

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NEWS
REPORTAGE AND PRESENTATION OF
NEWS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF
TELEVISION NEWS**

BY

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(PGSS/UJ/12674/00)

**A Thesis in the DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY,
Faculty of Social Sciences,**

**Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies,
UNIVERSITY OF JOS, JOS, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D) of the
UNIVERSITY OF JOS.**

August 2005

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research efforts, undertaken under the supervision of Prof. Ogoh Alubo, and has not been presented elsewhere for an award of a degree or certificate. All sources have been duly distinguished and appropriately acknowledged

IGOMU ONOJA

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CERTIFICATION

DEDICATION

To my wife, Ada, for all her patience while I was on the road most of the time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to Professor Ogoh Alubo who ensured that this research work made progress. He almost made it a personal challenge ensuring that all necessary references and corrections were made. His wife also made sure that I was at home any time I visited Jos. Their love and concern for this work has been most commendable. My brother, and friend, Dr. Alam' Efihrain Idyorough of the Sociology Department gave all necessary advice to enable me reach this stage of the research. He helped to provide reference materials most times, read through the script, and offered suggestions.

The academic staff of Sociology Department and the entire members of the Faculty of Social Sciences assisted in many ways when I made presentations. Their input helped to enrich the research. The former Head of Department, Professor E.E.O Alemika and present Head of Department Dr. Gray Ejikeme, had their doors opened to me every time I needed assistance.

I am most grateful to my brother, John Ugwu Onoja who with his wife had to tolerate my late nights in their house most times when I was using their computer. My sister, Ene and her husband were instrumental in many ways to give me comfort in Jos and encouragement. Uncle Raphael Igomu, and Ajuma Igomu assisted a lot during the preparation of this thesis. Most times, I had to rely on them for my printouts.

To my Director General, Dr. Silas Yisa, of the National Broadcasting Commission, who gave me approval to prosecute this programme, I owe a lot of gratitude. To Mr. Mark Ojiah, Head of Public Affairs, I thank for his encouragement. Mr. Eddy Aina, Head of Operations, NBC, read through the manual and offered very useful suggestions. To my former Zonal Director, Mrs Bunmi Cole, Mr. Chris Okoyomoh, I thank for their understanding when I had to take some time off. My colleagues in the office, Mrs Ojone Otonoku, Kehinde Banjo, Segun Oluyole, Mr. Stalinus Aneke, Engr. Kareem Morufu, Sunday Omoge, Jumoke Coker, Lilian Okoro, Juliet Akuagbazie, Abu Siaka, James Shaibu, I thank for their assistance in different ways. To John Odah, Secretary General of the Nigeria labour Congress, and Smart Adeyemi, National President, Nigeria Union Of Journalists, Dr. Okwute Aba of English Department and Dr. Umar Pate, Mass Communication Department both of University of Maiduguri, I thank for their useful contributions. To my friends, Group Captains S.J Audu and T.O Araki, I owe a lot for their kindness. To my brothers and sisters, particularly Agada Onoja and Abogonye Onoja and many others too numerous to mention, who have assisted in different ways, and encouraged me to complete this programme, God will continue to manifest his good works in their lives.

Igomu Onoja

August 2005.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABN	Association for Better Nigeria.
AD	Alliance for Democracy
AG	Action Group
AFP	Agence France Press
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
ANC	American Network Company
AP	Associated Press
AIT	African Independent Television
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation.
BON	Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria
BCNN	Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria
BPTV	Benue Plateau Television
CNN	Cable Network News
CTV	City Television (Kano)
DBS	Direct Broadcast by Satellite (Cable)
DTH	Direct to Home (Satellite Television)
ENBS	Enugu Broadcasting Service
ENBS(TV)	Enugu Broadcasting Service (Television)
FRCN	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria
GTV	Gongola Television
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITPAN	Independent Television Producers Association of Nigeria.

LTV	Lagos Television
MTV	Midwest Television
MAMSER	Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery
MMDS	Microwave Multipoint Distribution System
NTA	Nigeria Television Authority
NBC	National Broadcasting Commission
NBC	Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (Statutory name which NBS was changed to).
NBS	Nigerian Broadcasting Service
NCNC	National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon
NNDP	New Nigeria Democratic Party
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTS	Nigeria Television Service
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order
OGBC	Ogun Broadcasting Corporation
OSRV	Ondo State Radiovision
PRTV	Plateau Radio and Television
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting
P&T	Post and Telegraph
RCP	Royal Commission of the Press
RFI	Radio France International

RTK	Radio and Television, Kaduna
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
TCPC	Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization
TNC	Trans-National Corporation
TSOS	Television Service of Oyo State.
UNDP	United Nigeria Democratic Party
NPI	United Press Institute
UPN	Unity Party of Nigeria
UPP	United People's Party
VOA	Voice of America
WNBS	Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service
WNTV	Western Nigeria Television
WTO	World Trade Organization.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how ownership of television stations, the social structure of the Nigerian society and the deregulation of the broadcasting industry influence the reportage and presentation of news on television in the country. The research further investigated how preferential access in news reportage is given to different social classes in Nigeria.

The methodology for this research is both through use of primary sources: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); Semi-structured Interviews (SSI) and secondary source (Content Analyses). Using the former, news editors, reporters, station managers, and viewers were interviewed. An Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses for the content analyses for this research.

Three stations, Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Plateau Radio and Television (PRTV), Jos, and African Independent Television (AIT), Lagos were used as sample stations for the study. They were selected to represent the different ownership structures that exist in the country at the time of this study.

Findings from the Content Analyses, the FGDs and SSI show that all the stations were protecting the interests of their owners. However, it was found that private stations had more balanced coverage than the government owned stations. Overall, it was found that stations coverage of the news did

not differ significantly from each other in terms of ownership, social class and the deregulation of broadcast industry.

Owners of broadcast stations who also have economic power tend to be neutral in the management of their stations. However, their interests are entrenched and protected. This is because, such owners do not exist in a vacuum; they have interests, which are both economic and political. News reportage and presentation tend to support these interests.

Hence, different television stations differentially report some obvious news items, the ethic of neutrality and objectivity as ethical values in news reporting was being compromised. This state of affairs tend to further perpetuate and legitimise the existing relations of production in the society. It was found that no matter the professional ethics and difference in the ownership structure, all broadcast stations have one thing in common: to preserve the existing relations of production in the state.

It was further found that the existing differential access by different social classes in the country is exacerbated by the new commercialisation euphemism, of “Let them Pay”, which in local parlance, means those who have money to pay do have such access to news reportage more than those that cannot pay. The discussion is focused on the use of broadcasting for power and domination, and ensuring that the existing ideology of the ruling class is preserved. News items that may not meet editorial criteria filter into reportage because of its commercial value.

The contribution of this study to knowledge is, in the finding that the general belief that the media is the neutral eyes and ears of the public is a myth in Nigeria. Thus, television stations, whether private or public, hardly adhere to cardinal ethics of fairness and objectivity in Nigeria. It is recommended that community ownership of broadcast stations will improve accessibility of the ordinary people to broadcasting; it is then that the voice of the ordinary people can be heard.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In all societies, communication is used to pass information from one person to the other or between or amongst groups. However, the form of communication differs depending on the stage of development of such a society. In other words, the stage of production of any society determines the complexity of its communication (Peil, 1976:19).

According to Peil (1976), communication in pre-industrial societies was easy, simple and mostly face-to-face. He further points out that the town announcer was often used to pass information from one person or group to others in such societies. As societies develop and become more urbanised and industrial, face-to-face communication became less efficient and constrictive. Thus, with increasing need to reach more people, the use of newspapers, radio and television has become better means of mass communication.

Television is one of such media that passes information almost instantaneously. This is because of its ability to combine audio and visual effects and its immediacy in reaching the audience (Ajia 1986:10; Lasode, 1994:48). Unlike the print media that were established at the initiative of Nigerian citizens, and used as a vehicle for venting dissatisfaction with the colonial government, the colonial government established the

first broadcast medium, the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) to facilitate its governance of the country. NBS was established in 1932 as a re-diffusion station.

According to Ake, (1981:78), Toyo (1983:3), Alubo (1990) and Madunagu (1989:25), the Nigerian society is deeply divided into the ownership of property and wealth. It is also a society characterised by great inequalities of power as a result of these divisions. One aspect of this division is that ownership of radio and television stations are concentrated in the hands of the few who own private property as well as government. Those who own property such as television stations also may also have political and economic interests. In many cases, news reportage and presentation from such stations may be skewed to protect such interests. Hence the station will usually protect such owners' capital (Curran et al, 1977:115).

Reportage of news on television entails the provision of information on different issues at different segments of a programme. It also involves giving credibility to such event, especially, because, "Credibility in the minds of the audience being the *sine qua non* for news, beyond which all else is propaganda" (Smith, 1991:34). Thus the mass media have an agenda setting role, the ability to give events certain public prominence while ignoring others, as part of the processes of newsgathering and reportage. This agenda setting role according to Smyth (1991), Onoja (1992) is however not a value free exercise. In other words, the reportage of news has organisational, individual reporters and ownership bias.

One of the roles of the media is to highlight these conflicts. The media, particularly television, which should highlight conflicts, portray only selected and dominant ideas of the ruling class. This is because, the media is owned by the ruling class, thus, a case of he who pays the piper dictating the tune (Akinfeleye, 2004:20). It therefore becomes an arena for consensual values in order to obscure these conflicts in the social system. Hall (1977) has asserted that "the mass media are the most important instruments of twentieth century capitalism for maintaining ideological hegemony in that they provide the framework for perceiving reality".

Audu (1999:85) argues that the colonial radio was severely attacked by the Nigerian nationalist movement and the indigenous press as being the mouthpiece of colonial government. It was a time the Nigerian people wanted an impartial Nigeria Broadcasting Service (NBS) that would be representative of not only the government but also that of Africans. Uche, (1986:42) points out that since the colonial government controlled the colonial radio, the indigenous community had no access to its use. The emergent Federal House of Parliament in 1954 thus set in motion steps towards transforming NBS, which later became NBC into an autonomous body free from government control. According to Uche (1986:40), the Western Regional Government established its radio station in 1959.

The leader of the defunct Action Group (AG), the party in power in the region, who later became the leader of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), during the 2nd Republic, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, had criticized the Macpherson Constitution for not meeting the expectations of Nigerians. The colonial Governor- General defended the

constitution using the NBS and castigated Awolowo for unfaithfulness in the British progressive measures towards independence. Chief Awolowo made futile efforts to give a rebuttal to the Governor General using the NBS but was denied access.

For Mackay (1962:28), this encounter between the colonial Governor and Chief Awolowo resulted in attack against the NBS, which later became NBC, for failing to function impartially. It reinforced the determination of the AG to ensure that its member, Alhaji Adegbenro, who had moved the motion that led to the transformation of the NBS into the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), turned the NBS into a public corporation in line with earlier steps. Thus right from the emergence of broadcasting in Nigeria, access by the people has been a problem.

The first television station in Nigeria, Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) was thus established to ensure that the AG, who are the owners, have access to present their view on television. Subsequent establishment of television stations in the country have followed a similar pattern with owners denying others access.

The origin of television and the political development in Nigeria are linked. The ruling elite often uses television to further the cause of politics. According to Lasode (1994:18), since the National Broadcasting Service, which was the colonial radio refused to grant Chief Awolowo equal access to air a rebuttal on the radio, Chief Awolowo was furious and accused it of bias. This led to the establishment of the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) in 1959. He further states that:

This incident also went on to be the forerunner of what is to become a very common occurrence throughout Nigeria's political history. Time after time, the government owned electronic broadcast media would continually be dominated by ruling political groups and used as a mouthpiece of the government of the day. Nigeria's chequered political development is rife with the partisanship of Nigeria's mass media (Lasode, 1994:18)

As Egbon (1992:17) also points out,

Perhaps this was a device calculated to spite the Federal authorities and gain political advantage over the other regional governments. The other regional governments responded in a very competitive spirit; hence a poor and unindustrialised country like Nigeria in the sixties, had four different systems of television service. Despite the obvious reasons advanced by the regional governments for this expensive mass medium in Nigeria at the time, it would appear that the motivations were certainly more than merely having a voice in national issues. Radio would have been cheaper to establish to carry the regional message across the political borders. The introduction of this status symbol enterprise, in the country, that at time was relatively poor, has to have something to do with state pride and prestige.

This competition among the regions marked the beginning of broadcasting in Nigeria. The trend has continued among states till today.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The mid 18th century has been identified as the era of liberalism having free market economy as its underlying principle. According to Mohammed (1994), this market model upholds the duty of government not only to defend the territorial integrity of the nation, but also to ensure that law and order exist, and at the same time leaving all aspects of national life to entrepreneurial forces. This is the concept of *laissez faire*, which was propounded by Adam Smith. As an economic principle, it contradicted the prevailing social and economic order of agrarian societies.

Revolutionary capitalism was thus synonymous with economic prosperity and state ownership with retrogression, symbolised by total and absolute monopoly of the material means of production by the feudal class and the Catholic Church. Breaking state control of the mode of production, the major thrust of capitalism with slogans such as liberty, equality, and fraternity was synonymous with socio-political and economic stakes of capitalist class, which was to wrest power away and participate in the ownership of the mode of production from feudal dominance.

According to Mohammed, (1994:36), the driving law of capitalism is the maximisation of profit. This culminated into the industrial revolution of late 18th and 19th centuries in Europe. Liberal democracies provided the political cloak in respect of participation in government. The British monarchical regimes of old gave way to Republican constitution, which enabled the people to exercise the right of who should rule them, and how much power, they should exercise in that regard. The ideology and cultural correlation of this principle found position and role accorded the mass media. They are seen as instruments necessary for the success of democracy. Citing Mansfield, Mohammed points out that this is based on the principle that:

The people must be supplied with the knowledge they thirst for. But this must be done in such a way as not to interfere with their judgment. The media report what is said and pass on every allegation. Thus, the information must be neutral and objective; there must be equality of access to the mass media in terms of ownership and content (Mohammed 1994:38).

This principle is based on the fact that plurality in access and ownership would lead to truth, which would guarantee the citizens the right to determine and

judge things for themselves in democracy. In this case, media content would be said to be qualitative if all views are considered and presented to the public without coloration. Later day monopoly capitalism shows dominance in monopoly concerns with tentacles in various sectors of the economy including broadcasting.

According to Mohammed (1994:47), the high level of state involvement in the economy of most European countries in the post world war years gave rise to state capitalism, a point where the capitalist state is not only a guarantor of the existing social order but an investor in capitalist monopoly concerns. In the eighties, there was a return of the conservatives to power in Britain, Germany, Italy, Greece, Australia and Spain, all leading industrialised countries of the world. The triumph of these conservative forces further helped to bring to the forefront the issue of privatisation and sometimes commercialisation as a policy for their economy's revival. This was subsequently adopted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank which elevated them to central elements of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), often recommended to Third World countries, including Nigeria as a means of resolving their economic crises. It is within this global political economy of the 1980s that Nigeria conceived of, and embarked upon the deliberate execution of the policy of privatisation and commercialisation.

For Mohammed (1994: 48), the policy thrust was to keep organisations, corporations and entrepreneurs alert to their responsibilities. As Alubo (1990: 45) maintains, what is now known as the Nigerian economic crises is the outward manifestation of the structural dis-articulation, particularly with reference to

production, food supply and other social services. These crises, he also said, have ironically fostered greater integration of Nigeria into international capitalism, which is ironic, because it was this annexation that initially, precipitated the crises in the first place. This greater integration is fostered through the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and other IMF/World Bank therapies that are now the acclaimed blueprints for economic recovery.

As part of this accelerated incorporation package, the supremacy of market forces is emphasised...these adjustments have consolidated the foreign stranglehold in several ways. Small indigenous businessmen, who are less able to adapt have been driven into bankruptcy while the MNCs assume near total control (Alubo, 1990:48).

Every economic structure determines the type of media existing in such country. According to Siebert, et al, (1963:78) and Akinfeleye (2004:18), authoritarianism is a system where a nation has absolute control of all its structures including the media. This control includes the restriction on information content and its structures. Here, the press is both conceptually and structurally guarded by the government in power, ownership and control is the preserve of the government, loyal party members or both. The libertarian model is based on freedom of information by and for the citizens. Here, the information flow is assumed to be free of censorship. According to Siebert, et al (1963:83), because of plurality of views, readers and viewers can select from a diverse message and arrive at the truth by themselves. Such views are expected to be objective. But as Onoja (1992) points out, no news is neutral. Nigeria emerging from 25 years of military dictatorship still retains a lot of the vestiges of authoritarianism.

Under the libertarian model, there is a free flow of information with all members of the society having free access and exit to information. Here, freedom of the press is assumed to be a necessary panacea for development of the society (Siebert, et al, 1963; Onoja, 1984). But as Amin (1973) notes, the relationship between developing and underdeveloped economies allow only for an unequal exchange. This also includes relationship within the media

For Akinfeleye (1987:20), the Nigerian media is still controlled by the government in power. There is no freedom of information act in the Nigerian constitution. Under the fundamental objectives and principles of state policy, section 21 of 1979 constitution compels the Nigerian press to monitor the governance and make the government accountable to the people. However this long period of military rule has negated this important role of the media. This is due to the military's rigid control of the press.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Television as a form of mass communication has continued to attract significant level of recognition in the development of the society and social interactions. Studies indicate that more people use television as a source of news than any other medium today (Moemeka, 1973:7; Okigbo 2000:17) because of its advantage of combining audio and visual effects.

In a survey of news media preferences among 300 residents in Jos Metropolis, Ajia (1986) found television to be the most preferred medium with 56 percent, followed by radio, with 26 percent of the respondents. The print media: newspapers and magazines trailed with 15 and 3 percent respectively. Among the mass media channels, television is the most pervasive medium in most countries of the world. According to Okigbo (2000:8), watching television ranks higher than reading, listening to the radio, showering or bathing.

Television has obvious effects on the viewers. This medium described as a mass culture has the power of pacification and stupefying the masses (Moemeka, 1989:7; Jay, 1972). News on television is a prepackaged set of ideas mass produced and disseminated to people. These actions are the work of the ruling elite, which media managers belong (Golding, 1977). These managers create, process, refine and preside over the circulation of images and information, which determine beliefs and attitudes and ultimately, behaviour. Hence, they have been called, "mind managers" (Schiller, 1976), who produce images that do not necessarily correspond to the realities of social existence. The role of broadcasting in reproducing the power relations and ideological structure of society, Hall (1977:210) argues, appears more central an issue than its incidental kickbacks.

The content of television news and the environment within which it is presented serve to relay and reinforce dominant definitions of the situations and to exclude alternatives. Moemeka further explains the impact of such mind management when he states that: "the mass media may not be successful in telling their audience

what to think but are stunningly successful in telling their audience what to think about. This is domination of the consciousness" (Moemeka 1989:6)

Hall (1977) and Moemeka (189:8) assert that the mass media have progressively colonised the cultural and ideological sphere. Control over the mass media offers several important possibilities- attracting and directing attention to people, problems and or solutions in ways which can favour those in power, and correlatively, diverting attention from rival individuals or groups; conferring status and legitimacy. Control over the mass media therefore gives the power elite veritable channels for persuasion and mobilisation. More importantly, the mass media are vehicles for offering psychic rewards and gratification (Cohen and Young, 1973). For instance television is often used to appeal to the masses to understand policies along the line of government and also keep them from any form of protest against such government policies that may be detrimental to their lives (Dahl, 1961).

The ability of the mass media to create publics, define issues, provide common terms of reference and thus allocate attention and power imbues the media with power over the audience. This has been recognised by the power elite and is evidenced in the way governments devise means to control the media: either controlling them completely or providing guidelines within which they will operate freely but with responsibility (Adorno and Horkheimer 1977). As Mills (1976) reminds the world, we are living in an environment of constant mass communication, which we experience hourly, and daily. He said that because we take this environment for granted, we might have lost touch with the reality of its influence.

Through a sustained conditioning of attitudes of the people, television news set the agenda for discussions, thoughts and actions. The day- to- day political education and information is not only narrowed, but also dictated by the worldview of the dominant class. Access to broadcast programming is limited to a tiny literate member of the urban fragment. In the case of television, access is restricted to an elite who has power and wealth. According to Ayu, (1983), in third world countries, capital, literacy level in association with the media's cultural roots effectively marginalise the central issues of political life. He also points out that

When consumers of this disarticulated western cultural propaganda sit down to fashion out an ostensibly democratic programme, they vomit the bile of western imperialism swallowed over the years. This results in assemblage of contradicting and confusing statements hurriedly put together by their intellectual hired hands, thus violating the tenet of the very democratic structure they set out to construct, leading to pitfalls in democracy and freedom for most third world countries. (Ayu: 1983:125)

In Nigeria, the structure of ownership of broadcast stations has predominance of government and sole proprietorship of immense wealth, who have partisan political and economic agenda and interest (Golding, 1977:78). In certain cases, the managers are mere front- professionals for the real owners, including foreigners (Oyovbaire 2001: 22). Here, the station not only serves the professional role and mandate assigned to it by the constitution and society but also the political agenda, objectives and motivations of the owners. Such owners see their medium as the political extension of their economic powers, as well as possible ladder for political power or influence. Onoja (1992: 18) observes how late Chief M.K.O Abiola, who wanted to contest the Presidency in 1983 put his newspaper, the *National Concord* to use for the National

Party of Nigeria (NPN) the ruling party in the country then. At that time, the newspaper was used to propagate the policies of the NPN. But when he did not win the presidential candidacy, his newspaper quickly changed its editorial policies to attacking the party. Since then, the newspaper has collapsed.

The pluralism of the Nigerian media is mediated by the monopoly worldview of the property class. Thus most socio-political programmes and commentaries by stations show that television is not objective in the coverage of events and analyses of issues. It is indeed a capitalist press. As Oyovbaire puts it,

The increasing problems of social classes and class formation, increasing poverty and pauperisation of the Nigerian social formation, mass unemployment of even graduates from tertiary institutions, --- do not usually attract media attention to mobilise and build popular consciousness against them or to resolve them. The wretched of the earth are yet to be a subject matter... In other words, Nigeria has only an establishment media. (Oyovbaire, 2001:22).

When there is a threat to capital, the media provide adequate publicity. For instance, when issues such as armed robbery attract media attention, it is most likely to be when property belonging to the ruling class are involved or they are physically assaulted. For Curran et al, (1977:186) pluralism of television programming further rests on the monopoly of the market. Thus, the issue of making profit is paramount. He also points out that the agenda setting role of the media includes deliberate suppression of otherwise critical issues of public interest, gross diversion of public attention away from matters of natural interest, selective targets as issues for personalities and national discourses, deliberate foisting upon the public particular images as well as contents about public policy.

Curran et al, (1977:195), further state that such social conflict is relayed as if it would normally affect everybody in the society. They assert that “issues are presented as if they have very serious consequences” (Curran et al 1977:196).

The mode of ownership of property in a society may however affect the reportage of events. It could either be positive or negative, depending on the owner’s interest. According to Sobowale (1986:48) there is no appreciable difference in news coverage between the private and the government owned media. This is because, the media, whether public or private is controlled by those who own property and wealth, and who also belong to the ruling class (Mohammed, 1994:90). Sobowale (1986) found that the government owned media carried a higher number of favorable stories in favour of government in their news column than the privately owned ones. Ibrahim (1989:16) argue that whatever the stated motive of establishing news media, it is not a neutral agent in class and ideological conflict. For Ibrahim:

By helping to define issues, set the agenda, the tone of the public debate and interpret events, the mass media perform an ideological function that helps, ultimately either to confer legitimacy on existing arrangements in the society or to question or offer alternatives. This is one reason why government own and control the media. (Ibrahim 1989:17).

Thus setting up broadcast stations has continued to be priority to private entrepreneurs, state and federal governments.

This study is concerned with examining the role of television and access to the stations in modern Nigerian society. It is not about news per se, but its effects, disguised in news reportage and presentation. There is the general belief that television

news reportage and presentation is neutral because journalists in the course of their duties are expected to uphold professional ethics of fairness and balance in their news reportage (The National Broadcasting Code, 1997). This neutrality is expected to be the hallmark of news production: unbiased reportage and presentation irrespective of class relations.

Different kinds of broadcast ownership are guided by necessary laws and regulated by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Irrespective of the ownership structure, they all subscribe to certain professional values and ethics. Even the NBC Code Section 2.3.2.1 states that fairness and balance must be exhibited at all times in the coverage of news in television. Despite these professional claims, there must be some other factors that may not be explicitly stated, such as the influence of ownership on reportage of news. For instance, in a federal, state government or private medium, how much objectivity and fairness can be expected in such a medium particularly if the owner has an interest in a particular issue, or if such reportage will put the owner in bad light.

But as pointed out by Norall and Norall (1975:144), partisan reportage is tied to the ownership structure, and it is expected to legitimise the ideology of an existing society. They also argue that bias reporting consists not only certain slices of behavior typical of a social class, bizarre or dramatic, but a good deal of less dramatic events, but no less dramatic behavior is overlooked. This research will investigate how such claims of neutrality are carried out while at the same time legitimizing the role of the owners.

Segilman (1983:144) also asserts that differential coverage in preference of a social class is organisationally structured to avoid conflict between the media operators.

