003:62).*

### 1.3 **IMPORTANCE OF ELECTIONS IN A DEMOCRACY**

Central to the principles and practice of democracy in every democratic society is election. It is a mechanism through which elected public office holders are called upon to account for their stewardship.

As a central principle and practice of democracy, elections provide a platform for:

- i. Political recruitment of politicians to fill available elective offices.
- ii. It provides a platform for adequate representation of every shade of opinions in the polity.
- iii. Leadership succession is made easy by elections.
- iv. It provides an avenue for the citizenry to meaningfully participate in the electoral system.
- v. A credible election similarly enhances the legitimacy of a regime.
- vi. Elections afford the electorates of the opportunity of influencing policy decision.

Suffice to state that Nigeria operates a competitive electoral system which provides for orderly succession in government. Anifowose (2003:25), quoting Janowitz and Marwick (1952) observes that at each stage of the electoral process in a competitive electoral system, the electorate is involved and each plays its own role.

While stressing that the touch stone of competitive elections is free election, Anifowose (2003:26), quoting Mackenzie (1958) further argued that “free election creates a sentiment of popular consent and participation in public affairs and provides for the peaceful transfer of authority to new rulers when the time comes for the old rulers to go”.

For elections to meaningfully play its role in a democracy, Mackenzie contends that there must be an independent judiciary to interpret electoral law, there must be an honest, competent, non-partisan administration to run elections as well as a developed system of political parties, organized to put their policies and teams of candidates before the electors as alternatives.

The success of competitive electoral system similarly requires a toleration of opposition and willingness to play by the rules. However, the records of post independent elections in Nigeria shows that most times, it is riddled with compromise and manipulations, thereby weakening the importance of elections.

#### **1.4 IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL REPORTING AND THE SURVIVAL OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA**

There is an inseparable relationship between democracy and political reporting. The relationship between the two concepts can be equated to the relationship between the ‘snail’ and its ‘shell’ in which the snail cannot move without the shell. Similarly, democracy cannot exist without communication. From the time of Walter Lippmann, the 20<sup>th</sup> century journalist who first drew attention to the power of the press to create pictures in peoples heads, the press has emerged as an indisputable ally in the democratic process, hence, Thomas Jefferson’s declaration, cited in Akinfeleye (2011:13), that “were it left for me to decide whether we should have a government without the press I would not hesitate a moment to choose the latter.” Akinfeleye (2009:20) quoted another statesman, Kenneth Kaunda, a former President of Zambia as describing press as being “capable of making government, given the appropriate condition, would create condition for peace and promote development.”

Various political communication scholars, notably Karl Deutsch, Richard Perloff and Idowu Sobowale captured this relationship vividly. To Deutsch (1963:35) “democracy is communication”. He stresses that just as war could not be fought without communication, similarly, politics could not exist without communication. Sobowale (1999:38) equally states that the press can provide guidance and assurance in periods of critical events. They can

arouse our awareness of crises of various descriptions, just as they can foster integration among diverse groups... They can also confer legitimacy and status.”

Perloff (2014: 37, 258) on the other hand described the mass media as the “playing field of politics” as well as “the road by which presidential campaigns travel every four years”. In the context of Okoye (2012: 71), political reporting pre-dates the emergence of electoral system in Nigeria.

He traced the origin of political reporting in Nigeria to *Iwe Irohin*, a missionary newspaper established by Rev. Henry Townsend in 1859. The newspaper, according to Okoye developed keen interest in reporting political issues in the society. According to Okoye, (2012:71):

*Iwe Irohin* considered no political issue too sensitive to report. In fact, its founder, editor and publisher, Henry Townsend, though a priest was a political animal to the core. As a matter of fact, he used the paper to feather his political nest.

Quoting Omu (1978), Okoye (2012:71) further states that: “**Iwe Irohin** was Townsend’s Chief weapon in his ambitious political propoganda and shrewd maneuvering for power in England”. Media historians similarly noted that all other newspapers which sprang up in the former Lagos colony in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were full of political news and commentaries. Ezera (1960:30) attributed the emergence of the newspapers to the birth of 1922 Sir Hugh Clifford’s Constitution under which several political parties sprang up.

Part of the provisions of the constitution was elective principle which states that four members of the Legislative Council were to be elected. Therefore, if there would be elections, then, there must be campaign and the vehicle for the conveyance or dissemination of campaign stories to the people are the mass media.

Political reporting falls within the context of specialized reporting. Other reporting in this context includes: Sports Reporting, Science & Technology Reporting, Aviation Reporting, Energy Reporting, Oil & Gas Reporting, Crime Reporting, Property, Real Estate Reporting, Defence Reporting, Environment Reporting, Reporting Transport, Reporting Obituaries, Agricultural Reporting, Diplomatic Reporting, Health Reporting, Reporting Terrorism, Judicial Reporting, Reporting Financial Crimes, Investigative and Interpretative Reporting, Undercover Reporting, Reporting Accidents and Disasters, Reporting Arts and Culture, Reporting Education & Educational Matters, Reporting the National Assembly, Reporting the Presidency, Reporting the INEC etc.

The importance of political reporting to democracy can be situated within the context of section 22 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution which empowers the mass media to monitor governance. The article states that “the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people”.

Electioneering periods are periods during which elected public office holders are mandatorily, expected to render their account of stewardship.

This study therefore focuses on such periods in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. The study critically analysed the pattern of political reporting in a bid to establish whether the reporting conforms with the ethical codes of reporting for media professionals in Nigeria as put together by the Nigerian Guild of Editors.

## **1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

At present, Nigeria operates a combination of autonomous and ancillary media; a plural and indeed eclectic system where private, religious and state owned media organizations operate side by side disseminating information in the country. The autonomous media make their own rules of operation, set their own goals and decide their own content independent of government influence, at least in principle. The ancillary media, on the other hand, being owned, directed and controlled by the government, often operate as the mouthpiece of political parties in power, either at the state or federal level, with most state governors scrambling to own radio, television and newspaper houses.

Consequently, especially as observed during the elections covered by this study, there is serious encroachment on the editorial objectivity of the Nigerian media, projecting them as ignorant of the rules and ethics of their profession. The political class and other stakeholders have hijacked this anomaly to become partisan, and have abandoned constructionism, a concept which allows people to independently construct meanings from media messages, to the act of deliberately dissembling information, half-baked truths, outright falsehood and spurious data that can, when aired, engender political violence. Such political violence has grown exponentially from the one republic to the other, claiming lives and property, and disturbing public peace in Nigeria.

To worsen matter, the media regulatory agencies, especially, The Nigeria Press Council (NPC), the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) which are statutorily empowered to compel compliance of media professionals to ethical code of practice were not forthcoming in checking the excesses of the media.

Therefore, securing compliance of media professionals to reportorial code of conduct in Nigeria, especially, during elections has been very problematic. From the first election in the post-independent era in 1964/65 till date, hardly was there any election in which the mass media were not blamed for instigating, fuelling or spreading electoral violence.

It is similarly worrisome that media professionals themselves know that it was improper to flagrantly violate the ethical code of conduct as well as the various rules governing the conduct of election as espoused in the *Electoral Act*. Yet, they continue their contemptuous disposition to the rules and ethics of journalism. Although, proprietorial interest has been identified as the main cause of such attitude, yet, due to the prevailing economic crunch in the country which has made the unemployment market to be saturated, media professionals found it difficult to resign from any medium where the proprietors dictate contrary to the ethics of journalism and laws of the land.

Based on this, the media continue to lose credibility as source of objective information, professionalism of journalists dwindle at alarming rate, democracy and good government are threatened and the political development of Nigeria is lumbering. The political communicator then becomes curious on one hand about these problems, especially as it concerns how to promptly checkmate an evolving state of anomie and through that put the Nigerian democracy on track. On the other hand, the study is curious about the degree of media compliance to their professional codes of conduct as well as how such compliance or otherwise has over the years affected political communication towards engendering violence in the society, how the violence has affected the socio political development of Nigeria, and how such effect can be prevented and controlled. These issues also raise the research questions that will be addressed in this work. At the moment, scholarly contributions on the

remote as well as immediate causes of electoral violence in Nigeria are not scarce. However, scholarly contributions from the mass media perspective as contributory agents are rare. This is the obvious gap this study intends to fill.

## **1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study aims at exploring how best the existing plural media system in Nigeria could be exploited for the sustenance of the country's nascent democracy and through that enthrone the culture of a peaceful electioneering process in Nigeria.

The specific objectives for the study are:

1. To evaluate whether the Nigerian media complied with their reportorial code which demands factual, balanced and fair reportage of electioneering processes between 1999 and 2011.
2. To determine how compliance or noncompliance to the reportorial code has affected the relationship between political communication and political violence in Nigeria.
3. To highlight the effects of media generated political violence in the democratic and overall political development of the country.
4. To recommend policy measures that can be taken to prevent media generated political violence in Nigeria.

## **1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Did the Nigerian media comply with their reportorial code which demands factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of electioneering processes between 1999 and 2011?



2. How did the compliance or noncompliance to the reportorial code affect the relationship between political communication and political violence in Nigeria?
3. What are the effects of media generated political violence on the democratic and overall political development in Nigeria?
4. What policy measures can be taken to prevent media generated political violence in Nigeria?

### **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The theoretical and practical significance of this study is that it calls for serious action on the need to checkmate a state of anomie that has taken over media operations in Nigeria during elections in the post-independent era. The study is of the view that societal efforts in the direction of media instigating violence before, during and after elections have been cosmetic. Absence of concerted efforts in this direction was largely responsible for the poor performance of the media during past elections in the post-independent Nigeria.

The study, therefore, underscores the importance of political communication in the society's quest for peaceful, hitch-free, credible, free and fair elections, based on strict adherence to the permissive and non-permissive rules of the game of politics as well as ethical code of conduct for media professionals in Nigeria.

The study is also significant in that it recognizes the complex nature of the Nigerian political terrain where on one hand, the centri-petal and centri-fugal pendulum could swing in opposite directions that could thwart the national objectives of conducting violence free elections and on the other hand where political pride, ambition, avarice, revenge and disorderly appetites of certain politicians could wreck havoc on the society.

Furthermore, the study revealed the reasons why the press has been blamed over major problems which reared its head in the conduct of many post-independent elections in Nigeria. It equally revealed why objectivity which a former *New York Times* correspondent, David Halberstem, described as “the basic rule of Journalistic theology” (Parenti, 1986:52) is somehow difficult in media news presentation especially during elections in Nigeria.

The study shows how the press voluntarily surrendered a vast amount of its editorial independence at election times. Furthermore, the study could serve as a research materials for students of politics just as politicians, policy makers, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) could learn greatly from the study.

### **1.9 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study covers the four General Elections so far conducted in Nigeria under the current democratic dispensation i.e. 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011.

The choice of the commencement date of the study is informed by the fact that it was the take off date for the current democratic dispensation in the country, while the terminal date is 2011. It is therefore worthy of note that it represents the longest ever civilian rule in the post-independent Nigeria.

### **1.10 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Communicator:-** The communicator in the context of this study refers to the giver or sender of published stories in the press.

**Communicatee:** The communicatee refers to the literate members of the public who consume published stories in the press.

**Constructionism:** A political communication term which deals with how people construct meanings to media message after an exposure to media message.

**Surveillance:** Topmost expectation of the public from the press, especially, during elections is that of surveillance. The people expect a lot from the press in the area of combing the environment for useful information on happenings on the political terrain.

**Election:-** This refers to the process by which state actors were chosen by the electorate during the elections covered by this study.

**FEDECO:-** This refers to the electoral body which organized all the elections into State Assemblies, Governorship, National Assembly and the Presidency during Nigeria's Second Republic up to the period when the Republic collapsed on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1983.

**INEC:-** This acronym refers to Independent National Electoral Commission, a body set up by government with responsibilities similar to that of FEDECO. Since 1999, this body has been conducting all elections into state and federal legislative and executive arms of the government.

**Objectivity:** In this study, objectivity is used to refer to a situation in which the political reporters avoid becoming politically active.

**Political Communication:** In the context of this study, political communication refers to communication that has actual or political effects on the functioning of a political entity called Nigeria.

**Political Parties:-** These are licensed office-seeking social groups, formed primarily for the purpose of contesting all elections, winning the elections and thus put their policies into operations.

**Political Reporting:-** In the context of this study, political reporting entails the art of rendering account of newsy activities or occurrences in the polity especially during the period of elections.

**Electoral Violence:** This refers to politically motivated inhuman behaviour such as rioting, arson, physical assaults, oppression, harassment, intimidation, murder which are purely directed at political objects. It is used interchangeable with political violence in the study.

**Press:-** This term, as used in the study refers to radio, television, newspapers, wire services, magazines as well as other channels of communication that are involved in the gathering and dissemination of news.

**Republic:-** This refers to a phase in the political history of Nigeria in which civilian helmsmen at various levels of governance were popularly elected usually for a period of four years.

## **1.11 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter explores what could be described as the foundations of the study as it tackles introduction to the study, history of electoral violence in Nigeria, importance of elections in a democracy, importance of political reporting in the survival of democracy in Nigeria, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the

study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and delimitation of the study, operational definition of terms and organization of the study.

Chapter two contains review of relevant literature. The review is categorized into two. The first group discusses the concept of violence, types of violence, causes of violence and solutions as well as the contributory role of the media while the second category focuses on political reporting and the role of the media in democracy. The essence of the review is to peruse existing literature as well as research papers on the role of political communication in the healthy growth of democracy in a political environment such as Nigeria, with a view to providing a summary of knowledge and identify gaps or vacuum which the study intends to fill.

The chapter also contains four relevant theories for the study. They are: Conflict theory, power theory, cause and effect theory and the magic bullet theory of the press. While the four theories are relevant, the study relies heavily on the magic bullet theory of the press and applied it as the striking theory while the other three are used as supportive theories.

Chapter three describes the methodology used in data collection and analysis while chapter four presents the analysis of the data used in the study.

Chapter five highlights and discusses the findings of the study while the last, chapter six, contains the summary of the thesis, conclusion and recommendations derived from the study, contributions to knowledge and suggestions for further studies.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The essence of this thematic review is to peruse existing literature as well as research papers on the role of political communication in the healthy growth of democracy in a political environment such as Nigeria with a view to providing a summary of knowledge and identify gaps or vacuum which this study intends to fill. While the review is guided by the Research Questions, efforts were similarly made to explain electoral violence and political reporting for a clear understanding of the issues raised in the study.

#### ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA, 1999 – 2011

The current democratic dispensation which took off in 1999 has been fraught with violence. The most dramatic and worrisome aspect of the violence is that the degree of occurrence increases at every election across the country.

Umar, (2003:210) attributed the problem to politicians across the country who employed violence in the pursuit of their political interests. According to him:

*The most worrisome behavior of our politicians is the manner they have intertwined politics with violence. They are not only ready to recruit and work with political thugs, but have come to accept thugs and violence as a 'legitimate' part of the political process.*

Writing on electoral violence from the perspective of the North-East geo-political zone, Umar (2003:210) stated that “there is hardly any politician or political party in the zone that does not have a militia group or at least one person who has ties to thugs and has the



capability to organize them (thugs) to attack, maim or assassinate a political rival or destroy political office in furtherance of political interest.”

Irrespective of the geo-political zone in Nigeria where in politician resides, Umar (2003:210-211) argued that Nigerian politicians have the same attitude to politics. He stated that politicians in Nigeria do not believe in failure or losing an election or even the thought of it happening. They can only take responsibility of winning but not losing.

A major reason why politicians employ violence has been attributed to quest for power and the drive towards primitive accumulation of wealth (Ologbenla, 2003:80), Ogunsanwo, (1994:14) & Umar, (2003:210). As a result, Ogbuide (2010:43) declared that in Nigeria, “the political class is believed to be making it practically impossible to conduct free and fair elections.” The attitude of the political class is largely responsible for such assertion. For instance, during the 2007 elections, there was a report concerning falsification of voters’ register such that names of Bill Clinton, Mike Tyson were smuggled into the voters’ register. In order for politicians in the North East geo-political zone of the country to achieve their selfish political goal, Umar, (2003:212) stated that politicians in the zone used the youths as cannon powder for the perpetration of violence in the zone in particular and the nation at large. “Politicians recruit them to serve as hit men, bodyguards and militia for the parties.”

Mu’azu (2003:375) however, described violence as the raw material for the media to produce news. He argued that violence has a natural attraction to the media to improve sales. He noted that the attention that is given to violence by the media depends on how it unfolds. He stressed that as soon as violence is suppressed, media attention moves to other issues unless it recurs or takes on new dimensions.

A recent survey conducted by INEC and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung on voter apathy across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria after the 2011 elections revealed that in all regions, violence and insecurity were major reasons for apathy. The survey provided the under listed figures. In the North East where serious apprehension was nursed due to pre-election violence in certain areas in the zone, 61% felt that violence was a major reason for voter apathy. This however was much lower than the figures returned from the South South geo-political zone (86%) and South West (83%). Reflecting on the extent to which violence had become an endemic problem, the following figures were similarly returned from the other geo-political zones; North Central (60%), North West (86%) and South East (52%).

In other words, the degree of occurrence of electoral violence during the 2011 elections was highest in the South South zone, followed by North West, South West, North East, North Central and South East respectively, South East being the least.

Ma'azu (2003:380) observed that even though many of the geo-political zones cannot boast of a vibrant locally – based print media. They however benefited from the services of print media based in other parts of the country.

*The newspapers and magazines outside the zone have correspondents or state editors in each of the states reporting for them, in this sense, national media. On this basis, it can be argued that the issues and events in the zone get national attention.*

Mu'azu (2003:381) listed the print media thus: *Champion, Daily Times, The Comet, The Post, The Punch, ThisDay, The Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, Nigerian Standard, Daily Monitor, The Examiner, New Nigerian, Daily Trust, The News Magazine and Insider Weekly.*

In addition, Mu'azu (2003:381) mentioned the presence of *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) in the zone in addition to local broadcast media. However, it should be noted that the pattern is

the same in other geo-political zones. It explains part of the reasons why the Lagos-Ibadan axis of the Nigerian press are regarded as powerful and influential.

A feature of most of the post-independent elections in Nigeria is that of political violence. . Scholars, especially those in the field of political behavior and Sociology had at different times attempted to operationalize and adduce reasons for violence. (Ologbenla, (2003:80);, Olurode, (1987:64); Mu'azu, (2003:375);, Anifowose, (1982:3); Ugo, (2004:105), Hoijer (1996:54); among others). They articulated indecent human behavior such as rioting, arson, verbal and physical assaults, oppression, harassment, intimidation, murder etc as variants of violence. They equally viewed violence as politically motivated and directed at political objects. From their postulations, one can deduce violence as a behavioural concept in which aggrieved or agitated individual or groups, resort to acts of muscle flexing, verbal and physical assault, thuggery, rioting, protesting, killing, maiming, destruction of valuable property, and arson among others. It is also a way of expressing grievances and discontent in the polity whenever state machineries tend to have been used to favour a particular candidate or political party during elections.

In what could be described as prelude or background to this politics of desperation, Uche (1989:53) through his work entitled: *Mass Media People and Politics in Nigeria* contends that the demise of public confidence and trust in government owned media in Nigeria started during the first post-independent election of 1964 in the Western Region.

He noted that the election was very controversial with various contentious issues bothering on allegations of rigging throughout the region which were substantiated and proved beyond doubt. In spite of this, Uche (1989:53) asserts that “the NBC still went ahead to broadcast

the results of the discredited election. This angered some people in the Region who reacted sharply by cutting off their rediffusion boxes which relayed the false election results.

In a related perspective, Anifowose (1982:220-221), writing on “switching of results” says in several cases during the election, the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) candidates were declared elected by the Returning Officer and accordingly issued certificates only to hear over the radio that their opponents were declared elected. He cited two prominent examples to buttress his assertion. The first was the rigging at Ilesha Urban constituency in which both the NBC in Lagos and the WNBS/WNTV in Ibadan announced the defeat of Olowofoyeku, a former Attorney-General in the region. “However, the same radio stations and the Electoral Commission later announced him as the victor.” The second example happened in Alhaji Adegbenro’s constituency at Egba south I where counting did not take place. However, Anifowose states that “the ENBS which had a mobile station at the Oke-Ado residence of Chief Awolowo, in Ibadan, broadcast one set of results while the WNBS/WNTV and the NBC in Lagos and Ibadan broadcast another set.

Unprofessional conduct of media personnel during the elections was therefore a major prelude to the outbreak of electoral violence in the region popularly known as *operation wet it!*

Writing on the “history, consequences and solutions to political violence in Nigeria”, Ali (2003:32-35) identified a number of causes of electoral violence in Nigeria. The causes ranged from: Intolerance, Unemployment and idleness of able bodied young men and women, complicity and partisanship of the security agents, government policy/displacement of youths, composition of electoral body, faithlessness of politicians in the different religions they professed, election rigging, tribalism and nepotism among others.

Similarly, Ogundiya (2003:63-65) identified poor electoral administration and lack of well – defined ideology as well as politics of ethnicity.

While stressing that electoral violence has rendered transition from civilian to civilian administration problematic, Ogundiya (2003: 59) further identified use of religion, ethnic sentiments, outright bribery, the power of incumbency, corruption, abuse of electoral processes as additional causes of electoral violence.

Ayeni – Akere (2003:79) on his part identified the do-or-die approach to politics as a major cause of electoral violence.

While describing electoral violence as a quintessential elite affair, he added that “it is the inordinate struggle for places in the structure of power that has often degenerated into open violence by hired thugs or ethnic – communal groups, who are deceived into believing that their interests are about to be imperiled”.

On the consequences/effects of political violence on the political development of Nigeria, Ali (2003: 63-65) noted that several people were dispatched to the grave beyond, bread winners were killed in the presence of their wives, just as the acts breed and nurtures insecurity. He further stressed that “those who do not engage in these acts of violence are made to feel hopeless, helpless and intimidated by the sheer use of unnecessary force and this leads to loss of confidence and a sense of inadequacy”.

Ali further contends that uncontrolled violence has the potential of truncating democratic practices in the country and sabotaging the will of the electorates at elections. According to him, “it may lead to a situation where leaders that emerge are elected by the minority because the majority that has fears for their lives will not go near the electoral process”.

On the solutions, Ali (2003:36-38) identified the following steps:

- (i) Legislations that would provide very tough penalties for promoters and perpetrators of political violence.
- (ii) Enforcement of the law. While noting that dearth of good laws is not a problem in Nigeria, he stresses that enforcement is a big challenge. “Our situation is not helped in this regard by the legendary corruption of those whose duty is to enforce the laws.”
- (iii) Political violence should be topmost factor for disqualifying political office seekers in Nigeria while prosecution of any one who is confirmed to be a sponsor of political violence must be a national policy.
- (iv) Good home bringing and proper education of the youth will also go a long way in dousing the waves of political violence.
- (v) The media should collaborate with other professional bodies as well as non-governmental organizations in promoting programmes and issues that will highlight the evil effects of electoral violence.
- (vi) The media should reposition itself by black-listing known promoters of electoral violence.

Ogundiya (2003:66) equally suggested a change in our attitude, orientation and behaviour to ensure a stable democratic polity. He equally advocated “a re-think, on the philosophical foundation of our political parties along a clear ideological disposition.”

While this study agreed with the above scholarly submissions, however, an obvious fact they omitted which this study intends to fill is the absence of ethical and legal rules guiding the operations of the media which if applied, could have reduced outbreak of violence which later occurred in the region as well as subsequent elections in Nigeria, especially, between

1999 and 2011. There is no doubt that their submissions omitted the contributory role of the press to electoral violence.