In this research, the focus is on how television news contributes to the sustenance of this myth of neutral ideology in Nigeria. This study is therefore an account of how news is produced, manipulated and presented, while at the same time hiding its bias in favour of the owners.

There is also the added claim by government and people that the deregulation of the television industry will lead to pluralistic views, that is to say, there will be divergent views on issues. But the problem is, those who own or control television stations have congruent economic and political ambitions. Even when other members of the ruling class feel their views are not properly represented in such medium, they seek to establish their own. That is to say that political and economic interests could also lead to fractionalisation of the ruling class. This research also seeks to find out how, in pursuit of legitimation, television news lays claim to ideological neutrality. But as Alubo (1990) has pointed out, these values do not exist in a vacuum but are anchored in material production and reproduction. Maduka (1997) commenting on partisan use of the mass media particularly during electoral campaigns states that television is always used particularly during the 1983 election. This study will further investigate how television is used for partisanship through denial of access to a particular class of people while at the same time orchestrating another.

This partisan use of the media by the ruling class continues even during the military era. This time, no opposition was tolerated. For instance, the Buhari regime promulgated Decree 4, of March 29, 1984. Titled Public Officers Protection Against False Accusation, the decree stated that any person who publishes or broadcasts in any form, whether written or otherwise, any message, rumour, report or statement which is false in any material particular, or which brings the Federal Military Government or the government of a state or a public officer to ridicule or disrepute, shall be guilty of an offence. As Mommoh (192002:24) explains, Decree 4 purportedly wants to punish not just publications or broadcasts that brought or tended to bring a government into disrepute, but also embarrassed government or public officers. The truth of a statement as a defense was no longer tenable in this bid of military regime to protect themselves.

There is also the problem of decaying family values, which has been exacerbated by television programming. N'Abba (2001:6) points out that it is a matter of concern that Nigerian electronic media have become channels of destroying family moral values of the society. Most television stations do not show respect for African traditional sensibility and modesty in matters of interpersonal comportment. Many television stations broadcast movies, which exhibit uninhibited sex and criminal violence. This is same of the quality of foreign music broadcast in Nigeria today, which tends to corrupt and incite adolescents that constitute the larger population of television audience.

Beyond our national borders, our image as a nation continues to be periled and diminished in the estimation of other countries that wrongly mirror us as a country of

gangsters, cultists, hustlers and bandits. This negative national image is reinforced by obnoxious contents of movies transmitted on our television channels. This is rather damning even as we know that this is definitely not a true depiction of the character and lifestyles of the people of this country.

In this research, focus will also be on how stations give preferential access of presentation and reportage to those who are in power. For instance, why is it that in news programming by broadcast stations, the single most significant broadcasting icon is usually the Head of State, to the utter neglect of Africa's domestic capacity and all other voices and perspectives. Commenting on television, Okigbo (2000:3) observes that television news starts with the President or some other activity in some Government Houses, continues with focus on the most significant cabinet ministers before it is spiced with some remote events, including international news. There is the allegation that television news starts with the government and ends with it. Thus there is "the minister say culture", that has turned broadcasting into public relations with the dissemination of government propaganda as its top priority. Limited resources available to stations are used to ensure that all activities of the government are covered with what they term their broadcast entitlements.

In certain cases, broadcast stations are used to govern the people. Some African rulers literally govern their countries through radio or television, and some people have even been relieved of their posts through this medium. Audu (1999:140) pointed out such an instance as it affected Mr. Patrick Ityohegh, then Director of News and Ms Gold Oruh, then manager News of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) in

1991. The two officers were dismissed on air during a special network broadcast. The reason given was their alleged refusal to broadcast a statement phoned in by Mr. Nduka Irabor, Chief Press Secretary to then Chief of General Staff (CGS), Rear Admiral Augustus Aikhomu.

This is to the effect that Mr. Fidelis Oyakhilome, Director General of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, had been dismissed. Mr. Oyakhilome was replaced with Mr. Fulani Kwajafa. It took the intervention of the Director General of NTA, Malam Mohammed Ibrahim, who insisted that the two officers were duly carrying out normal newsroom procedures, of not airing unauthenticated news and so requested that the officers should be reinstated. More so, as the news item was phoned in only ten minutes to airtime, which did not leave room for confirmation. Since the news was not aired, an angry CGS directed that the two officers be relieved of their positions for their effrontery in refusing to carry the news on the ill-fated day.

Most times television stations in their news presentation and reportage also engage in sycophancy by praise singing persons who have economic power, particularly those who could patronize them with adverts or its owners. For as Gana states, broadcast stations have somersaulted into the un-edifying practice of yesteryears, the days of remorseless sycophancy, misuse of electronic media, abuse of the essence of deregulation; that it is serving as the trumpet of a tiny cabal especially in government owned media

Audu (2000:8) gave an instance, in the last days of General Ibrahim Babangida, former Head of State of the military junta, after scuttling the election won

by late Chief M.K.O Abiola. The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) reported visits of traditional rulers and members of the Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) alleging that the election was unconstitutional and urged General Ibrahim Babangida to stay on in power. But when reality of the election dawned on the military government, it made a quick exit for Chief Ernest Shonekan to take over. In the same manner, Audu (2001:10), states that when the late General Sani Abacha mooted the idea of succeeding himself, it was the same NTA that was used to set the agenda, and carried a jingle of “he who the cap fits”, an eulogy of the then Head of State on his achievements and why he should continue in power. But the reality on the ground was that the Head of state was using the state apparatus to kill, maim and destroy opposing groups.

This study also seeks to investigate the problem of programming which has been watered down by the introduction of commercialization in our television stations through the sale of airtime for news and programmes. Schiller (1976:7) has used a more encompassing term, “cultural imperialism”, in reference to the penetrative forces of television programming in dependent countries. He said that this occurs more, through commercialisation of programmes and importation of basic infrastructure.

This study will further investigate instances where the controlling political elite uses television stations to deny their political opponents access to the medium, even when they can pay for such news coverage. For Adaba (1998:12), commercialisation of news is used specifically to denote the sale of an entire newscast to a so called ‘sponsor’, whose logo or message or product is continuously displayed or relayed

throughout the newscast, or charging news sources for the privilege of covering and relaying their pre-packaged views or messages as news.

The implication of commercialisation is that only the ruling class who have wealth, power and can afford to pay for news often have access to be represented in television news broadcast, making it a privilege for the ruling class, thus ruling class ideas are the ideas that are propagated by the press. Boyd-Barret (1977:7) sees this privilege as imposition of ruling class ideas. He points out that this is worsened by the present situation whereby, ownership, distribution and content of the media in one country are singly or together dependent or subject to external pressures from the media interest of any one country or countries without proportional reciprocation of the receiving country. In all these authorities cited, no effort has been made to situate the content of news and influence of ownership and control of television stations on the Nigerian state in terms of philosophy, economy and the social structure. The effect of commercialization of news in our television stations has also not been properly investigated. This work is therefore a contribution towards filling such gap.

These problems will be investigated at three stations. These are Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Plateau Radio and Television (PRTV) and African Independent Television (AIT). These stations represent the different ownership structure of Federal, State and private ownership in the country as at the time of this research. Four issues: Coverage rights controversy of the Nation's cup in Mali 2002, fuel price strike of January 2002, the motion for the impeachment of the President in August 2002 and the electoral bill controversy would be used to investigate these

problems using content analyses. Also, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews would be held to investigate these problems.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

On the bases of the problems enumerated above, we propose the following research questions:

1. What is the philosophy of news reportage by television stations in Nigeria? What is the economic and socio-cultural base of such philosophy? Is there any objective neutrality?
2. What is the extent of neutrality and objectivity in news reporting with regard to ownership and how are these values sustained?
3. What is the nature of bias? Is it possible to determine the source of bias? The owners, managers, administrators, programme producers or the newsmen?
4. What is the role of political and economic interests in such neutrality and objectivity?
5. What are the implications for what passes for news?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- i. To identify the philosophical and socio-economic bases of news reportage by television stations in Nigeria.
- ii. To determine the influence of ownership on reportage of news in television stations and the pattern of such news reportage;
- iii. To examine the present deregulation system and its influence on news reportage;
- iv. To examine the differences that might exist in news reportage of issues in terms of prominence, depth, picture coverage and other footages involved, particularly, as it relates to different classes in Nigeria.

These issues will be examined with particular reference to state or private interference as reflected in the different ownership structures in the country using Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), African Independent Television (AIT) and Plateau Radio and Television (PRTV).

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. Television is a medium that is relied upon and confers status on those who have access to it. It is a powerful medium and thus the control of what passes through it as news and commercials has wide impact on the viewing public. This is necessary to understand the slant, if any, in news reportage and presentation.

2. Television news also has the power to mould opinion. If news is biased it is likely to affect public opinion. Thus, it can be used to control and mould public

opinion. Given the potentials of television, it has often been used to re-engineer the society. Examples of previous cases in Nigeria are the introduction of Mass Mobilisation for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), Privatisation and the current Anti-corruption crusade. These potentials could be used to sustain particular interest, by selling such ideas through television.

3. Those who control television also determine what people know. This is important during democracy, particularly when canvassing for votes depend on what the people know about the candidate. A candidate may be given advantage of a live coverage over other candidates, which could result in massive support. As Macquail points out, television can popularise a candidate and confer certain celebrity status on him even before he or she seeks political office. (Mcquail, 197: 49).

4. Television news is often regarded as a credible means of mass communication. This study will draw viewers' attention to influences or manipulations or hidden bias in news reportage. This study will further contribute to the understanding of the nature of news reported and presented in Nigeria.

5. It will also contribute to the understanding of the sociological analyses of the mass media particularly how ownership and control of television stations affect reportage of news and other events in the Nigerian society.

6. For any rigorous policy formulation to be carried out now and in future in the television industry, there is a need to analyse its contributions both in the past and present. This is why a study like this becomes very relevant.

7. There is also a problem of dearth of literature on the subject matter. Materials are scattered in different fields such as broadcasting, politics, sociology, journalism, history, the arts and humanities. This study will bring together information from different fields, using primary and secondary sources for the fieldwork.

1.7 Definition of Terms

News: All types of news can be divided into two: Straight news, which is usually superficial and largely un-interpretive while the second type, is in-depth or interpretive news. However, some kind of news, events, process or situation cannot be effectively handled at the acquaintance-with level, because the audience may not understand it. It therefore requires more in-depth analyses.

Other types of news could be described as event centred and process centred reportage. Process centred news are in-depth news reportage and analyses, un-interpreted coverages of processual, multi-dimensional and continuing set of activities, with multi-implication for human beings. Event centred news are organisational products that are created or manufactured reality that are subject to, or affected by various human limitations, organisational influence, political and other social factors that can conspire to act as constraints in the process of reportage. This makes it necessary to advise journalists working in their various beats to always bear in mind or be guided by the research-supported fact that the facts we see depend on where we are placed and the habits of our eyes.

Voice over: This is a situation where a report carries footages but not the sound byte of the person shown. It is used to describe the situation in a news report.

Actuality: A situation where the sound on the television is the actual person being shown or the actual remarks of the person making a remark.

Logbook: This is a record of all transmission of programmes of a station. They are usually kept at the transmitting room.

The preceding chapter will concentrate on reviewing relevant literature on news reportage and how it affects the society

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review would focus on the major contending paradigms and issues such as the history of the media in Nigeria, ownership and control. It will also focus on media, class and power structure in Nigeria; globalisation and commercialization of news, particularly, television news.

2.1 HISTORY OF THE NIGERIAN MEDIA

The arrival of missionaries interested in promoting education was the genesis of press development in Nigeria. The first set of media to be set up in Nigeria was the

print media, by the Presbyterian Mission in Calabar (Etimomo 1990:279; Ikime, 1983; Omu, 1978).

Akinfeleye (1987:15) and Omu (1968) further point out that eight years later, Rev. Townsend, established a printing press and a school in Abeokuta. Thus the *Iwe Irohin* (1859-1867) was the first paper by Rev Townsend to be established in Nigeria. It had a turbulent relationship with the colonial government particularly over the problem of ceding Lagos and Egbaland to the British in 1861. Between 1859-1945, there were about 96 publications made up of 23 dailies, 39 weeklies, 3 fortnightly, 7 monthlies and 24 provincial weeklies. About ten of these publications were either owned or supported by the colonial government while the others were privately owned (Omu, 1968:116).

Omu (1968) further states that this period was the beginning of intellectual and political awakening of the Nigerian press. Prominent among the papers was the *Anglo-African* (1863-65) published by Mr. Campbell. It was devoted to the promotion of education and criticism of socio-political conditions. *The Lagos Times* and the *Gold Coast Colony Advertiser* (1880) owned by Mr. R.B Blaize, were known for their furious editorial on the incumbent government on March 9, 1881. *The Lagos Observer* (1882-90) was a fortnightly, published by Br. J.B Benjamin, an auctioneer, financier and importer. This paper emerged as the greatest intellectual output of the period. *The Eagle* and *Lagos Critic* (1883-88) published by Mr. O.E Macaulay, grandson of Bishop Ajayi Crowther was seen as pro government, because it enjoyed the patronage of government through advertisements inserted by Governor W.B Griffith.

Etimomo (1990:68) asserts that on the other hand, Payne Jackson's *Lagos Weekly Record* (1890-1930) enjoyed similar patronage, but protected the interest of the Nigerian people particularly, when Nigeria's interest was impaired. By 1890, when government withdrew its patronage, Jackson went into full opposition, using his medium. *The Lagos Standard* (1894-1920), a weekly owned by Mr. G.A Williams, very independent of government contained robust declarations of courage and independence and pungent criticisms of government. *Lagos Echo* (1910-1924), was published by Bright Davies, the first professional journalist in Nigeria jailed by the colonial government for his frank and open criticism of government measures. Although he approved the imposition of water rate and other levies, he was known to be very bitter on the imprudent application of the Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance.

With the amalgamation of the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria, under British colonial rule in 1914, new democratic institutions were introduced in the country. These include the Nigerian Council and Legislative Council between 1914 - 23, and the Lagos Town Council. It was thus clear that early Nigerian journalists would be identified with politics.

Etimomo (1990:280) further states that during this period, the *Nigerian Pioneer* (1921-36) published by Sir Kitoyi Ajasa was considered too reactionary and thus suspected of being established at the instance of the British Governor. *The African Message* (1921-26) produced by Ernest Ikoli was very nationalist oriented. When the *Lagos Daily News* (1925-36) was bought over by Herbert Macaulay in 1928, there was no doubt that the era of using newspapers for political purposes had begun. It was used

as an instrument of propaganda and power, as Macaulay conceived it to be an organ of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). It was therefore considered to be anti-imperialist and anti-establishment. The *Nigerian Daily Times* was thus established as a rival of the *Daily News*. With Ernest Ikoli as editor and Adeyemo Alakija as the Chairman of the Board, it appeared on the streets on June 1, 1926 under great criticism and suspicion that it was pro-imperialist. Thus, the Nigerian Printing and Publishing, publishers of the *Daily Times* was established, in 1925, with the collaboration of the colonial government and some businessmen. (Etimomo, 1990: 79)

According to Audu (1999), in 1937, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe established his chain of newspapers, namely, *The West African Pilot*, in Lagos; *Eastern Nigerian Spokesman* on January, 1943 in Onitsha; *The Daily Comet* (1945) in Kano; and *The Southern Nigerian Defender* (1943) in Warri and Ibadan. *The Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* (1939), edited by Alhaji Abubakar Imam and the *Nigerian Citizen* (1948) in Zaria were the Northern newspapers. These newspapers not only served as the party papers but were also instruments of anti-imperialist struggles towards achieving independence. Chief Anthony Enahoro summed the role of the press in the *Southern Nigerian Defender* as:

The editorial policy of the paper was briefly to arouse political consciousness among the people, to expose the petty tyrannies of, inefficiencies and mistakes of British officials, and to agitate for an increasing share by Nigerians in administration, the appointment of Nigerians to higher positions in the civil service and parity of treatment between Nigerians and expatriate officials (Enahoro cited in Etimomo, 1990:85)

The press took the form of opposition to government as it provided the medium of criticism of the authority, spreading disaffection with aspects of official policies and programmes and coordinating movements of agitation.

With the introduction of the Richards Constitution in 1946, political party formation in competitive rivalry became the order of the day in the central legislature and in the three regions expressive of ethnic interest. All the newspapers became divided and aligned according to these interests. During this period the papers that served political interests were: *Northern Advocate* (1945) Jos; *Southern Nigerian Defender* (1943) Warri and Ibadan; *Nigerian Sentinel* (1950) Enugu. All these belonged to Zik group of newspapers. Others like the *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Daily Service* and the *West African Pilot* kept vigilance over the political parties.

While the *Daily Service*, once an organ of the defunct Nigerian Youth Movement and the *Nigerian Tribune* supported the Action Group, the party in power in the Western region; the *West African Pilot* owned by Zik supported the cause of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC). *The Daily Service* was the official organ of the first truly national party, the Nigerian Youth Movement. First published in 1933, it continued into the '50s when the Action Group took it over and merged it with *The Tribune*. It was then re-named the Daily Express. (Etimomo 1990:81).

Under this structure, the newspapers became identified with political and ethnic interests. *The Daily Service*, *Tribune* and the *West African Pilot* remained anti-imperialist in their struggle for independence. The struggle and demand for

independence came in 1945 when some striking miners were shot dead in Iva valley coalfield in Enugu. With this the newspapers became more insistent in their demand for self-government. It also precipitated a meeting of the National Emergency Committee composed of the political parties, labour unions and the editors of *West African Pilot* and *Daily Service*. Although this action propelled the British government to prepare for independence in the 50s, the colonial government discovered that the Nigerian people were not in agreement on the status of Lagos and its timing. *The Daily Service* and the *Tribune* favoured Lagos remaining as part of the Western Region; its rivals wanted Lagos to be a federal territory for all Nigerians.

Omu (1968), and Ikime (1983) point out that ethnic politics became more rife as Nigeria became more politically independent. This was shown with regionalisation of the parties. Most of the media men also became politicians of the new era. Political mud slinging became more prominent in place of the criticism of the government, who were divided on ethnic grounds. There was no more political motivation against a common enemy. The *Daily Times*, which was apolitical, started gaining more prominence, because it had enough financial support. *The West African Pilot* disappeared from the newsstand, while the *Daily Express* was taken over by its founder, the Action Group. In 1961, the Federal Government incorporated the Nigerian National Press Ltd, printers and publishers of the *Morning Post* and the *Sunday Post*.

Anxiety of government to publicise their programmes and defend its interests under ethnic politics led the Eastern Nigerian government to convert the *Eastern Outlook* to a daily newspaper, and renamed it *Nigerian Outlook*. The *New Nigerian* also

sprang from the remains of the *Nigerian Citizen* on January 1, 1966. Private newspapers also came up. These include: *The Punch*, 1980; *Guardian*, 1980; *Concord* 1982; *Vanguard*, 1984; *The Mail*, 1985; *The Reporter*, 1987 and many others. Some of them are already out of circulation such as *The Mail*, *The Reporter* and *National Concord*.

State governments also entered into newspaper publishing, as they needed to protect and publicise their interests and programmes. In 1964, the Western government started the *Daily sketch* in Lagos. This was later moved to Ibadan. The Mid West region carved out of the Western region published *The Observer* on 29th May 1968; East Central state joined with the *Renaissance* in 1973 but renamed it the Star in 1973; Rivers state had *The Tide* while Benue Plateau published *The Standard* in 1973.

Magazine publication took off only after 1960 when the *Drum* and *The Spear* appeared in 1963. Daily Times published *Modern Woman* and the *Flamingo*, both of which started in 1963. The ownership of the media almost illogically went to the party that captured power in the states or regions (Ikime 1983, Omu, 1968). Since the early operators of the mass media in Nigeria were part of the ruling elite and consequently, part of the power structure, their publications thus supported the existing power structure.

While there were colonial newspapers that supported the colonial regime, there were also anti-government newspapers used by the Nigerian elite to serve their cause. Post-colonial newspapers are today factionalised, lending support to elite and ethnic

issues and have tended to support the national cause only when their interest is seen to be on the safe side.

2.1.1 Military Regimes and Control of Newspapers

With the creation of more states by the Gowon regime, there was a quest for each state to publish its newspapers. However, the concentration of newspapers remained in the Lagos-Ibadan axis, because these places were seen as having a viable economy and commercial centers that could sustain such newspapers and magazines. However, with the coming of the military regimes, control of the press became more repressive. In many cases there was the economic form of control, which involved placing advertisements in the newspapers and magazines. Since this subtle form of control did not seem to yield immediate results of putting the military government in good limelight, other form of control believed to be more repressive were resorted to.

Each of the seven military administrations that ruled Nigeria from 1966 to 1999, namely, Aguiyi Ironsi, Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Mohammed/ Obasanjo, Muhammed Buhari, Ibrahim Babagida, General Sani Abacha and General Abdusalami Abubakar, took different measures to curtail what they regarded as the “excesses” of the press. In addition to the provisions of the Federal Constitution, which they suspended, each of them also enacted and used extra-legal measures to control the press and curb press freedom to disseminate different views and opinions, particularly, those not favorable to the government.

As Ogbondah (1994:55) points out, all the regimes drafted and utilised state of emergency and constitution suspension decrees. These decrees suspended press freedom

provisions in the constitution. Despite the existence of these laws, the Nigerian press was not cowed. Some of the military governments such as President Babangida even gave assurance at assumption of office that the press would be free to criticize its policies, only for it to turn round and gag it.

Since there was no parliament where people could make their grievances known during this period, newspapers were the only avenues people could use, to seek redress. During this period also, Nigerians saw newspapers as the 'people's parliament', an avenue they believed should be free and unfettered. It was the only way to express their fears, hopes and aspirations, thus Nigerians supported a free press. The opposition to government control of the press was in form of public and press resentments.

According to Mommoh (2002:24) the period between 1965-1967 was marked with violent military intervention. When General Ironsi assumed power, he inherited existing statutory provisions mostly borrowed from colonial statute books to control the press. These were the Detention Act of 1961, Official Secret Act of 1962, Newspaper Amendment Act of 1964, the Criminal Code Act particularly, Section 50, 59 and 418 which deals with freedom of information, and the State of Emergency Decree of 1966.

For instance, Decree 1, of 1966 (Suspension of Modification) Decree, recognized the existence of 1963 constitution, but suspended and modified it. It also gave more powers to the military government to enact decrees to rule the country. Some other decrees included State Security (detention of persons) No. 3, of 1966; Decree No 44 of 1966 (defamatory and offensive publication) decree.

The enforcement of these decrees, affected press freedom to disseminate information in several ways. Some reporters and editors were arrested, quizzed and

detained without trial. Three foreign journalists were also declared unwanted immigrants under this state of emergency and deported in 1967 during Gowon regime. Although some of the laws existed before General Aguiyi Ironsi, he did not suppress the press as much as the other regimes that followed it. One of the steps he took to encourage the press was the release of 21 members of staff of *Nigerian Tribune*, who were held under police custody for one month for an undisclosed offence.

According to Sobowale (1986:22) General Yakubu Gowon inherited the military decrees. In addition, he and his regional Governors drafted new decrees. Even though his predecessor suspended and modified the constitution (Suspension and Modification Decree of 1963) informally, Gowon enacted this decree on March 17, 1967 to formalize the suspension of the constitution. Two months later it delegated some of its functions to the Federal Executive Council.

One of the early repressions during this regime was the enactment of an edict, which banned two newspapers under the same stable. These were the *Morning Post* and *Sunday Post* prohibition edict (1967), May 8, 1967, where the Military Government of Western Region, under General Adeyinka Adebayo enacted this edict. This was because *The Post* allegedly misrepresented facts about the Western region.

There was also Decree No 17 of 1967, known as Newspaper Prohibition Decree. This law gave the power to ban the circulation of newspapers considered detrimental to national interest. However, Decree 24 of 1967, known as Armed Forces and Police (special powers) Decree was seen as the most formidable institutional measure the regime utilized to muzzle the press. This was used to control opinion the regime considered unfavorable. It conferred powers of entry, search and seizure of property

without a warrant on any police officer of or above the rank of inspector or any member of the armed forces who by virtue of the decree had powers of an inspector.

The regime also enacted Decree 41 of 1967, (Police Act Decree), which gave the police powers to arrest anyone, including journalists without warrant. Decree No 53, Trade Dispute Decree also made it an offence for anyone to publish in a newspaper or television or by any other means of mass communication, any matter, of which by reason of dramatization or other defects in the manner of its presentation, is likely to cause public alarm or industrial unrest. It provided a jail term of three years.

In 1975, *New Nigerian Newspaper* and *Daily Times of Nigeria* were taken over by the Federal Government. Officials explained that the take-over of the two most influential newspapers would not jeopardize press freedom. A government statement read:

The Federal Military Government wants to state that its acquisition of the total ownership of New Nigeria and equity (60%) of DTN will in no manner contrail the independence of the newspapers published by the 2 establishments. Government wants to underline its policy of full support of press freedom at all times (New Nigerian, 1975:14).

However, as (Ogbondah 1994:58) states these take over was seen as necessary, because they were the two most powerful newspapers in the country. These decrees were enacted to keep the armed forces in power without question to its legitimacy and its policies. It was to further assist in publicizing their activities in favourable light. The Federal Government also ensured that only editors attended their monthly press briefing. This was to ensure that they streamlined their editorial policies with the ideals of the military regime. For instance, on

November 18, 1966, the Western regional Government shut two newspapers: *The Sunday Star* and the *Imole Owuro*, for allegedly reporting it in bad light. The Government alleged that the two newspapers constituted a danger to it. On December 19, 1966, the police invited the editor of Nigerian Tribune, Ayo Ajewumi for a chat over a story the newspaper carried on impersonation of soldiers.

To further illustrate how the military regime whipped the press to line with its policy was the case of Amakiri, a reporter, with the *Tide* newspapers who was shaved, whipped and detained for publishing a story in the state government owned newspaper, *The Tide*, which the Governor, Col. Diette Spiff felt embarrassed him on his birthday.

During the Murtala /Obasanjo regime, there was a claim that the regime was prepared to wipe out corruption both from the private and public sectors. Ironically, General Mohammed himself was the first to be accused of corruption by one Obarogie Ohanbamu. As Onoja (1992) points out, following this accusation, the regime responded to deal with similar accusations against it by enacting Decree No 11, of 1975, known as Public Officers Protection Act Against False Accusation. The decree sought to deal with newspaper publications that falsely accuse public servants of improprieties. Other decrees set up by the Murtala/ Obasanjo regime to muzzle the press included the Newspaper Prohibition of Circulation Decree No. 12 of 1978, which formalized the Federal Government's confiscation and ban on *Newbreed* magazine, the *Daily Times of Nigeria* (Certain Transfer of Shares) Decree

No. 10 of 1979, which transferred 60% of the shares to National Insurance Corporation of Nigeria (NICON).

The effect of these decrees was that many newspapers were shut, while editors, reporters were either dismissed or demoted. Magazines and newspapers were also either confiscated or banned. For instance, the editor of the *Nigeria Standard* Iliya Audu and his Benin Correspondent were arrested and charged to court in 1975 over unfavourable reports by the government.

The Shehu Shagari government, which assumed power in the democratic dispensation, was also turbulent. Many newspapers became partisan along regional ownership and party lines. For instance, *The Tribune*, owned by the Awolowo family supported Chief Awolowo, leader of UPN, *New Nigerian* owned by the Federal Government supported the NPN, the ruling party, while *Statesman*, owned by the Anambra state government towed the line of NPP.

However, from the moment General Muhammadu Buhari seized power in 1984, he showed his impatience and resentment for the press. He stated that he would tamper with the constitutional provisions of freedom of the press. According to *National Concord* of February 22, 1984, two months after he assumed power, he told some journalists that a decree to control the press was in the offing. He said such a law was necessary to shield government from slanderous and malicious accusations. He said that discipline and responsibility were as necessary as press freedom.

He introduced Decree 4, of 1984, known as Public Officers Protection Against False Accusation. Journalists and publishers who contravened the law were tried under a military tribunal, whose judgment had no appeal.

This decree came into being, because, Buhari became aware of allegations of 2.8 billion Naira missing from the coffers of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), when he was a minister. He was also alleged to have amassed fortune as a Governor of Borno State under Murtala regime. Two journalists of the Guardian were jailed for contravening this decree. Many journalists and commentators were arrested and detained also. This decree created despair and loss of faith on the regime.

To further equip himself with necessary institutional measures to control the press, Buhari promulgated Decree No.1, which again suspended the constitutional provisions and empowered him and his cabinet to make laws for the country. He further promulgated Decree No. 2, which gave special powers to detain persons indefinitely including journalists for acts prejudicial to state security. It was because of the vehement press and public opposition to the decree that Ibrahim Babangida abrogated the obnoxious press law, as soon as he came to power, in a coup that toppled Buhari in 1985. .

Thus, when General Babangida's coup came in 1985, it was welcomed. Babangida in his first public statement abolished the obnoxious decree and pronounced unconditional release of the two journalists jailed under the provisions of decree four. In his maiden broadcast on August 27 1985, Babangida urged the press to feel free to criticize the regime and promised to listen to public opinion. As

soon as he assumed power, he reneged on this promise to protect human rights and uphold the freedom of the press. He continued with the repressive policies of his predecessor. He did not repeal Decree 2, which meant that people including journalists could still be arbitrarily detained, neither did he repeal the constitution suspension and modification decree.

According to Ogbundah (1994), Babangida also set up the Press Council, to regulate the activities of the press. One of the provisions of the council was that only persons trained in institutions approved by the Nigeria Union of journalists and have certificates of experience acquired after five years could practice journalism. *Newswatch* magazine was also banned because it published what the government considered as “classified information”.

The regime further enacted the Offensive Publications Decree 35, of 1993, which empowered the Head of state to seize or proscribe any publication deemed offensive to state security or public order. Under this decree, copies of July edition of *Tell*, a weekly magazine was seized. Newspapers were further required to register with the government under a new decree, which prescribed new registration guidelines. It further required all existing and future newspapers to be licensed by a board to be appointed by the Federal Government. This was to further control the activities of the newspapers and magazines. Public resentment of *Newswatch* Decree enacted under Babangida also explained why the press remained relatively free under that period, as the government was careful not to further hurt public opinion against it. It also played a leading role on why government did not extend

the clamp on the magazine for another six months despite a provision for such in the decree.

During General Sani Abacha's regime, this repression was not different. He retained all the repressive laws. *Newswatch* editors were jailed for carrying a story that portrayed the military regime in bad light. The decrees continued to exist. Even when General Abdusalami's regime took over in 1997, the oppressive decrees were not repealed, except that they were not used against the people. Until 1999, when the civilian regime took over, the military regimes drafted press laws to keep the press in check, because it believed that the press was becoming more powerful. For as Buhari puts it, "*the excesses of the press could endanger the stability of the nation*". Similarly, General Babangida explained the proscription of *Newswatch* as one of the irresponsibilities of the Nigerian press. These decrees existed till General Obasanjo assumed power in May 1999 before the National Assembly repealed them.

2.1.2 History of Broadcasting in Nigeria

Unlike the print media that was established at the initiative of Nigerian citizens, and used as a vehicle for venting dissatisfaction with colonial government, the colonial government established the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

Audu (1998:85) argues that the colonial radio was severely attacked by the Nigerian nationalist movement and the indigenous press as being the mouthpiece of colonial government. It was a time the Nigerian people wanted an impartial NBC that would be representative of not only the government but also that of Africans. Uche,

(1986:42) points out that since the colonial government controlled the colonial radio, the indigenous community had no access to its use. The emergent Federal House of Parliament in 1954 thus set in motion, steps towards transforming NBS into an autonomous body free from government control.

The early fifties was a period in Nigeria when the apparently conflicting desires for regional autonomy on one hand and national unity on the other hand had already taken root. According to Olabode:

The colonial administrators stated the purpose for which broadcasting was established: These were to serve the information needs of the British community in Nigeria; to propagate Western cultures and to also advance the colonial administration (Olabode, 1994:86)

For Audu (1999:68), under the Macpherson constitution, broadcasting was placed on the concurrent list thus making it possible for the three regions to establish their own stations, each in competition with the central government. Maduka further states that:

Even at the beginning it was not an indigenous radio particularly its guiding laws: whole sections in Nigerian laws were replicated from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) charter, especially in the provision of fairness and balance in news treatment of political issues and public disputes (Maduka, 1997:64).

Uche further argues that the colonial antecedents of broadcasting in Nigeria can be traced back to 1932 when the British hooked up Nigeria by wire services to the mother country. This was extended to the Nigerian colony using the Post and Telegraph (P&T), through some rudimentary wire services, which were obtained in other settler

colonies such as Kenya, Rhodesia and South Africa. This made it possible for Nigerians to tune to the BBC. Obazele (1996:144) states that this fledgling colonial radio was facilitated by wired relay stations, and was conceived mainly as an arm of British propaganda and as a public relations strategy in the colonies especially during the World War II to counter Hitler's propaganda.

Being the only service of this nature available at the time, the mechanism became popular as the number of subscribers rose to 10,000 in 1949, with relay stations covering major cities such as Lagos, Enugu, Kaduna, Ibadan, Calabar and Port Harcourt. At this time the number of licensed sets were about 5,000. Rapid urbanisation underpinned by gathering anti-colonial ferment of the 1950s made the establishment of an indigenous radio service inevitable.

The contemplated idea of a British West African Broadcasting Service, by the colonial government in 1932, according to the Turner Byron Commission was considered unviable due to linguistic and geographical barriers. The Turner Report rather recommended, and the colonial administration accepted the establishment of a country Radio Service. In the case of Nigeria, the expansion was to assume a regional structure. The project that gave birth to Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS), was undertaken by BBC through its experts including T.W. Charmers and J.W. Murray who became pioneer chief executive and chief engineer respectively (Ikime 1983; Audu 1999:69).

Though widely supported, the initiatives in the House of Representatives did not materialise until 1957, when by an Act of Parliament, No. 57 of 1956 assented to by the Queen, NBS was later converted to a statutory corporation and called Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on April 1st 1957. The reason for this was to shield the NBC from the prospects of government interference and exclusive propagation of the views of the ruling political party. The NBC Act was in operation until 1978, when the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria came into being by virtue of Decree No. 8, of 1979, with retrospective effect from 1st April 1978 (Omu 1963; Audu 1999:53).

The functions of the NBC include, among other things provision of independent and important broadcasting service to reflect the unity of Nigeria as a federation, and at the same time give adequate expression to the culture, characteristics, affairs and opinion of the people of each region. It was also to engage in presentation of ministerial speeches from various political parties, including speeches that express divergent views on issues other than political, and provide educational service for the benefit of the people.

According to Audu (1999), the new NBC has a Regional Board of Governors with a chairman and ten members in each Region. There was also a Director-General (DG) and a Secretary to the corporation. The NBC was expected to be an independent policy making institution. The functions of the Regional Boards were identical to those of the National Board. In practice, however, whereas the national board portrayed national cultures, the regional ones focused on cultures within the region.

The way the NBC functioned raised concern about national unity. Each of the three regional governments lost faith in the NBC and embarked on the establishment of their broadcasting outfits. The 1956 Ordinance gave almost autonomous powers to Regional Boards of the NBC. The political arrangement in the country had already established what was almost a confederation with regions competing freely with the Federal center. The emerging Federal Constitutions especially that of 1953 left media matters on the concurrent list. This enabled the Regions freedom to establish their media and seek frequency allocation from the Federal government. According to Lasode (1994:18)

The colonial radio, which was based in Lagos, had a difficult task. It was required not only to project a national image, but also to reflect the various characteristics of the three regions. This was not always possible. Conflicts always arose between the NBC and the regional governments who felt that NBC has failed to accomplish the utmost diversity and decentralisation in dealing with regional complaints.

Audu (1999:57) states that with the 1956 Act which gave a leeway to the regions to have more than a say in the media organisations based in their areas, they gradually got their parliaments to introduce edicts that established their broadcasting systems. All these thus provided the necessary impetus for the establishment of regional broadcasting services. It was the Western regional government that seized this opportunity to first establish its radio and television stations.

According to Maduka (1997:49), radio, which was the first to start, refused to carry the views of the people, particularly if such views were divergent from the establishment. This further gave impetus to emergence of television in Nigeria. The

situation remains the same until the emergence of private broadcasting stations in Nigeria. This situation did not change until the emergence of private broadcast stations in 1996.

2.1.3 Emergence of Television in Nigeria

The establishment of television in Nigeria followed the same pattern as that of the radio. Maduka (1997), Omu (1968) state that whereas the Federal Government was the prime mover in the birth of radio broadcasting in Nigeria, it was the Western regional government that initiated strategies that ensured the emergence of television broadcasting in Nigeria. This began on 31st October 1959.

Although the first television station started in 1959, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the AG leader, conceived the idea of a regionally based radio and television station as early as 1952. A colonial office report published that year states that the colonial government saw that television would play a greater role in the development of the country. It notes that: *"It is now clear that the political and social developments of the regions will mean that regional broadcasting will play an even more important part than was originally accepted"* (Mackay 1964:30). With the birth of a Federal Constitution, it became possible for the three regional governments to set up their own broadcasting services.

An incident that facilitated the establishment of television was the constitutional crises of 1954. According to Lasode (1994), the early fifties was a period in Nigeria when the apparently conflicting desires for regional autonomy, on the one hand, and

national unity on the other hand had already taken root. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that each region was dominated by an overbearing ethnic group and a political party.

The political party that ruled the Northern region was the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC). The Action Group, (AG) ruled Western region, while the National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns (NCNC) was regarded as the political party of the Eastern region. The Sarduana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, headed the NPC. It saw Northern Nigeria as its exclusive preserve. The majority ethnic group in the former Western region was the Yorubas. The AG was regarded as the party for the Yorubas headed by Chie Obafemi Awolowo. The Ibos had their leader, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, one of the founders of the NCNC. The NCNC had strongholds in the Eastern region especially amongst the Ibos. In the North, it was not as easy as there were the Hausa Fulani ethnic groups and a lot of minority ethnic groups particularly in the Middle Belt region.

In 1951, the AG, NCNC and the NPC contested an election instituted by the Macpherson constitution, which was structured into regional assemblies and the appointment of Nigerian Ministers from these assemblies to a central government. The NPC won control of the Northern region House of Assembly, while the NCNC and the AG won control of the Eastern and Western region Houses of Assembly respectively.

Lasode (1994), Omu (1968) and Audu (1999) further point out that in the quest for independence, in 1953, Chief Anthony Enahoro, AG member of the House of

Representatives moved a motion for self-government in 1956. According to the *House of Representatives Debates Session*, March 6-25 1954, the motion was opposed from the NPC who constituted half of the membership. This was based on the fear that the North had not developed enough, and needed more time to catch up with the other regions. The Debate further stated that, the AG members led by Chief Awolowo were angry, declared the Macpherson constitution in-operatable, and walked out of the Assembly.

The AG Ministers immediately resigned from the Federal cabinet, and this led to constitutional crises. Angered by the action of the AG Ministers, the Chief Secretary to the Nigerian government, Mr. A.E.T Benson, put a telephone call to Governor Macpherson, urging him to make a national broadcast on NBS, about the perfidy of the AG. According to Mackay (1964), the Governor reluctantly made the broadcast. The following morning, Chief Awolowo also put a telephone call to the director of NBS requesting equal time. The director, Mr. Chalmer, was prepared to allow Chief Awolowo refute what he claimed was a misrepresentation of the AG's point of view.

However, T.O.S Benson, then Minister of Information intervened, preventing Chief Awolowo from making his broadcast. Chief Awolowo was furious and accused NBS of being manipulated by the government. This incident in 1953, may have indirectly led the Western region to set in motion the establishment of Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS) and the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) in 1959. The AG government, whose leader, Chief Awolowo, lost faith in the NBC took

advantage of this opportunity to realise his dream of a separate broadcasting service in 1959 through an Act of Parliament.

According to Audu (1999:68), the WNBS went into partnership with a foreign firm, Overseas Rediffusion Company Limited. The new broadcasting company, which was also known as Radiovision, was charged with the responsibility for actual broadcasting including both radio and television from the inception of WNBS. In the West, the idea of television was very revolutionary but a few questions attended its establishment. There were those who felt that television could hardly be a priority given the realities of Nigeria, where there was hardly electricity and when most of the rural areas needed potable water. Such critics were worried about the cost of such a project. (Lasode 1994:53).

The AG Government however considered the setting up of Radiovision as a social service for the people. The services were to range from programmes on health, agriculture and education through school broadcasting which were considered to be of direct benefit to the people. Programmes were also designed to promote the culture of the people of the Western region. It was believed that these radio and television, through commercial broadcasting, would defray the cost of the project. The government was to provide subventions for staff emoluments. The Action Group Government of the Western region had made up its mind on the matter. On 31st October 1959, the WNTV was commissioned as the first television station in Nigeria, and indeed in black Africa. Audu states that at the official opening ceremony at the

Parliament Building, Ibadan, the Premier of the Western region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo said:

The Western regional government was convinced that television could play a major role in increasing both the pace and standard of education; television will serve as a teacher and entertainer, and as a stimulus to us all, to transform Nigeria into a modern prosperous nation. The station's identification signal was "First in Africa" (Audu, 1999:59)

In terms of programming, Lasode (1994:51) and Audu (1998:86) state that initially, the three regional stations tried to live up to their public service image commitment. They offered similar services mainly educational programmes and news bulletins. The WNTV ran six and half- hour programmes daily including documentary and news broadcast. It worked with the Western Nigeria ministry of education with result that programmes for some 100 schools equipped with television sets were broadcast from 11.00am to 2.00pm Monday through Friday.

Broadcasting as it was employed between 1962-65 by the regional governments was an instrument for waging offensive against the opponent. The step taken by the Western region aroused a sense of competition in the other regions too and they started efforts towards establishing similar stations. The Western regional Government needed to have a broadcasting system, which it could control. The policy framework stipulates that:

Subject to the provision of this law, the Minister may give the corporation general or specific directives as to the policy to be followed in the exercise and performance of their functions of the corporation. The corporation shall comply with and give effect to all such directives. The Minister, anytime he requires, may require the corporation to broadcast any announcement and it shall be the duty of the corporation to comply. The Minister is to determine

the number of members of the board of the WNBS/WNTV and the executives to run the station. (Ikime, 1983:42).

Although television was seen as a social service, commercial consideration militated against the provision of the service to certain areas that were considered unviable. The partner, the Overseas Rediffusion, which saw it as commercially oriented to make maximum profit, had a disagreement over this issue. While the government was anxious that the station should finance itself as much as possible with revenue generated from advertisement, it was still committed to provide such social services such as educational broadcast and promotion of the people's culture. The foreign partners did not see why it should commit its funds to such a programme, thus they opted out of the partnership on January 1, 1962.

According to Ikime (1983:46) whatever the law provided, it was unfortunate that as soon as WNTV was established, there developed some political crises, which affected how the powers granted to the Minister, was to be exercised. In 1962, there developed an intra party crisis within the Action Group, the ruling party in the West, which led to a split in the party. Chief S.L Akintola, the deputy leader of AG who succeeded Chief Awolowo as the Premier, after the latter left as the leader of the opposition in the Federal House of Representatives was by decision of the party's executives removed as Premier on grounds of indiscipline and anti-party activities. In January 1963, Chief Akintola and his supporters now known as the United People's Party (UPP) went into coalition with the NCNC and formed a new government, which was still as unpopular as the previous regime.

In 1965, an election took place, which Akintola's new party NNDP, which had now entered into a new alliance with the NPC won. This means that even with an unpopular government, the broadcast media controlled by the government would still be used to propagate and legitimate the ideas of such an establishment (Lasode, 1994:36, Audu 1998: 72).

There were allegations of rigging, violence, arson and murder, but Chief Akintola backed by the Federal Government in Lagos announced victory for his party. Voters in the Western region refused to accept the result of this election. This problem persisted till the military took over in 1966. Between 1959 and 1966, the region was ruled by three different administrations. The regimes were anxious that it had the control of the WNBS/WNTV, to ensure that it does not put out any news detrimental to its interest. The only way this could be done was to have its appointees on the board, and the administration to keep a firm grip on the day to day running of the organisation.

Ikime (1983) further states that for the WNTV, when a new administration came into power, its board was changed to reflect the interest of the new government. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information was a member of the board, to ensure that the corporation was not only under the control of the Ministry, its day to day running was overseen by it. For instance, during the political debates, which were prevalent during the period, the WNTV was used as the government megaphone. Its executives became political appointees. They ensured that the newscast and other programmes by the station do not offend the ruling government. It was often ordered by the government to carry announcements or news, which the government of the day

desired to beam to the people. The situation at the WNBS/WNTV was such that, Chief Awolowo, who set up the corporation to control it suddenly, saw it being used against him.

Audu (1999:81) also points out that on October 1st 1960, the Eastern Regional Government under Dr Michael Okpara set in motion steps towards establishing its own television broadcasting system. The region emphasised the motives for embarking on a radio and television project, as there was a need for public education. It was the same Overseas Rediffusion Company, which built the WNBS/ WNTV that went into partnership with Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Company to establish ENBS radio and television. In both the West and Eastern arrangements, Overseas Rediffusion Company owned shares and this was responsible, to some extent, for the high dose of foreign programme content found in these stations.

During this period, it dawned on the Federal centre that the regions had already set the pace in setting up television stations, and any further delay would be embarrassing. In 1962, the Federal Government contracted the American Network Company International to build the Nigerian Television Service (NTS). The Federal Government along with NBC, initially, jointly owned the NTS. It commenced broadcasting in April 1962. The ANC – International of America was however to sell off its shares in NTS to Nigeria at the expiration of the establishment agreement. Before then, it had trained Nigerians in the course of a five-year contract between 1962-1967. At the expiration of the contract, the NTS was integrated into the NBC and the new station called NBC-TV (Audu, 1999:73).

At the time the Federal Government embarked on the television project, the Northern Regional Government was also getting anxious about the manner the Lagos studios of the NBC were reporting Northern issues. According to a Northern People's Congress (NPC) press release of July 29, 1961:

The Northern regional government wishes to express its serious concern about the presentation of news from Lagos studios of the NBC. The Northern regional government has now lost faith in the NBC News Service from Lagos and intends to go ahead without further delay with its own sound broadcasting service (NPC News, July 29, 1961).

In 1960 the Northern Regional House of Assembly passed a bill authorising the government to set in motion the machinery for a Northern controlled broadcast station. But it was not until 1962 that the government contracted Granada Television of the United Kingdom and Electrical Musical Industries (EMI) also of Britain to establish a radio and television station in Kaduna. According to Alhaji Sani Katsina, who later moved from NBC to head television at Radio Television Kaduna (RTK), the Northern broadcasting station was conceived with "*the deliberate intention of making it different from others in the country*". For one, the WNTV and ENBS (TV) were established as a partnership between the regions and the international companies that had built the NBS.

In terms of programming, Lasode (1994:51) points out that it started broadcasting for two and half hours each day for six days in a week from a temporary site. It moved to a permanent site in August 1963, and progressively increased its broadcasting period for seven days. It had local drama, educational programmes and also aired foreign programmes, which took about 60 percent of the airtime.

For Audu (1999:88) the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN) was ahead of other stations in terms of technology and manpower. The BCNN was thus a joint effort with foreign firms that provided management and technical support while the Northern Government provided the necessary funding and manpower that was to be trained on the job. The aim was also to attract the best hands of Northern indigenes at the NBC to take up appointments at the BCNN.

The station was commissioned on 15th March 1962 as the Radio Television Kaduna (RTK) and was managed by EMI/Granada. Its chief executive was Lesley Arthur William Diamond. According to Audu (1999:60) the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto said: *“With the commissioning of the BCNN, the North has arrived. Now we have the opportunity to reach what the North wants, what the North feels and how the North will perform”*.

According to the *Nigerian Citizen* of March 16, 1962, the Premier charged the operators *“to bear in mind the need for professionalism as they project the rich cultures of the North, its unique traditions and variety.”* The Company had the responsibility of working in the manner to strengthen the unity of the North within the Nigerian federation. Before the Premier could conclude his inauguration speech, there was a power cut and there followed spontaneous shouts of sabotage, thought to have been caused by anti-Northern elements. The birth of BCNN led to mass recruitment of brilliant youths especially those of Northern origin.

Such was the ethno-regional rivalry of the early 1960s that broadcasting became an instrument of political and interest group competition within the emerging Nigerian nation. As Sotumbi (1996:174) observes: “the present mushrooming of radio and television stations reflects the changing nature of the Nigerian state”.

In the changing structure of the Federal Government whereby states replaced the regions, each state felt obliged to establish its own broadcasting station as an identity. The regional stations ensured that it aired only government views. As pointed out by Ikime (1983:48) and Maduka (1997:22), often the party in power in the regions sent political invectives as press releases and demanded that it should be broadcast unedited in the government’s own station. In the Eastern and Northern regions, these were less pronounced because of the political calmness in the area. For instance, a radio reporter with the WNTV gave this account:

A visiting opposition leader had been touring the region on an election campaign. The reporter transmitted a television story of a large crowd that came out to the streets to welcome him on the first day. The government chief took offence on the large footage used in reporting the enemy success. He then went to admonish the reporter and instructed him on what to write on his subsequent stories if he was still interested in keeping his job. (Maduka, 1987:76).

It was only a matter of time before the stations credibility sank, such that it had to remove its logo from its vehicles because its workers became targets of attack wherever they were identified by the public. Broadcasting by the three regional governments was such that where the opposition was mentioned, it was to disparage it. Only unfavorable stories were reported of the enemy, otherwise, it was a total blackout (Maduka: 2001).

One pertinent point about the early years of broadcasting in Nigeria however was the high quality of the technology and managerial elite that pioneered its establishment. As Maduka (1998:48) notes, “most of the top managers of the early stations were expatriates who had worked in some of the well known broadcasting institutions in Europe and America. Naturally, this had an effect on the quality of training-on-the job received by the Nigerian professionals and managers who took over from the expatriates.

During the early days, there was no central body to regulate the activities of the broadcasting stations. An essential organ that would have been established in the early days, the National Broadcasting Commission, to regulate broadcasting in Nigeria came on stream vide Decree 38 of 1992. According to McKay (1964), the colonial government had realised the strategic importance of radio and set up the Nigerian Broadcasting Service, (NBS) as a propaganda and public relations medium.