Political violence has also emerged as a strategic game plan by desperate politicians to turn election table in their favour during electioneering and voting. There have been instances in Nigeria where thugs were hired by desperate politicians with the main objective of bulldozing opponents into passivity or passivity into demonstrative supporters either during party primaries, conventions, campaigns or voting. The height of such political maneuvering is the procurement of acid and firearms to fight political opponents. *Metro FM*, a Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) station based in Lagos, in its news report at 8.00am on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2003, said angry supporters of a defeated candidate of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) freely used 'acid' while protesting the option A4 voting system that was used at the primary election. Corroborating the report, *The Guardian* newspaper, quoting the Commander of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS), an arm of the Nigeria Police, created to fight organized crime, Mr. Tunde Sobulo, said the angry party supporters bathed two policemen with acid during the fracas (*Guardian*, Fri. 10<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2003:3)

Ologbenla (2003:80) attributed the above trend to the Nigerian state structure, the petty-bourgeoisie who runs its apparatus and their poor economic base. His words: "They seek to use state power to accumulate wealth in a primitive manner within the Nigerian political economy. Thus, gaining access to political power is a do-or-die affair and violence, assassinations and ethnicity is often used to gain access to power and to sustain it."

An indication confirming Ologbenla's assertion that a major root cause of political violence could be attributed to the do-or-die attitude of Nigerian politicians was the fact that the

outcome of the 2007 election were reversed by Election Tribunals. According to Ibeanu (2009: 1-2).

*Election Tribunals and courts have overturned a number of elections by either installing those who were initially declared losers or ordering fresh polls. Governorship elections in Kogi, Enugu, Edo, Abia and Rivers among others have been nullified for various reasons. Even the presidential election, the outcome of which was contested all the way to the Supreme Court, the verdict that upheld the outcome seems to have split Nigerian legal and public opinions down the middle.*

Meanwhile, Akinboye (2009: 192) however asserts that “the problems surrounding the conduct of the 2007 elections could be attributed to inordinate quest for power elongation by the incumbent president.” There is a general assumption that in a democracy, the media would act as platform for the dissemination of strategic information to the citizenry as well as acting as vehicle for mobilization and civic education.

This assumption is heightened by the fact that historical antecedents of the Nigerian media are very rich in this context. Mu’azu, (2003:372) states that “the expectations placed on the media have historical roots in the struggle for independence and after. The media were seen and used as a platform to rally the disparate Nigerian people to struggle for independence”

A school of thought however asserts that the media can contribute to the escalation or de-escalation of violence due to the manner they gather, process or package and disseminate information to the public. Leading proponents of this school of thought are Denis McQuail and Ralph Akinfeleye.

While McQuail (1987:266) notes that “the media can provoke a riot, create a culture of rioting and provide lessons on how to riot, spread a disturbance from place to place,” Akinfeleye (2004:106) on his part observes that:



*By their very nature and practice of their craft, journalists can make or mar the society and the politicians they serve. They can lift politicians up and they can pull them down. They can protect or harm the politicians they serve. They can cause war without participating in it. They can also bring about peace, harmony and concord within the society they serve.*

However, McQuail and Akinfeleye's assertion have been a major source of concern since early 19<sup>th</sup> century when US President, Mckinley was assassinated. Burleigh (2009:72-88) states that Mckinley was assassinated in 1901 by Leon Czolgosz. According to him:

*Czolgosz approached Mckinley outside the Temple of Music, where he shot him at close range. One bullet was deflected by the president's breast bone, but the second went so deep into his abdomen that surgeons could not recover it. The president slowly bled to death. A search revealed that Czolgosz not only had a newspaper clipping in his pocket but that he had used the same 32-calibre Iver Johnson revolver which had been used for the assassination of Prime Minister of Spain and King Umberto of Italy. (Burleigh, 2009:72-88)*

A detailed news report or in-depth reportage of the assassination of the Prime Minister of Spain as well as King Umberto of Italy provided home lesson for the assailant of President Mckinley.

It is instructive to state that the media are seen as part of the problem in Nigeria, because of the way they either gather and report or the way some political programmes were structured. Political violence falls directly into the category of hard news stuff. In the words of Fedler et al (2005:503), hard news gives important "information immediately" while Dominick (1993:341) described it as "news of important public events such as crime, environment, science, international happenings, social conditions, and the economy among others."

A major reason why media and violence remain a major problem of media coverage of elections in Nigeria is that of partisanship. This in turn gives birth to ethical problem in

which media professionals set aside the code of ethics for Nigerian journalists, put together by the Nigerian Press Organization (NPO)

From the first post-independent elections of 1964/65, this partisanship agenda has remained a core factor in any discussion of electoral violence. During the Second, Third and Fourth Republics, it was the same scenario.

Although it would be misleading to contend wholeheartedly that the media was responsible for all the political violence which trailed the past elections due to the fact that the politicians who are the objects of media coverage are equally unethical in their conduct. Uwalaka (2000:1) captured this trend in the following words:

*In Nigeria, public officers, often make ethical undertaking and claims they do not intend to discharge with diligence, honesty and integrity. To foster true peace and lasting stability, politics must be practiced according to a set of moral values and code of norms. Politics must be both value-driven and value dependent.*

Fadakinte (2014:74) on his part attributes electoral violence to factional struggle within the dominant class in the process of state formation when there is no cohesive dominant class or a ruling class. According to him, “in Nigeria, the dominant class has not yet emerged as a strong and cohesive class. At independence, the dominant class got political power but without economic power because economic power was still with the metropolitan capitalists in Europe, as they dominated the economy. Consequently, what we had at independence was a dominant class who was given political power but who did not have economic power. The result was the dominant class, who had broken into factions during the period of nationalist struggle began to struggle among themselves for resources, political and economic with the aim of taking control of state power and consolidating it”. This struggle, at various stages of

the political process (primary, campaign and voting) when it reaches crescendo usually resort in violence.

Article 96(1) of the Electoral Act (2010) states that “no candidate, person or group of persons shall directly or indirectly threaten any person with the use of force or violence during any political campaign in order to compel that person or any other person to support or refrain from supporting a political party or candidate.”

In most of the Nigerian post-independent elections, this rule was hardly enforced. Maitambari (2011:80) for instance observed that during the 2007 elections, snatching and destruction of electoral materials was rampant. “Thugs and party agents, sometimes with officials snatch and/or destroy ballot boxes in the area in which they suspect their opponents have an advantage. In some other instances, stolen ballot boxes are presented to the electoral officials as genuine documents”.

Gutmann and Thompson (1997: xiii) contend that “public officials use means such as violence and threat of violence to achieve a set goal”. In other words, they use bad means to achieve what they perceive to be good ends. Maitambari (2011:71) using the Nigerian Second Republic politics confirmed the above assertion.

Quoting Wright (1984), Maitambari (2011:71) remarked as follows:

*The NPN undeniably influenced FEDECO and was able to control the activities of some of its officials. The deployment of the police, then under Sunday Adewusi and other paramilitary units before and during the elections was allegedly designed to ensure that violence was deterred or effectively contained. When violence did break out as in Oyo and Ondo states, the police were used to defend the status quo, namely, an unbelievable NPN victory.*

Thus, according to Anyanya (2011:19):

*Electoral violence has remained an almost recurring feature in Nigeria's democratic and electoral narrative. Even in a country where the ugly specter of electoral violence is anticipated and prepared for, the violence that engulfed parts of Nigeria in the aftermath of the 2011 elections were undeniably unprecedented.*

On the conduct of the 2011 presidential elections, Anyanya (2013:25) noted that “gory images of widespread violence, dead bodies, burnt vehicles and charred property would sadly linger for long in the memories of some as the defining image of that election. Even in a country seemingly accustomed to electoral violence, it has to be admitted that 2011 was unprecedented in scale, scope and severity”.

Anyanya also recalled that violence broke out almost simultaneously in the following states of the federation: Kano, Kaduna, Adamawa, Katsina, Plateau, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno, Sokoto, leading to the imposition of state-wide 24 hours curfew.

Quoting the Human Rights Watch, Anyanya stated that within three days, over 800 persons lost their lives to the election violence while about 65,000 people were displaced. Part of the victims of the violence were members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) whose national spread and contributions in the conduct of elections has been highly commendable.

In a related development, Alemika (2011:121) identified violence as a major reason why voters turn out is usually low during elections. He noted that scores of people were killed before, during and after series of elections held in April and May 2003 and 2007. According to him:

*The principal objectives of electoral violence are to eliminate, demoralize and neutralize opposition so as to facilitate the commission of electoral fraud. On many occasions and in many places, the perpetrators enjoyed the support of security*

*agencies whose main function is to prevent violence, apprehend and prosecute those who threaten free and fair elections. (Alemika, 2011:121)*

Alemika, quoting a 2004 Human Rights Watch report further contends that “the elections held in 2003 and 2007 were preceded by widespread intra-party and inter-party violence that continued on the polling days. Among others, he observes that:

*In April and May 2003, at least one hundred people were killed and many more injured... majority of serious abuses were perpetrated by members or supporters of the ruling party, the PDP.*

Meanwhile, Olurode (2011:105-106) contends that ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo issued a direct signal to the possibility of electoral violence during the 2007 elections when he stated at a campaign rally in his home state that “this election is a do-or-die affair for the PDP” He also revealed that following the declaration, mass transfer of police officers followed. He added that such deployment has become an established pattern in Nigeria.

In addition to the deployment of police officers who had been briefed on how to work for the victory of the ruling party, Olurode, quoting General Victor Malu, a former Chief of Army staff who gave a vivid testimony on how government equally used the army to perpetrate electoral fraud; noted as follows:

*In 2003, the PDP rigged the elections with the help of the military. What happened was that before the close of polls, a vehicle either from Government House or any of the official vehicles will arrive at the polling booth, with armed soldiers, Air Force, immigration, or customs personnel. They will start to shoot in the air. There would be pandemonium, and the voters will run away. These armed people will collect all the polling materials, take them to wherever they wanted, do whatever they wanted with them before they will resurface many hours after ballot boxes have been already stuffed. That was my personal experience in Benue state where I come from (Olurode, 2011:106).*

The above instances are not only newsy but worth reporting adequately by the media. When violence thus break, the media can not ignore it. As the political editor of *Daily Independent* newspaper, Oboh (2014) advised as follows: “if you don’t want negative things including violence published, please refrain from doing negative things”

The contentious issue in this study therefore is that reporting such issues or incidents must be done in an objective manner such that it does not glorify the acts, like the example of *Tell* magazine cover story of April 30, 2007.

In the *lead* or *intro* of the story anchored by Adekunle Yusuf, the magazine wrote,

*The results were late in coming, but when the announcement finally came, many cities across the federation were instantly engulfed in wild protest, protesting the daylight robbery of their mandate. Simultaneously, similar incidents ruled the atmosphere in Osogbo, Benin, Enugu, Ado-Ekiti and Abeokuta (Tell, April 30,2007 Pg. 19)*

The *Nigerian Tribune* published a similar story thus:

*Fears and cynicism of Nigerians were yesterday confirmed as the gubernatorial and state assemblies elections were conducted in a do-or-die manner with massive rigging and extensive violence recorded across the country. (Nigerian Tribune, April 15, 2007 leadstory)*

A careful professional perusal of the above samples of news stories on the conduct of the elections revealed a high degree of application of framing which conveyed politically loaded images. Just consider the tone of presentation, slighting, the accompanying headlines and vocabulary. Example of headlines: Bayelsa, boils, militants attack government house, Buhari, Yar’Adua in fierce context for power; Bloody day in Osun, Edo, Kano, Ondo; DPO, wife, 11 policemen killed (*The Nation*, April 21, 2007).

In a way, a school of thought sees violence as a form of political communication. Leading scholars in this school of thought, Rod Hague and Martin Harrop in a 2004 study argued that

the main business of politicians is communication; while their task is to signal their agenda, policies and strategies to other players of the political game.

*Indeed, in public affairs, words often speak louder than actions. Even when politicians do act, their actions convey meanings that transform their behaviour into communication. Thus, when President Truman authorized atom bombs to be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, he was also indicating to Japanese opponents his willingness to continue using weapons of mass destruction on civilian population. (Hague & Harrop, 2004:105)*

Various political scholars viewed political communication differently. While Habermas (1978), cited in Hague & Harrop (2004:105) describe democracy as a form of political communication, North (1967) quoted by Isaak (1981:293) says “politics could not exist without communication nor could wars be fought”. Almond and Coleman (1960:45) note that political communication is a pervasive activity and that all of the functions performed in the political system – political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, rule-making, rule application and rule adjudication are all performed by means of communication. Consequently, Blake and Haroldsen (1975:44) assert that “political communication is a communication that has actual or political effects on the functioning of a political state or other political entity.”

Professor Friday Ndubuisi (2014) of the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos, said during an in-depth interview that publication of stories that could induce violence could be blamed on the Nigerian environment, the social factors or the ills of the society and partisanship.

While noting that most of the Nigerian media are not objective in their reportage of election news, Prof. Ndubuisi attributed the problem to the fact that politicians have penetrated into

the media. He stressed that one should also note that most of the politicians are owners of very strong and influential newspapers. He further remarks that:

*It is difficult to build a strong democracy without the input from the media. It puts us in a dilemma because if the press is not able to cover or tell us the actual situation during elections, it will be difficult for the public to know what the situation is. The Nigerian politicians are desperate. They want to win election by all means and the bulk of the public are semi-illiterate. So they depend essentially on the media to be able to get the tempo of what is happening and the media have not been able to do that and so, it becomes difficult for the public to access the information.*

**Source: Field Interview by the author.**

It is note-worthy to assert that the deep penetration of the Nigerian media by the politicians which Prof. Ndubuisi raised has a historical antecedents. Ezera (1960), Omu (1996) and Uche (1989) alluded to this assertion.

While Ezera (1960:30) attributed the penetration of Nigerian politicians to the media to the birth of 1922 Sir Hugh Clifford's Constitution under which several political parties "sprang up over night and several newspapers commenced publication," Omu (1996:6) equally described the late twenties and early thirties as the twilight of the political press.

Among the newspapers established by nationalist politicians or people with high political interests during the period were: *Lagos Weekly Record*, established in 1891 and founded by Herbert Macaulay and Thomas Horatio Jackson, *Eko Akete*, founded by Deoye Deniga on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1922, *Lagos Daily News*, established by Victor Bababunmi on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1926 and bought over by Herbert Macaulay in 1928, *The Weekly Spectator*, owned by Akinwande Savage, established 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1923, *The Daily Telegraph*, established by Ernest Sesei Ikoli on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1927, *The Nigerian Daily Times*, set up by Adeyemo Alakija in 1926, *The West African Pilot*, founded by Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1937 and *Nigerian Tribune*, set up by



Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1949. Omu (1996: 7) further states that in a bid to further his political interests across the country, Dr. Azikiwe “constructed a chain of newspapers with the following titles; *Eastern Nigerian Guardian* (Port Harcourt, 1940), *Nigerian Spokesman* (Onitsha, 1943), *Southern Nigeria Defender* (Warri, 1943), *Daily Comet* (Lagos,/Kano, 1944), *Eastern Sentinel* (Enugu, 1955) *Nigerian Monitor* (Uyo, 1960). Omu (1978:248) captured the danger of politicians involvement in the establishment of the press in the following words “the newspapers were completely immersed in the vortex of partisan politics and were in no position to prepare the people for the challenges of independence and national Unity”

Assessing the performance of the Nigerian press during the First Republic, Omu (1996:9) states that:

*The first few years of independence saw little change in the political style of the newspapers. Indeed, the struggle for power among the politicians assumed a new fury and the competing party newspapers advertised their fanaticism.*

From the first post-independence elections of 1964/65 till date, a major problem of press coverage of elections remains that of political polarization which has affected the detachment and objectivity of journalists. Thus, in the words of Omu (1978:36):

*There is often the temptation to get emotionally involved in current political controversy as if the press is a party to the confrontation or is an official organ of a political party or interest group.*

A school of thought is however of the view that the deep interest of Nigerian politicians interest in the media could be regarded as part of the lessons learnt from the British colonizing powers. Negrine (1996:47) contends that “despite the growing independence of the press from political parties, vestiges of 19<sup>th</sup> century practices remained as politicians

persisted in summoning newspapers to their side of the political battle by whatever means possible”

He cited the example of *The Observer*, *The Standard*, *The Globe* and *The Pall Mall Gazette* which were receiving aid from the Unionist funds. He provided an outstanding example of politicians seeking to gain press support through acquisition of newspaper titles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the purchase of the *Daily Chronicle* by supporters of Lloyd George. “Lloyd George sought to obtain regular press support through the direct means of ownership”

In a related development, Negrine (1996:48) similarly asserts that the press barons, notably, Beaverbrook who owned *The Express* and Rothermere who owned *The Mail* “amassed their vast power through their industrial holdings and/or their ownership of large circulation, and profitable newspapers. Both newspaper proprietors decided to use their newspapers to pursue a political philosophy and policy”.

Writing on proprietorial influence in election coverage, Adedayo and Agbaje (2010:96) states that: “Nigerian newspapers are partisan according to the lines dictated by their owners in the political equilibrium”. They cited several examples to buttress this argument.

First was the call for the sacking of former INEC chairman, Prof. Maurice Iwu, following what they called “the near-universal condemnation of the conduct of the 2011 General Elections and the palpable anger... in a massively rigged exercise.” They contend that *Champion*, a newspaper owned by Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, the INEC boss’s Kinsman, took it upon itself to deflect all arrows shot at Iwu and targeted at his removal.

The second example was the re-run elections in Ekiti state following the Appeal Court verdict which ordered for a re-run in some local councils in the state. The re-run involved Governor

Segun Oni of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Dr. Kayode Fayemi of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) Adedayo and Agbaje (2010:iii) contend that due to the political affiliation of the owner of *Compass* newspaper, Otunba Gbenga Daniel who belonged to the PDP, "*The Compass* took it upon itself to project and report ultra-partisan slant of stories on the elections from the prism of the PDP. *The Nation* and *National Life* too, also chose to walk the other route by publishing stories favourable to the AC."

In a study on the influence of ownership in Nigerian newspapers' coverage of national issues, Sobowale (1986:111) observes, "it has been shown that when the ownership of a country's media is vested in government or concentrated in the hands of a group or 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 functionalist Lasswell says are the basic tasks of the media, or providing entertainment, according to Wright, the media are turned into 'indispensable tools' for retaining power by those controlling them".

The performance of the mass media in the Lagos-Ibadan axis, an axis described by Chaimuta (1996: 31) as "the hottest in Nigeria even in Africa" during the 2007 elections further illustrates Sobowale's assertion. In a final report entitled; "Monitoring of Media Coverage of The Nigerian General Elections 2007" by a Lagos based Centre For Constitutional Governance in the entire South West region of Nigeria, cited in Popoola (2009:165-167), the itemized report has it that all political parties received some coverage on NTA 2 Channel 5 in Lagos stressing however that the station's news coverage was such that the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) received a total of 63% share of news coverage of political actors,

Action Congress (AC) 11%, All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) 7%, Alliance for Democracy (AD) 3% with majority of other parties receiving less than 1%

On Radio Lagos, a medium owned by the Lagos state government, the report stated that the station afforded the AC party the dominant share of coverage with 48% of its coverage of political actors. It was followed by the PDP with 28% share and the Labour Party with 10%. According to other reports, the National Democratic Party (NDP), Democratic Peoples Alliance (DPA) and ANPP received between 2-3% share of the coverage. Lagos was then under the control of an AD governor, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu who later defected to the AC,

In a related development, the report stated that the PDP which controlled the Federal Government received the highest amount of coverage on Radio Nigeria with a 27% share of coverage. ANPP received 2% and United Democratic Party (UDP) 7%. Nine other parties received between 4% and 6% share of coverage on the station. The report further states that in spite of the high number of Political parties that ought to receive significant coverage, the PDP dominated with 58% share of news coverage of the political actors. The AC received 12% and ANPP 8%. The Federal Government owns Radio Nigeria.

The performance of Ray Power, Nigeria's first privately owned radio station on the other hand was such that equal attention was given to the AC and PDP with 27% and 26% respectively. The ANPP, African Democratic Congress (ADC) and Labour Party also received significant access. While ANPP received 16% share of coverage, Labour Party received 13% and ADC 9%. The report however notes that overall, AC dominated its news

bulletins as it received 40% share of news coverage, PDP 26% and National Conscience Party (NCP) 16%.

The trend was the same in the print media. For example, the oldest tabloid in the country after the *Daily Times* whose publication has been erratic since its sale to Folio Communications, *The Nigerian Tribune* gave 55% of space to the PDP while AC had 22% with ANPP receiving 9% of coverage of political actors. The Labour Party received 4% and AD 3%. The newspaper belonged to the family of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

In the area of political advertisement, the report stated that “the PDP purchased the highest amount of advertising in the newspapers with a 65% share of advertising in the *New Nigerian*, 51% share in *The Guardian*, 75% in the *Nigerian Tribune*, and an 85% share of all political advertising in the *Vanguard*. AC was the second largest advertiser in the newspapers with a 25% share in both the *New Nigerian* and *The Guardian*. The Federal Government and all the 19 northern states owned the *New Nigerian*, while the *Guardian* and *Vanguard* are privately owned.

While evaluating the coverage of the campaign activities of the parties, the report stated that the “PDP dominated the front page of the newspapers. The party received 47% of front page coverage across all the newspapers compared with 28% for AC. PDP received 56% of front page coverage in the *Nigerian Tribune* and 53% in the *New Nigerian*. In a reverse of this, AC received the highest amount of coverage on the front page of *The Guardian* with a 45% share of front-page coverage.

Justifying the trend as presented above, a renowned economist, Aluko (2007:4) asserts that “a government-backed political party or candidate cannot have equal access in the media

whether print or electronic with privately backed political parties or candidates”. Aluko (2007:4) asked:

*How, for instance, can a poor but excellently suitable party or candidate pay for the electoral costs of radio and television advertisements, as the government-backed one, even when the media are available for equal grab? It can only be free and equal if the advertorial are free of cost. How can a governor who is campaigning for re-election and who is ipso facto followed by his state —owned radio and television, in the guise that they are to cover the official commissioning of government provided facilities not have unequal coverage than the ‘Green horn who is campaigning to take the governorship from the incumbent governor?’*

Aluko, (2007:4) consequently advised that “we can only reduce the degree of inequality of access to the media among the contending parties and candidates by the state and government putting structures in place in order to reduce the obvious and grinding inequalities”.

In a related development, Akinola (2007:2) argued that “a close study of the media whether of the print or the electronic shows that there is actually no equal access by all political parties to the media. A lot of factors are responsible for this situation. State-owned or public media organizations have virtually been turned into mouthpieces of the political party in power both at federal and state levels. The cost of space in the print media or airtime in the electronic media also presents a serious challenge to the political parties. Airtime or space are quite expensive and many political parties are not financially buoyant to pay for adequate airtime or space. This is even more so when such a party is not in power. Many privately owned media outfits run on a shoe-string budget and depend on the government at the state or federal level for paid advertisements to survive. They tend to cover the parties or candidates that give them advertisements in positive light and even when they cover other parties, the coverage may only be in a negative light”; he added.

The civil rights activist further identified repression, harassment and intimidation of journalists by the political party in government as another problem. He stresses that the acts encouraged self-censorship by journalists noting, “In quite a number of cases, the private media avoid reporting the ills of the party in power so as to avoid trouble”.

**POLITICAL REPORTING IN NIGERIA, 1999-2011:** Political Reporting is a two-in-one concept comprising ‘politics’ and ‘reporting’. Therefore, it is crucial to this study to clarify each of the two concepts for understanding. Among political scholars, the definition of politics has been highly contested. According to *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics* (2003: 432) “there is considerable disagreement on which aspects of social life are to be considered political”. However for this study, we upheld the perspective offered by the liberal and the Marxist views of politics as well as the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, cited in Haque & Harrop (2004:4) who argued that ‘man is by nature, a political animal’. By this, Aristotle meant that politics is not just unavoidable but that it is also an essential human activity.