The nationalists, in the wake of struggles for independence, realised the importance of radio as a means of reaching out to the masses scattered in villages over large areas in the regions. But due to increasing dissatisfaction with the NBS, the politicians eventually changed it into an organisation with a strong regional posture, notwithstanding the mandate of the NBC that, it should at all times, ensure that_its services reflected the unity of Nigeria as a federation.

Lasode (1994:18) and Audu (1999:68) state that what obtained, however, was that the NBC as a national broadcast institution was engulfed in the politics of the

nation. This involves competition among the regional governments, which at the same time became suspicious of the colonial authority, which they felt, had strong control over NBC. The regional governments wanted two things: to control the programmes of the NBC in their regions; to have indigenes of the regions as the predominant staff of the regional NBC stations.

2.1. 4 Control of Broadcasting: Military and Post Military Regimes

By carving of 12 states, out of the four regions, by the Gowon regime, and later 19 states by the Murtala/Obasanjo government, most of the states that were financially viable, developed their state stations.

According to the *NBC Handbook* (1994:3), following the creation of 12 states in 1967 by General Yakubu Gowon, and subsequent abrogation of the regional governments as a strategy to prosecute the war, and reduce the stronghold of Biafra, there were new quests for the establishment of new television stations. Broadcasting became a vital organ to prosecute the war. It was used to boost the morale of the soldiers, their families and sensitise the people. In 1972, the Mid Western State under Brigadier Samuel Ogbemudia established the Midwest Television Service (MTS). Police Commissioner J.D Gomwalk established the Benue Plateau Television (BPTV) the first colour television station in 1973. These were still to allow the government propagate its dominant ideas to the people. Four other state television stations were later established in Kano, Sokoto, Aba and PortHarcourt.

However, by 1976, the Murtala/ Obasanjo government forbade states to further development and construction of television services. The existing ones were amalgamated into one service known as Nigeria Television. By 1976, the number of television stations had risen from four to ten. The same competitive spirit of statism and sectional loyalty that dominated the political activities of the First Republic in the 60s resurfaced in the 70s. Every state seems to feel secure only within the confines of its territory. This lack of trust appears to be responsible for every state wanting to have its controlled television station.

With the promulgation of Decree 24 of 1977, by the Federal Government, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was born. The decree took effect from 1976. It brought all the 10 existing television stations in the country then owned by the states under the control of the Federal Government and under the NTA. With the creation of seven more states in 1976 by the Obasanjo government, NTA still established stations in all the states. When Shehu Shagari became President, the expectation was that television and radio stations throughout the country would not only carry and interpret government news but also give equal opportunity to political parties and the opposition, and also give everyone a chance about how he was being governed.

The 1979 constitution removed these exclusive rights of ownership by the Federal Government. This gave rise to ownership being permitted for individuals, corporate organisations, states and Federal Government. Section 36 (2) of the 1979 constitution guarantees the right of individuals to have freedom of expression. Broadcasting was thus returned to the concurrent list as it was in 1959. The civilian regime of President Shehu Shagari which took over from General Obasanjo was busy

trying to fight the opposition that it had no time to approve any licence for private broadcasting as was stipulated in the constitution.

Given the green light by the 1979 constitution, which brought ownership of radio and television under the concurrent list, many states joined the quest to own television and radio stations. According to Lasode (1994:95), states not affiliated to the ruling party, the NPN scrambled to establish autonomous television stations to compete with the Federal Government controlled television stations.

Believing that the Federal Government was inhibiting their right to own television stations, on Thursday, February 5, 1981, 12 out of the 19 state Governors met and issued a joint press statement in which they warned the Federal Government to desist from the continued blockage of existing television stations. The 12 Governors accused the Federal Government of flouting the constitution by issuing administrative directives to the Central Bank of Nigeria and commercial banks instructing them not to process Form M, and not to open letters of credit for the importation of electronic equipment. In response, the Federal Government argued that there was shortage of frequencies and channels in Nigeria and that each state should wait for equitable distribution of the available 10 channels.

Edoga-Ugwu (1984) points out that by the end of the first year of Shagari's administration, it became obvious that the media controlled by the federal government were geared towards serving as the propaganda tool for the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

This fact was evident not only in the content of the news but also in its slant. Adversaries were either blocked out of the news or given the type of coverage that did

little to enhance their image. In some instances, advertising space was even refused political adversaries by the Nigerian Television Authority. State owned radio corporations were equally misused by whichever political party that controlled the state. They were harsh in their criticism of political opponents. As Edoga-Egwu (1984:25) points out, Lateef Jakande, Lagos State Governor was the first to establish a state radio and television at Ikeja, known as LTV Ikeja, Channel 8 in 1981.

For Lasode, (1994:29), the driving force for the establishment of new stations is that biased news coverage and slanted news stories were very rampant during these various periods in favour of the ruling government. He further points out that:

it was not uncommon for the broadcasting stations to refuse advertising time to political opponents. Manipulation of stations such as NTA by the NPN resulted in non-NPN controlled states, as a means of combating their political rivals and consolidating their political bases, invested in building and re-equipping more state broadcasting stations (Lasode, 1994:30).

But as Ikime (1983:73) points out, the irony is that those new state television and radio stations were established at the expense of accrued teachers salaries and other neglected development projects promised the electorate during the general elections. Political considerations seemed to outweigh other considerations

According to Maduka (1997), General Murtala Mohammed who created additional seven states did not allow the establishment of more television stations immediately. This was more so because the Federal Government was preparing to join the new technology of Aerostat, a tethered balloon transmitter, which was expected to cover the whole country, but the project failed. But given the 1979 election, which saw some Governors controlling states other than that of the Federal Government ruling

National Party of Nigeria (NPN), such states established their television stations to enable the views and programmes of their governments to be seen and heard.

Thus, Plateau state under Chief Solomon Daushep Lar who was a Governor under the Nigeria People's Party (NPP), set up the Plateau Radio and Television (PRTV), Lateef Jakande who was the Governor under the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) set up the Lagos state Television (LTV); Chief Bisi Onabanjo, UPN set up Ondo Radio Vision (OSRV); Chief Bola Ige UPN, set up Television Service of Oyo State (TSOS); Gongola state under the Great Nigeria People's Party set up Gongola Television (GTV); Borno state under GNPP also set up Borno Television, Kano state under the People's Redemption Party (PRP) set up the City Television (CTV).

For radio, following the complaint which turned NBS into a statutory corporation in 1957, it operated till 1976 as NBC, when the Federal Corporation of Nigeria came into being through Decree No. 8 of 1979, with retrospective effect from April 1978. Through this decree, the Federal Government handed over twenty radio stations being managed by it to the state governments. It retained only the stations at Lagos, Kaduna, Enugu and Ibadan. However, during the Second Republic, the Federal Government tried to establish its presence in some states where it was not in control by establishing 10 new stations. The Buhari regime abolished this proliferation of new stations on assumption of power.

This was the extent politicians in power did not allow opponents to share with them access to power which broadcasting confers. Despite the increase in the number

of television stations, access to it by the people or opponents were not liberalised. There was usually one viewpoint on the station, which is that of the controlling government in power. As Maduka (1997:76) points out:

In the campaign year for instance, the mass media had more than ever before, been split along partisan lines. Newspapers, radio and television were pledged editorially the servicing of the political interest of the governments in power or to individuals who own them. By implication, therefore, the media were wont to interpret developments and the actions of other public institutions in a partisan manner. Occasionally, the behaviour of such public institutions did not help matters.

Thus during the second Republic, there were proliferation of broadcast stations by the states and federal government because each of the governments wanted control of the content of programming while denying the other party access. This is why most states, which are not controlled by the ruling party at the Federal level, seek to establish their state television station. This historical review places the origin of television stations in Nigeria in context. The denial of access to the broadcast of opposition views, rather than anti-government sentiments, was often the reason for setting up new stations.

2.2 NBC AND THE EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE BROADCASTING

Before the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) was set up by the Federal Government, the legislative houses in the three regions had the powers to approve the laws, which established broadcasting stations in the three regions during the First Republic. They were primarily to serve as public service institutions.

Broadcasting and public service have almost become inseparable. The principle in Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is that it places it a duty on any government to administer any broadcasting medium in such a manner as to serve the national interest, predicating such service on its need for social, political and cultural experiences as its guiding philosophy. The origin of the public interest in broadcasting, according to Head (1982:20) is that:

Communication must of necessity serve the public interest, which emerged during the early days of maritime radio, when it became obvious that self interests and commercial profit could not be allowed to stand on the way, when lives were at stake in emergencies at the sea. To ensure that it serves public interest, the guideline then was unambiguous about the programming requirements such as fairness and balance, good taste, decency, integrity, accuracy, morality and social values. It must also serve the needs of the people irrespective of what government was in power.

The regulatory authority over approval of licences for broadcasting stations before 1994 was the Federal Ministry of Communications. The Ministry had power to approve licences but could not withdraw such. This anomaly therefore made it difficult for the Ministry to regulate the programming of broadcast stations, particularly if there was a breach of operational rules. There was even not much need to withdraw broadcast licences because the broadcasting stations were all government owned. This therefore, gave the stations room to become bias.

By 1966, following the collapse of the First Republic, an era of state owned radio and television stations began. This fad, according to the *NBC Handbook*, caught on with the creation of more states by the General Yakubu Gowon regime. This proliferation became more intense, as some of the states were not content with having

one channel of radio or television, but went ahead to acquire more channels especially on the Frequency Modulating (FM) band. This is to enable the regional governments disseminate news on their activities in local dialects. The feedback from the listeners was almost non-existent (Rhodes, 1999:15).

Predating the NBC was the National Mass Communication Policy workshop in 1987. It consisted of experts drawn from sociology, journalism, culture, films politics and other related fields. By 1990, after the policy had undergone the necessary policy organs of the state, it reaffirmed the deregulation of ownership as stipulated in the 1979 constitution. The logic of the World Bank/IMF driven privatisation of public enterprise regime on debtor nations and the complementary prescription of democratic reforms further urged the government into privatisation.

According to Tangrin (1995:27), discussion for privatisation and commercialisation of state enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa shows that these initiatives arose out of the need by African governments to comply with donor driven economic reforms programme of which divestiture and greater economic and political liberalisation constituted an integral part. He further contends that given their troubled economic conditions and acute dependence on foreign financial flows, African governments officially accepted privatisation so as not to forfeit the international support crucial for their survival.

It was within this background that the NBC came into being. The Decree setting up the Commission stresses the need for an agency to monitor, coordinate and

midwife the deregulation of the broadcast industry. According to Dokpesi (1997:63), NBC was set up to actualise the popular recognition of broadcasting as a vital tool in the country's socio-economic development and the need to break the monopoly of government ownership.

The Commission was set up to monitor and regulate the private and public radio, television and cable stations. It has relevant powers relating to broadcasting under the Wireless and Telegraph Act and Regulations as well as the powers in section 7 (1) of the NTA Act 1977 and section 6(1) of FRCN Act. Section 2(2) of NBC Decree 38 1992 states: *"No person shall operate or use any apparatus or premises for the transmission of sound and vision by cable, satellite or any other medium of broadcast from anywhere in Nigeria except under, and in accordance with the provision of the Decree"*.

This policy framework for the operation of private enterprise broadcasting in Nigeria coincides with the SAP, which began in the eighties. (Ogundimu, 1997; Bourgault, 1995). For instance, in 1988, the NTA and the FRCN were cited among enterprises slated for partial commercialisation, which entitled them to managerial autonomy and a great deal of financial independence after an initial take-off grant. In July 1992, the Federal Government, through the Technical Committee on Privatisation signed a Performance Bond with the two networks, NTA and FRCN. This however did not take place until new licences were granted in 1994. It recommended a regulatory body to control broadcasting in Nigeria. It gave official support to the establishment of the NBC in 1992 through Decree 38.

The mandate further includes the issuance of and renewal and revocation of broadcast licenses. Others are: setting up standards through the Broadcasting Code and ensuring that there is acceptable quality of content in programmes and non-programme materials broadcast on radio, television, cable and satellite stations in Nigeria; receiving, considering and investigating complaints, observations and suggestions from individuals, communities, organisations and governments regarding the performance of broadcasting organisations for the purpose of monitoring standards.

As at December 2004, following more approvals in 2004 there are today 99 federal television stations, 41 national radio stations; 40 state radio and 34 television stations, 17 private radio and 14 television stations. This upsurge in request is because, owning a licence for a station automatically confers a status of patronage from the state while access to a broadcast station is seen as vital to electoral success.

2.3 MASS MEDIA AND THE POWER STRUCTURE

There are two major paradigms within sociological analysis of the mass media. These are the functionalist and conflict theories. For Alubo (1995:3), functionalism is a theory, which states that the social universe may be likened to a biological organism, which has a structure as well as differentiated but related parts. The theory further suggests that these differentiated parts have specialised duties or roles, all of which are essential to the survival of the organism. Alubo further argues that a malfunction or breakdown of one component would lead to disruption of the equilibrium and harmonious relationship between the various parts, and therefore lead to crisis of the entire system. Should this happen, as it does often, proponents of this theory argue that the system has in-built stabilisers through which the various components rally around and help to weather the storm, and thereby restore the equilibrium and the system to normalcy (Alubo, 1995:4).

Functionalism is concerned with the analysis between relationship and wholes and their parts, it explains their parts by their roles in the larger system (Alubo, 1995. Collins 1988:54) Functionalist theory of mass media, essentially, is about media effect.

This is basically in terms of audience behaviour (Mcquail, 1977: 60). It is seen in three models of communication process.

The first of these is the action/motivation perspective, which allots a dominant role to the receiver and holds that the act of receiving communication is, in principle, a free and meaningful act that essentially defines the event. The second is the structural/cultural perspective, which sees communication as basically dominated by the source but limited in definition and meaning by the context and rules that govern the communication process. The third is the functional perspective, which focuses on communication as a systematic- interaction, a process of homeostatic adjustment within a larger social system.

The implication here is that there is neither an explicit nor an implicit intention to force a dominant elite ideology on anyone through the mass media, but to inform and educate the masses so as to provide them with the tools (facts and figures) to make them take intelligent decision about themselves and about their society (Moemeka 1989:9). This is not domination but enhancement.

Thus the role of the media in national development is emphasised, and the potential of the mass media to enhance political participation. Schramm (1963) spoke of the potential of the mass media to help traditional societies to change into participants in the modern world. This is necessary, because of their ability to report and inform and widen the horizons, focus attention on developmental needs, raise aspirations and create an informational climate in which development is stimulated. A

number of other studies in which is Rogers (1975) has shown that the mass media do indeed act successfully as true agent of liberation. This success is dependent on giving true consideration to factors of cultural pre-dispositions and adaptation. Lerner (1958) has also shown the impact of the mass media in urbanisation, literacy level, political participation and their ability to create empathy. Pye (1973) has also asserted how improvements in communication seemed to have pushed Turkish villagers to the path of modernisation. This was possible because the mass media could inculcate political awareness and knowledge.

This approach sees the mass media as instruments for providing the framework for the education and enlightenment of the people socially, economically and politically. This is different from the conflict theorists who see the mass media as instruments for rationalised manipulation and exploitation of the masses, instruments for rational domination.

The conflict theory sees the role of the mass media as principal instruments of the ruling elite for maintaining ideological control: camouflaging reality, creating false consciousness and hope and ensuring the creation of mass culture and improving ideological education through sustained integration and social solidarity. Even though the two theories agree on the function that the mass media serve the audience, they disagree on the effect. The concept of mental production and legitimation stems from the Marxian analyses in capitalist social formations and the role the mass media play to legitimise the ruling ideas of the dominant class.

The Nigerian society is class based (Alubo, 1995). For Alubo, before the various nationalities, over 270 in number, in what is now Nigeria, engaged mostly in agriculture through communal, tribute payment and other indigenous modes of production. With colonialism, Nigeria was formally incorporated into international capitalism. This emerging order, Alubo further states, changed the traditional subsistence agriculture to peasant production, the latter was foisted through the payment of taxes. Thus, colonialism created a peasantry in Nigeria. It subordinated rural producers to the requirements of the metropolitan market and colonial state. According to Alubo,

Corresponding to this economic structure was a class structure of dominant and dominated classes. At the apex was the foreign bourgeoisie, represented by expatriate managers of multinational corporations. There was also a lower level of this class occupied by Levantine shop owners. Second, there was a Nigerian petty bourgeoisie which consisted a small amounts of capital... a small group of professionals, doctors lawyers etc, senior civil servants, top armed forces personnel and Nigerians in the management of small number of wage labourers... the large number of independent peasants, rural tenant farmers ... and an expanding class of lumpen elements (Alubo, 1995: 67).

As pointed out by Curran (1991:9), power is unequally distributed in society such that the weaker social groups, though they form the largest of the population, come to accept their subordinate positions through the activities of such institutions like the mass media. H further points out that one of such control was the economic dependence of the weaker groups of the society on the powerful, while another is the legitimation of a set of values that become part of the national cultural heritage. The weak groups accept the values, thus the general value consensus, which prevails, is the dominant class values. Similarly, Gramsci (1968) stresses the notion of hegemony. He

points out that hegemony exists when an existing social order enjoys the support of unquestionable acceptance of the majority of the population. He states that it also exist where a ruling class or an alliance of ruling class factions or historic bloc is able to, not only to coerce a subordinate class to conform to its interests, but exert a total social authority over those classes and the social formation as whole. For him, a hegemony is in operation when:

The dominant class fractions not only dominate but direct, when they not only possess the power to coerce but actively organises so, as to command and win the consent of the subordinated class into their continuing sway (Gramsci, 1968:29)

Gramsci also points out that hegemony is accomplished through the agencies of the superstructures- the family, education system, the church and the mass media; and also through the coercive forces of the state. Althusser (1971:138) argues that the superstructure could be understood only in terms of the reproduction of the social formation. He points out that these consist of the repressive and the ideological state apparatuses, which entail the practices that are material in their effects. The ideological state apparatus represents the superstructure itself, and is often assisted by the repressive state apparatus. He further points out that these apparatuses are responsible in most parts for the reproduction of the relations of production, reproduction of the qualifications of the labour force; and reproduction is secured in most parts by the legal-political means and the ideological superstructure such as education, religion and the mass media (1971:148).

According to Althusser (1971:149), the ruling class does not rule directly or in their name or overt interests, but through the necessary displacements, through the class neutral structures of the state and the complexity structured fields of ideologies. *“Ideological reproduction thus becomes not only the state but the site of class struggles”*. Hall (1977:336) criticises him that the idea of a continuing struggle and of a contradictory reproduction in the sphere of ideology appears more marginal to Althusser’s theoretical argument, which centres upon the sphere of continuing reproduction of social relations of the system. *“This has the effect of making Althusser’s outline more functionalist than he would clearly like”*

Poulantzas and Milliband (1965) also point out that the ideological state apparatus such as the mass media carry out functions, which appear to be masked and displaced under capitalism. For them, the ideology of the dominant culture functions to conceal and repress the antagonistic foundations of the system. They state that *“the construction of social knowledge in capitalist societies depend on the mediation of the modern means of communication”*.

Milliband (1965:25) however asserts that the right of ownership confers the right of propaganda, and where that right is exercised in a capitalist society, it is likely to be towards conservative prejudice, either by assertion or exclusion of matters that the owners find undesirable to publish. He also argues that those who own the media may not control it directly. He said: *“Editors, reporters and managers are allowed a degree of independence and given a free hand. But ideas do tend to seep downwards and provide a political and ideological framework”* (Milliband, 1965:65)

The mass media is part of the legitimising institutions of the ruling class and help to mediate between masters and dependents. Marcuse (1964:78) argues that its publicity agents shape the universe of communication in which the one-dimensional behavior oppresses itself. He also said that:

Sentences are abridged and condensed in such a way that no tension, no space is left between the parts of the sentence. The result is that the sentences used by the publicity agents become a declaration to be accepted. They repel demonstration, qualification, negation of its codified and declared meaning (Marcuse, 1964:80).

He further asserts that the mass media in any social formation tend to use ritualised concepts, which are immuned against contradictions. Messages are hammered and unhammered into the recipient's minds. They produce the effect of enclosing it within the circle of conditions prescribed by the formula. The aftermath of such media deceit is the production of a happy consciousness.

Mills (1976) also show how the ruling class manipulates the bulk of the mass and subject them to "instruments of psychic management and manipulation". Excluded from the command post of power which comprises the corporate body, polity and military, the men in the mass is told what to think, feel, do and hope for by the mass media directed by the elites to ensure that people accept the status quo (Mills; 1976:49). This process of legitimisation involves the system of massive indoctrination through the use of advertising; through which capitalist enterprise promote both their products and the acceptable face of capitalism.

In a study Schiller, asserts, that news is a manufactured commodity in the West. Since news is a manufactured product, its use depends on its ability to generate revenue. He points out that: “In America, the competitive system transforms news over into commodities, and an advantage can be derived by being the first to acquire and dispose of these perishable commodity - the news” (Schiller 1976). Hall (1977) also asserts that the media are the most important instrument of 20th century capitalism for maintaining ideological hegemony in that they provide the framework of perceived reality.

The mass media is also used as an instrument of political power, propaganda, information, publicity and psychological warfare. According to Cohen and Young (1973:9), the mass media is often employed in programmed competition for the control of men’s minds. He also points out that the survival of any modern state depends on the propaganda daily sent out by these organs, and any social organisation which does not recognise this vital fact can hardly survive.

Golding (1977:78) points out that there is no formal policy for inculcating job policies in the newsrooms; they are diffused and informal. He also argued that though most newspapers are wholly dependent on voluntary applications to fill their vacancies, there are always new policies, which run from top downwards. He said:

This could be done through attitude promotion, which renders reporters favorable towards company policies, and socialisation, which establishes in the operative employee, attitude, habits and state of minds, which assist him to reach decisions, advanced by the organisation (Golding, 1977:91).

Milliband (1965) in an analysis of capitalist societies point out that the means of expression are monopolised by, and subservient to the ruling political power. He also states that the import and value of the freedom of expression is not to be underestimated, for the agencies of mass communication and particularly the broadcast media are in reality, the expression of, dissident news notwithstanding, a crucial element in the legitimation of capitalist society. He states that:

Freedom of expression is thus not rendered meaningless. But freedom has to be set in the real economic and political context of these societies, and in that context, the free expression of ideas and opinions, which are helped, by the prevailing system of power and privilege (Milliband, 1965:38).

The media thus perform the function of providing information and mediating in the provision of other needs of the public. Therefore, they have consequences for the individual and the society at large. If the information or other needs provided are those making for change of the status quo, the media would be seen to function as veritable channels of dynamic change. If the needs provided are for quietening of the masses and for containing them within the existing social system, then it would be seen as contributing to the system equilibrium (functionalist stand), and to the capacity of the individual to function contentedly within the existing social order (Moemeka, 1989).

Having examined the effect of class and its impact on news production, we shall now focus on studies on ownership and control of government and privately owned media organisations.

2.4 MEDIA, OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

Proprietor control over capitalist press has long been justified by the traditional conception of a “fourth estate”, independent of both government and economic interests. This functional conception of the press led the First Royal Commission on the Press (RCP), to declare that “it is undoubtedly a great merit of the British press, and that, it is completely independent of outside financial interests, while its policy is the policy of those who own and conduct it” (RCP, 1949: 149). But for Curran et al (1977: 60), since then, a substantial portion of the British press has been bought by international corporations. A large and steady section of the British media today have become the property of international conglomerates, which in addition to their vast economic powers are now in a position to influence the flow of news and opinions.

The First RCP (1949:177) also declared free enterprise, which is a prerequisite of a free press. Partly underlying this commitment to free enterprise is the commission's assertion that a free market guarantees diversity of press ownership, and consequently diversity on its editorial contents. “The freedom of the market would ensure that a variety of opinions are expressed, reflecting different ideas and commitments of individuals that publish freely competing newspapers”. But the second commission (RCP, 1962:15-17) revised this view, pointing out that there has been substantial concentration of ownership in the national and provincial dailies. The Third Commission (RCP, 1977: 25 0 26) even concluded that these claims have gained dominant position.

The First RCP accepted without question the assumption of traditional liberal theory that the press is made responsive and accountable to the public through the

process of competition. The commission therefore points out that: “whatever a media’s purpose, and however it is owned, it cannot escape the necessity of offering the public, what some, at least the public will buy”. (RCP, 1949:26) This is despite the fact that sometimes they have no choice or may not know better. It also highlighted that competition necessarily involves risk-taking by broadcasters and publishers. Thus, those who manage these enterprises must determine how the news organisation is to be conducted.

Curran (1977:101) however points out that within these recommendations, there is a natural parity in the relationship between broadcasters and viewers, publishers and readers, and the proprietors’ powers can be checked by consumers who are the ultimate masters of a media organisation’s destiny. However, the economic transformation of post war press has called into question the assumptions of these liberal theories. Smith (1991) points out that massive concentration of ownership and monopoly have cast doubts on the legitimacy of proprietorial control, by destroying and weakening the traditional arguments advanced to justify it. He states: “proprietorial direction is no longer a safeguard for editorial diversity and autonomy or appropriate reward for risk taking”. Criticising the RCP Report, Murdoch and Golding (1977:205) point out that the RCP studies are self-contained without a liaison with the RCP studies and reality. They further assert that the studies were symptomatic of the fragmentation characteristics in the media industry today. The studies they say are piecemeal in approach and devalue the emerging relations between sectors.