Thomas Hobbes on his part views politics as highly desirable if orderliness would be achieved in any society. Quoting Hobbes who contended that the main function of politics is to maintain order among naturally egoistic and competitive human being. Thus, Isaak (1981:2) states that “if the function is not adequately performed, it is back to the state of nature where there is no morality, no law and no politics”.

Easton (1965) cited in Hague & Harrop (2004: 4) on his part defines politics in four words: Authoritative allocation of values. He raises the status of ‘values’ in governance by reminding us that in politics, values are allocated through implementing decisions. In other

words, serious attention must be paid to implementation of decisions. Hence, Dahl (1957) quoted by Hague & Harrop (2004: 13) remark that “power is a matter of getting people to do what they would not otherwise have done”. Dahl’s declaration, in a way, is very close to Hans Morgenthau’s conception of politics in relation to the nature of power with emphasis on the power of the state.

The conception of politics can as well be taken to the realm of the liberal view as well as the classical view. The liberal view which coincides with the line of thought of English philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704) upholds the pluralistic view of society. Gauba (2007:72) notes that “the liberal theory regards politics as a state activity”. In this context, demands and supports such as obedience to laws, regulations, payment of taxes, etc emanate from various interest groups while policies and decisions are delivered by the state. Therefore, within the liberal view, politics is a group as well as state activity.

The Marxist perspective of politics however drew its strength from what it terms ‘conflicting economic interests’ pointing out that conflicting economic interests are the motive behind all politics. It is appropriate to note that while the liberal theory envisages innumerable political situations as well as clash of interests on multifarious issues such as economic, linguistic, cultural, religious, ethnic etc the Marxist theory regards the clash of economic interests as the fundamental issue of social conflict. Hence, Anifowose (2008:5) concludes that “politics has something to do with power, influence and authority”.

Equally of great significance to this study are the views of other political scholars such as Omolayo & Arowolaju(1987), Lasswell (1951), Perloff (2014), Appadorai (1975) and Alfred de Grazia (1965). Omolayo and Arowolaju (1987: 3) argued that “at whatever level, politics



is essentially characterized by the struggle for power and influence, resolution and consensus”. Lasswell (1950) cited in Isaak (1981: 21) on his part conceptualized politics in terms of who gets what, when and how? To Lasswell, power is the major ingredient of politics. It was his views that politics is essentially the struggle for positions of power and influence by which those who monopolize such positions in the society are able to make decisions having all pervasive consequences. Perloff (2014:29) professionally repackaged Lasswell postulation arguing that “political scientists view politics as the science of deciding who gets what, when and how” Appadorai (1975: 3) on the other hand argues that, “Politics deals with the state or political society”. Alfred de Grazia, in his book entitled: *Political Behaviour*, (1965: 24) says, “Politics include the events that happen around the decision-making centres of government”. Explaining what constitutes ‘government’. Isaak (1981: 17) states that, “Government means something like the legally based institutions of society which make legally binding decision”. What is central and relevant to this study in all the views above is that politics involved people and the main goal is that of acquiring political power through election. Hence, Anifowose (2003: 21) described elections as “the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system”. Onuoha (2003: 46) similarly described it as “a type of socio-political mechanism, among others, for aggregating preferences of a particular kind in a political system”. Articulating reasons for elections, Ogunsanwo (2003: 11) argues that “there is no superior method for selecting the leadership of a democratically ruled society”. According to Anifowose (1982: 201-202), elections serve two broad purposes or functions. First, is the competitive function whose goal is that people compete for offices and second, the ratificatory function in which the electorate are just

required to endorse a single list of party candidates without competition. For record purposes, the type of election covered in this study is the competitive type.

**‘Reporting’** on the other hand is simply to account. In other words, a person who gives an account of an event is reporting. This explains why he is described as a ‘reporter’. In media parlance, when we talk about reporting, we are talking about providing an account of event(s). However, to be a good reporter of an event, it is expected that every journalist is adequately trained. Thus, a reporter is defined as a person who has undergone training in the art of information gathering. The information when packaged is called ‘news’. Hence, Akinfeleye (2011: 95) defines ‘news’ as “an account of what the public wants to know, what they must know, what they ought to know...”

Having explained ‘politics’ and ‘reporting’, ‘political reporting’ in the perspective of this study can therefore be defined as rendering an account of occurrence in the polity that has to do with pre-election politics, election politics, as well as post-election politics.

The major goal of political reporting is not just to present happenings or occurrences in the polity to media audience during elections but also subterraneous battle for the brain of the audience. John Leland (1996: 42) notes that this entails “going back to the basic point where thinking begins and staying there”. Although, Joseph Klapper, cited in Akinfeleye (2003: 10) argues that “the media have some kinds of effects on some kinds of people under some kinds of conditions with some kinds of consequences”, the goal of ‘Political Reporting’ can further be deduced from Article 22 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution, which explained the obligation of mass media as upholding the Fundamental Objectives contained in Chapter II of the Constitution as well as upholding the responsibility and accountability of government

to the people. The fundamental objectives of the Constitution concerned among others: the Economic, Social, Education, Foreign Policy, Environment, as well as Directive on Nigerian cultures. Momoh (2010:23) states that the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media are told that they are at all times free to uphold these fundamental objectives.

Of special interest to Political Reporting is the need for every media establishment in the country to identify with the political objectives of the state as contained in Article 15 (ii) of the Constitution which states that “accordingly, national integration shall be actively engaged whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, states, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited”.

The role of the media at a period of election has been object of serious attention by communication scholars. Semetko (1996: 269) remarks that at such period, people use the media for strategic purposes. Both the candidates and the electorates are involved in strategic use of the news media. According to Semetko (1996:269):

*For the vast majority of people living in democratic societies, election campaigns are experienced through the media. Politicians gear their daily campaign activities to meet the constraints and deadlines of the news. They know that far more people turn to print or broadcast sources for information than turn out for political rallies in the town square.*

While the above assertion is true to some extent, the fact remains that most political parties in Nigeria hardly structure their campaign activities in a way that would meet the deadline of media establishments covering the campaign. That is why you find them at campaign venues by 6pm, still campaigning. The implication is that most print audience read their stories two days after the event. However, if the political party is buoyant enough, live coverage of the

campaign by radio and television stations may help in getting the stories across fresh and unedited.

Articulating the basic role of the media in a democracy, Odunewu (1999: 7) emphasized that the role of the press in a democracy “is to nurture the government of the people by the people. In this context, the press is the very oxygen of democracy”.

Gana (2000: 11) on his part argued that the media in a democracy should aspire to carry out five core functions, namely; promoting the culture of peace, promoting development, promoting people’s participation, promoting positive virtues as well as promoting a stable polity. He described the functions as necessary imperatives for the sustenance of democracy.

Sawant (2000: 25) on his part remarks that the press is the only institution which can keep people as well as those in authority informed on all matters and at all times of the day adding that:

*It is the media which enables the people to perform their three-fold functions in democracy – to participate in the day-to-day affairs of the society, to take informed decision, and to keep a check on the authorities who rule on their behalf.*

For these reasons, Sawant (2000: 32) described the press as the life-line of democracy as well as the ‘ears’ and ‘eyes’ of the people. According to him:

*The press is a powerful institution in a democracy. There is no subject on which it cannot comment and there is no institution which can escape its criticism. The media helps to preserve and promote democracy by safeguarding the independence of its institutions including of itself and ensuring accountability of them all.*

A former American statesman, Abraham Lincoln understood the centrality and critical role of the media in democracy. Edwards (1996: 192) quoted Lincoln thus “with public sentiment,

nothing can fail, without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions”.

### **2.1.1.2 POLITICAL REPORTING IN NIGERIA BEFORE 1999**

Political reporting in Nigeria before 1999 can be discussed under four headings, namely: The period after independence on October 1, 1960 to January 15, 1966. This phase is officially known as Nigeria’s First Republic.

The second phase is the era of military regime, January 15, 1966-1979 while the third phase is the period of Nigeria’s Second Republic, October 1, 1979 - December 31, 1983. The fourth phase is the period of another military regime, December 31, 1983 – May 29, 1999.

After independence, the third federal election was held in 1964. It was the first poll to be conducted by Nigerians without British supervision. The election laid the foundation for electoral crisis in Nigeria because the political class could not agree among themselves over who should rule at the centre and in the regions. The insecurity of lives and property in Western Region together with the acrimony and distrust generated by the 1964 and 1965 elections provided the excuse for the military to take-over government of Nigeria in January 1966. Thus, during the First Republic, the era of crusading journalism, fired by the objective of pursuing a common cause had gone down considerably as a result of division and self-interest among the nationalist political class. Nationalist leaders who were also leaders of leading political parties in the country then with few exceptions owned some of the newspapers in the country. Reflecting on the role of the press in the country after independence, Popoola (2003:94) quoted Omu, (1996) thus:

*The feud between the West African Pilot and the Daily Service (in the 1940s), contributed to the regionalisation of inter-group tension and animosity which characterized political developments for a long time.*

With the exception of the Preventive Detention Act of 1963, other national issues of the First Republic saw the press pursuing interest of their political godfather.

Popoola (2003:94) quoted Omu (1996) once more,

*The first few years of Independence saw little change in the political style of the newspapers. Indeed, the struggle for power among the politicians assumed a new fury and the competing party newspapers advertised their fanaticism. The Action Group crisis of 1962, the Census crisis of 1963/64 and the Federal Election of 1964 and its aftermath, the newspaper press provided a remarkable example of overzealous and irresponsible partisanship and recklessness.*

In what looked like an attempt to rise to the occasion, the government of the First Republic enacted various laws in addition to the Seditious Offences Ordinance of 1909 and Newspapers Act Cap. 129 of 1958, to regulate journalism practice. The laws which are still in force till date are Seditious Meeting Act No. 48 of 1961, Defamation Act No. 66 of 1961.

Defamation (Amendment) Act No 1 of 1963 and Newspapers (Amendment) Act of 1964 which made it a criminal offence to publish any false statement.

Apart from the 1993 and 1999 presidential elections, two of the country's major tribes, Igbo of the South East and Yoruba of the South West hardly agree on political issues due to what Omu called "irresponsible partisanship and recklessness of the mass media". The seed of mistrust between the two tribes was sown through the press during the First Republic. For instance, during the 1964/65 Federal and Western Regional Elections, the press inflamed an already tensed political atmosphere by publishing inflammatory campaign speeches of politicians. One-time Premier of the Western Region, Chief S.L. Akintola, who disagreed

with his leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, over political alliance with either the North or East said while justifying his preference for the North that:

*While the Northerners have a good exchange of commodities in kolanuts and cows with Yoruba, the Ibo have nothing to offer the Yoruba except 'second hand clothing'*

Such inflammatory statements disseminated through the press remain the major source of suspicion and unhealthy political relationship between the East and West till today. The period under review also witnessed the emergence of government owned newspapers whose interest was also at variance with privately owned newspapers. They include *The Morning Post* established by the Federal Government in 1961, the *Daily Sketch* established by Western Region in 1964, the *Eastern Outlook* established by Eastern Region in 1960, and *The New Nigerian* established by Northern Region in 1964.

With the arrival of government newspapers, the coffin of crusading journalism was seriously nailed. Quoting Alhaji Babatunde Jose, then Managing Director of *Daily Times* who believed that the press after independence needed to hold its fire, fight one battle at a time (against the British) and then face other problems after independence was quoted by Popoola (2003:95) saying:

*I was absolutely convinced that in the years before independence, all our energies should be used to join politicians in getting rid of British rule. We should not be fighting British rule with one hand and discrediting the Nigerian Political leaders with another.*

### **POLITICAL REPORTING UNDER THE MILITARY(JANUARY 1966-1979)**

This segment is devoted to the state of the Nigerian media under the first military rule i.e 1966 to 1979.

January 15, 1966 could be described as watershed in Nigerian political history. On that auspicious date, the first ever military coup d'état took place in the country, barely five years and three months after independence from Great Britain. The military tenaciously held on to power for the succeeding 13 years before disengaging from governance.

The subsequent years after the fall of the First Republic were hellish for the Nigeria press. Popoola (2003:96) quoted Omu (1978) on state of the Nigerian media under the military.

*The press has been one of the major theatres of the drama of military arrogance and Power play. The constant closure of media houses, the harassment, detention, torture and murder of journalists, all together put intense pressure on the press to an extent that any analysis of the performance of the press must take cognizance of these realities.*

The under listed eight military heads of state who ruled the country during the period were: late Major Gen J. T. U., Aguiyi-Ironsi (Jan. 15, 1966 - July 29, 1966), Gen Yakubu Gowon (July 29, 1966 - July 29, 1975), Gen Murtala Ramat Mohammed (July 29, 1975 - Feb. 13, 1976), Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (Feb. 13, 1976 - Oct. 1, 1979), Maj. Gen. Muhamadu Buhari, (Dec. 31" 1983 - Aug 27, 1985), Gen Ibrahim Babangida (Aug. 27, 1985 - Aug. .27, 1993), Gen. Sani Abacha, (Nov. 11, 1993 - June 24, 1998), Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar (June 24,1998 - May 29,1999).

Coping with these intolerant, autocratic and dictatorial regimes was a herculean task for the mass media as there were overt and covert attempts to gag the press from performing its statutory obligation to the people. A case in point was what became known as "*the Amakiri Affair*". Minere Amakiri was a Port Harcourt based correspondent of the *Nigerian Observer*.



The journalist was at a press conference addressed by the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Rivers State branch on July 27, 1973 in which the Union listed a number of grievances against the State Government with a pledge to down tools if their demands were not met at the expiration of an ultimatum.

The *observer newspaper* published the story with Amakiri's by-line on July 30, 1973. The publication coincided with the 31<sup>st</sup> birthday of the military governor of the State, Commander Alfred Diète-Spiff. The governor and his aides felt embarrassed by the publication and consequently resolved to teach him a lesson.

According to Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande, Journalist and former Second Republic governor of Lagos State:

*Amakiri was collected from his house, taken to the governor's office and tortured. His head was shaved with 'an old rusty razor blade'. He was stripped naked and given 24 strokes of the cane on his bare back. (Jakande, 1979:119).*

Thus, a common scenario throughout the period of military rule was that of the arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists without trial. At a time, the military promulgated a decree which made it a criminal offence to even report strikes, lock-outs and declaration of trade disputes. If the Nigerian press had respected anti-press legislations and acted accordingly, it would have become the most docile press in the world. However, the press ignored the legislations and carried on its duties as if the legislation did not exist.

Furthermore, it was equally extremely difficult for the press to make government accountable to the people during military regimes. A case in point was the spirited attempt by a Nigerian businessman, Mr. Aper Aku, to compel the then governor of Benue-Plateau State to disclose the source of his wealth. Aku swore to an affidavit making several allegations of improprieties and abuse of office against the military governor, Police Commissioner Joseph

D. Gomwalk. However, the then Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, frustrated his efforts as he summarily acquitted the governor and accused the press of gunning after the Head of State himself.

At a time when journalists were celebrating the collapse of Gowon's regime, following the coup d'etat of July 29, 1975, the succeeding government of Murtala-Obasanjo was to later embark on various covert attempts at controlling the mass media. For example, in a bid to create what it called "more conducive basis for national integration", the Murtala-Obasanjo regime in 1975 took over the ownership of *New Nigerian Newspapers* from the then six northern states. While pursuing this goal, the regime went further by acquiring majority shares from the *Daily Times*. To cap it all, the junta in November 1975 announced the taking over of all radio and television networks in the country.

In spite of the harsh environment, the press throughout the 13 years of military interregnum remained undaunted and canvassed for the return of the military to the barracks. They constantly reminded the military that their statutory role is not to govern but to defend the nation against external attack. Their unrelenting efforts, coupled with the readiness of the political class to take over the mantle of leadership, paved way for the birth of the second republic on Oct. 1, 1979.

### **POLITICAL REPORTING DURING THE SECOND REPUBLIC (1979 - 1983)**

With the restoration of civil rule in the country, the mass media heaved a sigh of relief. Several states regained their autonomy and freedom to air news considered suited for audiences in their states, while others established new radio and television stations as well as newspapers.

However, some of the stations were later selfishly used by civilian helmsmen in their states during the 1983 general elections which were marred by widespread electoral fraud occasioned by violence.

According to Adamolekun (1985) quoted by Popoola (2003:97):

*Judging by the violence and alleged electoral frauds that had characterized the preliminary electoral contests, there was widespread fear that the August/September elections could be marred by serious violence and extensive rigging. These fears became fulfilled prophecies. Law and order broke down completely in several states with Ondo and Oyo States as star cases that attracted international attention.*

Of special interest to this paper was the role played by the defunct Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Akure, controlled by the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and the state owned Ondo State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) controlled by another political party, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

While the FRCN overtly drummed support for the NPN gubernatorial candidate, Chief Akin Omoboriowo who was initially declared winner of the governorship poll by the defunct Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), to the extent of intermittently playing a popular record of pop singer, Christy Essien titled "Give peace a chance", the Ondo state radio at the same time was supporting the UPN candidate, Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin, then incumbent governor of the state. The station was simultaneously playing the record of late Bob Marley entitled "Get up stand up, stand up for your right..." Quoting Singer 1970.

Denis McQuail (1987) cited in Popoola (2003:98) declares that "the media can provoke a riot, create a culture of rioting and provide lessons on how to riot, spread a disturbance from place to place..."

The violence which occasioned the conduct of the election was therefore one of the identified reasons for the military take over of the reign of government again on December 31, 1983, thus ending the Second Republic attempt at civil rule.

Notable politician-publishers who emerged in the post-colonial era are: Alex Ibru, Chief MKO Abiola, Sam Amuka=Pemu, Clarkson Majomi, Nduka Obiagbena, Alhaji Lateef Jakande, Chief Phillip Asiodu, Alhaji Ahmed Joda, Alhaji Sheu Malami, Gen. Sheu Musa Yar'Adua, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, Chief Orji Uzor Kalu, Alhaji Azeez Arisekola Alao, Chief James Onanefe Ibori, Chief Akanni Aluko among others.

### **POLITICAL REPORTING UNDER THE SECOND MILITARY RULE (DECEMBER 1983- MAY 1999)**

The military on the New Year eve of December 31<sup>st</sup> 1983 rolled out their armoured tanks and dismissed the elected civilian administration in the country. The coup d'etat ushered in the administration of Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari. The regime remained one of the harshest military regimes in the country, for it had no respect for human rights including that of the press. Draconian decrees were made by the regime which prevented the press from carrying out its statutory duties. For example, Decree No. 4 of 1984 prescribed two-year jail term for any person found guilty of publishing false or 'embarrassing' reports against public officers. The publishing companies may also forfeit their publishing equipment to the Federal Government. Truth was no longer a defence under the Decree. Two *Guardian Newspaper* reporters, Mr. Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor were jailed by the regime for publishing what the regime termed embarrassing story. However, what they published was later discovered to be a true account.

Furthermore, Decree No.22 of same year forbade anybody from challenging the legality of Decree No. 4.

Following the ousting of Gen. Buhari's regime in 1985, the government of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida repealed the Decree and released the jailed *Guardian* reporters.

Gen. Babangida gave the impression that he was press friendly, at the same time, his regime sanctioned Decree No. 2 under which anybody whose conduct is perceived to be a threat to public peace could be detained without trial, subject of course to a review after three months. About 12 media establishments perceived to be critical of the policies of the regime were arbitrarily closed down at various times. They included: *National Concord, Vanguard, Guardian, Champion, Newswatch, Punch, Sketch, Observer, Abuja Newsday and Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation (OGBC)* among others. Whereas, the right thing should have been initiating legal action against the media houses in court if any law had been violated. But because the regime had no regard for the rule of law, it preferred to take law into its own hand.

The regime was also government by deceit. While professing superiority of popularly elected government over dictatorial military regime, the junta announced popular transition programme and organized the freest ever conducted election in Nigeria and amazingly announced the cancellation of the result of the election without any tangible explanation. The impression that Nigeria took delivery of the third republic was also created by the regime.

However, the political heat of the annulment of the results of June 12, 1993 presidential elections forced Babangida out of governance on Aug. 27, 1993. He horridly conceived an

interim government and handed over to Chief Ernest Shonekan who ruled from August 27, 1993 – November 11, 1993 when he was ousted few months later by Gen. Sani Abacha.

Dictatorial as the regime was, private ownership of the broadcast media started under the regime. Such privately owned radio and television stations, however, existed under strict control by the government. The regime also left behind a legacy of intolerance of press criticisms as arsonists and security operatives were detailed to assassinate publishers of critical press. Various revelations from courts during the trial of members of the late Gen. Abacha's Strike Force confirmed this.

There was an occasion when arsonists set the premises of the Guardian newspaper ablaze. The publisher of the newspaper, Alex Ibru, narrowly escaped assassination from agents of the regime. Following the death of Gen. Abacha in 1998, Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar took over and organized the shortest transition programme which culminated in the restoration of civil rule on May 29, 1999.

### **2.1.1.3 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW/GAPS IN LITERATURE REVIEW**

Even though the commencement date for this study is 1999 while the terminal date is 2011, however, in a bid to carry out a comprehensive review of literature, the review was expanded to the period before 1999 in Nigeria.

The review established a pattern of political reporting in which from the First Republic, the slanting of political stories are mostly biased and seriously influenced by the political interest of the proprietors.

The review similarly observed that the problem of media professionals not adhering to their reportorial code which demands factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of political news derived its roots from Nigeria's First Republic.

In a related development, the review touched various aspects of the effects of media generated violence in Nigeria. A glaring observable trend from the review is that while scholars identified the remote as well as immediate causes of electoral violence, none of the works reviewed attributed the outbreak of electoral violence to the contributory role of the media, especially, as it concerns non adherence to the reportorial code of journalism as enunciated by the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Nigeria Press Council and the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria. This lacuna is the gap intended to be filled by this study.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Four relevant theories to this study are: The conflict theory, power theory, cause and effect theory and the magic bullet theory of the press. However, the study uses the magic bullet theory as the striking theory while the rest are used in supportive capacity.

The probing thesis of the Magic Bullet Theory of the press centred on why people react instantaneously or immediately to a media message (Lowery & Defleur 1995: 13). *Tell* weekly news magazine for instance reported that when the announcement of winners of the 2007 State Assembly and governorship elections were made, "many cities across the federation were instantly engulfed in wild protest... similar incidents simultaneously ruled the atmosphere in Osogbo, Benin, Enugu, Ado-Ekiti and Abeokuta." The communication theory that readily comes to mind in any scholarly attempt to explain the violence is the magic bullet theory. The theory which scholars ascribed to the intellectual property of John

Watson according to DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989:2005), who asserts that “the only legitimate data on which to develop theories explaining human behavior were direct observations of overt actions of individuals”. Schramm (1958) cited in Blake and Haroldson (1975:142) reasoned along Watson. He stressed the need to pay attention to “what mass communication does to the individual life and what it contributes to social change or lack of change”. The theory has been given different names by various communication scholars. For instance, Melvin Defleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1989:163) styled it “the stimulus — response theory, the hypodermic needle theory and transmission belt theory”. Severin and Tankard Jr. (2001: 3) as well as Bittner (1989: 373) simply referred to it as “bullet theory” or “hypodermic needle theory,” while Blake and Haroldsen (1975:121) described it as “mechanistic stimulus response (S-R) theory”. Okunna (1999: 161-162) on her part described it as “hypodermic syringe theory” because it was believed that the media message acted like the content of a hypodermic syringe when emptied into an audience. The gist of the theory is that voters in particular and members of the public in general are vulnerable to mass media messages, especially during elections when people are usually eager to get information about the outcome of an election. Putting it succinctly in the perspective of DeFleur and Ball — Rokeach (1989: 164), “the basic idea of the theory is that media messages are received in a uniform way by every member of the audience and that immediate and direct responses are triggered by such stimuli”.

In the words of Severin and Tankard (2001: 24), the theory therefore suggests that if media message hits the target, “it will have its desired effect”. The desired effect, according to Daramola (2001: 45) is that “once people listen to a message, they will comply” adding that “all the communicator needed to do was to get the audience to listen and the deed would be



considered done. Popoola, in a 2012 study on the relevance of the theory in explaining the behaviour of media audiences in Nigeria and some North African countries which are battling with the ‘Arab spring’ virus stated that “contrary to the view in some quarters that the theory is no longer strong in explaining the behaviour of media audiences, developments in Nigeria, Africa, south of the Sahara in the last two decades or there about are pointers to the fact that the theory is still very relevant in explaining the behaviour of mass communication audiences to media message”.

McQuail (2010: 458) equally flayed scholars who faulted the relevance of the theory in explaining the behaviour of media audiences. While noting that undue weight was given to the scholarly contributions of Katz and Lazarsfeld’s *Personal Influence* (1955) and Klapper’s *The Effects of Mass Communication* (1960) whose goal was that of deflating the potency of media power as conveyed through the Magic Bullet theory, McQuail (2010: 458) declares:

*One reason for the reluctance to accept a ‘minimal effect’ conclusion was the arrival of television in the 1950s and 1960s as a new medium with even more power of attraction (if not necessarily of effect) than its predecessors and with seemingly major implications for social.*

### **2.2.2. RELEVANCE OF THE MAGIC BULLET THEORY**

In a critical re-evaluation of the submission of a communication school of thought led by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet who discredited the relevance of the bullet theory in explaining the behaviour of audience to media messages that the Bullet theory is not only obsolete, but naïve, simple and a mere historical curiosities (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989), Popoola (2012:224) ascribed himself to the view widely canvassed through the writings of the French philosopher, Jacques Ellul (1973) cited in Severin & Tankard Jr (2001:293) that “the bullet theory may not be dead yet”.

After a thorough analysis of developments concerning the 1983 electoral violence in the old Ondo state, and the electoral violence which rocked Delta State in 2007 among others in

which the bullet theory proved to be the most appropriate theory in explaining the reactions of the people to developments in the polity, Popoola (2012:223) argued that rather than a wholesome adoption of Lazarsfeld *et al's* conclusion on the bullet theory, there should be a re-visitation to the era of powerful media earlier advocated by Noelle Neumann in 1973. This position is strengthened by the emergence of television, years after the release of Lazarfeld *et al's* study. Today, communication scholars are of the view that television is more powerful than all its predecessors.

### **2.2.3 ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE BULLET THEORY**

Of special interest to this study are the four-point arguments raised to discredit the bullet theory while on the other, advocating the limited effect theory. The four-point arguments are that:

1. **The media rarely influence individuals:** Here, it was argued that research findings had consistently indicated that most people are shielded from direct media manipulation by family, friends, associates, co-workers among others. As such, their attitudes are not easily changed by what they read, hear or see. According to Baran & Davis (2009:129) “if they encounter new ideas or information, they turn to others for advice and critical interpretations.”
2. **There is a two-step flow of media influence:** The contention here is that media would be influential only if the opinion leaders who guide others are influenced first. These opinion leaders, going by their pedigree, sophistication and the fact that they are critical media users, act as gatekeepers which constitute a barrier to media influence.

3. **By the time most people become adults**, they have developed strongly held group commitments such as party and religious affiliations which provide an effective barrier against media influence.
4. **When media effects do occur**, they are modest and isolated.

However, much as the above four points and some studies have tried to discredit, puncture or deflate the relevance of the bullet theory, or attempted to regard the theory as obsolete, naïve, simple and mere historical curiosities, emerging developments in Nigeria, Africa, South of the Sahara, in the last two decades or there about are pointers to the fact that the theory is still very relevant in explaining the behaviour of mass communication audiences to media message.

The developments as it would be seen later concerned the 1983 electoral violence which trailed the conduct of gubernatorial election in the old Ondo State, as well as the fracas which occurred in Delta state in the aftermath of the 2007 gubernatorial election. In both events, the bullet theory proved to be the most appropriate theory in explaining the reactions of the people to developments in the polity.

#### **2.2.4 RELEVANCE OF THE MAGIC BULLET THEORY IN THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Following the publication of *The People's choice* by Lazarsfeld et al, a number of communication scholars have been reiterating their conclusion that the media have relatively few direct effects on their audience. Furthermore, it is stressed that media audiences are not always passive. Buttressing this assertion, Severin & Tankard Jr. (2001) cited a classic study by Bauer (1984) who noted that “the audience is often quite active”. Other researchers, like Bryant and Street (1988), as observed by Severin & Tankard Jr. (2001:3) equally echoed

similar statements. One incontrovertible fact which all the scholars who attempted discrediting the Bullet theory have not been able to deflate is the fact that as members of a mass audience, any body could receive information directly by either watching the television, listening to the radio, reading a newspaper or magazine or browsing the internet.

In most of the troubled North African countries of Egypt, Algeria and Libya for example, many people, it was noted, resorted to Facebook to share information which were acted upon immediately. This led to the uprisings in that region popularly referred to as “The Arab Spring”. While it is true that some of our knowledge is derived from other people who have been exposed to the media, the fact remains that there have been instances in which immediately people received information from the media, the effect of such message could best be related to the magic bullet theory.

In a special study on the role of mass media in electoral violence which rocked the old Ondo state during the 1983 gubernatorial election, Popoola (2003:63) observes that the public reaction to radio messages from the defunct Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Akure, controlled by the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and the state owned Ondo State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) controlled by another political party, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) could best be explained by the Bullet theory.

Popoola (2003:68) noted that while the FRCN overtly drummed support for the NPN gubernatorial candidate, Chief Akin Omoboriowo, who was initially declared winner of the governorship poll by the defunct Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), to the extent of intermittently playing a popular record of pop singer, late Christy Essien Igbokwe titled “Give peace a chance”, the Ondo State radio at the same time was supporting the UPN candidate, late Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin, then incumbent governor of the state. The

station was simultaneously playing the record of late Bob Marley entitled”. “Get up stand up, stand up for your right.” The above corroborates Singer’s (1970) declaration in Denis McQuail (1987), that: “The media can provoke a riot, create a culture of rioting and provide lessons on how to riot, spread a disturbance from place to place.”

Notwithstanding DeFleur’s (1970) modification of the Bullet or Hypodermic theory of the mass media in which he punctuated the direct effect of media message with personality, attitude, intelligence, interest etc, the people decoded the messages from the two radio stations and instantly took to the streets, attacking all identified members and leaders of the NPN. They did not spare their property as well. At a stage, the OSBC announced that chief Omoboriowo was running out of the state in a Peugeot 504 salon car going as far as giving registration number details of the getaway vehicle. The people swung into action immediately and were desperately searching for chief Omoboriowo, in all 504 cars, as if, in pursuit of a common criminal. In the ensuing fracas, houses were razed; some of which are yet to be rebuilt even at the moment. The violence which followed the conduct of that election was therefore one of the identified reasons for the military take over of the reigns of government again on December 31, 1983, and thus ending the Second Republic attempt at civil rule in Nigeria.

An audience study which has attracted much scholarly attention concerned the uses people make of the media as well as the gratifications derivable from media exposure. Bittner, (1989:379), Dominick (2009:37) and Lowery & DeFleur (1995:107) argued that for the media to exercise considerable influence on the audience, the audience must have been using the media for certain purposes and must have been deriving some gratifications. While several researchers have classified the uses and gratifications into four categories, namely:

cognition, diversion, social utility and withdrawal, this study established that the media exercised enormous influence on the people during elections for two reasons. First, they used the media to keep up with current events in the polity and secondly, they used the media to learn about situation of things generally.

In a related development, Akinfeleye (2004:106) while alluding to the efficacy of the magic bullet theory of the press said: .

*By their very nature and practice of their craft, journalists can make or mar the society and the politicians they serve. They can lift politicians up and they can pull them down, they can protect or harm the politicians they serve. They can cause war without participating in it. They can also bring about peace, harmony and concord within the society they serve.*

An incident in Warri, Delta State of Nigeria, during the 2007 General Elections confirmed Akinfeleye's (2004) postulations. *The Nigerian Tribune*, in a news report of Monday, April 21, 2007 noted that supporters of Chief Great Ogboru, one of the major gubernatorial contenders in the state, in a commando style, stormed *Jeremi FM*, a radio station in Adeji, near Warri and declared him (Ogboru) winner of the April 19, 2007 governorship election in Delta state, in spite of the fact that figures released by the electoral umpire – INEC indicated that he scored less than 10 percent of the total votes cast at the gubernatorial polls. The controversial politician however later denied masterminding the broadcast. Of special interest to this study was the manner by which his supporters took to the streets, jubilating immediately after the illegal broadcast. According to *The Tribune*, in its news report published on Monday, April 21, 2007 “the reaction was so instantaneous to the extent that police had tough time controlling the jubilant crowd and in the process, about five people were reportedly killed by police bullets.

A cursory look at the whole episode confirmed the relevance of the bullet theory in explaining media effect in Nigeria, especially the violence which occurred in the elections covered by this study.

Another occurrence of media effect that could further justify the relevance of the bullet theory in our environment was during the 2015 electioneering campaign in Lagos State during which motorists had tough time due to traffic jam. However, *Traffic Radio 96.1Fm* provided minute-by-minute traffic reports. Immediately people got information that a particular road was completely blocked, they resorted to alternate routes without being told. Thus, when any official of Lagos State Traffic Management Authority, (LASTMA) made a call through to the station that traffic is at a stand still at a particular route or road, listeners (motorists) would respond to the information and began to behave like robots via looking for immediate solution from the traffic deadlock.

Electoral violence is a form of conflict and conflict is regarded as bread and butter of journalism. Owens-Ibie (2002:32) quoting Tehranian (1996) and *Media Development* (1996) described conflict as a bread and better of journalism. He stressed that “conflict sells, conflict is a source of sensation, the yellow press and other periodicals and the commercial driven... find raw material to remain in competition in the daily battle for market share and profits.”

Lulofs and Cahn (2000:2) regarded conflict as a fact of life; they contended however that violence is not part of life. It is however worthy of note ironically that in Nigeria, conflict and violence are part of life and hallmark of the electoral process. Hardly was there any election in the post-independent Nigeria in which violence and conflict did not occur.

Lulofs and Cahn (2002:2) further stated that “we encounter it at home, at school, and at work”. They similarly presented two perspectives of conflict. At one end, they described conflict “as a disruption of the normal workings of a system” while at the other end, conflict is presented “as a part of all relationships”. The aspect of conflict that is of interest to this study is that aspect that disrupts the system during pre-election campaign, election days and post election process.

From sociological perspective, Peil (1977:41) remarks that “from the beginning of the discipline, sociologists have been concerned with the problem of order in society.” while noting that “societies are a tissue of conflicts and loyalties”, Peil (1977:44) stressed that “friends at one level may be enemies at another....” Peil’s perspective of the conflict theory is equally relevant in explaining election violence in Nigeria where top politicians are fond of cross-carpeting and changing party allegiance at the eve of many major elections.

The relevance of the power theory on the other hand as a supportive theory for this study is premised on the fact that power is very central to the problem which characterized the conduct of the various elections covered in the study.

A German sociologist, Max Weber described politics as “striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power either among states or among groups within a state (Isaak, 1981:20).

William Bluhm, a political scientist equally stated that “politics is a social process characterized by activity involving rivalry and co-operation in the exercise of power and culminating in the making of decisions for a group.”



Implicit from the Weberian and Bluhm's declarations on politics is that 'power' is very central to the problem which characterized the conduct of the various elections in this study. Hence, Gauba (2003: 248) asserts that power is regarded as one of the central concepts of political science. "It is said that the concept of power holds the same status in the realm of Political Science as held by the concept of money in the realm of economics".

A similar assertion was made by Hague & Harrop (2004:12) who observe that:

*Power is the currency of politics. Just as money permits the efficient flow of goods and services through an economy, so power enables collective decisions to be made and enforced. Without power, a government would be as useless as a car without an engine. Power is the tool that enables rulers to serve and exploit their subjects.*

In a related development, Gauba (2003: 249) quoting Frederick Watkins (1934) observes that the proper scope of political science is not the study of the state or any of other specific institutional complex, but the investigation of all associations in so far as they can be shown to exemplify the problem of power.

The significance of power in discussing political phenomenon was brought out by traditional political thinkers such as Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, as well as contemporary writers like Max Weber, Catlin, Merriam, Lasswell, Kaplan, Watkins, Trietschke, Hans Morgenthau among others.

Equally central or strategic to this study is Alan Ball's (1988:20) submission on power.

According to him,

*The concept of political power.. .is a key concept in the study of politics for if politics is the resolution of conflict, the distribution of power within a political community determines how the conflict is to be resolved, and whether the resolution is to be effectively observed by all parties.*

The emergence of British press barons, especially Beaverbrook, Northcliffe and Rothermere in the 1920s and 1930s was largely informed by power drive. According to Negrine (1996:48):

*The press barons- in particular, Beaverbrook who owned the Express and Rothermere who own the Mail had amassed their vast power through their industrial holdings and/or their ownership of newspapers... Both newspaper proprietors decided to use their newspapers to pursue a political philosophy and policy.*

Since the colonial days, a strategic political power equation has emerged amongst the Nigerian political elites. It is premised on an assumption that to be a serious contender to any elective political office, you must own or have controlling shares in one or two influential mass media. Notable politicians in this context were Herbert Macaulay, Ernest Sesei Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo among others.

This trend continues in the post-independent era. *African Media Barometer* (2011:24) for instance, states that “a former governor of Lagos state own *TV Continental*, *Radio Continental* and *Adaba FM* as well as *The Nation* and *National Life* newspapers.”

The publication further notes that former President Olusegun Obasanjo allegedly allocated himself, 5 to 10 radio and television broadcasting licenses before leaving office. Even Busienss mogul, Jimoh Ibrahim in a bid to be relevant politically diversified his interest into the realm of media ownership and acquisition as he owns *National Mirror*, *Daily Sketch* and recently acquired *News Watch*. This explains why occasionally, media organizations whose proprietors are politicians act as an adjunct of political parties or mouthpiece of the political parties or politicians.

Lasswell (1951) cited in Isaak (1981:204) identified eight values that are sought in politics. They include: power, wealth, well-being, skill, enlightenment, affection, rectitude and respect.

However, going by the trend of politicking in Nigeria, two of the eight values, namely: power and wealth; tend to be the core motives behind the aggressive pursuit of political power by the political class in Nigeria. Hence, Ologbenla's (2003:50) assertion that "they seek to use state power to accumulate wealth in a primitive manner... and thus gaining access to power is a do-or-die affair."

This is part of the reasons why a consistent and persistent trend in virtually all the post-independent elections in Nigeria has been that of breaches of the electoral process.

The degree of electoral breaches is such that Igini (2013) described many of the post-independent elections conducted in Nigeria between 1999 and 2011 as 'failed elections'. From the first post-independent elections of 1964/65, a template of electoral breaches which has grown phenomenally remains:

- ❖ Pervasive influence of government on electoral umpire.
- ❖ Ballot box snatching/ballot box stuffing.
- ❖ Kidnapping of political opponents before or on polling day.
- ❖ Desperate disposition of aspirants including incumbent political office holders to secure election or re-election.
- ❖ Falsification of voters' register.
- ❖ Purchase of voters' cards.
- ❖ Acts of thuggery, perpetrated by thugs using illegally acquired weapons.

- ❖ Inappropriate deployment of security agents by government
- ❖ Coercion of electorates.
- ❖ Intimidation, harassment of voters.
- ❖ Mass transfer of police officers on the approach of elections.
- ❖ Use of armed forces personnel to rig elections.
- ❖ Abuse of power of incumbency during pre-election political activities, during elections and after elections.
- ❖ Employment of non-state security agencies such as members of Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC), the Egbesu boys and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), among other ethnic militia groups across the country.
- ❖ Destruction of campaign billboards and posters of political opponents.
- ❖ Disruption of political opponents' rallies and campaigns.
- ❖ Threat of violent attack against political opponents.
- ❖ Assassination of political opponents.
- ❖ Denial of opposition parties and candidates accessibility to the media.
- ❖ Culture of impunity that encourages electoral violence etc.

All the above are serious crime which Oloko (2004:50) described as 'deviant behaviour', leading Olurode (2004:97) declaring that most Nigerian cities are theatre of war during elections". A theory that readily and appropriately captured this political desperation therefore is the power theory.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the methodology through which the study was carried out. In specific terms, it discusses the research design, population for the study, the sample size and distribution, instrument of data collection, etc.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

In the context of Merrigan and Huston (2004:48), a research design is the logical sequence that connects a researcher's claim, data or evidence". Johnson and Reynolds (2008:122) similarly described it as "a plan that shows how a researcher intends to study an empirical question. It indicates what theory or propositions will be tested, what unit of analysis are appropriate for the test among others".

The research design employed to carry out this study therefore is cross-sectional research design in which a sample of a data collected through the listed sample size in table 1 was used to draw inferences about the research questions. Thus, the design is intended to be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory as well as analytical.

The study, even though a political communication perspective, falls within the sub-field of political history and political development in Nigeria. Hence, it adopts the historical method of analysis of the four general elections conducted in Nigeria between 1999 and 2011. While the study is theoretically anchored on the magic bullet theory of the press, it similarly utilizes the power theory, conflict theory as well as cause and effect theory as supportive theories.

The inclusion of the cause and effect theory is due to the historical method of analysis used in anchoring the thesis. It utilizes primary sources such as archival materials from the National archive, Ibadan, oral information, reports of workshops among others, to analyze the relationship between political reporting and electoral violence in the period covered by the study.

Relevant information and data obtained from the various sources were interpreted and analyzed within the context of historical methodology. For a clear understanding of the issues addressed in the study, thematic and chronological approaches were combined to form a meaningful whole.

### **3.2 POPULATION**

The population for this study consisted of the 57 print media establishments and 243 broadcast media i.e. 148 T.V and 95 radio stations in the country identified by Akinfeleye (2003:44-47) and Komolafe (2004:107-110 & 116- 121) plus two senior academic members of staff in the professorial rank who were interviewed for expert opinion on some issues learnt on the field.

### **3.3 SAMPLE SIZE**

The sample size for the study were 24 print media and 19 broadcast media establishments in Lagos, extracted from the population of 57 print media establishments in the country and 243 broadcast media identified by Akinfeleye (2003) and Komolafe (2004). It is instructive to stress that Lagos state has the highest concentration of media establishments in the country. The 24 print media represents 73 percent of the 33 Lagos based print media currently in circulation in the country. Those ignored are the print media which are no longer in

circulation when the study was carried out such as: *Daily Times, National Concord, Sketch, The Monitor, The Democrat, TNT, Classique, Tempo, Lagos Horizon* among others as well as newspapers which came on board after the 2011 elections such as *Daily Newswatch* and *Daily Telegraph*. In all, the sample size consists of 150 media professionals i.e. 44 political editors, 10 line editors and 96 political reporters and two University of Lagos professors from the Faculty of Law and Department of Philosophy who were interviewed to authenticate some controversial issues which required expert opinion. The 19 broadcast media consists of eight TV stations out of 12 in the state i.e. 67% and 11 out of the 21 radio stations i.e. 52% operating in the state. The justification for the inclusion of the two professors is premised on the fact that there are two sides to this study, namely: Ethics and law. Since ethics is a branch of philosophy, the appropriate academic discipline to authenticate the controversial issues that are related to ethics in the study is by seeking expert opinion from the Department of Philosophy. The same reason explains the inclusion of another professor from the Faculty of Law to authenticate similar controversial issues bordering on law in the study.

**Table 1. Sample Distribution**

S/N	NAMES OF SAMPLED MEDIA	YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT	YEARS OF ESTABLISHMENT POL. DESK	SAMPLE SIZE
1	Nigerian Tribune	1949	1949	2
2	The Punch	1973	1973	5
3	ThisDay	1995	1995	5
4	The Guardian	1985	1985	5
5	Vanguard	1984	1984	5
6	Champion	1988	1988	5
7	The Compass newspaper	2008	2008	5
8	The Nation	2006	2006	5
9	Nigerian News Direct	2010	2010	3

10	Independent newspaper	2001	2001	5
11	Businessday newspaper	2001	2001	3
12	National Mirror	2010	2010	3
13	PM News	1994	1994	2
14	National Encomium	1997	1997	3
15	Tell Magazine	1991	1991	2
16	The News magazine	1992	1992	2
17	City People Magazine	1996	1996	2
18	Newswatch magazine	1985	1985	2
19	Ovation Magazine	1996	1996	3
20	The Sun newspaper	2000	2000	5
21.	National Daily	2007	2007	3
22.	Hallmark	2009	2009	3
23.	Insider Magazine	2001	2001	2
24.	Celebrity Magazine	2001	2001	2
25	Radio Lagos	1978	1978	3
26.	Eko FM	1983	1983	3
27.	Radio Nigeria	1957	1957	5
28.	Bond FM	1987	1987	3
29.	Voice of Nigeria (VON)	1961	1961	5
30.	Unilag FM	2004	2005	3
31.	Inspiration FM	1993	1995	3
32.	Rhythm FM	1997	1997	3
33.	Radio Continental	2005	2005	3
34.	Top Radio	2009	2009	3
35.	Star FM	1996	1997	3
36.	Silverbird TV	2003	2003	3
37.	DBN TV	1993	1993	3
38.	Lagos State Television(LTV)	1980	1983	3

39.	NTA	1977	1977	5
40.	Television Continental (TVC)	2005	2005	5
41.	MITV	1996	1997	3
42.	Channels TV	1993	1995	3
43.	Superscreen TV	2008	2008	3
	Academic Staff (Professors)	-	-	2
	Total			152

**Source: Field questionnaire by the writer or author**

### **3.4 INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION**

The study used oral/In-Depth Interview (IDI) method in gathering data from political reporters, political editors and line editors who are the respondents in this study.

An In-Depth Interview guide was drawn up to elicit comments from the respondents. According to Sobowale (2008:67), In-depth interview requires the researcher to arm himself with a number of questions which will help the interviewee to respond to the questions in a way that would elicit adequate information about the subject of interest to the researcher. “This information –gathering technique enables the researcher to probe deeper into the inner recesses of the interviewee... unlike in a survey when they are limited by response options or the need to paraphrase their views”. The choice of IDI was further informed by the fact that journalists are agenda-setters or opinion molders and that the best approach to address the issues outlined in the research objectives and research questions is the approach in which you don’t think for them, but rather allow them to freely express their minds on the issue. This method further provides opportunity of asking penetrating follow-up questions.

When it was discovered that some of the issues raised in their responses required expert opinion, the interview was then extended to two experts, one from the Department of Philosophy and the second from the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos.

### **3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

The first pilot study was carried out in July 1999 on all the print and broadcast media establishments covered by the study. The last one was conducted in February 2014. The oral information gathered were recorded in a non verbal information format and electronically through the aid of micro tape recorders. The outcome, after transcription and critical analysis, revealed that the interview guide was highly reliable and valid.