The behavioural model studies point out that the media have positive social responsibility. This model holds up public enlightenment as a significant role of the mass media. It also postulates that power is pluralistically diffused among a diversity of competing interests of which none is dominant. According to Dahl (1961) and Polsby (1963)), the mass media are part of the machinery through which rival pressure and policy proposals are expressed, made known, brought to arbitration in a multiple contest that makes for shifting equilibrium of influence.

But Westergard (1977:38) states that an examination of the pluralistic views run counter to interpretation, which assigns a single set of interest in contemporary societies, despite ostensibly indefinite pull and push of societies. He states that the locus of power at any given time can only be established by referring to visible results of contest for influence in decision-making.

Studies on the managerial revolution also separate ownership and control in the mind industry and locate such control with the management because they implement the daily decision necessary in the industry. This is highlighted by Zeithlin (1974:1078) who argues that the control of modern corporation is divorced from ownership. They point out that large corporations now look to outside sources for their source of finance, such that, ownership as expressed in legal form of shareholding has become dispersed. Zeitlin (1974:1085) further points out that the traditional company structure where founders and families hold majority shareholding have waned and become replaced with a corporate structure where shares are held in small holdings which does not provide a sufficient basis for any particular dominant interest. "By this withdrawal by

founding families, the operational control of large corporations has passed into the hands of the new elite”.

Zeithlin (1974:1087) further argues that command over the administration of the media has replaced ownership of the means of production as a basis of control. This argument, based on the stratification system is a reaction to Marx’s analyses of class in a capitalist society. But as Murdock and Golding (1977: 96) assert, the characterisation of media corporation and those who manage them is derived from their structural location in a capitalist economy, unaltered by the mixed ambitions of owners and managers.

2.4.1 Ownership and Control in Nigeria

Most media organisations, particularly government media are resistant to control of their organisations from their owners. They however assert the notion of objectivity, as pointed out by Mamman Daura, former editor of the *New Nigerian Newspapers*. He said that government control of its media could be through legislation, which exists, in most political systems (1973:48). Daura however accepts that there could be self - imposed restrictions and control from the boards on behalf of its owners interests. He said: This might be accepted in the mass media as normal interferences, just as reporters receive control and guidance from their editors. But in the case of the *New Nigerian*, such is not the case. It is rested on objectivity (Daura, 1973:49).

However, elsewhere, in our analysis of government news media, we found that government newspapers are more favourably disposed to carry government news even

when they are against the people. We also found that in the case of the *New Nigerian*, there were less unfavorable stories relating to the government who are its owners (Onoja 1992).

In a study on effects of ownership, Sobowale (1986) concluded that there were no appreciable differences in the stories by the private and government owned media. He however accepted that government owned newspapers carry a higher number of favorable stories than the privately owned ones when its owner's interests are concerned.

Ibrahim (1989) in a study of effects of media ownership point out that whether the ownership of the country's media are vested in the hands of private or government, the media are mere megaphones in the hands of those in control. Citing the *National Concord* owned by then late Chief MKO Abiola, an NPN stalwart, the ruling party in 1979, the publisher over ruled that some stories which authenticity could not be verified should be published in order to achieve some political gains. A case in point was the publication of a land scam against Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who was alleged to have bought the whole of Maroko in Lagos. (Ishaku, 1983:43). A similar streak of partisanship was noticed in the media's coverage of a long-standing debate surrounding the quota system. Ishaku (1983:44) further observes that:

The press tended to reflect the debate in the manner in which its owners affect them---The major point to note is the extent to which the media has been so much their master's voices, that they pass individual opinions and positions on the federal character debate as group positions and interest.

A further illustration by Ayida, a former Permanent Secretary during the Gowon regime, highlights the partisan use of the media by its owners. Ayida (1987:148) states that during the general strike in 1964, ports and other essential services were virtually paralysed. At the committee of Permanent Secretaries coordinating government action on the strike, the most senior Nigerian Permanent Secretary, Mr. F.O Nwokedi suggested that as part of the propaganda effort, the Federal Government should put out a statement that the Lagos ports have resumed operations as dockworkers were going to work.

The announcement was carried on the television network that night and in the newspapers the following day. When the committee resumed sitting the next day, Mr. Nwokedi waved a copy of the Daily Times and gleefully proclaimed that the strike action was virtually over with the resumption at the Lagos Ports operation, when he was reminded of his suggestion the previous day, he could not believe it. He said that it sounded so convincing that television news with the old film footages and in the Daily Times with the eye witness reports of imaginary workers streaming back to work (Ayida: 1987:249).

But as Ibrahim (1989) points out, despite the stated motives of establishing media organisations, it is not a neutral agent in class and ideological conflict. They help to confer legitimacy on existing arrangements in society. He also points out that although the publications may be liberal, and may engage in exposes or highly critical of certain aspects of the social system, they all have one charge: to defend the existing system and its main beneficiaries. But as Curran (1977) points out that when ownership

of a country's media is vested in government or in few hands, the media tend to become mere megaphones of those in control.

Television news by its nature is inherently political. Thus in the real world, access to television has been a subject of competing interests. According to Yanka (1997:58), even with deregulation, private stations are in direct competition with the government owned stations. Despite the idea of promoting pluralistic views, broadcasting is still the preserve of a few privileged persons. Politics and broadcasting are almost inseparable.

Ownership of a licence alone is political while political access to broadcasting has always been a contentious issue, despite the fact that it utilises a public owned frequency and therefore, a public forum opened to all. According to Egbon (1992:17), the birth of television in Nigeria was precipitated by the alleged denial of right of reply to the leader of the Action Group, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, on the colonial radio by the imperial governor. Similarly, the upsurge in the establishment of broadcast stations in the early seventies and eighties were motivated by the right- of- reply doctrine. Eleven states established broadcasting stations between 1979 and 1983. This stems from perceived fear of not being heard in the federal broadcast media and the need for an alternative voice to the people, which prompted the priority being given to them.

For Maduka (1997), the various regimes have used the broadcast media particularly television to sustain the status quo.

During elections, unfavorable stories are usually reported of opposition

strongholds or persons, otherwise, it was a total blackout. On the other hand, members of the ruling government are paraded on air. The limit of such exposure was limited only by technology. (Maduka, 1997:48)

In Britain, USA and Germany where broadcasting is of public domain, it formed a formidable arsenal for these countries particularly during the World Wars. After the war, a famous British politician, Lord Reith complained about the powers of the press and that broadcasting was too serious a business to be left in the hands of broadcasters.

As Na'abba (2001:4) has pointed out, most often, an arm of government wrongly appropriate the nuances of the totality of government, forgetting that all the arms of government function to complement one another for the good of the people. He further states that it was rather curious that the National Assembly only gets to be loudly reported when there is a situation of perceived crises.

The shameful role played by some government owned media during the face off between the National Assembly and the executive are better forgotten. News on television today have been hijacked by politicians in power (Na'abba, 2001:4)

Maduka and Na'abba enthuse that news today is largely about what people in power do, and where they and their families go, while questions are not asked about their programmes and policies.

Broadcast stations owned by government have transmuted into propaganda tools for incumbents in their feverish and desperate bid to return to power. Consequently, there is unabashed display of sycophancy particularly at the state and federal levels which pervades the airwaves just as opposition parties are denied their constitutionally guaranteed rights to fair and equitable hearing (Na'abba, 2001:8)

For Audu, (2000:4), politicians and newsmen have a symbiotic relationship, with the media acting as watchdog. He states that the politician after winning an election now looks for position of power, which the media bestows. They therefore cultivate each other with the reporter using him as news sources. In true democracy, the relationship works out in favour of the electorates if certain criteria are observed.

It is often said that the politician's main preoccupation is to get elected, but once elected, the social contract with the people is forgotten until the next elections when promises are made without fulfilling the last ones. The cultivated news reporter is even used to bear witnesses to the laudable achievements of the politician by highlighting projects and programmes that were executed by previous regimes (Audu, 2000:4).

This partisanship is located often with chief executives of government owned media who are encumbered by the pressure of their owners and the fear of victimization or outright sacking in the discharge of their honest duties. But as Gana (2001:9) states, if we must project our airwaves as the true face, voice and ear of Nigerians, then, we must recommit ourselves to the recognition and projection of the public interest in contradiction to the ungodly promotion of the whims of mortal man and profit. He further adds that for now, the broadcast stations continue to wear the toga of insufferable corporate arrogance and maintain the character of serving as the trumpet of a tiny cabal, especially state owned media.

In normal times, politicians fight to keep the opposition away from "their" media. This is what Nixon refers to as politics of accumulation among African leaders. According to Maduka (1997:28), during election time, or run-up to election, this power of accumulation takes a fiercer form and new dimensions are added. A broadcaster was

once hauled before a top Nigerian government functionary for allowing the opposition a hearing on the government owned station even in normal times. He explained his actions based on the enabling laws setting up the station.

But the officer asked the broadcaster: do you know that those laws are neocolonialists and therefore no longer tenable? In a similar circumstance, a government spokesman would not allow a station to apply established rules to a case, because, according to the senior official, it was an election year, and therefore, a war situation existed. (Maduka, 1987:29).

Although the defeat of Richard Nixon by John F. Kennedy in the US Presidential election is credited to the effect of their television debate, studies show that the race was close despite Nixon's electronic showing. This shows that broadcasting can ordinarily not win an election for a politician except if the contest was marginal. The findings show that most voters have already made up their minds on which candidate or party they intend to vote for. In the 1979 elections, and even during the run up to the elections, NTA drew up a set of fairness rules to govern the conduct of stations in matters of political broadcasts:

During the campaigns, actual election coverage and during subsequent civilian administration, the rules were drawn using foreign examples and the Nigerian experience to cover politicians' news, social fora, donations, rallies, talks and debates. It also provided room for appeals for aggrieved politicians or parties, the right of reply and the procedure for adjudicating petitions. However during a television debate between two governorship candidates in one of the states in 1979, one of the candidates abandoned it of his own volition, but later turned round to demand another recording. His request was turned down (Maduka, 1997:33).

Maduka: (1985:29) further states that after the 1979 elections, a state governor demanded that NTA remove one of the General Managers of a station on grounds that the then General Manager had sided with other political parties during the campaigns

and election, the complaint was investigated, and it was found that the station had not acted improperly. NTA then pleaded with the complaining Governor to let the matter lie low. Also, during the campaign days, one party accused a station news manager of repeatedly denying them access to the broadcast channel. The manager's defence was that the party had insignificant following in the state. This protest was upheld and the manager lost his job.

Bako (2001) points out that NBC will sanitise partisan reportage by broadcast stations. He states that flagrant abuse of the airwaves as well as the mortgaging of the public trust and confidence by the operators has polluted the broadcasting terrain in the past months. Some of these violations have been there for some time, others have been corrected or persisted. He said that due to the political climate and the present democracy the regulatory body has adopted a new style of dialogue and persuasion in achieving the sanity required of a purified airwaves.

Chege (1995:1) observes how the world press uses highly selective cases to argue that even with the best of intentions, of donor relief agencies, the chances of turning the tide of continental tragedies was hardly worth it. They ignore the many chances of positive achievements and hope exemplified by democratic and economic development initiatives. African broadcasting has failed to correct these wrong impressions.

In Nigeria, the role played by the mass media in the coverage of presidential elections in the Third Republic has not been different. The mass media set a hegemonic

political perspective, and confined itself to the limits set by the state, attempting to strike a balance between the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). As Keane (1991) points out, the Presidential hopeful, provided, he is affiliated to a major political party, enters the news when he begins to act like a presidential candidate, and stays there as long as he appears to have a chance at the nomination. He however states that news is class based and since presidential candidates belong to the upper stratum of the society, they will receive coverage in the news media. He further adds: "*The poor appear in the news less often than the upper class, except as violators-demonstrations, or victims of occupationally connected accidents. The mass media tend to universalise upper middle class practices as if they are shared by all*". (Keane, 1991:86).

Television today has become the prime source of political communication and the most suitable means of spreading information about candidates to the population. Efforts by contesting political leaders to assure themselves a means of disseminating information have become a natural development. Tocqueville puts it more succinctly:

When firm and lasting ties no longer reunite men among themselves, it is impossible to obtain the cooperation of a great number of them, unless you can persuade every man whose help you need, that his private interest obliges him voluntarily to unite his exertions of others. This can be habitually and conveniently affected by means of the mass media. Nothing but the mass media can drop a thought into a thousand minds at the same time. (Quoted in Zeithlin 1974:1083)

The broadcast media has therefore become a vital aspect of organisation of political conflict. As Tocqueville further said: "The effect of news is not only to suggest the same purpose to a great number of persons. If there were no news, there would be no

common activity”. Today, many news organisations end up endorsing a candidate or party in an election, with some maintaining a surreptitious bias in their selective reporting. Despite pre-election electoral endorsements, most of the news media rarely admit that they do so. Rubin (1983) states that:

Even more rare is a news organ openly functioning as part of a political party organisation, coordinating, of its volition, its political opinion with the national state and local partisan positions. But the media (particularly during political campaigns) pursues all these partisan activities (Rubin, 1983:48).

This linkage has assisted most media organs to enjoy patronage during campaigns particularly, if the endorsed candidate wins. Smith (1991:45) points out that it is vain talk of a free press when the favour of power is essentially to the support of editors. It is the most solemn truth and it should be impressed on every mind that if liberty shall ever expire in our country, it will die of poisonous draught of poisonous patronage. The media thus has potentials to act as facilitating agents, to diffuse and magnify issues and events. Each message is designed for a particular purpose and audience. As Smith (1991) puts it, it must indeed be recognised that a journalist ceases to be a reporter for whom all is grist to the mill and becomes in good faith a judge of what is expedient. Information is not and cannot be entirely neutral.

According to Sobowale (1986:45), virtually all information published by the media is suspect. To him, “Choosing what events to cover on the lead, involves a lot of subjective decisions”. He further pointed out that even those news sources that provide information to reporters do not do so out of genuine desire to make information

available to the public. According to Madunagu (1989:25), the Nigerian society is deeply divided into the ownership of property and wealth.

The Nigerian ruling class is divided into power blocs. He sees the power blocs as a constituent of social classes and its functions reflecting the multiple modes of production that defines a social formation. Thus the power blocs in Nigeria have capitalists, socialists, compradors, commission agents, senior military officers, professionals, intellectuals, politicians, religious leaders, bureaucrats, leaders of fraternities and cults. All the power blocs are on the right of the ideological spectrum and are regionally based (Madunagu, 1989:25).

For Ayu (1983), the press in Nigeria is a millionaire press at the beck and call of the rich and powerful. He further states that: to be a good editor, is to reproduce the day by day official lies of IMF dignitaries and leading functionaries of the government and boardrooms of big private firms. They are the newsmakers. In spite the growth of the Nigerian media, it is a case of diversity without much to choose from. They are all singing millionaire songs.

Sobowale (1986:48; 1994) states that owners' interest greatly affect reportage. He said: "*when interests such as pecuniary benefits, group and religious interests are involved, ownership plays a leading role particularly its directionality*". He further points out that government owned press tend to give more favorable coverage than the privately owned, if the image of the owner is affected, a case of who pays the piper dictates the tune. For instance, reportage of the presidential elections in the Third Republic was sharply divided along political party lines and the structure of ownership where personal interest was involved, the state of the stories easily betray the prejudices of the affected media. On the annulment of June 12 Presidential election, the Northern part of the country

were clearly in support of it while their South West counterpart took the opposite axis. A few others whose interests were considered more paramount than political or regional allegiance charted a more middle of the road course. Ownership of the media thus confers control over the nature of the information disseminated.

Despite the effect of partisanship, there is however another problem of national boundary penetration through globalisation of the media. This, today, is also affecting the culture of Third World countries.

2.5 GLOBALISATION AND THE MEDIA

History of broadcasting in Nigeria has been a celebration of local audiences. Within one geographical boundary, those acclaimed as heroes have been within local institutions, just as it is the nature of media all over the world to pay more attention to their local audiences.

The present global environment is about to change all this. As Okigbo (2000:8) argues, the Internet and other facilities of global communication increasingly strive to bring about one world community. He also points out that today, Nigerian news is available on the internet thus becoming accessible to a global audience. More importantly, anybody who has access to a computer modem, a serviceable telephone line and an internet service provider (ISP) can instantly share in the magic of instantaneous global communication with all its potentials of limitless intercourse.

Global television is a new world. Whereas, NTA used to claim 30 million people are watching its network programmes, today, with web –television and digital broadcasting, it is almost impossible to determine how many people are watching or tuned to it. Related to this is the problem of unfair competition between the local and international programming. Elliot (1977:21) points out that African programmes are fast losing their audience to international communication networks. Okigbo also adds that:

Countries suffer distinct disadvantage in this new age of communication globalization at the same time we are not attracting foreign audience for our radio and television programmes. This situation is laden with serious implications for cultural domination. (Okigbo, 2000: 16)

The geographical location of the broadcasting station is important to understand the essence of globalization because it is one of the vital tools for segmentation in the world. This is because global communication links the idea of the media as a marketing tool with the notion of audience as reachable targets. This location is necessary to understand the various forms of persuasive communication.

The new globalisation technology does not see the erstwhile meaning of location as a group of identifiable and reachable targets, but sees it as borderless or global audience of world communication. According to Olawepo (2000), globalisation refers to the rapidly developing process of complex interaction between societies, cultures institutions and individuals worldwide. This definition masks the danger posed for these societies, cultures, institutions and individuals that are involved in this unequal interactions.

Nye and Owens (2000:25), associate globalisation with interdependence. They observe that the term was not a new phenomenon. Referring to the global political changes witnessed of recent, they say that it is a vague phrase that expresses a poorly understood but widespread feeling that the very nature of world politics is changing. They further state that: " *it is the state that involve networks of interdependence at multi-continental distances with linkages occurring through socio-economic and cultural exchanges*".

They further point out that television and other aspects of the information revolution may have succeeded in creating a global awareness but have not necessarily produced results that are conducive to greater universal harmony. Ownership of broadcasting stations and control of programming content and its distribution are critical in influencing the benefits derivable from global broadcasting. This is central to the argument by Okigbo (2000:9-11) in his conception of globalization. He sees the context of the media as a complex process that involves media ownership that sometimes transcends geographical boundaries and programmes that flow at an increasing rate across penetrable geophysical borders. He points out that some of these products are cultural products, which are shaped quickly and easily around the world.

For Golding (1977:1) there is now a new notion of globalisation, which is marked by new factors, building on old networks to give a different intensity and synchronization to the process of globalization. He states that:

It is involved in our increasing sense of one world or spaceship earth, the phenomenal interconnectivity arising from inter-linkages of satellites,

computers and telephones (internet), new environmental concerns that are

not delimitable by national or political borders, the domination of multinational corporations in world space, and the pervasive influence of media infrastructure. This new globalisation manifests in the new communication technology by shrinking space, time and disappearing borders (Golding (1977:145).

Schiller (1976) points out that it is not the communication TNC's alone that are facilitators for media globalization. The different Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, and International Financial Co-operation (IFC) have long incorporated the requirements of the new economic order to their conditions in their dealings with different countries of the world particularly the debt-ridden economies of Africa, Latin America and Asia. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has now emerged as new colonialism on the world scene. They act as one of the global enforcers of the globalisation phenomenon. The WTO like the Bretton Woods institution is interested in such things that will facilitate greater interpenetration of capital, international competition and trade.

The WTO is concerned with issues such as slashing tariff to allow international competition and trade – bringing services and agriculture under multilateral trade rules and free trade. The new globalised economy requires some conditions by all countries of the world intending to take advantage of this phenomenon. These include: deregulation of these economies; privatisation of state's enterprises, opening of domestic markets as concessions to be traded for access to foreign markets, removal of state subsidy, multi party elections, free press, free trade unions free environment and Non governmental Organisations (NGOs). Writing on the economic history of trans-national news agencies: Boyd – Barret (1977:22) states that:

...the growth of international trade and investment required constant

source of reliable hard data, about international economic affairs: trade and empire requires a constant supply of information affecting political alliances and military security; population mobility as a result of international trade and export ... News media are allowed to cater for mass market, relatively uninhibited by political restraint, and with their large circulations they attracted advertisers.

Olawepo (2000:6) also argues that the forces of globalisation appear to be eroding the political independence of economically weak nations of the developing world and also obliterating their mores and culture. *"For many it is like globalisation stepped in to extinguish the demand of most counties of Africa, Latin America and Asia for a New-World Economic order and its communication variants New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)"*.

The broadcast medium's import in global communication is more in the commonalities of content around the world than in its pervasive message. Okigbo (2000:17) points out that television is in-expensively available, with slickly produced programming from the developed world as an easy substitute for creating a local television infrastructure. He further points out that this issue is not just a problem for the developing countries. *"Even some developed nations fear that their culture will be swept aside or assimilated into the tide of materials emanating from such developed countries"* (Okigbo, 2000:19).

According to Uche (1986) the global manipulation of the media by the industrialized North to the continued disadvantage of the south, most areas of which are still underdeveloped, makes us believe that the North and South are in many world, one voice." The one voice is the one the industrially rich North has imposed through its

claim to economic and technological superiority and hegemony. Thus, the new world order does not seem to guarantee economic rights, self-sufficiency, cultural pluralism, autonomy and sovereignty of the nations of the South. The new technology especially the Direct Broadcast by Satellite (DBS) has further allowed information from one country's culture continue to be beamed across borders to other countries with different cultural values and tastes.

According to Haruna (2001:32), information is power. It is apparent that the Western domination of the global information industry is near total. Whether it is the film industry, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, wire service or the internet, this Western domination is almost unchallenged. He also points out an instance of the radio, where virtually all the radio stations with global reach are Western. These are BBC, VOA, RFI, and Deutchewelle. The BBC's annual income 15 years ago was over one billion dollars (about N140 billion). There are few areas, which such stations with such financial clout cannot reach. The BBC broadcast to Africa in English round the clock, in Arabic for 63 hours a week, in Hausa for over 10 hours a week, and in Swahili for the same number of hours. It claims a regular audience of 120 million people. The VOA has similar broadcasting hours to the BBC. It broadcasts to the world in 53 languages. The station has also moved into digital television and the internet.

In response to a Congressional concern that VOA would merely be replicating CNN, and thus be wasting tax payers money, a director of VOA said: *"If you are in a hotel or in a fancy neighbourhood, or in a government office, you can get CNN, but CNN does not reach many people at the village level "* (Haruna, 2001:31).

In television, virtually all the global news are supplied by a combination of CNN, BBC, News of the World and some subsidiaries of the News Corporation, a huge media corporation owned by Rupert Murdoch. In the wire services, between the Associated Press (AP) and the United Press International (UPI), the British Reuters and the French Agence French Press (AFP), they supply about 90% of the world press, radio and television news.

To complete this picture of a manipulative news media, Knightly, a former war correspondent of the London Sunday Times in the International Press Institute magazine of the first quarter, states how the mass media has lost a long and bitter 30-year war over independent war reporting. Citing Knightly, Haruna states that:

As a result, subsequent wars have been reported on terms laid down by the military and government spin-doctors. The British Ministry of Defence and the Pentagon have manuals that are updated every year on how to guide the way, conduct and relationship with media in war times (Haruna, 2001:32).

Haruna questions why countries that have little or no economic, technological and military capabilities to export terrorism are portrayed in the eyes of the world as terrorist states, and the countries like US, Britain, Soviet Union, France and Israel which have these capacities and never hesitate to use them in the pursuit of their political and economic interests are not regarded as such. He adds that the answer is simple

These same latter countries own and control global communication. These ownership and control has enabled them to look as if each time they attack and try to destroy those they think stand in their way of the control of the world's resources, they are actually merely protecting and defending themselves from outside aggressors and monsters. Their control of the

global media has enabled them to define who is a terrorist and what terrorism is (Haruna 2001:32)

As Okigbo (2000:8) points out, countries such as China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea and similar countries that want to shield their citizens from the internet have found out that the new communication environment does not respect geographical or political borders. Okigbo further states that:

What has made the new global audience possible is the convergence of multimedia communication with the computer and the Internet. This development is so powerful that it has changed our traditional concept of the audience. This convergence is the one that will also determine the future of the media (Okigbo, 2000:9).

According to Powell (2000), the implication of this global network is that the traditional medium of television, interacting in this new convergence, has been transformed into a new medium. This embraces a set of ever changing technologies ranging from the Internet and the world -wide web, the global positioning system to the omni-directional cameras. This means that there is now a new environment of communication. This ultimately affects the information flow from and into Nigeria in a disadvantaged manner.

2.5.1 Globalisation and Nigerian Media

Nigerians like many other countries can today access and assess a foreign programme through the satellite dish and the internet. This phenomenon, according to Okigbo (2000), has become so rampant that it is today a status symbol for the rich. Although some may agree that it is part of the new pluralism, there is often the question of equal access to the new global technology.

When Marshal McLuhan enthused that the whole world would be turned into a new global village as a result of the potentials of the new communication technology and the high preponderance of information availability and application in the world, no one could blame him wholly. In Europe just as in Africa, the issue of satellite communication has become primary concern of broadcasters. It provides television programmes with all the Western content. According to Akinfeleye (2004), a culture that allows sexual promiscuity unchecked will also promote similar technology to sustain it. Thus, France has today developed the Le Mintel, a form of video sex. It is the first country to use video sex, marriage and computer in television programming.