### **3.6 DATA GATHERING**

Oral/ in-depth interview was conducted in an exploratory manner in order to elicit information from the respondents. The information gathered was used to substantiate evidence from other sources. The oral interview was complemented with documentary records or secondary sources from the archives of the Ghandi Library of the University of Lagos, Fredrick-Ebert-Shiftung, Unilag, the *Guardian*, *Punch* and *Vanguard* newspapers libraries where books, journal articles, unpublished thesis as well as newspapers and magazines were consulted.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In terms of data analysis and interpretation, the study employed tools across the relevant disciplines. In doing this, the study adopted multi-disciplinary approach. A multi-disciplinary approach became a useful tool of carrying out the research, especially, based on the strength of the approach as argued by Olufunke A. Adeboye (2001) who wrote:

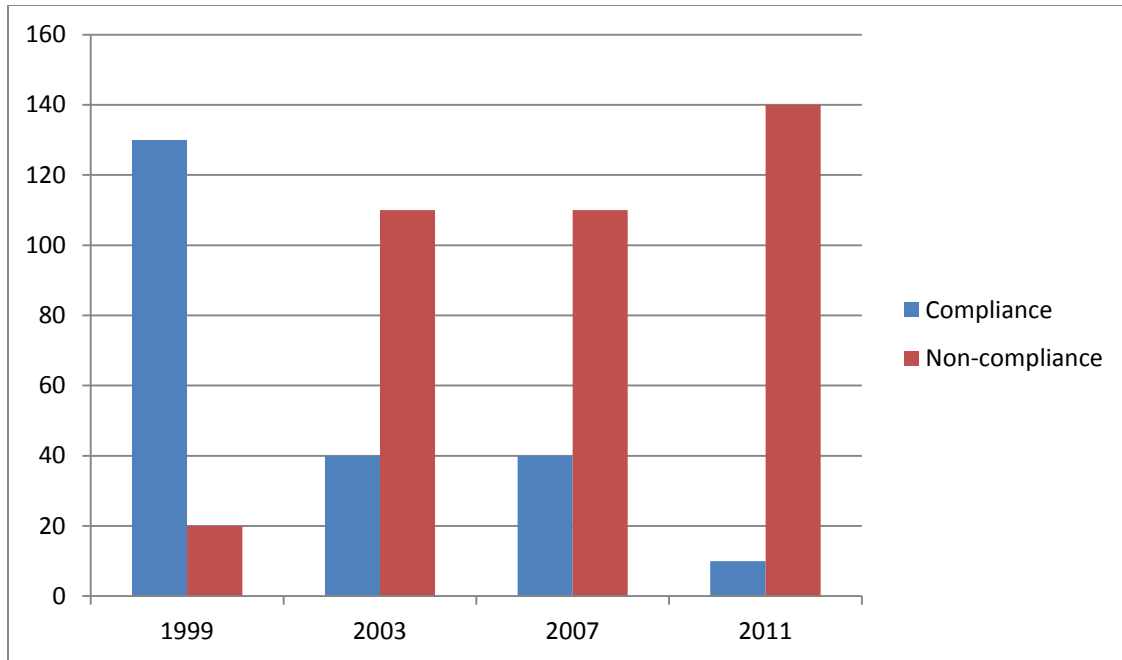
*The inter-disciplinary approach to sociology in history has opened to the historians, a world of new ideas, evidence and opportunities many of which are yet to be fully tapped. Meanwhile, historians are more receptive to ideas from other disciplines and they readily collaborate with their colleagues across disciplinary borders. Such co-operation has yielded an abundance of knowledge well beyond the competence of a single discipline.*

Data from the field work were subsequently analyzed qualitatively in order that its outcome is understood, digested and invariably used in tackling the research questions.

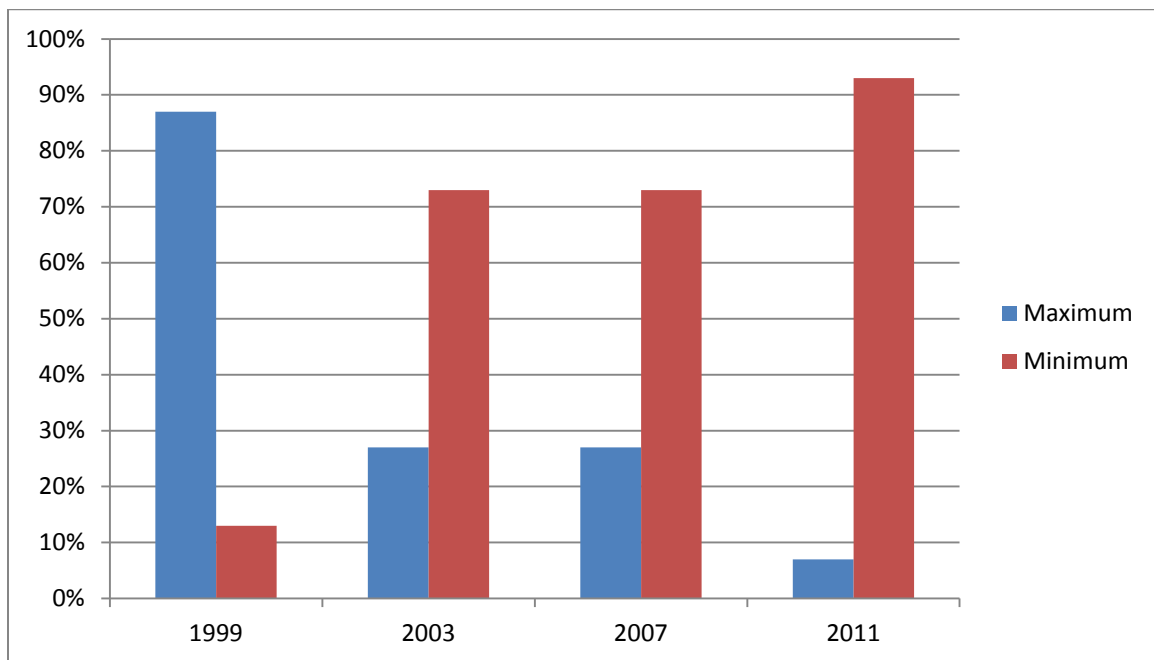
While analyzing the data, different issues were treated under appropriate research questions with appropriate tables as hereby presented.

**Table 2 RQ1: Did the Nigerian media comply with their reportorial code which demands factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of electioneering processes between 1999 and 2011?**

Options	Election Years				Estimated Degree of Occurrence			
	1999	2003	2007	2011	1999	2003	2007	2011
Compliance	130	40	40	10	87	27	27	7
Non-compliance	20	110	110	140	13	73	73	93
Nil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	150	150	150	150	100%	100%	100%	100%



**Fig 1.1:** Graph showing the maximum and minimum compliance of journalists to reportorial code which demands factual, accurate, balance, and fair reportage of electioneering process in each election year.



**Fig 1.2:** Graph illustrating the estimated degree of occurrence (in percents) of violence in election years.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 above are two explanatory graphs specially developed to provide additional analysis of statistical information contained in Table 2.

Fig. 1.1 provides a graphic picture of respondent's verdict on whether or not media professionals complied with media ethical code of conduct was at minimum or maximum level in the election years covered by the study.

The vertical wing (y-axis) of the graph is for the number of respondents while the horizontal wing (x-axis) represents the election years. It shows clearly that the level of compliance was at its lowest level in 2011 and also at its highest level in 1999. The blue bar denotes compliance while the red bar denotes non-compliance.

Fig. 1.2 shows further illustration of compliance and non-compliance of respondents in each election year. The blue bar represents compliance and the red bar represents non-compliance. As it is, the 2011 elections were badly hit by violence (93%) followed by 2003 and 2007 (73% respectively). 1999 recorded the least percentage of violence (13%).

In other words, the above table 2 further shows an ethical pendulum which conform to the canon of journalism globally during the 1999 elections. However, the pendulum changed negatively in 2003 and remained there in the subsequent elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011. Various reasons were adduced by media professionals for this ugly trend. The reasons ranged from partisanship, poverty, poor working conditions, inadequate training, sensationalism, ownership interest, lack of discipline, laziness/failure to confirm reports, over reliance on on-line reports, poor implementation of code of ethics among others. Details are hereby presented.

Adebanwi (2014) of *The News magazine* contend that whatever ethical problem observed in the Nigerian media reportage of election news could be shifted to media owners. It was his view that “media owners are often biased and this shapes the kind of stories published in their newspapers”. Nwabueze (2014) of *Hallmark* newspaper attributed the problem to partisanship on the part of Nigerian journalists.

Babalola (2014), the news editor of *PM News* on his part blamed the problem on environmental, social and monetary factors. A similar view was expressed through the *African Media Barometer, Nigeria* (2011:50) thus: “Journalists covering government institutions are careful not to lose their accreditation, which is a standard practice when an official gets uncomfortable with the reporting of a particular journalist. The fear of losing perks such as monthly stipends for covering state houses and the use of free facilities such as the telephone, fax and internet access for filing their stories also forces journalists to practice self-censorship.

Iwuga (2014), a political correspondent of *BusiessDay* however blamed such stories on inexperience as well as inadequate training of journalists. Iwuga’s colleague at *The Nation’s* newspaper, Ibrahim Shamsudeen (2011), blamed the development on what he called “the quest to sensationalize by a section of the media”.

His counterpart at same medium, Odufowokan (2014) chiefly attributed the problem to ownership interest. Odufowokan’s boss, Remi Adelowo, an Assistant editor on the political desk expressed a similar view. He said “pecuniary gains, coupled with the publishers political interest are responsible.” The political editor of the newspaper, Sam Egburonu,

(2014) in a direct and pungent manner says “media owners who are politicians often fail to separate their political interest from the fortunes of the media houses.”

Ibe (2014), the General Manager, publications and chairman of Editorial Board of *Champion* newspaper argued that partisanship in terms of ownership of the papers, ethnic biases of the owners, monetization of the political process leading to compromise of journalists and media organization are responsible. Bayagbon (2014), a senior journalist with *Vanguard* newspapers in his contribution stated that logistical constraints of many media houses could be responsible. Williams (2014), the Deputy Editor of *Guardian* newspaper said “generally, poverty could be responsible”. Aghedo (2014), a political correspondent of *Guardian newspaper* on his part identified poor implementation of the code of ethics for Nigerian journalists, put together by the Nigerian Guild of Editors as being responsible. The political editor of the newspaper, Samson Eze says lack of discipline among the regulatory agencies and media professionals are responsible.

Olumide (2014), a political correspondent with *The Guardian* newspaper identified inadequate background training of journalists as well as ethical problems as being responsible. The political editor of *ThisDay* newspapers, Vincent Obia (2014) similarly identified lack of adequate training on election coverage as being responsible. Odiboshi (2014), the political editor of *National Daily* blamed the problem on partisanship on the part of reporters and over-bearing influence of the publishers. Nwabueze (2014) of the *Hallmark* newspaper claimed “Nigerian factor is mainly responsible.” Williams (2014), the deputy editor of *The Guardian* newspapers however disagreed saying we did our best to be ethical in all our news reports.

Adeogun (2014), political editor of *Ovation* magazine says a major problem responsible for inaccurate reporting could be attributed to lack of standard remuneration for media professionals. Ajala (2014), the political editor of *Celebrity magazine* averred that over bearing tendency of the political class to promote falsehood was the main reason. George (2014), of *Insider magazine* stated that a factor responsible for the publication or airing of such stories could be attributed to financial inducement and intimidation of journalists by politicians which in turn erode their fairness and objectivity in reporting. Onabanjo (2014), the political editor of *Tell magazine* was of the view that different perspectives of reporting an event could be responsible. “The fact remains that all over the world, reporters report events differently as they view it”.

The broadcast journalists equally expressed similar view. Kunle Fasina (2014), a political correspondent of *Lagos State Television* (LTV) identified materialism as the major reason why journalists may not be ethical in their news reports. Chukwulue (2014), an *FRCN* political reporter asserts that the urge by journalists to meet some basic needs tend to make them dance to the tune of desperate politicians who are ready to induce them financially. Chukwulue’s boss, Ogunbunmi (2014) however disagreed saying “interference by the ownership i.e. government, is responsible. FRCN controller of News, Fred Braimah (2014), revealed that the major factor responsible for publication of inaccurate stories was the high level of corruption in the society. He declared, “politicians would do anything to have their ways including influencing media reports” Adagun (2014), a former deputy Director of News department of *Radio Lagos/Eko FM* claims that “the much talked about Nigerian mentality, laziness, poverty and greed are main causes of publication of inaccurate stories which in turn could provoke violent reactions.

Fatonji (2014), a senior editorial member of staff of *Voice of Nigeria (VON)* opined that inadequate education of journalists was responsible. Another staff of VON, Umoh (2014), the head of the organization's newsroom stressed that poor monitoring by relevant regulatory bodies are responsible. A political reporter of NTA, Adebayo (2014) noted that influences of political parties and government are responsible. He stressed that this is due to the fact that both political parties and government would do anything to win elections. Ajao (2014), a political reporter of MITV similarly said the Nigerian media was not adequately protected from violence, hazards and other views.

Akpan (2014), the political editor of *Inspiration 93.5FM* opened a new chapter on the issue as he identified three factors as causes of the problem. He noted inexperience on the part of the affected journalists, failure to confirm news reports and above all, over dependence on on-line media reports. Takuro (2014), the news editor of **Unilag 103.1FM** offers similar reasons to those who identified ownership influence and corruption by politicians who try to influence journalists through their ill-gotten wealth. His colleague at same medium, Waheed (2014) identified ownership and tribal influences as well as gratifications. Enitan further reveals that working conditions are generally tough for Nigerian journalists and this has pushed many to trade their integrity in order to survive. "Corruption and the acceptance of tips in cash and in kind are rampant within the industry. Greed also pushes even well-paid journalists to demand and accept money from news sources with a clear understanding that in return, they will either promote the agenda or cover-up the wrongdoings of their benefactors. *African Media Barometer* (2011:52) offers a similar explanation.

"It is common practice for media houses to demand 'fuel' or transport money to cover news events. Unable to pay salaries, some media owners encourage journalists to extort money

from news sources in lieu of salaries. The situation is that bad that a panelist summed it thus: “the Nigerian media is corrupt and its integrity is on trial”. Just as some journalists in the print sector disagreed with the majority views, a similar scenario presents itself in the broadcast media. Asuquo (2014), the Bulletin editor of *Television Continental (TVC)* said “most of the media organizations impacted accurately and fairly during these elections”. He identified TVC as one of the stations. “Regardless of political linings, TVC reporters were so balanced in their reportage during these elections”. Another editor from the stable, Adeyeye (2014) expressed a similar view. he pointed out that most TV stations reported what they saw, TVC inclusive. According to him, “We aired accurate, balance and factual stories”. He was however quick to add that “corruption can be a cause”

In a related development, a senior editorial member of staff of *Bond FM*, Lagos, Ejiro (2014) equally dismissed to notion that the media news report during the elections were full of inaccuracies and ethically biased. According to him, “the mass media did not violate any ethical code, rather, politicians were violent and openly rigged the elections”.

In a bid to provide insight into the respondents’ responses above, it may be necessary to render some of the build-up stories before, during and after the elections.

As was the case in the previous post-independent elections in Nigeria, the opposition parties equally threatened guerilla warfare if the ruling PDP fails to abide by the rules of the game. The *Nigerian Tribune* quoted an ANPP chieftain, chief Yomi Tokoya thus: “*We would mobilize forces to launch guerilla warfare against the administration through Benin Republic and Borno state, so as to destabilize the government*” (*Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2007, pg 4*).



While politics of bloodshed reigned across the land during the 2007 electioneering campaign as a result of several cases of attacks and counter-attacks on party candidates and their supporters, the security situation was further worsened by the planned nation – wide strike by the men of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF).

The *Nigerian Tribune* reports that, four days to the election, fear has reportedly gripped the leadership of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) as the rank and file of the force has insisted on going on a nationwide strike. (*Nigerian Tribune*, April 10,2007 news story)

Another pre-election activity given adequate coverage during the 2007 elections was the activities of the opposition parties which reacted sharply to the outcome of the state assembly and governorship elections. According to a *Nigerian Tribune* news report, “the opposition parties advocated boycott of the forthcoming presidential election as a way of protesting the alleged rigging of the governorship and Houses of Assembly polls” (Nigerian Tribune, April 17, 2007 pg.4)

The press similarly gave prominence to stories concerning the arrest of key opposition leaders before the elections. The arrest, according to news report in *The Nation* Newspaper edition of April 12 heightened, following President Olusegun Obasanjo’s declaration two weeks to the elections that the election was going to be “a do-or-die affair”, a statement which Fafowora (2007) described in his back page column as “a matching order, a clarion call to war to achieve electoral victory at all costs and by all means, mostly foul. It was a blank cheque from the president to his cohorts to do whatever needed to be done to ensure a sweeping victory at the polls by the PDP”. The former president insisted till date that he owed no body any apology, since he was exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Among those arrested were Chief Femi Ojo and Mr. Yinka Akerele, the governorship candidates of AC and ANPP in Ekiti state. In an editorial titled: “Stop arrests of opposition party members, *The Nation* newspaper further wrote on the arrest as follow:

*Mr. Akerele, the ANPP governorship candidate in the Ekiti state and 45 members of the party were arrested barely 10 days to the elections. Chief Femi Ojo, a chieftain of AC in the state had equally been arrested (**The Nation**, April 12, 2004, pg. 16)*

In spite of the fact that no concrete effort was made to rectify observable problems during the governorship and assembly polls, INEC still went ahead and conducted the presidential and National assembly elections on April 21.

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar’Adua of the PDP was declared winner two days after the election was held polling 24,638,063. Gen. Muhammedu Buhari (rtd) came second with 6,605,299 while Atiku Abubakar came third, scoring 2,637,848 votes (*The Nation*, April 24, 2007 lead story).

Twenty five candidates contested the election. The press equally gave adequate coverage to the conduct of the polls. Through an aggressive surveillance on the electioneering process via movement of voting materials, survival of electoral officials at various polling centres, accreditation, voting, counting and movement of ballot boxes to designated collation centres.

Minute-by-minute stories at each of these stages were adequately reported. For instance, the *Nigerian Tribune* in her news report on the conduct of the election reports that: “Fears and cynicism of Nigerians were yesterday confirmed as the gubernatorial and state assemblies elections were conducted in a do-or-die manner with massive rigging and extensive violence recorded across the country”. (*Nigerian Tribune*, April 15, 2007 lead story)

The paper went further and provided a state-by-state reportage of how the elections went saying 61 people were killed in Rivers, Lagos, Osun, Oyo, Borno, Abia and Edo. While ballot boxes were snatched and burnt. The paper further said two police stations were burnt in Port Harcourt while a PDP chieftain was shot dead in Ekiti.

The presidential and National Assembly elections took place on April 21. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) as well as the opposition parties faulted the conduct of the election and called for its cancellation. The *Nigerian Tribune* quoted the head of the European Union Monitoring Mission, Max Van den Berg as saying “he feared there had been no improvement on last week’s polls” (*Nigerian Tribune*, April 23, 2007, pg 4).

The commonwealth observer group made a similar observation, citing multiple lapses in the conduct of the polls. In spite of the complaints, INEC still declared the PDP candidate, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, winner of the poll on Monday, April 23. The election, just like the previous legislative and governorship elections was characterized by lots of irregularities and violence in several states of the federation.

As part of efforts aimed at providing media audience with up-to-date information after the conduct of the elections, the press further devoted time to the coverage of post-election events/activities. Where protest galore greeted the announcement of election results, the media gave prominence to such protest. Where results were either suspended or cancelled, such developments were also reported. For example, *Nigerian Tribune* reports that:

*The Independent National Electoral commission (INEC) in Ondo state on Sunday suspended the announcement of the results of the governorship and House of Assembly elections held in the state on Saturday to investigate allegation of malpractices across the state.*

*In another development, the Imo state Resident Electoral Commissioner, Mr. Austin Okojie, has announced the cancellation of the governorship election in the state which was conducted on Saturday. (Nigerian Tribune, April 16, 2007 pg. 4).*

In a special editorial on the election titled “On the Saturday Elec(Sham), the *Nigerian Tribune* says

*Nigeria began its journey to enthrone another democratic government on a rather wobbly and bloody note last Saturday. The governorship and houses of assembly elections that took place last Saturday were not just shambolic, their conduct put the whole essence of democracy to shame. (Nigerian Tribune, April 16, 2007,pg.8)*

The paper continued, “what took place on Saturday and which was termed elections could only have happened in a primitive society as no civilized society would allow such crude display of barbarity and/or savagery that was the hallmark of the Saturday elections”.  
(*Nigerian Tribune*, April 16, 2007pg. 8)

The paper categorically said “there is every ground to suggest that INEC played to certain instructions in last Saturday’s election in the bid to ensure that candidates of its favoured party won at the polls judging from the reports of complicity leveled against the Commission. *The Nation* newspaper editorial on the election called for the sacking of Prof. Maurice Iwu, the INEC chairman, noting:

*Iwu is not a credible umpire; he should be removed forthwith and replaced with an electoral umpire from within INEC. The elections of last Saturday show that not all electoral commissioners are servile to the biddings of extraneous forces. (The Nation editorial, April 17, 2007)*

Following sporadic protests across the country which greeted the outcome of the election, government resorted to imposition of curfew on states where the protests were extremely hot; notably, Osun, Ondo, Delta, Edo, Kano and Kogi.

The protest, rather than subsiding, increased monumentally when the presidential and National Assembly elections took place on April 21. *The Nation's* newspaper lead story of Monday, April 23 captured the mood of the nation after the polls thus:

*There was outrage across the land yesterday as results of last Saturday's presidential and National Assembly elections trickled in... ANPP presidential candidate, Gen. Buhari said from what he observed, it was obvious that he would find it difficult to recognize any candidate that emerged winner. The Transition Monitoring Group TMG, the biggest election monitoring group called for a re-run. The group said voting took place in only half of the country and warned that a winner should not be announced based on results collated from the election. (**The Nation**, April 23, 2007, lead story)*

In its editorial on the election, *The Nation* further wrote that the natural expectation was for INEC to learn its lessons from the earlier governorship and assembly polls, but like the French Bourbons who learned nothing and forget nothing, the nation was saddled with a barefaced travesty of an election, drawing praise only from the PDP whose flag bearer, Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua was declared winner with his running mate, Goodluck Jonathan. (*The Nation*, April 24, 2007, pg. 16).

***RQ2: How did the compliance or noncompliance to the reportorial code affect the relationship between political reporting and political violence in Nigeria?***

A number of reasons were given by the respondents concerning non compliance to the provision in section 100 (2-5) of the Electoral Act (2010) which states that “state apparatus including the media shall not be employed to the advantage and disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election, media time shall be allocated equally among the political parties or candidates at similar hours of the day. At any public electronic media, equal time shall be allotted to all political parties or candidates during prime times at similar hours each day, subject to the payment of appropriate fees. At any public print media, equal coverage and conspicuity shall be allotted to all political parties”.

Omotosho (2010), editor of *The Nation* newspaper attributed this to the political interest of the owners. Emewu (2010), the deputy editor of *The Sun* on his part blamed the non adherence to the law on lack of openness and probity within the system. Okereke (2010), of the NUJ however attributed the problem to the do-or-die attitude of Nigerian politicians. Adeyemo (2010), the Editorial Director of *Tell* magazine says the problem could be attributed to government censorship as well as partisanship on the part of senior members of staff of government-owned media.

Alakija (2010), the General Editor of *City People* magazine attributed the problem to fear of reprisal measures including sack from the management if opposing views are aired/published. All the sampled print editors however agreed that the law is appropriate and should be implemented to the letter.

From the broadcast respondents, Uzoka (2010), the Head of Business Desk of **Silverbird TV** says “with over 50 political parties and thousands of contestants, it is difficult to give equal access. The ownership factor is another factor”. The News editor of **Continental Broadcast Services**, Malagu (2010) expressed a similar view. He contends that “as at 2007, Nigeria had 52 registered political parties as a result of which it would be difficult to comply with the rule. Furthermore, media ownership is another reason which obstruct compliance with that provision in the Electoral Act.

Onahaegte (2010), Manager of News & Current Affairs of NTA attributed the problem to the LTP policy at NTA (Let them pay). He said political parties and candidates can access airtime as long as they are willing to pay.

Chukwuelu, (2010), a supervisor of News at **FRCN** said FRCN as a rule abides by the law except that the political parties/candidates are usually not forthcoming. An Editor with **Bond FM**, Okichie (2010) says the law would be difficult to comply with by state-owned media as a result of funding. Onimole (2010) of *Top Radio* says, all the Government-owned media are being managed by political appointees and that they will end up favouring the interests of their bosses.

Junaid (2010), Manager News, LTV on his part says “the law is ineffective because journalists in government-owned media are loyal to the party in power for fear of not losing their jobs”. Olanrewaju, (2010) Acting News Editor of **Radio Unilag** says “it is generally believed that government owned media should support the government in power and deliberately exclude the opposition. It is a moral issue”. Hassan (2010), acting controller of programme of **Eko FM** says “most media organizations are now being forced into the market to source funds, government which pays the media men could use them for political purposes”.

On what factors are responsible for government in power using state apparatus including the media to the disadvantage of opposition parties, the respondents equally responded differently. Bola Dan Abu (2010), Executive Editor of *Newswatch* magazine says state media are strictly controlled by state government and they cannot but support their pay masters. “It is a game of survival first. That is why they didn’t perform well”. Dan Abu’s counterpart at *Tell* magazine, Adeyemo (2010) contended that politicians in public office can go to any length in achieving their aim. He cited the example of Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS), Ibadan, where a former General Manager was redeployed because he gave air time to opposition parties.

Alakija (2010), the General Editor of **City People** magazine noted that virtually all the state-owned media in the country, including the NTA aired more contents on the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the detriment of other political parties. Omotoso (2010), Editor of the *Nation* newspaper equally described state-owned media as mouth pieces of their owners.

Uzoka (2010), Head of Business Desk of *Silverbird TV* identified a number of factors as being responsible. They include lack of independence, financial autonomy coupled with the fact that government in power appoints the Chief Executives of the organizations including board members.

Ladeinde (2010), supervisor, News & Current Affairs of *Degue Broadcast Network (DBN)* argued that media professionals in the employment of state owned media can't resist the quest by government to use the media to the disadvantage of opposition parties due to fear of losing their jobs or being intimidated by the government.

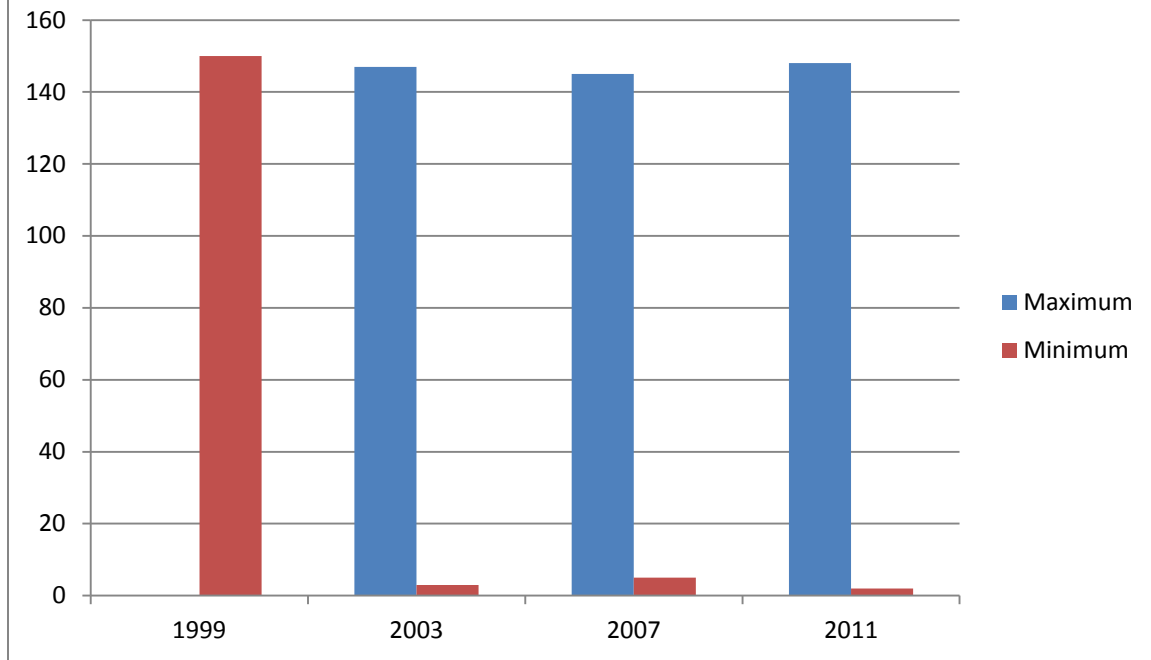
Onimole (2010), the Chief Operating Officer of *Top Radio* declared that "there is no human being who is not biased. He stated that "even the workers in state media cannot speak against the incumbent government and go free".

The contention of most of the respondents is that it would be an herculean task for government not to use state media apparatus to the detriment of opposition parties, especially against the backdrop of the fact that they appoint the Chief Executive, the Board members and pay their salaries.

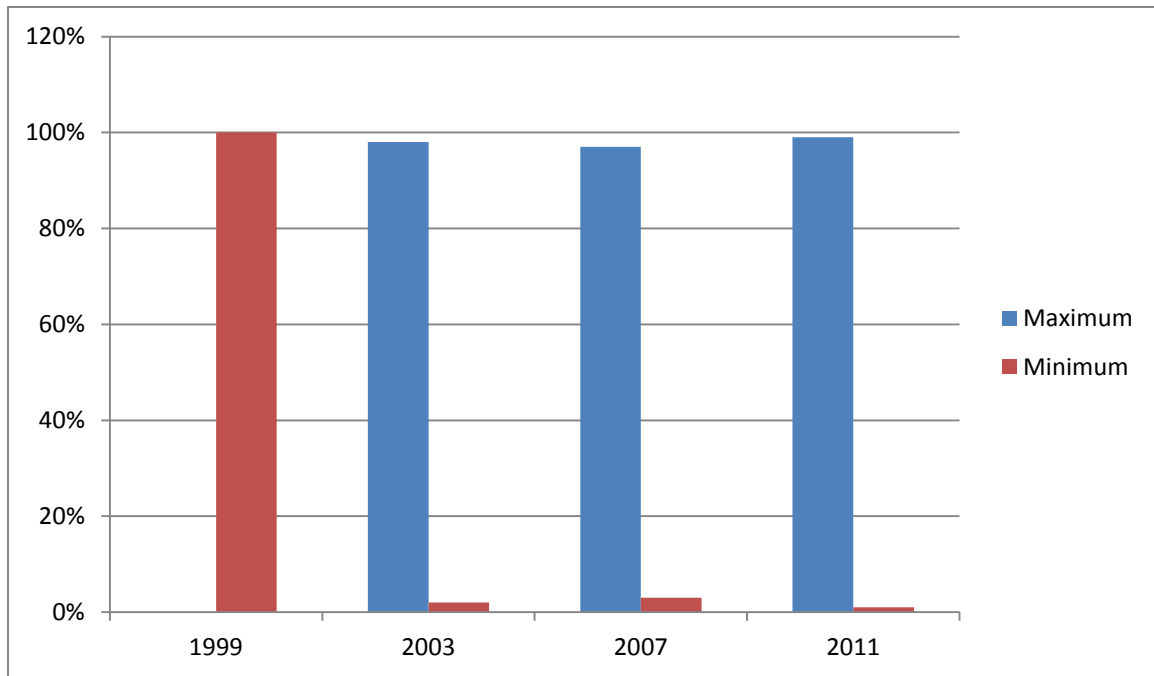


**Table 3, RQ3: What are the effects of media generated political violence on the democratic and over all political development of Nigeria?**

Options	Election Years				Estimated Degree of Occurrence			
	1999	2003	2007	2011	1999	2003	2007	2011
Maximum	-	147	145	148	-	98	97	99
Minimum	150	3	5	2	100	2	3	1
Nil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	150	150	150	150	100%	100%	100%	100%



**Fig 2.1: Graph showing the effects of media generated political violence in the democratic and over all political development of Nigeria in each election year**



**Fig 2.2: Graph illustrating the estimated degree of occurrence of the effects of media generated political violence (in percentages) in the democratic and over all political development of Nigeria in each election year.**

A glaring observation from table 3 above is the fact that the media played safe during the 1999 general elections. This could be attributed to the fact that the country was tired of military rule and that nobody wanted to do anything that could truncate the return to civil rule. Even though there were issues of irregularity in the conduct of the polls. For instance, Chief Olu Falae, the Alliance for Democracy (AD) presidential candidate in the 1999 presidential election alleged “I won by 84,000 votes but was cheated out of the race by those who were supposed to be the umpire.”

There could be some iota of truth in chief Falae’s assertion, going by the strength of the interview granted *The Guardian* newspaper by General Abdulsalami Abubakar whose government presided over the conduct of the 1999 elections. Quoting General Abdulsalami, *The Guardian* states as follows:

*In Africa, winners are sometimes determined before actual elections, as part of consultations to preserve national security or where a ruling party grows into an octopus, emerging as an authoritarian one-party state and using the instruments of the state to subvert the electoral process by making sure it wins and remains in power at all cost (The Guardian, March 1, 2003 pg10)*

The Press considered the above as a bombshell, and began to insinuate that the 1999 presidential elections conducted by the Abdulsalami administration might have been programmed such that General Olusegun Obasanjo would emerge as president. Although Chief Falae pursued his case legally but the court ruled in favour of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. All the same, he appealed to his supporters to take things easy in order not to give the military any excuse for not handing over power again. Such appeal and understanding by stakeholders was generally responsible for an atmosphere of peace which prevailed during the elections. However, the picture was different at all other elections conducted in 2003, 2007, and 2011 as could be seen from table 2 above.

From the table, all the respondents interviewed claimed the 1999 elections were peaceful and devoid of violence while the mass media reported proceedings as they unfolded. It was a different scenario from 2003-2011 as violence became top issues in the election as well as subsequent ones as could be seen from the table to the extent that 99% of political writers agreed that the media can't be exonerated from the violence, although the role they played was influenced by a number of factors such as the need to arouse the curiosity of readers or audience, inadequate training, inexperience, influence of ownership, partisanship, materialism, ethical problems, poor welfare provisions for media professionals among others. Details of their responses on the effects of such media generated violence in the polity are hereby presented.

The first major effect of violence or threat of violence on the electoral system identified by some of the respondents centered on the security response by the state through the electoral Umpire, INEC

Adelowo (2014), an Assistant political editor of *The Nation* newspaper says once there is a threat or outbreak of violence, state response has always been in the direction of deployment of security personnel so as to promptly contain violence or prevent outbreak of electoral violence. “Depending on the magnitude of such security operatives, once the figure is intimidating, it could affect voters turn out as many electorates might be scared of coming out to vote.

Oboh (2014), the political editor of *Daily Independent* newspaper says “violence provides opportunity for men of the Nigeria police to do what they know how to do best, harassing, embarrassing and at times ridiculing voters under the guise of checking. He argued that within the pro-democracy groups and civil societies groups in Nigeria, the police are regarded as the worst human rights violators and abuser.

Babalola (2014), The News editors of *PM News* on his part says low voters turn out due to electoral violence could affect the credibility of electoral outcome as well as the legitimacy of those elected through such elections.

Fasina (2014), the political correspondent of *Lagos State Television (LTV)* argued that violence could easily provide the dominant political actors opportunity to subvert the peoples will. “It is a known fact that over the years, the police and other security agents usually work hand-in-hand to protect the interest of the party in power either at the state or federal level.

Chukwulue (2014), a political reporter of *Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria* (FRCN) says the head of security forces in the country are usually overzealous in their handling of security arrangements for any election. “At times, they behave as if they are working for the government and not the people. He argued that such overzealousness on the part of security agents attracted the attention of the Nigerian press, especially during the 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections.

Takuro (2014), the News editor of *Radio Unilag 103.1fm* opines that the major effect of violence on the electoral system is that it constitutes a major threat to the political rights of Nigerians to exercise their political rights during elections.

Takuro is also of the view that desperate politicians could easily ferment trouble during elections as a result of the low strength of the Nigeria police. The staff strength of the police is put at 350,000 while there are 120,000 polling units across the country which INEC is contemplating to increase. In other words, it is a situation of about three policemen per polling unit. This is grossly inadequate and should be addressed especially, against the backdrop of the fact that historically, thuggery has been established as one of the ways through which politicians can easily cause violence during elections.

Williams (2014), the deputy editor of *Guardian* newspapers listed major effects of violence on the electoral system as assassination of political opponents, snatching of voting materials, disruption of political campaign, abusive and various forms of violent attack on opponents, among others. Ibe (2014), the General Manager, publications and Chairman of Editorial Board of *Champion* newspapers said thus far, violence has brought unmitigated disasters upon the society just as it has made nonsense of the whole essence of democracy. He argued

that just as Nigeria's former senate President, Ken Nnamani was quoted by the press, violence has made it is difficult for us to deepen democracy. Rather than improving, every succeeding election is worse than the previous one. Taking a cursory look at the magnitude of violence which characterized the conduct of 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections in Nigeria, Ibe argued that it is not only shameful but disgraceful that each election is worse than the previous when we should be talking of consolidating democracy.

**RQ4: *What policy measures can be taken to prevent media generated political violence in Nigeria?***

The dos and don'ts of political reporting during elections in Nigeria can be situated within the context of Article 95(1&2), 96(1) and 101(1) of the *Electoral Act* (2010). Section 95 (i-ii) of the Act states that "No political campaign or slogan shall be tainted with abusive language directly or indirectly likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional feelings. Abusive, intemperate, slanderous or hate language or insinuations or innuendoes designed or likely to provoke violent reaction or emotions shall not be employed or used in political campaigns.

Section 96(1) of the Act further states that 'no candidate, person or group of persons shall directly or indirectly threaten any person with the use of force or violence during any political campaign in order to compel that person or any other person to support or refrain from supporting a political party or candidate. Section 101(1) of the Act similarly states that "a print or electronic medium that broadcasts, publishes, advertises or circulates any material for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate over radio, TV, newspapers, magazines...24 hours preceding or on polling day is guilty of an offence under this Act.

Non adherence to these rules was largely responsible for the generation of political stories which engendered violence during the period covered by this study. Interesting enough, respondents who were interviewed for this study were divided on the desirability of the rules, especially, on prohibition of campaign 24 hours preceding an election. Table 3 below shed more light on the position of the respondents on the issues.

**Table 4: How desirable is prohibition of electoral mobilization/campaign 24 hours before any election?**

Options	Media Classifications		Respondents' Ranking	
	Print media	Broadcast media	Print media	Broadcast media
Desirable	80	48	86	84
Not Desirable	10	9	11	16
Undecided	3	-	3	-
Total	93	57	100%	100%

From table 4 above, it is quite interesting to note that while 86% of the 93 print respondents interviewed supported the provision in Article 101 of the *Electoral Act* (2010) which states electoral mobilization including advertisements shall stop 24 hours preceding every election, 11% said the law is unnecessary while 3 percent were undecided. However, 84 percent of the 57 Broadcast respondents said the rule is desirable while 16 percent said it is unnecessary.

It is instructive to add that in exercise of this provision, *Channels Tv* and *AIT* were sanctioned during the 2007 elections and were consequently fined N500,000 each while during the 2011 elections, *Zamfara radio* was fined N500,000 for airing unauthorized election results.

Those who supported the rule and consequently said it's desirable argued that at this critical moment during elections, all hands must be on deck to ensure there is peace and tranquility. It is also stated that there must be no undue advantage to any political party. Another reason adduced is that the provision will prevent advertisement which could unduly influence the opinion of the electorate. The need for fairness and equity was another reason being put forward to support the rule. Another contention is that it is a global rule. Bunmi Idowu (2010), Assist News Manager of NTA says" the law is necessary for the avoidance of slander or libel from rival parties as there is limited time to respond."

Among the reasons put forward by those who said the provision is unnecessary are the need to recognize the fact that many of the broadcast stations which violated the rule are privately owned which needed the money to survive. Okoye (2010), the News editor of *Radio Continental* said the provision is unnecessary because there is need for the political parties to woo the electorates until the last day of election. Uzoka (2010), Head of Business Desk of *Rhythm FM* also said the law is unnecessary. He asked rhetorically "what about the Bill Boards? What about the posters on the walls etc.? I strongly feel electoral mobilization in form advertisement should be allowed as long as it falls within acceptable content level".

While the dust generated by the NBC sanction on erring broadcast media for either carrying electoral mobilization advertisements or airing unauthorized results is yet to settle, some political parties and candidates devised other means of carrying their campaign even to the polling booths through GSM SMS. Table 4 & 5 below are samples.



**Table 5: Unethical SMS Advertisement/Campaign**

SMS Advertisement/Campaign Message	Source	Date circulated	Time Received
Vote Labour Party on Saturday to liberate Lagos from Tinubu who imposed his wife, Oluremi, daughter, son-in-law and sis-in-law as candidates vote Labour.	Lagos voters message centre +46731234200	Thursday, 7 <sup>th</sup> April, 2011	2.58pm

The source of the SMS in table 5 is neither real nor authentic. It is more or less a propaganda.

Like the biblical adage the hand is that of Esau but the voice is that of Jacob, any right thinking Nigerian could easily detect the source. However, since they hid their identity for reasons best known to them, serious voters may shun voting for the Labour party.

**Table 6: SMS Advertisement could Be Politically Strategic**

SMS Advertisement/Campaign Message	Source	Date circulated	Time Received
I, Gov. Fashola (SAN) reject the impression of me created by the opposition-sponsored SMS message. I am not a duplicitous person and I stand solidly by my mentor and hero of Democracy, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Remember a vote for the PDP or Labour is a vote against me. Pls vote only for ACN candidates. Thank you – BRF	BRF Gov. message centre +46731210251	7 <sup>th</sup> April, 2011	1.13p.m

The SMS in table 6 above was not only timely but very strategic to the political cause of ACN in Lagos state during the 2011 elections.. Before the emergence of Gov. Fashola as the ACN gubernatorial candidate, it was widely rumoured that he was not favoured by Asiwaju

Bola Ahmed Tinubu. There were other candidates being touted as Tinubu's candidates. It was not a secret. Various political calculations and permutations tilted the scale in favour of Fashola to swear to an oath. It was in the light of the above scenario that the governor authorized the above SMS which apart from clearing so many issues equally put several speculations to rest. Part of the urgent policy measures to prevent media generated violence in the country is strict enforcement of all existing laws relating to the conduct of hitch-free elections.

Furthermore, as could be seen through this study, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) should properly regulate SMS political adverts/campaign through mobile phones to ensure compliance with the laws of the land. The Sim Card registration by the various GSM service providers in the country should also continue as this will help the system in tracking down faceless people who may invade the GSM network to cause confusion through similar messages during future elections. The regulatory agency for all advertisements in the country, APCON must be alive to her responsibility by carefully and painstakingly examine all future political advertisements so as to avoid anything that could threaten peace, especially during elections. For a result-oriented and effective regulation of future SMS political advertisements/campaign, it is hereby strongly suggested the need for an inter-governmental cum Department approach towards the regulation of future political advertisement through concerted efforts by the National Communications Commission (NCC), National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and the Nigerian Press Council (NPC)

In a bid to corroborate some of the issues raised in this study, especially the legal aspect, we sought the view of Professor Taiwo Osipitan, SAN of the Faculty of Law, Unilag for expert opinion. He, inter alia, stated as follows:

*I think the provisions in the Electoral Act can be justified on the ground that whatever has a beginning must have an end. Campaigns will not start before a given time before the election. Similarly, it should stop a number of hours before election. The whole idea is to ensure that you campaign between a given period. We don't want a situation where people starts throwing things at themselves during an election or hours before an election. If they are allowed to do that, there is tendency that it will lead to violence. It is to allow tempers to cool down and also allow voters to make up their minds.*

When reminded that some politicians avoided the traditional media for last minute campaign and resorted to using the GSM, Prof. Osipitan said:

*I believe if they are found to have done that, it was wrong. If they are bold enough to admit to it, they should be prosecuted. INEC has its problems. There should be an independent body that should prosecute electoral offences . INEC has its problems, they can't really be able to do that due to manpower shortage but if there is an independent body that deals with electoral offences, such act will be decisively dealt with*

On government owned media not giving equal access to the opposition parties as stated in the Electoral Act, Professor Osipitan SAN said:

*Government media should honour that provision. In practice, who pays the piper, dictates the tune. Then most journalists are not courageous enough to air campaigns that are anti-government. I believe that government media should be compelled to take such adverts. Most politicians, governors are intolerant, they have become tyrants. Most journalists, editors are afraid to loose their job; hence, they do not give practical effects to such provisions*

On the way forward, Professor Osipitan said: "I believe that you journalists have regulatory bodies in which report can be lodged against such media houses. I believe any media house that goes against the law of the land is liable for misconduct. We want a situation where aggrieved persons can report such houses to the professional regulatory bodies. Let us see if

censorship on self regulation by the professional bodies will work. The journalists, editors, media houses involved can be dragged to the various domestic professional bodies for misconduct and they can be sanctioned. A political party should be able to go to court, to seek declaration that this is a public establishment, that I have equal opportunity and compel them to take the campaign and get them published. If they refuse to do it, you can charge them for contempt of court and send them to prison. By the time two or more are jailed, everybody will seat up”

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This study has revealed a dangerous trend in Nigeria's brand of democracy. It is a trend in the direction of failed elections.

From one election to the other in this study, there is a re-run of the old tricks of electoral irregularities such as stuffing of ballot boxes with ballot papers ahead of actual voting, seizure of or hoarding of electoral materials, fabrication and manipulation of electoral results, use of security agencies to intimidate, maim and disenfranchise eligible voters, killing of political opponents on election day or before, hijacking of voting materials including ballot boxes, rigging at vote count, etc all which are foremost factors of failed elections which preceded failed regimes in parts of Africa, especially, in Congo DR and Zimbabwe.

Nigeria ought to be itching in the direction of conducting secured credible, free and fair elections as the case of Ghana and South Africa. The mass media which are professionally and statutorily empowered to checkmate incidence of failed elections performed below expectations due to a number of factors identified in the study among which are partisanship, unprofessionalism, ownership influence among others.

As it is, the Nigerian media cannot grow democracy. For the mass media to support and grow democracy, government must be alive to her duties in the area of strict enforcement of all laws relating to the conduct of elections.

One of the reasons why some political scholars described Nigeria as a 'regressive state' is as a result of her inability to deepen democracy. Adekanye & Iyanda (2011:45) quoting Ken

Nnanami, Nigeria's former Senate President stated that since the return of democracy in 1999, "succeeding elections was worse than the previous ones". Williams (2011: x) similarly remarked that since the return of civil rule in 1999, Nigerian elections have produced increasingly cruel travesties, leading to democratic regressions rather than the consolidation of the democratic process. Civil rule in Nigeria has produced electoral results which cannot stand scrutiny or the elementary tests of integrity.

Lulofs and Cahn (2001:14) described the above scenario as "symptoms of a system that is functioning incorrectly." However, any nation-state that is not functioning correctly is already drifting towards a failed state. In a study on "anatomies of failure and collapse", Milliken and Krause (2002:762), quoting William Reno described Nigeria as a failed state with considerable potential for collapse.