According to Schiller (1976), television news reportage is part of the design of American industrial complex to dominate the world. For Westergard (1997), despite the seeming originality of news content, they are produced and formatted within Western news values and structures.

Thus, globalisation and mergers in the media world has resulted in cultural identity crises in Third World countries. Rhodes (1999:36) states that our children now want to be anything other than what they are because of what they watch on television.

A situation where a Nigerian would like to be a Michael Jackson is an abrogation of birthright. The television programmes in our homes glorify him. You will now see somebody saying, this is Michael Jackson of Nigeria. We must start talking of Ojo, Kanu, people who matter and bear good character traits that can influence them positively (Rhodes, 1999:36).

Furthermore Bako (2000:28), asserts that children pick up habits fast particularly from television. When stations use foul and vulgar language, children tend

to imitate them. The stations are popular because children see them as hallmarks of modernisation. According to Uche (1986), television stations established for its novelty has not fulfilled its purpose of cultural transmission, rather, it has become avenues for transmitting foreign cultures. *“Television has failed as a transmitter of culture and education and portrayer of national psyche as needed by a developing country such as Nigeria”* (Uche: 1986:65). In terms of programming, Rhodes (1988) states that as at 1962, indigenous culture account for only 40 per cent of programming. This even dropped to 25 per cent in 1975. Attempts by the NBC to raise it to 60 per cent for terrestrial televisions and 20 per cent for satellite channels are being resisted by these stations.

There is a further problem of acculturation related to this global training and programming in television stations. The foreign expatriates who set up the stations used their country’s culture as referral points and as priority for the stations to emulate. These are usually assimilated through foreign training of journalists and engineers.

Bankole, writing in *The Guardian* of August 31, 2000, states that the Independent Television Producers Association (ITPAN) went on a three nation tour through an arrangement with a foreign television company, TV Africa, to South Africa, United Kingdom, and France. TV Africa promised to spend \$30 million on local productions over a period of 10 years. The Ford Foundation also gave ITPAN N30 million to improve on their school’s curricula. There is also a working arrangement between Nigerian producers and United Kingdom’s Alliance for Cinema and Television to strengthen their administrative structure and integrate ITPAN into global

alliance of the profession through the website. The Alliance would also provide research grant and curriculum development for the school. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is also to site a two-year capital building project in the school. The ITPAN school has an agreement with Film and Video Foundation of South Africa and the French government to allow its members to work with other producers.

According to Esiri; (2000), these are new forms of colonialism because of the degree of foreign programme training of Nigerian producers, whose works are envisaged to be broadcast on Nigerian stations. He said these activities would further erode Nigerian culture because the country does not stand to gain from most of these activities in the long run. Ogundimu (1997:75) further states that despite the deregulation of the broadcast industry in Nigeria, Nigerian stations are profoundly dependent on foreign technology and programming. The foreign stations have even gone a further step by providing down linking equipment to stations that agree to air their programmes, free of charge. According to Ebisemiju (1997), the danger Africans face is not so much that Nigerian television stations transmit foreign programmes and relay live broadcasts, they have become tools of world control to continue to misinform the people. "The real danger is the direct access to transmit their programmes in our stations which is another form of recolonisation of our national airwaves".

This dependent situation led Boyd-Barret (1977:177) to conclude that a small number of source countries still dominate the international media flow. He identifies USA, UK, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Japan as prominent programme sources. Mcphail (1999:124) also points out that it appears that these flows between these

countries are closely related to limits in national media production, the difficulty of producing media content at home having a great deal with what media contents are exported across the borders. Ogundimu (1997:79) also agree with this. He states *"since the seventies, there has been a dramatic increase in television news flow across the borders with CNN, BBC and other DBS providers accelerating the penetration of the societies by offering entire newscast and even all day news coverage across the border primarily through satellite"*.

As Adaba (1998: 12) points out, the security of the national airwaves continue to be breached without apologies by the technologically superior nations of the West, especially USA, Britain, France, Germany using direct broadcast satellite or short-wave radio and television signals. These were even more, when citizens discovered that they could get what seems to be a more balanced and credible account of their local affairs from VOA, BBC, RFI and Radio Deutcheswelle. They even found that all the political views they were not allowed to express on their national broadcasting stations were welcomed on the external services of western broadcast stations. But as Esiri (2000) states: our news and other programmes today form the software of the television industry. He also points out that the development of broadcast content and the cultivation of broadcast audience has been in spurts interrupted by waves of uncensored foreign programmes, which have served more private economic purpose.

The responsibility thus falls on individual broadcasters to move away from the traditionally oppressive and manipulative roles the colonial masters intended for broadcasting. These include norms of broadcasting such as bad news, sex, war, and

famine. Film and television need to provide people with the communication necessary to free the unconscious to deal with contemporary reality, reshape their lives and take responsibility for their own development (Esiri 2000: 3 – 4).

Media globalisation is therefore not a neutral phenomenon. It has exacerbated the division between the haves and have nots, not only at the national level but also at the global level. Most nations such as Nigeria, do not have facilities to be included in this global technology due to their backward economies and technology. Influx of foreign media also tends to destroy our local culture and create unfair competition in developing economies such as ours. Like multinational corporations, globalised media, because of their superior financial strength, easily become the dominant players in the media market.

However, to attribute the socio-political orientations of broadcasting to only the natural ideology leanings of their controllers is to miss the significance of another corollary: the fact that broadcasting is business; the dependence on market sales.

2.6 COMMERCIALISATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

Until recently, national broadcasting systems were seen to be the main vehicles through which the national culture was to be transmitted. In Nigeria, this is seen with the takeover of all television stations by the Federal Military Government in 1976, even when state governments set up some of them.

Proponents of public ownership of broadcast stations argue that because information is of public good, it is hard to keep it away from those who have not paid for it. They further argue that private owners tend to provide less information than would be socially desirable. As Islam (2002:6) points out, state ownership of the media is necessary to expose the public to desirable cultural and or educational values and to ensure broadcasts officially produced contents

Given the World Bank/IMF driven privatisation of public enterprises regime on debtor nations, and the complementary prescription of democratic reforms, deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria was started. According to report of the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation of some Federal Government agencies in 1988, NTA and FRCN were listed among enterprises slated for partial commercialisation. In July 1992, the Federal Government through the Technical Committee on Commercialisation and Privatisation (TCPC) signed performance bonds with FRCN and NTA. They were to be partially commercialised. Thus the concept of “Let them pay”, (LTP) was introduced. This is a term where news designated to be of public relations nature are charged before they are presented.

According to Akinfeleye (1985:24), until recently, the mass media systems were financially distressed. Therefore the concept of LTP was introduced.

Here truth as the basis of good and responsible journalism was thrown out and the love of advertising revenue became the order of the day. This leads to reckless sensationalism of news coverage, features, editorials and even placement of pictures. Basically broadcasting stations both private and public depend on finance to sustain them.

But as Adaba (1998:6) points out, “*these stations throw ethics to the winds to generate funds*”. Some of such violations are the use of commercial backdrops, sponsorship of news and commentaries. The ethical practice according to the NBC Code section 4.3.11 is that “news is universally accepted as sacred and sponsorship of news detracts from its integrity and predisposes a bias in favour of the sponsor. Therefore newscasts shall not be sponsored”. He further states:

Charging and receiving fees by whatever name called to cover for news; company annual general meetings, wedding, funerals, chieftaincy titles, town festivals, workshops, seminars, events organised by charity organisations, stations are not only prostituting the integrity of news, they are insulting the audience and breaching the NBC code (Adaba, 1998:8).

According to the Code, Section 4.3.9 states: “*Commercials in news and public affairs programming shall be clearly identified and presented in a manner that shall make them clearly distinguishable from the content*”. Section 4.2.10 further states that: Advert placements in all programmes shall be done in such a way that they do not distort the essence of the programme.

As the NBC Code stipulates, selling news as a means of improving dwindling finances is partisan, and does not give equal access to people to air their views. It compromises standards and marginalises a large majority of those who cannot afford to pay. It denies the other contending party a level playing field; it short charges the electorate, offends the principle of social justice and threatens the democratic process. As Adaba (1996) states, any effective and socially beneficial deregulation is one, which creates an environment in which broadcasters must find a balance among regulatory mandates, social obligations and financial stability.

In an editorial, the *Observer* newspaper (1996:16) states that commercialising coverage of political news is unacceptable, because the practice is capable of bringing back some of those ugly things which nurtured and fertilised politics of bitterness and rancour in the past republic-That is allowing moneybags to indiscriminately monopolise the airtime to the detriment of other parties. The effect of this is that viewers and listeners would be denied the opportunity to determine the right choice of candidates and parties.

Adaba (1996) further states that how the needs of the public shall be defined and served have become a task, if we must save our air waves from the decadence of yesteryears, if we must secure our airwaves as a reservoir, as a purveyor of our patrimony to generations yet unborn. If we must project our airwaves as the true face, voice and ear of Nigerians, then we must recommit ourselves to the recognition and projection of the public interest in contradiction to the ungodly promotion of whims of mortal man and profit.

It was to conceive an audience instead of a market. However, the new trend towards liberalisation and market reforms with a lack of official faith in the continued implementation of Public Service Broadcast (PSB) leads to a syndrome where the audience has no option than being conceived as the market. This is spurred on by economic consideration that coincides with the new broadcast technologies, thus further strengthening the market model.

Moemeka (1973:125) also points out that broadcasting by its very nature, is a public oriented venture. The public is the very reason for its existence. It is almost a selfless, socially based business geared towards the satisfaction of the public for the sake of the public. Smith (1991:145) has said that broadcasting is not to be considered as merely a business carried out for private gains, for private advertisements or for the entertainment of the curious. It is a public concern impressed with the public trust to the same extent and upon the general principles as other public utilities. He further states that:

It is a trust because of the non-market allocation of the spectrum space with public as the beneficiary, and the acknowledgement of the public to be informed appropriately. This is predicated on the principle of public interest, conscience and necessity (Smith, 1991:148).

The discomfort of broadcasters with this model is reflected in the demand for deregulation or the market policy approach to broadcasting, under which is the right of broadcasters to speak, is that the broadcast media is treated as private and commercially based. This model uses the market model instead of the regulatory injunction to determine public interest; where public interest lies in broadcasting.

This is premised on what Zaragoza (1974:18) terms making profit. This is through provision of good programming for viewers by entrepreneurs. Na'abba (2001) points out that Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) upholds the principle of free speech, expression as well as free access to communication. It enables all citizens to communicate openly on a level playing field. It serves the interest of everybody irrespective of religious or political belief, culture, race and sex. In its overall

programming, it reflects the range of existing opinions. Viewers and listeners attach importance to television and radio content, giving rise to what the Glasgow Group refers to as the audience maxims. Through media selection and arrangement of radio and television materials, broadcasters set the stage for the audience in its expectation of broadcast content which ultimately constitute the maxims.

According to Servaes (1992: 327) this tendency has undermined the view that broadcasting is a sphere of activities analogous to education or health, that is, primarily social and cultural activity rather than an economic or political activity. There are two schools of thoughts regarding commercialization and PSB. One is that the two activities are incompatible and cannot be combined within a single service. The other view is that they can coexist. That is, they can compete in the advert market to the mutual benefit of both. According to Igyor, (2000:7) PSB is rooted in the enlightenment notion of the public in which social and political life democratically unfolds. Powell (1994:1) also points out that anybody who, within a law of the land, provides a service which the public wants at a price it can afford, is providing a public service. Here, the public is regarded as an aggregate consumer market for broadcasting, linked to political authority of the state and the economic arbitrage of the market. The market based broadcasting addresses human beings as individual consumers driven by pursuit of self-interest. PSB is however expected to address its audience as national citizens and provide them with information upon which a national debate can be based.

In Nigeria, PSB has been a distant ideal. It was never allowed to develop right from the start. In UK, the BBC and USA, the VOA as PSB, are independent of the

state and corporate business. This is because, politics and economic agenda encroaches on PSB, undermines its principles and practices, and more broadly the public sphere of culture. For as Tracey (1994:12) states, PSB is rooted in the enlightenment notion of the public and of public space in which social and political life democratically unfolds. PSB in Nigeria comes into conflict with the market-based system of broadcasting. The two systems have different concepts of audience and a set of social relations binding them to their audience Tracey (1994) also points out, independence from politics and autonomy from the market have become the leading criteria for the definition of public space, as no station can function today oblivious to market pressure.

Smith (1991: 18) examined political advertisements in the 1972 United States Presidential campaign and found it to have only a small effect on behaviour, although, advertisements increased voters issue awareness and have a small but definite effect on their votes, enough to change the winner of an election. The structure of news, its relationship to advertiser budget, size of the news department, percentage of air time to news all reflect the fact that news is developed within an enterprise connected to profit making. These determine to a large extent what news is aired and the regularity to which news and other programming can be interrupted for advert placements.

The doctrine of fairness and political coverage by the NBC has always faced stiff oppositions from broadcast stations in the country. The stations umbrella body, the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), rebuffed this attempt. "The code", the regulatory body said, "appreciates stations' needs to generate revenue for their operations, but this must not be allowed to endanger the people's right to make

informed decisions about their political future" (Guardian May 28 1997). NBC opposes charging coverage fees for social events, political parties and political campaigns. This is because any political coverage based on the mere ability to pay, not only denies the other contending party a level playing field, but further short-changes the electorate, offends the principle of social justice and threatens the democratic process. It also offends section 7.9.2 of the Code, which stipulates that: "In the interest of fairness and balance, and to prevent the monetization of political broadcast, any form of commercialisation of political news or coverage is forbidden"

But BON in a communiqué at the end of a meeting in Lagos on March 1996, considered this inimical to the survival of its members. It reaffirms its members' right to charge fees for all manner of broadcasts. According to Nweke, BON executive secretary, the NBC was out to stifle its member's financial source. They argued that they need money to send reporters out and if they are paid for it, it will complement their efforts. It is right that the parties pay for their publicity advertisements.

According to Nwokoh, (1996:27) what has become news is ego spreening. They assault and insult the intelligence of the audience by giving visibility to stuff of the establishments that have money to spend, the person reel out fallacies about his organisation and massages his ego on his so called achievements. He further states that:

It is a shame that the broadcast organisations, which should be extending the frontiers of objectivity in the media, are recklessly championing partisanship through their demands. For instance: A politician pays for 30 minutes of political coverage and uses the opportunity to make false

claims about his rivals. It is unlikely that the broadcast station would be

in a position to discomfort a politician who has paid thousands of Naira to air his message by challenging the news or the facts he presents. One can be sure of a softball question, and no attempt to unearth the truth. So, because, the rival politician or party is not financially healthy enough to dispense money for a rebuttal, such falsehood would be allowed to gain a bridgehead. The station should in this era, not give visibility to an odious initiative that does not inherently provide for a right of reply. They should be in a vanguard of those championing the cause of providing ample information by the politicians and their parties to the public (Nwokoh, 1996:27).

He further states that the argument that auctioning of news will improve their revenue base does not hold water. He questioned: "Are they telling the public that they are in the throes of death and the elixir is the said auctioning? They should look at other things to sell. Politics is too sensitive a subject to be sold to the highest bidder".

To ensure that foreign stations carry some local news, all Cable satellite redistribution stations are allowed to air 80 percent of foreign programmes and 20 percent of local programmes. But as Ebisemiju (1997:36) points out this has not gone down well with satellite broadcast stations. He cites an insistence of CNN Africa regional office, which expressed its disgust on the inclusion of local programmes on its channels. The regional manager, Edward Boateng described the stipulation as unprecedented, and could not understand why NBC insists on tampering with international channels such as CNN. NBC however, replied that any operator that feels uncomfortable about using local programme should return its license, and any station that does not have local programme will be shut. They have to be there because these channels are given by Nigeria for the good of Nigerians. "We have aped the West too long and needs to make a break and device something for ourselves (Bankole: 2000).

According to Blumler (1992:51), PSB is an attempt to embody the notion of a public sphere as central to the democratic polity. The public sphere is that arena of social interaction within which public opinion is formed and modified by a reasoning public. When politics and economy encroach on the structure of PSB, they attack and undermine the principles and practices of PSB, and more broadly the public sphere of culture. The insatiable search for money has pushed many PSB stations to compete with private broadcast stations whose philosophy is different.

In Nigeria, PSB stations are not setting agenda in quality programming as in older democracies. Today, it is the private sector broadcasting that is conceptualized as a complementary form, providing services that the PSB can afford to abandon and not vice versa. PSB is usually policy motivated while that of private broadcasting is interested in reaching the largest audience with maximum profit (Murdock and Golding; 1977).

According to Venturelli (1994:500) PSB should provide a common reference point for all members; a forum for broad public discussion; impartial news coverage; pluralistic, innovative and varied programming, programmes which are of both wide public interest and attentive to the needs of the community, reflection of different ideas and beliefs in plura-ethnic and multicultural societies, a diversity of national cultural heritage; extended viewers and listeners choice by offering programmes not provided by the commercial sector.

Market led arguments like this start from the assumption that broadcasting is a business like any other – that its business is profit – driven production of programmes commodities and that these are consumed like any other commodity. PSB is the foundation upon which broadcasting in most nation-states were established and developed. Central to these are to secure the values underlying the political, legal, and social structures of democratic societies and in particular the respect for human rights, culture and pluralism. In democratic societies, PSB systems are independent of the state and corporate business (Blumler, 1992:52).

Critics claim that the original rationale of PSB has disappeared and that it is now just a response to the problems of spectrum scarcity and financing it. The state therefore has to regulate the industry in its infancy and help with its teething problems. Market based broadcasting address human beings as individual consumers driven by the pursuit of self-interest.

As Gana (2001:4) points out, part of a station's responsibilities consist of upholding the highest standards of ethical practices, most easily expressed through the traditional journalistic values of honesty, fairness and objectivity, accuracy, completeness and cultural relevance among others. PSB upholds the principles of the speech and expression as well as free access to communication. It enables all citizens to communicate freely in a level playing field. It serves the interest of all people, irrespective of religion, political belief, culture race and sex. In its overall programming, it must reflect as comprehensively as possible, the range of existing opinions (Na'abba 2001:6). He further states that puts it:

People know straight away when the stuff they are being fed by the

national broadcast station is rubbish, and given more choice they'd switch off. To get the audience on your side, they want questions answered about price rises, food shortages, why the roads, are not repaired. Journalists should ask those questions on behalf of the people (Na'abba 2001:7).

In a situation where the economy is left to the vagaries of market determination, that is ability to pay, means that those who do not have such means will have what they watch on television determined by those who can pay. Commercialisation as a new form of economic reform in Nigeria will thus affect news reportage and presentation because of the emphasis on monetary gains. The stations will also tend to cover issues that advertisers find interesting, which translates into political bias favouring this group of patrons. It is therefore incumbent that the government must necessarily control this new economic reform so as not to extinct the views of those who do not have the means to pay.

So far the attempt is to review the existing literature as it relates to the research problem of news presentation and reportage, and how these existing literature will relate to our research findings. We shall now discuss the perspective of the theory which this study shall be analysed.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by the Marxist approach to political economy. This approach addresses the issue of the superstructure: the mass media, politics, law and order as being determined by the substructure, the economy. According to Eskor Toyo (1983:10), political economy is:

The scientific study of the formation, structure, functioning, development

and disintegration of economic formations and phenomenon related to ...it is the economic pursuit in a fully scientific way. It is that form of economic theorising that considers economic phenomenon aspects of social formation or as aspects of society in the broad.

Alubo (1995:17) also sees this approach as emancipatory political economy founded on historical materialism; i.e. that production of material life is fundamental and that change is brought about through contradictions. Alubo further states:

As a method, Marxist political economy is a tool for the analysis of the mode of production as a totality: the stratification order, the role of the state and the various dynamics, which impinge on this societal production and reproduction. This approach is holistic, historical (processual) and critical (Alubo, 1995:17)

This approach will be used to examine the structure and content of news reportage. It will also be used to examine the social relations of production and the existing class relations in the Nigerian society. It will include those who own the television stations and their motives. It will examine what news is produced for consumption and who defines it.

In the preface to "A contribution to the critique of Political Economy", an attack on the prevailing economic theories of the day, Marx (1965) wrote that "in the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations of production, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production". The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of the society, the real foundation on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite form of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social political and intellectual life.

This shows that the system of class control over the control of distribution in a society is embedded in, and conditioned by the fundamental underpinnings in capitalist economy. Thus an adequate analysis of cultural production needs to be examined: the class base of control, and the general economic context within which this control is exercised. For Marx, "*therefore, it was not enough to analyse only the general features of capitalism, it was also necessary to show how they were developing and changing in response to concrete historical circumstances*" (Bottomore and Rubel, 1968:96-97).

In the German Ideology, Marx further points out that, definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Marx also relates the production of ideas, conceptions and consciousness at the center of mental production. The relations, which govern the social organisation of material production, are specific for each stage or phase, which constitute a mode.

The social and cultural superstructure, which corresponds to each mode of production, is historically specific. For Marx, each of the major modes of production in human history to date has been based fundamentally on one form of exploitation of the labour of others. They are therefore based and founded on a root of antagonistic contradiction. He saw material needs fairly straightforward and transparently reflected in the sphere of thought, ideas and language.

According to Hall (1977:219), a social formation is not thought of as consisting of a set of autonomous practices but as an expressive totality in which the needs or the

tendencies of the determining base are mediated in a homologous way at the other levels. Hall further states that:

Men are decentred by the determined condition in which they live and produce and depend on circumstances and conditions, which are not their making, their practice cannot immediately realise their goals and intentions--they are realised through ideology (Hall: 1977:220).

Thus, ideology is a necessary level in any capitalist social formation. This is the dominant ideology of the ruling class. On the role of the mass media in the production and reproduction of dominant ideas, Marx (1965: 60) states that:

The class, which is the ruling material force, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force...it has control over the means of material production, so that generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it... The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of material relationships... grasped as ideas, hence the relationship which the one class, the ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance... so far as they rule as class, and determine the extent and compass of an epoch...they rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age.

This shows that control over the production and distribution of ideas is concentrated in the hands of the capitalist owners of the means of production, and because of this control, their views and account of the world receive instant publicity and come to dominate the thinking of the subordinate groups. This ideological domination remains a key role in maintaining class inequalities.

In the case of the mass media, it is the apparent neutral ideology. The news value and production require an examination of the codes, to identify how the mass media is used to legitimise the dominant ideology. News value appears as a set of neutral and routine practices. But as Hall (1977) points out, we need also to see news

values as an ideological structure to examine these rules as the formalisation and operationalisation of the ideology of news. According to Gramsci (1968), the mass media reproduces the hegemony of the exploiting class. For him: "*A hegemony exist when a ruling class or an alliance of ruling class faction is not only able to coerce a subordinate class to conform to its interests, but is able to exert a total authority over the class and the social formation*" (Gramsci, 1968:33).

He argued that hegemony cannot be won in the productive and economic class alone. It is achieved by the containment of the subordinate classes within the superstructure. This means that the definitions of reality favorable to the ruling class fractions and institutionalised in the spheres of civil life and the state primarily come to constitute the lived reality of the subordinate class.

Apart from hegemony, ideology also plays a leading role in mystifying the ruling class interests. As Althusser points out, the ruling class does not rule directly or in their own name and overt interests but through the complexly structured fields of ideology. For him,

The reproduction to the submission to the ruling class ideology requires the cultural institutions- the church and the mass media, the political apparatuses and the overall management of the state, which in advanced capitalism increasingly take all those non-productive apparatuses into its terrain (Althusser, 1971:96).

Hall (1977) also points out that ownership of the mass media by the capitalist class have been used to colonise the culture and the ideological spheres. He states that:

As social groups and classes live increasingly in...their fragmented and

differentiated lives, the mass media are responsible ...for providing the images, the representations and ideas around the social totality...which separate and fragmented pieces can be grasped as a whole (Hall, 1977:230).

Murdock and Golding (1977:108) point out that sociological analyses of the mass media involve how it legitimises and maintains class inequality, processes that contribute to the reproduction of class relations and the shift from ownership. They further argue that since the shift to conglomeration of ownership, the interconnectedness amongst mass media controllers indicate that the mass media constitute an idea of the capitalist class. They further argue that concentration limits the range and diversity of views and opinion, which find public expression. More significantly, it is this views and opinions representing the least powerful social groups, which are systematically excluded (Murdock and Golding; 1977:105)

Enzensberger also demonstrates how the mass media is used as an instrument of legitimation and mobilisation by incumbent regimes, and their need to control such organs. He argues that:

Whenever any industrially developed state is occupied or liberated, or when there is a coup d'état, revolution or counter revolution, the crack police units, the paratroopers, guerrilla fighters do not any longer descend on the main squares of the city or seize the centres of heavy industry as in the case of 19th century or symbolic sitesthe new regimes would instead take over, first of all, the radio, television stations, the telephones and telex exchanges and the print media. And after having entrenched themselves, it will by and large leave those who manage the industries. while all the functionaries who manage the mind industries would be replaced. In such executive extreme positions, the role of the broadcast media becomes quite clear (Enzensberger, 1978:115).

2.7.1 Class Struggle within the Political Economy

Under colonialism, Britain controlled the economic political and cultural life of Nigeria. It had absolute jurisdiction by virtue of conquest over the material wealth and real potential of the country, as well as supreme political, judicial and ideological power within the territory (Mohammed, 2002:8). Through this, they supplanted, via military conquest, the slave or feudal mode of production. These were dominant in the kingdoms and city-states on the demise of which the colony and protectorate of Nigeria were forged.