Before arriving at the declaration, Milliken and Krause critically scrutinized Reno's work. They assert that he traced the potential to governmental rule that has been and continues to be hostile to state institutions and public order.

*Beyond (deliberately) creating functional state failure, governmental misrule limits or prevents mass movements for systematic change from gaining ground and instead lays the basis for interest-based, narrow, and ultimately anti-social change movements. State failure is thus made self-perpetuating, in that even opposition to the state is hostile to public order.*  
(Milliken and Krause 2002:762)

Quoting Abdel-Fatau Musah and Neil Cooper's work, *Surveying Africa*, Milliken and Krause dismissed the notion that warlords or groups within the state make violence. They assert that "the state is frequently the primary source of violence. "State collapse is often preceded by widespread violence and predation by the state against its own citizens, as the core function of providing security erodes".

Going by the testimony of General Victor Malu, a former Chief of Army staff in Nigeria who spoke on the electoral fraud which characterized the 2003 General Elections, one could assert that the state is part of the problems of electoral violence in Nigeria.

*What happened was that before the close of polls, a vehicle from Government House or any of the official vehicles will arrive at the polling booth, with armed soldiers, Air force, Immigration or Customs personnel. They will start to shoot in the air. There would be pandemonium, and the voters will run away. These armed people will collect all the polling materials, take them away to wherever they wanted do whatever they wanted with them before they will resurface many hours after..(Olurode, 2011:105-106)*

Alemika (2011:126), in his detailed analysis of the violence which marred the conduct of 2003 and 2007 elections in Nigeria further corroborates Abdel-Fatau Musah and Neil Cooper's assertion.

Quoting Francis Febode Taboi (JCA) in his lead judgment at the Election Petition Court of Appeal in the case, Buhari and All Nigeria Peoples Party against Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003, Alemika said the judge observed that there were allegations of perpetration of violence either by PDP thugs in the presence of military and police personnel or by the military and police personnel themselves.

While noting that there were instances of some violence in all the states which elections were questioned in the petition from Enugu, he particularly berated the manner in which police Sgt Anthony Abba, one of the six policemen attached to the ANPP Gubernatorial candidate was killed. According to him:

*Instances of such brutal killings either immediately, before or on the 19/04/03 are numerous. These allegations were in most cases not controverted... and the most tragic and disturbing aspect of the incidents is that these incidents either happened in the presence of policemen and soldiers or immediately reported to them. No arrests were made and no investigations.*



Alemika further states that the Buhari election petition filed by Muhammadu Buhari, Chuba Okadigbo and All Nigeria Peoples Party against Olusegun Obasanjo (CA/A/EP/3/03) on May 20,2003 contained numerous instances in which the security agencies were alleged to be involved in either inflicting violence on electorates or condoning same by thugs, most often loyal to the PDP

*The petitioners provided details as to names of perpetrators and locations of incidence. Most graphic and tragic was the case involving the soldiers and officers of the 6<sup>th</sup> motorized Battalion, Ibagwa in Akwa Ibom state. The petitioner alleged that under financial inducement, the soldiers and officers of the Nigeria Army were deployed to several LGAS. The petitioners provided the names of 35 soldiers, along with their service numbers, who were alleged to have participated in thumb-printing ballot papers and produced false results.*

Alemika (2011:121) similarly quoted reports of observers deployed by the transition monitoring group during the 2003 and 2007 elections which contained numerous instances of violence at or around polling stations attributed to the security agencies attached to politicians and public officials.

*In some cases, they arrived at polling stations shooting at random to cause pandemonium and thereby facilitate the snatching of boxes after intimidating opponents. Privatization of security is therefore one of the factors in electoral violence and the constraints in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in the nation.*

One of the reasons why the state was in a position to perpetrate the high degree of violence outlined above could be situated within the Marxian postulation. In the *Communist Manifesto (1848)*, Marx described the executive arm of the modern state as “a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie”

The second reason could be justified on the Weberian (1970) declaration in which he described the state as a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of

physical violence within a given territory. The usage of physical violence by the state, it must be stressed is in legalistic or constitutional terms. It is therefore a big source of concern at every approach of election for the citizenry to live under threat of violence or subjected to violence.

It is also a big contradiction for state to be implicated in electoral violence since a major factor that gave rise to the emergence of modern state was the need to stem the high level of violence which plagued the society during the state of nature.

Today, however, it seems very unfortunate that the state is involved in arbitrary and despotic use of physical violence which was the hallmark of pre-modern state when state aspiration should be similar to that of Winston Churchill, quoted by Ezera (1960:73), declaring that “I have not become the king’s first minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.”

All the above instances confirmed that there is a jinx and vicious circle surrounding the conduct of elections in Nigeria. Hence, Tar (2007:74) described “a regressive state as a fragile state that is drifting backwards”. At every election, the state of Nigeria drifts backward as a result of government inability to curb the excesses of the political class.

Jinadu (2011:57) says the Nigerian political elites always approach elections with deadly and incendiary do-or-die attitude. Quoting Ake (1975), Jinadu (2011:57) further states that “they turn politics into war by other means. They recruit warriors, establishes private armies and engages in a war of attrition among one another.”

Dudley (1981:179) similarly contends that in Nigeria, “it has become an accepted practice for party politicians to go about campaigning with the protection of paid personal bodyguards, usually armed with a variety of offensive weapons”

To Oloko (2004:60), politics in Nigeria has taken the form of behaviour of the phenomenon defined by Maurice Duverger (1966) as “a conflict between individuals and groups for the acquisition of power, which victors use to their advantage at the expense of the vanquished and an attempt to establish a social order beneficial to all”

The persistence of violence at every post-independent election in Nigeria is a clear indication that government is yet to come to the reality that sovereignty is a big responsibility. According to Deng et al (1996:34) “sovereignty carries with it responsibilities for the population.” If sovereignty is responsibility, governing is managing conflict.

A government manages conflict by winning it, by resolving it to the parties’ satisfaction or overcoming it through mechanisms of co-operation”

Implicit from Deng et al’s submission is the fact that government is hired to manage conflicts. However, since the first post-independent elections of 1964/’65 in Nigeria when government summoned the key political actors to a meeting in Lagos in a bid to ensure the conduct of a violence free election, the meeting which Dudley (1981:190) says produced a “code of conduct” to govern the elections, government has consistently failed to fully implement all rules guiding the conduct of elections in Nigeria.

This problem is largely responsible for the phenomenal growth of electoral corruption which Dudley (1973) says has “increased from one election to the other just as the incidence of violence, culminating in what came very close to anarchy...”

Whereas, quoting John Locke (1632-1704), an exponent of the social contract theory of the state, Gauba (2007) states that men join in a civil society and established government purely because of the need for the protection of their individual rights to life and protection of their properties. As a matter of fact, putting it succinctly in the context of Milliken and Krause (2002:763), “the modern state can be understood as an efficient mechanism for ensuring property rights...”

What the state therefore exists to protect are foremost targets of destruction and vandalization during elections. Hence, Huntington (1968:1) after a careful evaluation of governance in several countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America arrived at his famous quotation that in many cases in Africa, Asia and Latin, America, “governments simply do not govern”

According to Huntington (1968:2), these countries have a political community that is fragmented against itself, the political institution have little power, less majesty and no resiliency – where, in many cases, governments simply do not govern”. Huntington further notes that the countries suffer real shortages of food, literacy, education, wealth, income and productivity.

LaPolombara (1971:65) made a similar statement. While noting that government implies powers, he stressed that “the most unequivocal and uncontestable statement one can make of the new nations today is how little power those at the centre actually possess”.

Therefore, Huntington and LaPalombara’s declarations are good platforms for a heuristic academic discourse on electoral violence in Nigeria between 1999-2011.

Writing on the 2011 electoral violence, Ujo (2012:283) states that the remote causes of the violence in the North could be traced to the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2010.

According to him, "Yar'Adua was elected to serve a four year term in 2007. All things being equal, he should have been re-elected for another four years based on the PDP zoning arrangement."

In other words, the political calculation was that the presidency will domicile in the North till 2015. Ujo (2012:283) consequently revealed that following Yar'Adua's death, attempts were made to invoke the zoning arrangement to bring his successor from the North West zone to complete his terms. This attempt failed as his vice-president from the south-South geo-political zone was made acting president and eventually president.

Against the above background, the 2011 elections offered the North a golden opportunity to reclaim the presidency through the CPC presidential candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd). Ujo (2012:285) observes that early returns of the election results came from the North-West and North-East which showed the CPC candidate leading.

*By the time the results from the other zones started coming in, the trend was dramatically changed in favour of Goodluck Jonathan. The supporters of the CPC interpreted this to be an outcome of rigging. The build up of tension degenerated into violent explosion mainly in the Northern states. The epic – centres of the riots were Katsina, Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Taraba states.*

The state response to the violence was not only slow but untimely. As a result, the protesters burnt religious places of worship, public buildings and houses of politicians suspected to be members of the PDP. Similarly, some prominent religious leaders who were suspected to be

sympathizers of the PDP were not spared. INEC offices and some NYSC members who were recruited as INEC ad-hoc staff were similarly attacked.

As if not satisfied by their actions, the protesters stormed the palace of Sultan of Sokoto, the highest Muslim authority in the country and severely damaged his palace. Ujo (2012:287) claimed that “tens of thousands were displaced while a total hundreds of persons were murdered”

The mayhem led to the postponement of governorship elections in Bauchi and Kaduna states.

The Lemu Panel, a 22-man probing Panel which investigated the remote and immediate causes of the violence attributed it to the zonal arrangement within the PDP and the charge by the presidential candidate of CPC on voters to ‘guard their votes’ as being primarily responsible for the crisis.

Quoting the report, Ujo (2012:286) notes as follows:

*Generally speaking, the basic cause of the violence in nearly all the communities concerned is political. Ethno – religious sentiments were brought into the issue through negative campaigns and rumor-mongering by unscrupulous individuals to achieve ulterior motives.*

The panel further reported that “provocative utterances by many individuals and the widespread charge by prominent politicians, including the CPC presidential candidate to the electorates to guard their votes appeared to have been misconstrued by many voters to include recourse to violence, which they did.”

Besides the 2011 General Elections, this study showed that build up to elections especially in 2003, 2007 and 2011 were characterized by violence. Ujo (2012:287) emphasized that “violence was a major issue of concern and incidents increased as the election days drew

nearer. Credible reports indicated that several candidates and police officers were killed in election related incidents.

In a performance review of the 2007 elections, Maitambari (2011:57) observes that violence engulfed parts of the country in the aftermath of the 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2007 presidential elections as well as Governor and House of Assembly elections of 14<sup>th</sup> April. Maitambari, however attributed some of the violence to broadcast of false information about the elections.

According to him:

*In one particular event, the website of the electoral body was hacked in 2007 and false information about the election introduced into the system. Such acts led to violence in some instances which eventually led to questions being raised and doubt expressed when the true information were broadcast/published.*

The story was the same during the 2003 elections. Alemika (2011:121) states that both the 2003 and 2007 elections were preceded by widespread intra-party and inter-party violence that continued on the polling days.

Quoting the Human rights Watch, Alemika asserts that both Nigeria's federal and state elections in 2003 and local governments' elections in 2004 were marred by serious incidents of violence, which left scores dead and many others injured. Thus, he remarks as follows:

*In April and May 2003, at least 100 people were killed and many more `injured...*

*In a number of locations, elections simply did not take place as groups of armed thugs linked to political parties and candidates intimidated and threatened voters in order to falsify results... one year later, local government elections took place across Nigeria on March 27, 2004. These elections were characterized by serious violence and intimidation, as well as widespread fraud and rigging. There were reports of dozens of people killed before, during and after the local government elections.*

Electoral violence falls into the category of hard news stuff. (Fedler et al 2005 & Dominick, 1993). When violence erupted, the media wasted no time in providing a minute-by-minute incisive analysis as well as in-depth reporting. Some blew the occurrence out of proportion and reported as if to glorify the acts.

Verba (1987) stresses that the values of political leaders can be expected to have “coherence and consequences”. Most of the Nigerian post-independent elections were characterized by violence and blood letting which invites a big question mark on the nature and character of succeeding Nigerian leaders in particular and the nation-state in general.

Ihonvbere (1988:2) writing on “the irrelevant state, ethnicity and the subversion of the goals of nationhood in Africa” blamed the high degree of occurrence of electoral violence on the fact that government lacks credibility and legitimacy and could therefore not mobilize the people.

While noting that most states in Africa have virtually lost the capacity to provide leadership and direction, mobilize human and material resources and effectively mediate class contradictions and conflicts, Ihonvbere stressed that “given the violent, coercive and exploitative nature of the state, the masses turn to ethnic, religious and philanthropic organizations for hope, leadership, self-expression and support.:

The exploitative nature and character of Nigerian leaders is such that following the global fall in prices of oil, the Nigerian authorities just reduced the pump price of petrol from N97.00 per litre to N87.00 when in south Africa, it was sold for N16.00 per litre.

When President Jonathan cited the rehabilitation of Lagos-Ibadan expressway as part of his achievements during his re-election campaign in Ibadan, Oyo State, a project that has not



been completed, a public outcry greeted his speech. Five days later, construction giant, Julius Berger was drafted to patch the most terrible parts of the road.

It was the same story in Ogun State where contractors were drafted to commence work in the evening after such projects have been abandoned for over six months.

Violence has become a regular feature of the Nigerian electoral system as a result of absence of affective political culture, electoral offenders are hardly prosecuted to a logical conclusion, leading to the submission in some quarters that electoral violence is part of the manipulation secret agenda of the ruling political bourgeoisie to perpetuate themselves in power. Going by the poor handling and levity given to perpetrators of electoral violence, one tend to believe such assertion.

Similarly, media organizations that violated electoral laws are hardly sanctioned beyond the penalty imposed on AIT, Channels TV and Zamfara radio in which they were fined N500,000.00 each for giving unauthorized announcement. In spite of the existence of National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) recalcitrant media which violated electoral rules or ethics of journalism are hardly sanctioned.

Two diametrically opposed views identified by Blumler and Gurevitch (1995:2) which are quite visible and evidential in this study centered on the role of mass media in a competitive democracy. Quoting Marx and his latter-day disciples as well as McLuhan, Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) while presenting the first paradigm argued that “the mass media are essentially sub-ordinate to society’s institutionally dominant power-holders, treated as

accredited witnesses whose opinions are regularly sought and whose interests and ideologies are systematically reinforced.”

This perspective explains government owned media which act as mouthpiece of the political party in power or privately owned media operating with the mind-set of protecting the political interest of their owners. This perspective presents a big problem as could be seen from the study as both government owned media and privately owned media operate during the elections covered by the study contrary to the ethics of journalism practice and in some cases contrary to laws of the land as enunciated through the **Electoral Act 2010**.

The second paradigm, according to Blumler and Guveritch (1995:5) contend that the mass media are themselves power stations, reality definers and sites of professional cultures, with which other institutions must then come to terms:

Quoting Altheide and Snow (1979), Blumler and Guveritch (1995:10) argued that the second perspective presents the media as the dominant institutions of contemporary society to which other institutions must confirm. There are a number of privately owned media in the country which gave this impression. However, through their news presentation, editorial write ups and advert patronage, it is not difficult to ascertain that they are just disguising.

In a highly divided or polarized society such as Nigeria, class struggle should not be seen as a strange occurrence. If the state is seen within the context of Marx as essentially the instrument of society’s ruling class i.e. the capitalists or bourgeoisies, then the state owned media should be viewed as an appendage of the ruling party, projecting the aims and objectives of the party in power like that of the state owned media.

The first probing question for this study asked “did the Nigerian media comply with their reportorial code which demands factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of electioneering processes between 1999 and 2011?”

Going by the responses of the respondents, 87% of the 150 respondents said the mass media in the country complied with their reportorial code during the 1999 General Elections while the percentage dropped to 27% in 2003 and 2007 respectively as well as 7% in 2011.

The implication is that the degree of electoral violence occasioned by reportorial stylistic devices was at its lowest ebb in 1999 but changed dramatically in the subsequent election years in 2003, 2007 and 2011.

Top reasons adduced by the respondents for this trend ranged from bias by media owners who most times were responsible for publication or airing of ethically biased stories, partisanship on the part of media professionals themselves, self-censorship by media professionals, pecuniary gains, publisher’s political interest, poor implementation of code of ethics for Nigerian journalists, financial inducement and intimidation of journalists by politicians among others.

RQ2 similarly asked “how the compliance or non compliance to the reportorial code did affect the relationship between political reporting and political violence.” Several reasons were given by the respondents concerning this question.

Top of the reasons are: the do-or-die attitude of Nigerian politicians, government censorship, partisanship on the part of senior editorial members of staff of government owned media, fear of reprisal measures including sack if opposing views are published or aired, loyalty of journalists in government owned media to the political party in power, an assumption that

government owned media must support the political party in power, absence of editorial independence, lack of financial autonomy among others. On the effects of media generated political violence on the democratic and over all political development of Nigeria, which was the focus of RQ3, all the 150 respondents said violence was very minimal during the 1999 elections and therefore made the outcome of the elections credible. However, it was a different scenario in the other subsequent elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011. 98%, 97% and 99% of the respondents respectively claimed that violence made nonsense of the elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011.

Amongst the effects identified by most of the respondents were: poor turn out of voters, state response to outbreak of violence could resort in deployment of intimidating security operatives, who in turn could begin to do what they know how to do best (harassing, embarrassing and ridiculing voters under the guise of checking). Credibility of elections could be affected, the political rights of the people could similarly be trampled upon etc.

RQ4 further asked what measures could be taken to prevent media generated political violence in Nigeria. Majority of the respondents suggested strict enforcement of laws regulating the conduct of elections for the mass media and the political class.

While 86% of the 93 print media professionals interviewed for this study agreed that electoral mobilization and campaign should end 24 hours before every election as contained in the *Electoral Act (2010)*, 84% of the 57 Broadcast respondents for the study similarly expressed a similar view.

Amongst others, the respondents said it is a global rule while others said the law is necessary for the avoidance of slander or libel from rival political parties. However, 11% of print

respondents and 16% of their broadcast counterparts claimed the law is unnecessary. Some of the respondents in this category claimed that “there was need to woo the electorates until the last day of election”. Another respondent in this category said so long nobody could dismantle bill boards and poster of political aspirants 24 hours to elections, the law is unnecessary.

Divergent views or responses to the four research questions by the respondents were as a result of the libertarian orientation of media professionals in Nigeria, which could be directly traced to the philosophical postulations of John Locke, the proponent of popular sovereignty, Thomas Jefferson who advocated the necessary relationship between a free press and good, sound democratic government as well as John Stuart Mill.

These philosophers, according to Merrill (1974:163) “believed that all kinds of information and ideas should be made public.” They despised secrecy; they rebelled against prior censorship and felt that free criticism was essential to personal as well as national happiness and growth. They were fundamentally ‘democrats’ and not autocrats, aristocrats, or some other variety of elitists.

It is therefore not surprising that at every election, the media in Nigeria usually behave differently as if there are no rules and regulations guiding their operations. Going by the findings from this study, Nigeria is far from practicing good journalism. Good journalism, according to Akinfeleye (2009:44) entails reporting events as it is without any colouration, elegance, embellishment or exaggeration. To Akinfeleye after a thorough evaluation of Nigerian brand of journalism with special reference to political reporting, protocol journalism is now the order of the day among several media professionals in Nigeria.

He described protocol journalism as a journalism of loyalty to the ethics of their bosses as opposed to the ethics of journalism. According to him:

*In most cases, they compromise their sense of professionalism. They design and carry out propaganda for their bosses while their own credibility continues fading away. Their reports about people or events lack surface credibility.*

As it is, going by findings from this study, as well as earlier discovery by Akinfeleye (2009:128-130), there is acute shortage of political reporters who could be described as journalists of conscience; that is, journalists who believe and practice objectivity, fairness, accuracy, clarity and simplicity in their news reports. They write news as they see it and not as it is being dictated to them by their bosses. They never sell their conscience for naira, dollars, cedis, francs, shillings etc. Their professional ethics are supreme and are adhered to at all times.”

Uche (1989:71) published the heroic display of one of such journalists in his work entitled: *Mass Media People and Politics in Nigeria*. Writing on the extent to which the television system in Nigeria was politically abused during Nigeria’s Second Republic which eventually led to loss of public confidence and trust in the NTA, Uche recalled how an NTA newscaster, Mr. Chuma Edozie at the Enugu zonal branch of NTA refused to read a news bulletin and widely protested before his viewers and publicly alleged that it contained fake information.

According to Uche: (1989:71)

*Mr. Chuma Edozie who had been primed to read the bulletin scanned the scripts discovered that one of the stories contained “false information.” He immediately threw down the bulletin and let loose in full glare of viewers. I am fed up with this information. I hereby tender my resignation. I can’t continue with this stuff; no, no, no, I am fed up, he screamed and walked out on camera in apparent disgust.*

The prevailing media climate in Nigeria can be identified as the major factor responsible for the low availability of journalists of conscience.

*African Media Barometer* (2011:51-52) captured vividly the prevailing media climate in Nigeria while reflecting on the working conditions of media professionals in Nigeria thus:

*Working conditions are generally tough for Nigerian journalists and this has pushed many to trade their integrity in order to survive. Corruption and the acceptance of tips in cash and in kind are rampant within the industry. Greed also pushes even well-paid journalists to demand and accept money from news sources with a clear understanding that in return, they will either promote the agenda or cover-up the wrong doings of their benefactors. It is common practice for media houses to demand 'fuel' or 'transport money' to cover news events. Unable to pay salaries, some media owners encourage journalists to extort money from news sources in lieu of salaries. Salaries are low irregular and in some cases, inexistent. This is not only true of private media organizations, even journalists or state-owned media are underpaid and complain of a lack of career prospects*

The above factors are some of the reasons why Akinwale (2009:31) argues that since pre-independent era in Nigeria, government owned media behave as mouth piece of the government.

Akinwande's declaration, notwithstanding, the Nigerian press unarguably is a pride of Africa. Various international scholars made no pretension concerning this. Paul Nugent, a Reader in African History and member of the *Centre of African Studies* at the University of Edinburgh described Nigeria as "African colossus which deserves special treatment in its own right."

According to Nugent, (2004:27):

*Nigerians had long taken a pride in their irrepressible private press and vibrant associational life and often found the political timidity of other Africans incomprehensible. Nigerians, it used to be said, would simply not tolerate a Banda or a Mobutu.*

Another distinguished African scholar, Professor Ali A. Mazrui of Binghamton University, New York, similarly laud the Nigerian press. In his book, Mazrui (2006:95), notes that at a particular point in history, during the Shehu Shagari years, “freedom of the press was so excessive that newspapers sometimes came close to inciting violence, which would be a journalistic offence in such countries as Britain.”

However, going by findings from this study, a new chapter is being opened for the Nigerian press. The Nigerian press, for many reasons is losing their reputation and being blamed for electoral violence which plagued the conduct of elections covered by this study. While the press fought for independence and exit of the military from governance, there is an urgent need now to free the Nigerian press from many factors which have invaded the media, especially between 1999 and 2011, a period covered by this study.

The sad discovery from this study, however, is that at a time when sister African states, especially Ghana, South Africa are consolidating democracy with many other African states witnessing democratic openings with strong state commitment to sustain democratic growth, Nigeria is rather regressing. The regressive play in being acted with the active collaboration of the media.

Adducing reasons for the above scenario, Falana (2015:15) remarks that even though the code of ethics for media professionals in Nigeria was put together by the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Guild of editors and the Newspaper Proprietors Associations of Nigeria, “these principles are however shaped by the interests of publisher or the class interests of media organizations”. Most times, based on findings from this study, such



proprietary interests usually contradict national objectives of conducting hitch-free, credible, free and fair elections.

Alluding to this findings, Falana (2015:16) argues that:

*While the public owned media is biased in favour of the government, the private media protects the interests of the proprietors, some of whom are politicians with vested interests. The social media has however successfully challenged the control and manipulation of information by the bourgeois media.*

In a related development, Sobowale (1985:111) similarly asserts that when ownership of the media is vested in government or concentrated in the hands of a group or a few individuals, the media tend to become mere megaphones of those in control.

The danger which the above poses in a democracy, according to Sobowale (1985:111) are:

*Instead of performing the functions of surveying the environment, correlating parts of that environment and transmitting culture, which functionalist Lasswell says are the basic tasks of the media, or providing entertainment, according to Wright, the media are turned into "indispensable tools" for retaining power by those controlling them.*

Part of the major findings from this study is that security is very important in the conduct of elections. It may not be exaggeration to state that it is indispensable in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections. The reason being that adequate or water-tight security is necessary for members of the public, especially voters at pre-election campaign venues. It is also necessary for movement of electoral materials from constituency to constituency and polling booth to polling booth.

Furthermore, even after voting and counting exercise, adequate security is necessary for the protection of election results.

These are necessary steps that must be taken if the results of the elections would be credible and acceptable to stakeholders. However, how could one explain the situation where by those who are employed and paid through the tax payer's money for the purpose of providing security are those implicated or found breaching the law of the land? This is part of the major findings in this study. At each of the elections covered by this study, the problem reared its head.

The magnitude of the problem created by security agencies during the election was such that opposing parties are already kicking against future involvement of soldiers in the conduct of future elections in Nigeria.

From the first post-independent elections of 1964/65, the struggle for political power has been very hot. Rather than striving to discard a widely held notion that Nigeria can only hold flawed elections, most of the elections covered by this study, especially, in 2003, 2007 and 2011, rather recapitulated this notion.

In spite of the fact that electoral violence tend to inhibit or discourage voters turn out during elections as well as limiting campaign movement from constituency to constituency, the quest for political power tend to make it a popular strategy amongst Nigerian political elites. Theorizing on this behaviour, Thomas Hobbes theory of the state of nature readily comes to mind.

In the context of Thomas Hobbes, human beings are war mongers who would only submit or surrender to a superior warfare. However, the power theory is more appropriate in explaining the behaviour of political actors leading to violence during the elections covered by this study.

Topmost of these political behaviours which could be attributed to contemptuous disposition of the Nigerian political elites to ethics of electioneering campaign and voting are:

- Stuffing of ballot boxes with ballot papers well ahead of actual voting.
- Seizure of or hoarding of electoral materials.
- Manipulation and fabrication of election results
- Use of law enforcement agencies to intimidate, main and disenfranchise voters.
- Killing of political opponents on Election Day or before.
- Manipulation of post-election judicial processes to distort outcomes.
- Snatching/destruction of electoral materials by political thugs with active connivance of security agents.
- Ambushment of vehicles conveying electoral materials. Most times, the vehicles are completely grounded.
- Collusion between security agents and electoral officials with party agents.
- Prevention of rival political parties from campaigning in their own areas of electoral strength.
- Abuse of powers of incumbency through questionable deployment of security agents, resulting in intimidation, harassment, and coercion of electorates etc.

The quest for political power is mainly responsible for all the above anti-democratic behavior which Oloko (2004:61) described as political crime but which Coker (2003:5) described as “nagging electoral problems associated with Nigeria.” Such behavior justified the relevance of power theory as one of the theories upon which the study as anchored.

The same theory could be used to justify the behavior of government owned media whether at the state or federal level and to a large extent, the behavior of privately owned media whose conduct is now very close to what obtained during Nigeria's Second Republic when according to Uche (1989:58), "the media engaged in and disseminate open character assassination, all sorts of profanity, slander, falsehood and even pure incitement bordering on treason" A careful perusal of the role of the media in all the electoral violence witnessed during the elections covered by this study revealed a negative orientation of media professionals who were involved in the coverage of the elections.

It is as if they expect outbreak of violence. Hence, at any spike, the media picks it up. They look out for violence ferociously the way Hyena looks out for prey. They pursue the story aggressively often times ignoring the ethics of journalism as well as code of conduct for media professionals, put together by the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC). In a manner reminiscent of athletes who are involved in a 100 meters race, the media professionals compete for a priceless race to be first to break the news.

The outcome was the gory images of widespread violence, dead bodies, burnt vehicles and charred property which turned out to be the defining image of the 2011 elections. Anyanya (2013:25) recalled that violence broke out almost simultaneously in Kano, Kaduna, Adamawa, Katsina, Plateau, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno and Sokoto states. This was as a result of the fact that the media play it up and no other theory is strategically placed to explain the situation other than the magic bullet theory of the press. Hence, Haroldson (1975:72) described it as "Stimulus Response" (S-R) Theory based on the fact that media audience usually behaves in a uniform way upon receiving a media message. The culpable media in this context are radio, television and on-line media.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

#### 6.1 SUMMARY

The study examined political reporting and electoral violence in Nigeria from 1999-2011.

It noted that violence has become a characteristic feature of most of the post-independent elections in Nigeria such that hardly was there any election in the post-independent era in Nigeria that did not end in serious disputations, crisis, violence and blood letting to the extent that academics across disciplines concluded that since independence on October 1, 1960, the electioneering process in Nigeria has been an experience of tears, blood and sorrow. Just as the crow of the Cock is the harbinger of dawn, similarly, electioneering campaign and voting in Nigeria have become a magnetic pull for violence.

The mass media in Nigeria which are regarded as the playing field of politics or the road through which campaign travels every four years were identified as contributory agents.

Based on the above, the study therefore examined circumstances or factors behind such unprofessional conducts which negate journalist's creed and the code of ethics for media professionals in the country as put together by the *Nigerian Press council (NPC)* and the *Nigerian Guild of Editors*

Through a historical research method which relied on primary and secondary data collected from 150 media professionals consisting of 44 political editors, 10 line editors and 96



political reporters and two professors, the study examined the above problems through four research questions.

**RQ1:** Asked “Did the Nigerian media comply with their reportorial code which demands factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of electioneering processes between 1999 and 2011.

**RQ2:** Asked did compliance or non-compliance to the reportorial code affect the relationship between political communication and political violence in Nigeria?

**RQ3:** Asked what are the effects of media generated political violence in the democratic and overall political development in Nigeria?

**RQ4:** Asked what policy measures can be taken to prevent media generated political violence in Nigeria?

Using the magic bullet theory of the press as the main theoretical pole with power theory, conflict theory and the cause and effect theory as supportive theories for the study, the study found out among others, that the plural media system in the country under which the press deplored irritancy against military rule and consequently published adversarial stories against its elongation now tend to be unmindful of the debilitating effect of unprofessionalism in their electoral reportorial stylistic devices as this constitutes a threat to healthy growth and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

The study further discovered that non-compliance to ethical code of conduct as one of the major factors responsible for publication or airing of provocative stories capable of engendering violence during elections.

The study similarly discovered that contemptuous disposition of the Nigerian political elites to ethics of electioneering campaign as espoused through the *Electoral Act* is a major factor responsible for electoral violence in Nigeria

## **6.2 CONCLUSION**

The study has been able to establish the contributory role of the mass media in electoral violence during the elections covered by this study.

A number of factors responsible for the publication or airing of stories which could precipitate violence were equally explored. The factors ranged from partisanship, poor working conditions, inadequate training, sensationalism, ownership interest, laziness/failure to confirm reports, over reliance on on-line reports, poor implementation of code of ethics among others.

The study established the current plural media system in the country under which private, public and religious owned media exist side-by-side as being exploited for selfish political reasons by the political class during elections. It was established during the study that such media behave as mouth-piece of the political parties in power either at the federal or state levels. The private owned media also operate according to the dictate of their owners.

These problems erode media professionalism especially during elections between 1999 and 2011. The study also established that recalcitrant posture of the Nigerian political elites to ethics of electioneering campaign as one of the critical factors responsible for publication or airing of stories capable of breeding violence and recommends measures to check-mate the ugly trend in the interest of healthy growth and development of Nigerian democracy.

### 6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above, the study puts forward the following recommendations.

1. Faithful implementation of the various laws regarding the operations of the mass media during elections as clearly spelt out in the *Electoral Act (2010)*, especially, section 100 (2-5).

This section states that state apparatus including the media shall not be employed to the advantage and disadvantage of any political party or candidates at any election. As could be seen through the study, the rule was never respected by the government-owned media during the elections covered by the study.

Similarly, the law states that media time shall be allocated equally among the political parties or candidates at similar hours of the day. This rule, as discovered through the elections covered by this study was equally not observed.

Furthermore, another aspect of the rule states that at any public print media, equal coverage and conspicuity shall be allotted to all political parties. The study also found out that this rule was not enforced. Therefore, there is need for rigorous enforcement of rules relating to the conduct of the mass media during elections while violations of the rules should be appropriately sanctioned.

2. **Enforcement of Code of Ethics.** *The Nigerian Press Council (NPC), the Guild of Editors, National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)* and other media regulatory agencies should similarly sanction erring media or media professionals who violate the code of ethics to prevent further dissemination of stories capable of generating violence.

3. *The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON)* should also sanction any Global System of Mobile Communication (GSM) service providers who violate *Electoral Act 2010* rules barring political advertisements 24 hours to any election. During the elections covered by this study, especially in 2011, as established in the study, some political parties/candidates violated the rule as they disseminated political advertisements, few hours to elections.
4. **Strict enforcement of *Electoral Act 2010*.** During some of the elections covered by this study, especially, in 2007 and 2011, the *Electoral Act* which stipulated heavy sanctions against any mass medium that aired unauthorized election results were sanctioned. *Zamfara Radio, Channels TV* and *AIT/Raypower* were cited as culprits in the study. However, government owned media which violated other sections of the same *Electoral Act* were not sanctioned. For equity, justice and fair play, electoral rules ought not to be implemented selectively.
5. Any member of the political class who henceforth violate ethics of electioneering campaign by using abusive, intemperate and slanderous or hate language should similarly be sanctioned according to the law of the land as espoused through the *Electoral Act*.
6. **Regulation of future political advertisements.** The study recommends an inter-governmental-cum-departmental approach to regulate and prevent releasing of similar hate SMS/advertisements that were documented in the study so as to prevent any matter that could induce violence during future elections.

7. **Editorial Decision.** Part of the reasons given for publication or airing of stories capable of inducing electoral violence ranged from sensationalism, blowing things out of proportion or not paying attention to all sides of a controversy. These are issues requiring good editorial decision. The recommendation here is that under no condition must news report be released in a highly charged and tensed political atmosphere that may cause people resorting to violence.
8. **Political Reporting.** To broaden the knowledge of media writers, especially, the political reporters and political editors on election coverage, it is hereby recommended the need to teach political reporting as one of the specialized courses in all tertiary institutions offering journalism and mass communication in Nigeria.

#### **6.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE**

1. The study discerned that the current plural media system in the country is susceptible to ownership manipulation which erodes fair reportage of electioneering process in Nigeria.
2. The study established recalcitrant posture of political elites to ethics of electioneering campaign, ownership manipulation and non-professionalism as encouraging hijack of the media for partisan political goals during elections.

#### **6.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The study recommends for further study, how the existing plural media system in the country could best be utilized to support democratic growth and development in Nigeria, similar to what obtains in advanced democracies of the world.

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“Chaos across the nation” *Nigerian Tribune*, Ibadan: African Newspapers Nigeria Plc. April 15, 2007

## **APPENDIX I**

### **INTERVIEW**

Department of Political Science,  
Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Lagos,  
Akoka – Yaba,  
Lagos, Nigeria.

Dear Respondent,

#### **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW**

I write to seek an interview audience with you on a number of issues concerning Political Reporting and Electoral Violence in Nigeria during the 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 General Elections.

The in-depth interview is designed to elicit information from you for the purpose of writing a Ph.D thesis on media generated violence which the country experienced during the above stated elections.

I count very much on you for a revealing, truthful, and objective interview session.

Yours sincerely,

**Popola, Ibitayo Samuel.**

## APPENDIX II

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Let's have it on record, the registered name of this medium with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).
2. Precisely, when was the medium established?
3. At the time of registration, who was the proprietor?
4. How would you classify the medium? – publicly owned, privately owned or religiously owned?
5. When exactly was the political desk established?
6. The code of ethics for Nigerian journalists approved by the *Nigerian Press Council* and the *Guild of Editors* demands a factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of events. In virtually all the elections so far conducted in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011, this ethics was violated by the Nigerian media. What in your view was responsible?
7. The code further states that a journalist should not present or report acts of violence in a way that glorifies such acts. However, this was not observed in some of the elections especially, in 2007 & 2011. What would you say was responsible?
8. The code of ethics similarly says a journalist must refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language. However, such words have been published or aired as top stories during the past elections. What could be responsible?
9. As a practicing journalist, what would you identify as core challenges confronting political reporters during electioneering in Nigeria?
10. The Brown envelope syndrome has not only become embarrassing to media professionals but a shameful act. How best do you think the practice could be curbed or out rightly eliminated in order that media audiences are presented with an objective political news report?
11. Section 100 (2-5) of the *Electoral Act* states amongst others that state apparatus including the media shall not be employed to the advantage and disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election. But this rule is hardly observed by government owned media. What in your view is responsible?

12. The *Electoral Act* further states that at any public electronic media, equal time shall be allotted to all political parties or candidates during prime times at similar hours of each day. How would you describe the attitude of government owned media to this rule?
13. Section 95(1& 11) of the *Electoral Act* states that “no political campaign or slogan shall be tainted with abusive language directly or indirectly likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional feelings. Abusive, intemperate, slanderous or hate language or innuendoes designed to provoke violent reaction shall not be used in political campaign. However, many of such words adorned pages of newspapers and magazines as well as the broadcast media during the elections. What do you think could be responsible?
14. Section 101(1) of the *Electoral Act* states that a print or electronic media that broadcasts, publishes, advertises... 24 hours preceding or on polling day is guilty of an offence under this Act. However, some political parties resorted to the GSM medium and released political advertisement/campaign few hours to voting. What is your reaction to this and how best do you think it could be handled to prevent such advertisement from provoking violence?

## APPENDIX III

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH PROFESSOR FRIDAY NDUBUISI, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

**DATE: June 6, 2014**

1. Sir, how would you assess the performance of the Nigerian Media ethically during the elections so far conducted under the current democratic dispensation in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011?.
2. Now Prof. the code of ethics for Nigerian journalists approved by the *Nigerian Press Council* and the *Guild of Editors* demands a factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of events. Using this code as a template, how would you assess the performance of the Nigerian media during the elections?
3. The code further states that a journalist should not present or report acts of violence in a way that glorifies such acts. However, based on media news report, this code was rather ignored by the Nigerian media. What would you say was responsible?
4. The code of ethics similarly says a journalist must refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language. However, such words have been published or aired as top stories during the past elections. What could be responsible?
5. Section 100 (2-5) of the *Electoral Act* states amongst others that state apparatus including the media shall not be employed to the advantage and disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election. But this rule is hardly observed by government owned media. What in your view is responsible?
6. The *Electoral Act* further states that at any public electronic media, equal time shall be allotted to all political parties or candidates during prime times at similar hours of each day. How would you describe the attitude of government owned media to this rule?
7. Section 95(1& 11) of the *Electoral Act* states that “no political campaign or slogan shall be tainted with abusive language directly or indirectly likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional feelings. Abusive, intemperate, slanderous or hate language



- or innuendoes designed to provoke violent reaction shall not be used in political campaign. However, many of such words adorned pages of newspapers and magazines as well as the broadcast media during the elections. What do you think could be responsible?
8. Section 101(1) of the *Electoral Act* states that a print or electronic media that broadcasts, publishes, advertises... 24 hours preceding or on polling day is guilty of an offence under this Act. However, some political parties resorted to the GSM medium and released political advertisement/campaign few hours to voting. What is your reaction and how best do you think government or the *Nigerian Communications Commission* (NCC) should handle such acts to prevent SMS political advertisement from provoking violence?
  9. What are your candid suggestions or solutions to tackle some of the above problems in order that the Nigerian media could assist the growth of democracy in the country?

## APPENDIX IV

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH PROFESSOR TAIWO OSIPITAN (SAN), FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

**DATE: June 10, 2014**

1. Sir, legally speaking, how would you assess the operations of the Nigerian Media during the elections so far conducted under the current democratic dispensation in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011?.
2. The enabling instrument for media professionals in Nigeria, that is, the code of ethics says a journalist must refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language. However, such words have been published or aired as top stories during the past elections. What could be responsible?
3. Section 100 (2-5) of the *Electoral Act* states amongst others that state apparatus including the media shall not be employed to the advantage and disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election. But this rule is hardly observed by government owned media. What in your view is responsible?
4. The *Electoral Act* further states that at any public electronic media, equal time shall be allotted to all political parties or candidates during prime times at similar hours of each day. How would you describe the attitude of government owned media to this rule?
5. Section 95(1& 11) of the *Electoral Act* states that “no political campaign or slogan shall be tainted with abusive language directly or indirectly likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional feelings. Abusive, intemperate, slanderous or hate language or innuendoes designed to provoke violent reaction shall not be used in political campaign. However, many of such words adorned pages of newspapers and magazines as well as the broadcast media during the elections. What do you think could be responsible?
6. Section 101(1) of the *Electoral Act* states that a print or electronic media that broadcasts, publishes, advertises... 24 hours preceding or on polling day is guilty of an offence under this Act. However, some political parties resorted to the GSM

medium and released political advertisement/campaign few hours to voting. What is your reaction and how best do you think government or the *Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)* should handle such acts to prevent SMS political advertisement from provoking violence?

7. The code of ethics further demands a factual, accurate, balanced and fair reportage of events from every practicing journalist. How would you assess their performance during the elections?
8. Similarly, the code states that a journalist should not present or report acts of violence in a way that glorifies such acts. However, as you must have observed, this code was rather ignored by the Nigerian media. What would you say was responsible?
9. What are your candid suggestions or solutions to tackle some of the above problems in order that the Nigerian media could assist the growth of democracy in the country?

## APPENDIX V

*(ON MARCH 18-20, 1998, THE NIGERIAN "PRESS COUNCIL" ORGANISED THE ILORIN FORUM, WHERE THE NIGERIAN PRESS ORGANISATION FORMALLY RATIFIED THIS NEW CODE.)*

### THE ILORIN DECLARATION

Delegates at the Forum for the implementation of the Code of Ethics, affirm and declare as follows:

That we:

**ACCEPT** the imperative of a Code of Ethics as a vital pillar of journalism and the necessity for the application of ethics to enhance standards;

**AFFIRM** that self-regulation through a Code of Ethics and other structures drawn up by professionals would best serve the interest of both the profession and the public;

**ENJOIN** the Nigeria Union of Journalists, the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria to ensure the implementation of the eligibility criteria for entry into and practice of journalism in Nigeria, as contained in the Nigerian Press Council Decree No 85 of 1992;

**PLEDGE** to abide by the Code of Ethics and to promote the observance of its provisions by all journalists; and

**URGE** the Nigerian Press Council to collaborate with the Nigerian Press Organisation to publicise the Code of Ethics for the benefit of the press and the public, and ensure compliance with its provisions hereafter.

### PREAMBLE

Journalism entails a high degree of public trust. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and every news medium to observe the highest professional and ethical standards. In the exercise of these duties, a journalist should always have a healthy regard for the public interest.

Truth is the cornerstone of journalism and every journalist should strive diligently to ascertain the truth of every event.

Conscious of the responsibilities and duties of journalists as purveyors of information, we, Nigerian journalists, give to ourselves this Code of Ethics. It is the duty of every journalist to observe its provisions.

**1. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE**

Decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.

**2. ACCURACY AND FAIRNESS**

i. The public has a right to know. Factual, accurate, balanced and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence.

ii. A journalist should refrain from publishing inaccurate and misleading information. Where such information has been inadvertently published, prompt correction should be made. A journalist must hold the right of reply as a cardinal rule of practice.

iii. In the course of his duties a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment.

**3. PRIVACY**

As a general rule, a journalist should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects the public interest.

A. Information on the private life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest.

B. Publishing of such information about an individual as mentioned above should be deemed justifiable only if it is directed at:

i. Exposing crime or serious misdemeanour;

ii. Exposing anti-social conduct;

iii. Protecting public health, morality and safety;

iv. Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of the individual concerned.

#### **4. PRIVILEGE / NON-DISCLOSURE**

- i. A journalist should observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.
- ii. A journalist should not breach an agreement with a source of information obtained as “off-the-record” or as “background information.”

#### **5. DECENCY**

- i. A journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms with public taste.
- ii. A journalist should refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language.
- iii. A journalist should not present lurid details, either in words or picture, of violence, sexual acts, abhorrent or horrid scenes.
- iv. In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries should be carried out and approaches made with sympathy and discretion.
- v. Unless it is in the furtherance of the public’s right to know, a journalist should generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime.

#### **6. DISCRIMINATION**

A journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person’s ethnic group, religion, sex, or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.

#### **7. REWARD AND GRATIFICATION**

- i. A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribes, gratifications or patronage to suppress or publish information.
- ii. To demand payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.

#### **8. VIOLENCE**

A journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such acts in the eyes of the public.

#### **9. CHILDREN AND MINORS**

A journalist should not identify, either by name or picture, or interview children under the

age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses or defendants.

#### **10. ACCESS OF INFORMATION**

A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information.

Exceptional methods may be employed only when the public interest is at stake.

#### **11. PUBLIC INTEREST**

A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good.

#### **12. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.

#### **13. PLAGIARISM**

A journalist should not copy, wholesale or in part, other people's work without attribution and/or consent.

#### **14. COPYRIGHT**

- i. Where a journalist reproduces a work, be it in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgement should be accorded the author.
- ii. A journalist should abide by all rules of copyright, established by national and international laws and conventions.

#### **15. PRESS FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY**

A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility.

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **THE JOURNALIST'S CREED**

#### **I BELIEVE IN THE PROFESSION OF JOURNALISM**

I believe that the public journal is a public trust, that all connected with it are to the full measure of their responsibility trustees for the public; that acceptance of a lesser service than the public service is betrayal of this trust.

I believe that clear thinking and clear statement .accuracy and fairness are fundamental to good journalism. I believe that a journalist should write only what he holds in his heart to be true. I believe that suppression of the news for any consideration other than the welfare of the society is indefensible. I believe that no one should write as a .journalist what he would not say as a gentleman, that bribery by one's own pocketbook is as much to be avoided as bribery by the pocketbook of another, that individual responsibility may not be escaped by pleading another's instructions or another's dividends.

I believe that advertising, news and editorial columns should alike serve the best interests of readers, that a single standard or helpful truth and cleanliness should prevail for all; that the supreme test of good journalism is the measure of its public service.

I believe that the journalism which succeeds best - and best deserves success - fear God and honours man, is stoutly independent, unmoved by pride of opinion or greed of power. constructive, tolerant but never careless, self-controlled, patient, always respectful of its readers but always unafraid, is quickly indignant at injustice; is unswayed by the appeal of privileged or the clamor of the mob; seeks to give every man chance, and. as far as law and honest wage and recognition of human brotherhood can make it so. an equal chance; is profoundly, patriotic while sincerely promoting. International good will and cementing world - comradeship; is a journalism of humanity and for today's world.

Walter Williams, Dean, School of Journalism, University of Missouri.

Columbia, Missouri. U.S.A. 1908 - 1935