As Onimode (1985:34) points out, the British imperialist state deployed its agents such as the Governor-General, Regional Governors, Resident Officers and Divisional Officers, in addition to several directors and heads of administrative departments, to exercise political authority over the country. Leading imperialists commercial and industrial firms, operating as produce buyers, joined these class and sellers of manufactured goods, banking representatives, representatives of private capitalist mining companies and hordes of missionaries. This class owned the various means of production. They owned the land and mineral resources, such as the technology and controlled the deployment of labour. By virtue of this control, they exercised the capacity to appropriate the surplus of the working classes.

There were also the classes that met the needs of the imperialists. These were educated Nigerians who met the requirements for middle level bureaucrats to man the expanding administrative structures of the state, their counterparts at the middle level of the colonial commercial concerns as well as the traditional rulers.

The third social class within the colonial political economy was the working class, comprising the peasant farmers, who were subsistence cultivators and tillers of the land. They were the producers of the cash crops such as groundnut, cocoa, cotton, palm kernel and rubber. These commodities were needed in Britain as raw materials for their industries. This class were the most appropriated, as the colonial economy was reliant on subsistence agriculture. There was no industry to assist the take-off of Nigeria (Mohammed, 2002:12).

Given the nature of these appropriations, there were bound to be contradictions and confrontations. These sometimes broke out at various levels. This contradiction nurtured between the colonial capitalist class and the indigenous petty bourgeoisie nurtured the seeds of the nationalist struggles from the 1920s. However, the principal contradiction of the colonial political economy was between the colonial state and the working classes over the effective attainment of the goal of the imperialist acquisition to exploit the material and human resources of the colony in order to serve the needs of British imperialism.

The foundation of the press in Nigeria has connection between the activities of the Christian missions and the goals of colonialism. While missionary work was conceived as purely evangelical, colonialism was both political and economic (Mohammed, 2002:15).

Foundation of newspapers and consequently broadcasting must therefore be situated in this context of class struggle. The foundation of *Iwe Irohin* was part of the process of establishing the structures of colonialism. Despite the missionary background of the founders of *Iwe Irohin*, it was established to mobilize the minds

of and ideas of people, over time to accept and adopt capitalist values and practices. (Ibrahim, 1997:60). The British intervention in Nigerian affairs found legitimation in these newspapers. To penetrate the hinterlands, Christian missionaries were used. To prosecute the twin ideological function of education and evangelism, journalism was used as the main cultural agent. As Mohammed (2002:23) points out, journalism introduced new life and thought in Africa that led to the establishment of *Iwe Irohin*. The promotion of the ideological and economic prosperity of Britain imperialism underlay the foundation of the newspaper.

One of the levels of class struggle within the colonial political economy was between imperialist in the colonial state on one hand and the pre-colonial dominant classes rooted in feudal and slave modes of production. Another level was between the imperialist state and the petty bourgeoisie who were mainly part of the growing Nigerian intelligentsia. These developments shaped the development of relations between the state and the mass media until Nigerian independence in 1960.

According to Ibrahim (1997:61) and Mohammed (2002:14), the intelligentsia were led through the process of aspiring in the future to enjoy the rights and privileges of their contemporaries in Europe such as the equality of opportunities, freedom against discrimination in the colonial service, freedom of speech and democratic values. Their experience in the colonial service, commerce and even in the missions made them to reappraise their positions. This later resulted in agitations by the petty bourgeoisie especially the intelligentsia. Excluded from the colonial executive service, repressed in the legislature, frustrated in the

bureaucracy, commerce and the missions and schools, these educated Africans turned to journalism to challenge their oppressors.

According to Nzimiro (1985: 430), in the first phase, which lasted up to the Second World War, they were agitating for fairness, justice and equity within the colonial order, but in the second phase, after the war, they demanded national independence, based on the national right for self-determination, free and sovereign within comity of nations. It was against this background that the establishment of a plethora of newspapers in the country from 1880 should be appreciated. The colonial petty bourgeoisie, especially the intelligentsia formed the political parties and along with that, more newspapers to compete for political power. Notable members of this class who had earlier distinguished themselves in journalism and anti-colonial agitators, now assumed power in their respective regions in the early fifties.

In all these processes, the colonial petty bourgeoisie, now close to power, turned rather hostile to radical ideas, associated with the politics of the working class. Regardless of party differences, they preferred to close ranks with the colonial administration to countenancing the radical politics of the Zikist Movement rooted in the working class and in the trade union movement. They concentrated on how to win political power from the British colonial government to deploy national resources towards their transformation into a postcolonial bourgeoisie class.

2.7.2 Political Economy of the Nigerian State and the Media

An important implication of the Marxist theory of class and class struggle for the study of the problem of hegemony, with regard to the Nigerian state and press relations is that, first, they must be looked as a variable existing within a social context. As pointed out by Mohammed (2002:5), they must also be specifically situated in the conflict of inter-class and intra class relationships that predominate in the society.

The press and the state must therefore be seen in terms of their relationship to the social classes in the struggle to protect, preserve and promote their respective interests in the polity. To identify the Nigerian political economy, there are various social classes therein, and various subgroups, which has shaped the history of this country (Onimode, 1985:32; Alubo, 1995:67; Mohammed, 2002:6).

While it may be conceived that the bourgeoisie and the working classes are the two major social classes in Nigeria, there are other major sub-classes within each of these groups, who have secondary interests within the class, and whose total character within the sub-groups shaped the various classes within the country.

Several studies on Nigeria's political economy have identified three distinct, though interrelated social classes (Onimode, 1985:42). First, were the imperialist bourgeoisie, mainly British, the petty bourgeoisie, comprising the educated Nigerians working in the colonial administrative and commercial concerns, traditional rulers, self-employed professionals and commercial middlemen. However, the dominant class was the bourgeoisie, who were foreigners

with imperialistic objectives. They exercised political power by regulating, coordinating and enforcing all levels of control over the rest of the country. They were the governing class, exercising political, judicial, ideological and economic control.

The nationalist movement, which led to independence in 1960, transferred political power to an indigenous crop of politicians who were mainly members of the colonial petty bourgeoisie. With independence, this group came to exercise political power at the regional and federal levels, through the control of political power, and via the surplus generated by the marketing boards and the oil revenue in the 1970s. They developed to what Mohammed (2002:12) called the bureaucratic faction of the bourgeoisie in Nigeria. For him, it includes political office holders such as governors, ministers, ambassadors and successive military coups, the military high commands, which provided the high commands to man the diverse government positions in the period of military rule. Holding the machinery of governance and corruption as their main source of capital accumulation united them all

As Nzimiro (1985:485) points out, the Nigerian ruling class lacked a national will and consciousness locating their political ideology along ethnic lines. The Nigerian military class also elevated the ideology of statism and national development. They also created more states within the federal structure in place of the four regions thereby decentralizing the power centers in the country. The superstructure of the society was altered without the base. The capitalist social structure was not questioned. What emerged was the same class structure, as the

Nigerian military were committed to the capitalist course of development. They romanced the multinational corporations, indigenisation programmes, contract awards and corruption (Mohammed, 2002:7).

The indigenous faction of the national bourgeoisie were also in-cohesive and composed of two critical blocs: the bureaucratic bloc made up of politicians, who inherited political power at independence, their successors in the second, third and fourth republics, retired top members of the of the civil society at the regional, state and federal levels, the military, who accumulated capital through corruption and control of the machinery of government. There is also the corporate rich bloc, comprising captains of the private sector (Nzimiro, 1985: 485-6; Mohammed, 2002:10).

The creation of more states by the military regimes provided more opportunities for the petty bourgeoisie. This was particularly during recruitment of officers into the armed forces expansion of the public infrastructure, manufacturing and mining and the social service sectors. Thus, both ideologically and politically, the petty bourgeoisie became more attached to the apron strings of the post - colonial bourgeoisie state. They shared the aspiration to accelerate along the social ladder. This development also affected the other sectors such as the working class.

2.7.3 The State, Mass Media in Post Colonial Nigeria

In colonial Nigeria, the mass media were established, owned and maintained by the state and the colonial petty bourgeoisie (Omu, 1978:88). As Mohammed (2002:33) points out, the former needed the institution to articulate,

promote and defend bourgeois imperialist values, ideas and world outlooks, and counteract nationalist agitations, and the latter to fight for justice, self-determination, culminating in political independence. These two social classes engaged in fierce political struggle, mobilized their respective media of mass communication to advance their interests in promoting their differing social economic and political objectives.

In broadcasting, the fear that the NBC would be turned into political and partisan use was expressed even before independence. This fear led to enactment of the Act of Parliament in 1956 to insulate it from being politicized or used for ethnic gains. As Mackay (1964:2) points out,

The Corporation should be modeled on the BBC with a national and regional organization, and that so far as the regional organisation is concerned, there should, within the lines of the Corporation's policy be a large share of detailed autonomy, deciding the content of programmes. The detailed arrangements, when they have been formulated, will be subject to the approval of the House of Representatives. Among other provisions there would be laid upon the corporation the obligation of impartiality. The Corporation could give controversial broadcasts, provided that all reasonable points of view are represented.

This Act was to guard against partisan use by politicians. But the character of postcolonial politics undermined these ideals. There were complaints from both the ruling party at the center, those in power at the regions and those in opposition about political intolerance. The regional broadcast stations were used to support and legitimize such intolerance. With the exit of the colonial masters, who were hitherto the target of anti-colonial mass media activity, there was now a new

emergence of intra- class struggle within Nigerians for equity, fairness and access to the spoils of office both in the regions and at the center.

Thus, in Northern Nigeria, the *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo*, the *New Nigerian* and the Radio Television, Kaduna, became handy for the NPC, which controlled power in the region. The WNTV, the *Tribune* group of newspapers, founded in 1951 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the *Sketch* newspapers, founded in 1964 by the Western Nigeria government, became amenable to the Action Group government. Similarly, *West African Pilot* founded by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1937, and its chain of publications, in addition to the ENTV, established in 1960 were for the NCNC.

Mohammed (2002: 34) further points out that subsequently, upon attainment of independence in October 1960, and the devolution of political power to the petty bourgeois politicians through these three major political parties, which each of them now relied upon to transform themselves into regional strata and blocs within the indigenous faction of the national bourgeoisie, these developments and the ensuing nature of politics in the country impacted on the place and role of the mass media in post colonial Nigeria. Events in the First Republic were reported with an obvious regional and ethnic or political bias by the mass media. Such instances were the trial of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Census crisis of 1963, the Tiv riots of 1965 and the federal elections of 1965. This trend continues till today, even with the advent of private television.

Television is such a unique and efficacious instrument of persuasion, education and social value change (Mcquail 1972). The real proprietors of the

broadcasting channels are the Nigerian people as against the prevailing government of the day or the capitalist private owners. It is a necessary tool to manipulate and sustain the hegemony of the ruling class. According to Uche (1986:58),

Television in Nigeria has been found to be the most effective means of communication among the elite. As an information organ, the real proprietors of these institutions are supposed to be the Nigerian people and not the ruling government in power.

In Nigeria, Ibrahim (1989) and Ajia (1986) have highlighted partisan coverage of events by television stations particularly when the issue affects the ruling class. An instance was the riot against the introduction of SAP in 1989.

Ibrahim states:

Although the government owned media carried more open partisanship than the privately owned ones, they all acted in a way to show that the SAP riot of 1988 was a lower class fracas aimed at looting and massive destruction by some hoodlums (Ibrahim, 1989:16).

He further states that they act in such a way as to reproduce the dominant ideology and display partisanship in favour of the dominant class. For instance, he said:

Access to information and the quality of information are vital factors in orientating a society's perception, attitudes and the behavior of individuals and groups. Inadequate information and misinformation about a particular situation can, and do produce false consciousness, misunderstanding and inappropriate responses which may

cause problems for individuals and society. According to Onoge (2000:5), all cultures recognise the importance of information for perceptions and have therefore evolved traditions of information separately. He also said that certain kinds of information may be restricted.

However, all societies manage, package and control information. There is however more flow of information in more transparent and egalitarian social structures than in societies that have rigid hierarchies of prestige, wealth and power.

Onoge further states:

The functional value of information for orienting action is ultimately dependent on the degree to which the information corresponds to what Karl Marx calls the “the rude external reality”. An information predicated on falsehood which does not square regularly with this rude external reality, the real world, in which the people have lived experiences are ultimately distrusted and powerless (Onoge: 2000:6).

The information must accord with reality and address the contradictions in real life of the people, if it is to become the material force guiding the action. This partisanship therefore explains why there is total control of the media, particularly the broadcast stations during the past military regimes in Nigeria. The Code of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) succinctly supports this statement.

Section 5.3.1 of the Code states inter alia:

Licenses hold licenses in trust for the people. Once the people feel there is a misuse of the channel, the Commission will withdraw such a licence. Every five years, a public hearing is held for every station to enable NBC and the people who watch the station assess the performance of such a station, which is a requisite for renewal of such a station's licence.

As Moemeka, (1990:80) points out,

any development information skewed against the people is bound to fail. He said that one obvious lesson from the economic only paradigm and its information dumping strategy is that, it is impossible for development effort in any society to succeed if the development agents fail to actively involve the target audience, that is, if they only work for the people instead of working with the people.

He also said that acting in such a detached manner causes a lot of relational problems: lack of cooperation, hatred of the agents and self defense on the part of the target social system and lack of interest in the efforts of the agents.

Any information that would therefore be useful for the development of the people should be relevant and originate from them. This requires information originating from the people, which they can use to improve their lives.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, we discuss how data were collected for the research. Part of the objectives of this study was to explore the perceptions about the various channels and how these affect the overall viewership and access to television stations in the country. These were investigated through discussions with staff in such stations and viewers.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTATION

Research design is the stipulation of the technique with which research objectives are to be systematically operationalised, executed and achieved (Idyorough, 2000:65). The technique for this study involves two sources of data collection: primary and secondary sources. For the secondary source, we analysed content of videocassettes from the library of the stations under study. For primary sources, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Semi Structured Interview (SSI) were used. This involved selecting respondents who were willing to participate in the discussions, and have the relevant characteristics, that is, by ensuring that those who work in television stations and in the desired departments (where decisions on news reportage and presentation are taken) are included in the sample. Also, those who watch television news were the ones included in the sample to assess the perception of news from outside

To obtain information on such perception, we interacted with the staff. This chapter discusses the data sources for this study. Three stations were selected for this

study based on the various ownership structures that exist in the country today. These are:

1. Nigerian Television Authority, NTA (Federal Ownership)
2. African Independent Television, AIT (Private ownership)
3. Plateau Radio and Television, PRTV (State Ownership).

These stations were selected to meet the research objectives. They represent the three different ownership structures in the country today. They are all located in capital cities because this is where there is more regular assurance of electricity and other requisite for television transmission.

These stations were also selected because NTA is the only federally owned television station in Nigeria, and its network news is received in all parts of the country particularly during network period of 9.00pm to 9.50pm daily. AIT is the first licensed private television station in the country to originate transmission outside Lagos. It is however the second private station to go on air. It is also received through direct transmission to homes and via satellite in Nigerian homes, and Globecast, a foreign satellite transmission station in America and Europe. Its news broadcast period is between 8.00pm and 9.00pm. PRTV represents state ownership. Plateau State Government owns it, and it is the first state television station to be established in the Northern part of the country. It also commands large viewership as it is received in about five other states including the Federal Capital Territory. Its news broadcast is

between 6.30pm to 7.00pm. The three stations have different news periods and could be viewed one after the other.

Their choice is further influenced by the fact that the deregulation of the broadcast industry is expected to bring about pluralistic views, more access to the audience into the industry, more participatory and people oriented programmes into these stations.

3.2 SETTING OF PRIMARY SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

3.2.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

This is an interactive research method that assists to capture the perception of participants on an issue during a research. This method allows group members of at least six people and a maximum of 12, to participate in problem analyses, and discuss freely on issues. As a means of collecting basic data for research, policies and strategies formed through this method are more valid, because they have inputs from people who have daily experience on it. According to Idyorough (2002:6), Focus Group Discussion is helpful because it allows participants the freedom to explain reasons for certain actions, that is, for selecting specific news to air and at the same time ignoring others. This method also assists to draw out policy implications for the research under study, and helps to suggest the future direction of news reportage, reveal the performance of reporters, producers and line managers of television stations in Nigeria.

We insisted that for the FGD involving staff, only those who worked in the relevant departments that affect the selection and presentation of news were included in the sample. Most of the respondents in the FGDs at the stations worked in the daily production of television news and were likely to know the problems faced by the organisation. Questions were formulated from the research objectives and used as a guide. (See Appendix A). The whole discussions centred on the role of ownership; effect of the liberalisation of the broadcast industry and the role of the state on the content of news reportage. Notes were taken based on agreement with interviewees. Each of the FGDs lasted more than an hour but was less than two hours.

This source of data collection helped to balance insiders' knowledge with outsiders' perception and helped to interpret the social situation. This is because statistics alone cannot explain people's definition of the situation. Group discussion with these key operators of television stations provided more and adequate understanding of their definition and perception of the situation.

3.2.2 Selection of Respondents for FGDs

For FGDs, a purposive sampling design that involved all the key operators of television news production was used in this study. This involved selecting respondents who work in such stations and are in departments where decisions on daily news production are taken. Also, those who watch television news were the ones included in the sample to assess the perception of news from outside.

These traits were necessary to ensure that the desired elements within the population who also have inside knowledge of the production of news were included in the sample. The various departments whose operations determine news structure in the stations were identified. Three FGDs were conducted at the three stations, one in each station, while a fourth one was conducted for viewers at Abuja. Selecting Abuja for the special FGDs was because it is the only town the three stations under study can be received simultaneously through open transmission, and where respondents have better chance to watch news from the three stations.

The sample for stations' FGDs thus included staff from the editorial, programmes, commercial and administration departments. They were identified and interviewed. It was stipulated that no staff that had worked less than five years would participate in the FGDs and must also not be a management staff. Staff from the desired departments was initially asked of their experience on the job and if they were involved in news production. Staff, who were selected were expected to have spent at least five years on the job. Those who met this criterion were selected. Also staff that had input into news production and were not management staff were selected. For FGDs, a minimum of one and a maximum of two staff from each department, making a total minimum of eight and a maximum of nine staff were drawn from each station.

To further assess the perception of these stations by viewers, we conducted another FGD for a special group of people, who were mainly viewers. one respondent each, who is an academician, teacher, journalist, civil servant, politician and an engineer. Six respondents participated in the discussion. The criteria for selection of

these participants was mainly that, they were a group of enlightened people who watch television everyday and are also regarded as stakeholders in the broadcast industry.

Their choice was to ensure that views outside the stations were given the opportunity to assess and better analyse the news reportage of the stations chosen for the study. They were chosen based on their interest in news and also the need to have people from different backgrounds. Two separate FGD Guides were designed to cover these two groups. The Guide also focused on the objectives of the research. The information was recorded on audiotapes and its content transcribed and translated. The information was then analysed.

3.2.3 Semi-Structured Interview (SSI)

This is a method of data collection where respondents were interviewed individually. The purpose was to elicit information about a particular research problem. This technique was necessary because, it allowed participants to speak more freely on the research problem. This source of data collection was mostly used for people who prefer some degree of privacy to speak on an issue, particularly, for top cadre management. This became necessary because such management staff may not feel free to discuss in the midst of lower cadre staff. Each SSI lasted for more than one hour but less than two hours.

This technique also had the advantage of allowing such individuals to respond freely to questions, which they may not be willing to react to in an FGD. Questions were left open ended to allow the interviewees respond. Three management staff, one

from each of the stations was interviewed using an SSI interview guide. The questions were on wide ranging issues such as station's policy for highlighting and downplaying stories, effect of ownership on the station's reportage, effect of the deregulation of the broadcast industry on reportage and the role of the state on reportage.

The interviews took place either in the premises of the broadcast stations or at an agreed place to ensure there were no distractions. A research assistant was used to take notes during the interview. The interviewer administered the questions and looked out for non-verbal communication that may take place. The interaction with the management of the stations were further given an added impetus, because, as mind managers, they create, process, define and preside over the circulation of images and information which determine beliefs, attitudes and ultimately behaviour (Schiller, 1976). Information from the SSI was used for triangulating with the other sources of data collection for the research.

3.2.4 Selection of Respondents for SSI

To participate in SSI, we stated that such staff must have also worked for about 12 years on the job. Such management staff were also those who have influence on the day's news bulletin. One management staff that also had a key role to play in news production in each of the station was identified and interviewed at his or her convenience. This was because it was very difficult to bring them down to participating in discussions with other lower cadre staff. A semi-structured interview was drawn to cover the objectives of the research. This was used as a guide during the interview. For

SSI, a management staff of a selected station was interviewed at his convenience. The respondents were told to speak as freely as possible. The information was recorded on micro-audio tapes and its content transcribed and translated. The information was then analysed.

This research technique was used because it was the best way to draw out information from managers about the influence of ownership, role of the state and the deregulation of the broadcast industry from people who have inside knowledge of the situation. This interactive nature further enriched the research because, the respondents discussed as freely as possible since they were guaranteed anonymity. This instrument also helped to assess the perception of the stations within and particularly from management.

3.2.5 Limitations of FGDs and SSI

Selecting people who have spent long years in an organisation may end up having people who are used to certain procedures, and may not know what could interfere with the processing and production of news. This may result in problem of validation of data. Selection of such staff may also not necessarily elicit better views of the news production process. To avoid this, we ensured that only staff that spent not more than 5 years were included in the sample

There is the possibility that some of the interviewees had a grudge to settle with management of the station. The interview could therefore provide the opportunity to air such views, which could make the data unreliable. We therefore made sure that staff with outstanding disciplinary problems or who had recently been issued queries was not included in the sample. We did this by ensuring that the administration department in the three stations where FGDs were conducted gave us a record of those with disciplinary problems.

Interacting during the focus group discussions could make the interviewer to be carried away. He could end up having bias on certain issues being investigated. To guard against this, the researcher avoided contributing in the discussions. Interruptions were not much to ensure free expressions and the interviewer ensured that his opinions were not included in the FGDs.

Also, during the interview, many of the respondents could not recall exactly the incidents being investigated particularly the FGDs for special groups. Many of them became encumbered to comment freely on them because of this problem. We had to recall these issues several times to ensure that they could remember them.

Table 1: Summary of FGDs and SSI conducted:

Instrument	Category of Respondents	Stations				
		NTA	AIT	PRTV	Total	%
FGDs	Producers	2	2	2	6	28.6
	Editors	2	1	1	4	19
	Commercial Dept	1	1	3	5	23.8
	Reporters	2	2	2	6	28.6
	Total	8	8	9	21	100
SSI		1	1	1	3	

FGDs for special group: One teacher, Journalist, Engineer, Politician, Civil servant, Housewife.

3.3 SECONDARY SOURCE OF DATA COLLECTION

3.3.1 Content Analyses

One of the major methods of gathering information for this research was content analysis. According to Malitz (1988), content analysis is a systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. It is used to make replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. As a research technique, it involves specialised procedures for processing scientific data. Nwabokeye (1988:43) also states that it is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.

This method was used to gather baseline data for this research. This method of sociological research is not new. Tanjong and Gaddy (1994) used content analyses to study agenda setting function of the international mass media in Nigeria. Egbon and Mohammed (1994) also used content analyses to study the relationship of television viewing to cultural behaviour. However, these methods were limited to one station in each of the two cases. In the present work, three indices have been combined: ownership, class structure and reportage of news and deregulation of the broadcast industry involving three broadcasting stations were analysed to determine results.

3.3.2 Selection of Stations for Content Analyses

Although the three selected stations use different transmission formats, they were all transferred into videocassette formats to enable standardization. Transmission in television is measured in seconds, minutes and hours. This was the criterion that was used to measure such selected stories. Videocassettes containing selected news materials for the research were previewed and their content analysed. Some of the

cassettes were recorded off air by this researcher, while those that could not be recorded were obtained from the library of the stations or from individual reporters who covered the stories. Although PRTV at the time of this research was governed by the People's Democratic Party, which is the ruling party at the centre, it was included because, the response to issues by the station may not necessarily be the same with NTA owned by the federal government because they are owned by different tiers of government.

3.3.3 Selection of News Items for Content Analysis

Issues that affect the common man, leaders, individual stations and the owners are selected to investigate how the three selected stations report them. This is to ensure that the research objectives are met. This, therefore, informs the choice of:

1. The purchase of broadcast rights of Mali 2002 by a South Africa television syndicate, TV Africa;
2. Fuel price increase strike in January 2002;
3. Electoral Bill controversies in November 2001;
4. The motions in the House of Representatives and the Senate for the impeachment of President Olusegun Obasanjo in August 2002.

3.3.4 The Purchase Of Broadcast Rights Of Mali 2002

The purchase of coverage rights of 2002 Africa Cup of Nations by TV Africa was a controversy as two television stations, NTA and AIT who bid for the rights were denied by the Confederation of Africa Football (CAF). TV Africa eventually won the right. TV Africa then stipulated conditions for participation in airing the matches. This did not go down well with the two stations that urged all other television stations to boycott the coverage.

Since AIT and NTA lost the right, they resorted to questioning the rationale of a foreign company to operate in Nigeria. The study of the coverage of the controversy was in three stages:

1. TV Africa's statement on participation in the coverage to stations.
2. Reactions of NTA; AIT and PRTV along with Chairman, Broadcasting

Organisation of Nigeria (BON);

3. Coverage of NBC statement as an arbitrator.

3.3.5 Fuel Price Increase And NLC Strike:

Increase in the pump price of fuel in the country has been a very contentious issue. While labour leaders believe that such increase will further pauperise the people, the federal government insists that it will curb smuggling while the proceeds will be used to develop the country. On January 1, 2002, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi, Chairman

Petroleum Price Review Committee (PPRC) addressed a press conference to inform Nigerians of the increase. Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) also known as petrol was increased from N22.00 to N26.00, Automotive Gas known as diesel was increased from N21.00 to N26.00, while House Hold Kerosene (HHK) was increased from N19.00 to N24.00.

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) responded by giving an ultimatum that the price should be reversed and gave January 16, as last date if a strike was to be averted. The Federal Government failed to reverse the price and a nation wide strike was held on January 16, 2002. Here, 30 cassettes were examined made up of:

1. Seminar on liberalisation of the oil sector by the NLC and the Bureau
for privatisation of Enterprises (BPE) and meeting of Group Managing
Director of NNPC with marketers.
2. News of impending hike of pump price of petroleum products
3. The hike in pump price of fuel
4. NLC reaction to the price hike and subsequent coverages related to it
5. NLC's ultimatum
6. Federal and State Government's reactions to the strike
7. The strike

8. Arrest of labour leaders and their arraignments in the courts
9. Negotiations/ intervention by the National Assembly
10. Femi Falana's litigation against PPRC as an illegal body.

The videocassettes are made up of: NTA: 10; AIT, 11; PRTV 9.

3.3.6 Electoral Bill Controversy of December 2001

These are the laws guiding election of candidates into various offices in the country. These are elections into Local Government Councils (LGC), State House of Assemblies, Governorship, House of Representatives, Senate and the Presidency. The two arms of the National assembly passed this law on December 3, 2001. However, there were some manipulations, which led to a controversy of who was actually responsible for inserting some clauses, which were not accepted by the two arms of the National Assembly. A total of 32 tapes were previewed here. These were made up of: NTA: 11; AIT, 11; PRTV10. Coverages examined here were:

1. The manipulation or "procedural error" in the bill
2. House of Representatives reaction to the insertion
3. Senate President's reaction to the insertion
4. Press conference by 20 members of the House of Representatives
5. Senator Osunbor's reaction to the insertion

6. President Obasanjo's statement on the alleged inserted clause
7. The Senate's dissociation from the amended bill.
8. House dissociation from the bill
9. The litigation by the state governors over dissolution and tenure of the local government officials
10. Speakers take National Assembly to court
11. Chief Executive Officer Gani Fawehinmi's litigation against the National Assembly

3.3.7 The Motion for the Impeachment of President Olusegun Obasanjo

On August 20, 2002, the House of Representatives gave an ultimatum to President Olusegun Obasanjo, to resign or face impeachment. A seven man ad-hoc committee was setup to investigate constitutional breaches of the President.

On August 27, the Senate also set up a committee to investigate constitutional breaches of the President, with a view to impeaching him. The President made a national broadcast stating that it was a joke getting too far. The ruling party, People's Democratic Party, along with two former Heads of State waded into the controversy. A truce was brokered during a reconciliation party. Coverages to be examined are:

1. Motion as brought to the House of Representatives and subsequent coverages
related to the motion;
2. Motion as brought to the Senate as "state of the nation";
3. Summon of the DG of NTA and the Minister of Information for alleged bias
4. The presidents national broadcast on August 18,2002;
5. PDP reactions to the issue;
6. Atiku's fence mending mission
7. Minister of Women Affairs visit to the Speaker
8. Bukar Mandara's visit to the Speaker
9. Meeting of PDP NWC with Ministers
10. Defence of impeachment charges by the President
11. Dissent by 35 members of the House of Representatives
12. OPC's support for President Obasanjo
13. Gani's visit to the Speaker
14. The peace party by PDP stalwarts

For the purpose of these content analyses, videocassettes on news reportage relating to these issues by the stations were collected, previewed and its content analysed. The period of analyses involved:

1. Fuel price increase: 10th December 2001 to 20th January 2002.
2. Electoral Bill controversy: October 2001 to September 2002.
3. Purchase of broadcast right: 15th January 2001 to 25th January 2002.
4. The motion on impeachment of General Obasanjo from 1st July 2002 to 1st November 2002.

The choice of the dates was informed by the need to have, as many views on the issue as were possible. For the purpose of this study, only prime time television news was examined. For NTA, it was between 9.00pm-9.50pm; AIT, 7.00pm - 8.00pm while PRTV, was 6.30pm-7.00pm. In all, 116 cassettes were previewed. These were made up of 38 from NTA, 39 from AIT and 37 from PRTV.

Table 2: Summary Of Cassettes Previewed For Content Analyses

	<u>No. of Cassettes</u>	<u>Stations</u>		
		NTA	AIT	PRTV
2002 Nation's Cup Rights:	7	2	2	3
Controversy on Electoral Bill	32	11	11	10

Increase in pump price and NLC strike	30	10	11	9
Motion on impeachment of the President	47	15	17	15
Total	116	38	41	37

3.4 SCORING

3.4.1 Attention Scores

For the purpose of content analyses, attention scores were assigned to enhance easy analyses of data. According to Malitz (1968:79) attention scores are figures assigned to news casts, pictures, footages, analyses and other issues under investigation by a researcher to show either priority or non priority given to the content of a news broadcast. Attention scores were therefore assigned based on the following:

- A. Prominence on the day's news report;
- B. Duration of the reportage

- C. Depth of reportage
- D. Language
- E. Follow up on the reportage
- F. Footages (visual pictures) relating to the report

Attention scores ranging from 1-10 will be assigned to these items as they were transmitted on each day of the report to ease analyses.

3.4.2 Prominence

Many major newsbreaks are too big for editors and managers of broadcast stations to ignore even if the story might reveal something they would rather keep from the public. The suppression of a big story might be easily discovered or repercussion felt from persons involved in the incident. The station might lose its credibility and prestige. However the attention to such stories could be minimised by the prominence given to it by the newscast. It could be placed in the middle of the story, as filler or a dry report. Such mere placement of the newscast persuades the viewers that it is insignificant. Conversely, if an item appears as a headline, or in the first few minutes of the news, viewers assume that it has significance.

According to Mohammed (1994), prominence given to newscast is used to create and maintain views and attitude favouring the establishment. In this way,

stations use it as a means of making the total picture of the day's event by playing down on certain events to keep the public satisfied with the status quo.

Scoring: Two issues are being scored here. The headline position in the story and the position of the news on the day's bulletin.

Headlines:

1. Major headline 5points

Inside headline 2points

2. Position on the day's headline

First 5 minutes of news 5points

From 5 minutes-10 minutes 3points

From 10 minutes-15 minutes 2points

After 15 minutes 1point

3.4.3 Duration

This is the amount of time a station allocates to a newscast. According to Ajia (1986), nobody expects a television station to broadcast every bit of news they cover. More so, the amount of time given to the newscast depends on the priority given to such newscast. He further states that it would be lengthy, costly, boring and chaotic, if

all news items sent in by reporters were broadcast without time allocated to them. This therefore makes time allocation vital in broadcasting. Akinfeleye (1997) states that since broadcasting needs to catch the attention of viewers, it must be short, precise and straight to the point.

Scoring:

From 5 minutes and above	10points
From 4 minutes and less than 5minutes	8points
From 3 minutes and less than 4 minutes	6points
From 2 minutes and less than 3 minutes	4points
From 1 minute and less than 2 minutes	2points
Under 1 minute	1point

3.4.4 Depth of Reportage

This is a situation where all issues in a newscast are examined. It includes the story placement and the balance of the news. It involves allowing all parties involved in an issue to have enough time to adequately express their views in a news report.

According to Nwosu (1988), an in-depth report examines all issues related to a report, which gives it a good coverage.

Scoring:

All parties given equal time to air their views	10points
More than half of the parties involved in the issue examined	5points
Less than half of the parties involved in the issue examined	4points
Only one viewpoint	1point

3.4.5 Follow up Reports

One way of agenda setting in news coverage is a continuous repetition of an event. For Mcquail (1973), the real power of the press comes from its continuous repetition of an attitude or issue, reflected in parts which viewers have no chance to check. It could also be through its ability to surround these facts with suggestions, which often, half consciously seeps its way into the mind of viewers and form its premises. Such follow up coverages depends however on the priority the station gives to the news.

Scoring:

Each follow-up report or interview on the subject	1point
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Follow-up reports of 10 and above

10 points

3.4.6 Language

Through the use of carefully chosen words, broadcasters can discredit people or organisations they dislike. On the other hand, they can exalt those they want the public to respect. According to Akinfeleye (1986), it is the choice of just the right adjective or verb to sum a situation that evokes from the receiver the response the mass communicator feels should be adopted towards a story. The world and the situation he describes are inseparable, so that the use of the word triggers a standardised response in the receiver. In some cases, such words could be favourable or unfavorable to the newsmaker.

Scoring:

Favourable description 10points

Mild language 5points

Unfavourable description 3 points

3.4.7 Footages

In television news, pictures tell a lot of stories. More people look at the footages than anything else. According to Schiller, (1976), pictures exercise power in news production that is unique. It has power to influence illiterates, seduce sophisticates and even manipulate the minds of every one in between. Television

footages expose viewers regularly to people who are regularly in the news. Such footages could be positively or negatively used. Dry reports or newscasts without footages often attract less attention.

Scoring:

Footages involving all parties on an issue	10points
Footages involving less than half of the parties on an issue	5points
Favourable footage	5points
Unfavourable footage	2point
Dry report	0point

3.4.8 Limitations of Content Analyses

Stored videocassettes are susceptible to deterioration by becoming weak and brittle, if the visual cassettes used for transmission are stored in unfavourable conditions. Deterioration refers to a loss in value of stored materials or to a decrease in the ability of the cassette to play very well. In such cases, visual and audio loss is experienced. Such storage also accelerates natural aging of the recorded materials by the presence in storage rooms, factors such as light, dust, excessive dry or damp air, great variations in the relative humidity and temperature, and the presence in the atmosphere of contaminants.

Like in most tropical countries such as Nigeria, where the environment is not controlled, these archival materials are subject to rapid deterioration. To overcome these problems, I had to clean the tapes by rolling them through cleaner machines several times and ensuring that the tapes are kept under favourable conditions. This ensured that the quality of the tapes were retained.

Findings of particular content analyses are limited to the framework and categories used in the analysis. Different researchers may use varying definitions and systems of categorizing materials to measure a single concept. It is also time consuming and expensive. The task of categorising and examining large volumes of content is labourious and tedious.

Content analyses are in practical term value laden as the coders' interpretation of a particular news story provides the ultimate sense that is recorded for analysis. A wrong interpretation arising from wrong perception leads to obvious misrepresentation of the media content and consequently of reality. To overcome this problem, the coding was repeated three times using the same format to ensure that the same results were obtained. Also objectivity was maintained through triangulation with other instruments.

3.5 DATA ANALYSES

The analyses plan for the content analyses was based on identifying the difference in coverage of the three stations. For instance, a higher attention scores means that such a station gave a better coverage to the issue under study. Quantitative data from this study was used to support the critical analyses of this study. This will

assist to show the social relations between owners of production, the proletariat, the broadcast industry and how the nature of the state is reflected, reinforced, reproduced and constrained by existing structures of political economic domination.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to interpret the data obtained from the secondary source of data collection. This statistical technique allows the test of difference among the means of more than two groups. For Nwabokeye (1988), ANOVA is a technique for partitioning the total variation of a set of data into several components, with a view to ascertaining the proportion of the total variation attributable to each source of the variation. The components are variable due to different news treatment and error. Modeled mathematically as:

$$SST = SStr + SSE$$

where SST=Total sum of square

SSTr = Sum of square due to treatment

SSE = Sum of square due to error

According to Gordon and Gordon (1994), this technique is used to test whether the means of a set of three or more population are equal. A one- way analysis was used to test a single factor.

Through computer analyses of the attention scores, (test statistics) the value of an F. ratio was obtained. This was compared with a critical value of F found in the table

of F. values. If the tabulated value of F in the table entry is bigger than the computed value, then we conclude that there is indeed a significant difference in the means of the scores. But if the calculated value is smaller than the critical value (table value), there is then no significant difference among the means of the scores using the appropriate numbers of significance level and appropriate numbers of degrees of freedom. The difference in the means scores is therefore not significant. Since ANOVA is a hypothesis test, there is always a significant level associated with it. That is, different data can either have significant difference or not when compared.

3.5.1 Procedure For Test Of Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be tested are whether there is significant difference in the average news coverage in the three selected stations. This is modeled as follows:

Ho: $U_1=U_2=U_3$ implying that their average news difference is the same

H1: the U are not all equal, implying that there exists significant difference in their news coverage. The significance of the test level is $\alpha = 0.05$. The level of significance of a test is the probability of committing type one error. That is, the probability of rejecting Ho, when in fact, we should accept it. It represents the highest probability with which we are willing to risk a type one error. This level of significance also means that, there are 5 chances in a 100 that true null hypotheses would be rejected. A test is said to be significant, if the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level.

Hypothesis One: Ho: There is no difference in the news coverage of the Coverage Rights Controversy on the three television stations.

H1: There is a difference in the news coverage of the Coverage Rights Controversy on the three television stations

Hypothesis Two: Ho: There is no difference in the news coverage of the Fuel Price Strike on the three television stations.

H1: There is a difference in the news coverage of the Fuel Price Strike on the three television stations.

Hypothesis Three: Ho: There is no difference in the news coverage of the impeachment of the President on the three television stations.

H1: There is a difference in the news coverage of impeachment of the President on the three television stations.

Hypothesis Four: Ho: There is no difference in the news coverage of the Electoral Bill Controversy on the three television stations.

H1: There is a difference in the news coverage of the Electoral Bill Controversy on the three television stations.

ANOVA as a method of analyses was used, because, it allows for generalisation and enable inferences from the given data. Deductions were made from the test to assist television programming and improved audience viewing by the public. This will

further assist in policy formulation on broadcasting. Reports from these stations were analysed and further compared to newspaper reports on the issues. This will make the data so obtained to be valid.

Logbooks and programme schedules of stations were used to ensure that the news items used for the research were actually broadcast. This was because; all transmitted programmes are usually logged. This was to reduce the error margin.

Content analyses were also made of transcribed audiotapes from the FGDs and SSI discussions and the result incorporated into the data presentation particularly through anecdotes to enhance the validity of the data.

3.5.2 Table 3 Linking Objectives with Methods

This will show how the objectives to be used , the instrumentation and where it was used for the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

OWNERSHIP AND REPORTAGE OF NEWS

IN TELEVISION STATIONS

In this chapter, we discuss research findings relating to ownership in which we shall concentrate on the focus group discussions, the semi structured interviews and summary of the computed value of the data. The details of the raw data are appended.

The presentation of the data is organised under the three main topics, namely:

1. The influence of ownership on reportage of television news;
2. The present deregulation system, and the pattern of news

reportage;

3. The class structure of the Nigerian society and news reportage;

4.1 OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

Participants at FGDs and SSI in the three stations generally agreed that ownership affects the reportage and presentation of news in their stations. Majority of the respondents agreed that it plays an important role in news reportage. A participant in the discussion at NTA cited an instance:

If the President's wife attends a function, she expects a generous footage and actuality of her voice on the NTA in the evening. She complains to the Director General if it is otherwise. The President and his wife are priority as far as the NTA is concerned. There is even a 30-minute focus on her activity on NTA every Wednesday evening. This is because the Federal Government funds NTA. Through the Federal Ministry of Information, directives are effectively passed on to the station.

Similarly, PRTV gives priority and prominence to activities of the Plateau State Government in its news coverage. One participant from the state government station said:

The government established the station to sell its programme to the citizens. The government interest has to be protected; that is, its activities must be propagated to the people. Nothing is wrong with this. If you want to work here, you must learn this unwritten rule.

Also, a reporter at the state owned television station spoke of how the state government feels that broadcast licences belong to it. *"That is why there is the feeling that its interest must come first and not the people"*.

Another said:

What happens is that before the news is aired, it is given to the

General Manager. He removes what will hurt the government. Whether it is of interest to the people is not important. If it is detrimental to the interest of the government, it will not see the light of the day.

One producer at PRTV further stated that:

Here, there is a People's Democratic Party (PDP) government. Any report that seeks to counter a statement by the PDP government will not see the light of the day. So you don't even discuss it. Nobody will listen to you. It is a situation of how protective you are on what emanates from the government. It is rather unfortunate. Even people that are sent on training, when they come back, they are not allowed to practice what they have learnt. Any attempt to impart it will be resisted vehemently. You discover that a story not on the side of the government will not be aired. The government controls the station. If PDP insults Alliance for Democracy (AD), or All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), it will be aired, but not the other way round. It is the government in power that controls the state broadcasting station.

The situation seems to be the same at NTA. There are several gatekeepers who ensure that news stories do not embarrass the government. A discussant at NTA said:

From coverage of events, reporters are assigned. There are editorial board meetings, where we sit down, and ideas are generated. Reporters are assigned to specific duties, and reporters also generate ideas. However, it is the duty of the producer to ensure that the day's bulletin meets the taste required. One of this is to balance stories and not to embarrass the government in power.

Even though majority of the discussants agreed that the private stations have more leeway to air stories that are not favourable to the government, two discussants at AIT said:

We can write what we feel is in the interest of the people, but we also learn along the way that somebody pays the salaries at the

end of the month. We must first protect the corporate interest of

the station. If you look at some of the stories relating to our customers and owner, it could have been better otherwise.

Minority of the respondents who are executives of two stations stated that their actions were justified. According to one: "*I am an appointee and the moment I make a mistake, like embarrassing the government, I will be fired*". The other said:

To broadcast just anything will not be in the interest of this station and the viewers. Anything that will bring crises or hullabaloo or make me lose sleep, I will avoid. What we air here must agree with general policy of enlightening the citizens.

A reporter from NTA explained how the station refused to air the report on the motion for the impeachment of the President because the station takes instructions from the Federal Ministry of Information, which protects the image of the President, and hence,

Ideally, there should be no censorship. But we had a case here, when the House of Representatives started the impeachment procedure on the President, we did not carry it. Only NTA failed in the whole medium in the country to air it. We only aired it the next day. People here decided that it should not be used. We can't pretend that it did not happen. No justification. It affected our credibility.

Another participant from NTA said:

In fact we are very objective about this. The Executive Director News wanted to resign when the security people would not allow us air the story on impeachment. When the story got to the President, he was quoted as saying that they should allow NTA to do their work, report the Assembly and report the executive.

At the AIT, a reporter stated how the station always takes side with its interest any time it had problem with NBC, and the station was always in support of the owner's interest.

About three times when we had problem with the NBC on issues

relating to our broadcast licence, the station used a lot of airtime to protect its corporate interest without giving the Commission chance to air their views. Many times, some news had to be cleared from our Chairman. If you don't understand this unwritten rule, you can be sacked.

Similarly, at PRTV, majority of the respondents agreed that ownership by the government plays a leading role in news reportage, and many times the stations insisted that the interest of the governor must be protected even within his own party. One of the respondents said:

PDP held series of rallies and decamping of party stalwarts. These were run almost raw on TV. They crucified ANPP and AD. The station said that AD and ANPP were dead parties and would not be able to win any seat during the elections. The primaries of the PDP were also ran raw on TV. The primaries of other parties were not covered. Even within PDP, certain views cannot be aired, if it is challenging the government in power or the existing power structure. There was a case when there was crisis between two groups, in the same party backing the government. We got the story when the issue almost degenerated to a fight. The story was thrown out when there was a visit by a top government official to the station.

A reporter at one of the government stations stated how he was summoned one day by three different management staff because he interviewed a politician who was believed to be in the opposition, because it was believed to be an election year. *"I had to explain the motive, who authorised the interview, my gains from the interview, many others. I was distressed. I was almost dismissed that day"*. But a management staff said hesitatingly that: *"the President does not, and has never interfered with the running of this station. We take editorial positions in the interest of the people "*.

Discussants who are members of management also stated that even though management of the stations may not interfere directly, reporters, producers and editors are expected to know what will upset the government of the day, especially, the policy of the newsroom you work. One said that it must promote unity; another said that the news must enlighten people on the activities of the government. Another said that: *"a station that whips up sentiments or encourages crises within the community stands the risk of being shut by government regulatory or security agents. So we are being careful not to breach the NBC broadcast code, which is the guide to our broadcasting. More so, as you cannot fight the government of the day"*.

At the stations, protecting the interest of the owners particularly during crisis is regarded as good management of news. A reporter from NTA said:

I did things that were considered antagonistic to the establishment. There was a time, all my reports must be vetted before they are aired. It was an order from above. All my reports must be vetted before actuality. During the labour strike, before the strike, we covered the NLC President, we covered the rally and he answered some questions. It went for 7.00pm. I was called and told to remove it from 9.00pm news, particularly where the NLC President said things had gone out of control. When there was a bomb explosion, during Diya's time, I was not allowed to report it even when I was the only reporter around.

Another respondent from PRTV said: *"As a government owned media, you don't have a choice. The gatekeepers are there to do the bidding of the government. They will not want anything against the owners"*. At AIT, majority of the discussants said: *the issue of networking of news has always remained very close to the corporate*

interest. The station will not air anything that goes against this corporate interest. It is a statement of fact that there is interference in news whether directly or indirectly".

However, most of the discussants are not happy. Minority of the respondents at PRTV said that the station is prepared to stay by the state government even when it knows that it is lying to the people. Another from NTA said that the image of the station is very poor.

Especially the NTA. They are always more concerned with the government side. Network news is like a diary of government views. Even when there were no persons going to work they still lied. People normally listen to foreign stations if it is a strike. This is because, they will tell you the exact thing.

Majority of respondents agreed that interference of ownership was less pronounced in the private stations such as AIT. They also stated that they also have more liberty to present views from the ordinary man than the government owned stations. One respondent summarised the view of the majority: "*There is no doubt that ownership affects the coverage of certain issues which the government have an interest*". Content analyses of specific issues also show similar trend towards partisanship for the owners

4.1.1 Coverage of Mali 2002 Nations Cup Broadcast Right

The coverage of broadcast rights controversy show a tendency towards partisanship as stations reported the issue differently as it affected them.

On 16th January 2002, TV Africa issued a directive on participation in the broadcast of the Nations' Cup stating that such coverage must also meet its commercial target, NTA and AIT ignored the call. They did not even report it, believing then that they could still air the Nations' Cup through Canal France International (CFI), the French International Television.

PRTV, however, gave it prominence because it is one of the affiliate stations of TV Africa in the country. On 18th January, a day to the opening ceremony of the games, when it dawned on the two stations, NTA and AIT, that they might not transmit the matches, the two stations collaborated on a sports programme to castigate TV Africa. In a 10-minute report on its network news, NTA's Director - General Ben Murray Bruce spoke very angrily against TV Africa. He questioned the status of TV Africa and why it should transmit into the country. The Director General of Voice of Nigeria who is also the Chairman of the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) spoke against granting TV Africa such an important right. It was the second lead story of the day on NTA network news and it had three other follow up interviews by NTA reporters.

AIT's 8.00pm news bulletin also carried the same report of interviews of the NTA and VON Directors General over the issue. The chairman of AIT, Dr. Raymond Dokpesi was also angry during the interview. He called on NBC to ban TV Africa from transmitting into Nigeria since it is a South African company. AIT had four follow up interviews and dedicated eight minutes to the report. It was the third lead headline and fourth story on the bulletin for the day. None of the two stations attempted to interview a representative of TV Africa to balance their reports. AIT stated in its report that

Nigerian sports lovers could miss watching the Nations' Cup because NBC could not control a foreign company, which had no marketing licence to operate in the country. Since the end of this controversy, the relationship has returned to normalcy. AIT and PRTV, affiliates of TV Africa, now take other programmes from TV Africa before its recent demise early 2003.

PRTV on the other hand reported TV Africa's directive in its 6.30pm news bulletin. Since it was an affiliate of TV Africa, it was not quite worried which explains why it was the last report on the bulletin. The station gave only two minutes to the report. This shows that even though stations may air similar news reports, when its interests are threatened, they will take steps to protect it. NTA on 19th January during its sports programme dedicated another 15 minutes to castigate TV Africa, interviewing seven alleged sports lovers who all denounced TV Africa's activity in the country. Similarly, the same day, AIT carried five interviews from viewers on the activities of TV Africa, with none being complimentary.

However, when NBC issued a statement, clarifying that any station that wanted to relay the matches could transmit the signals from TV Africa, and abide by the agreement, only PRTV used it as second lead headline and story for the day. It also devoted three minutes to interviewing three people who supported NBC's action. NTA and AIT were silent on NBC's statement. The high attention scores by the three stations shows that ownership plays a leading role in this reportage. It also means that stations will give preference to stories affecting their corporate interests, and will protect its interests. Generally, each of the stations showed partisanship towards its owners and

corporate interest. While PRTV gave more coverage, because it wanted to relay the matches, AIT and NTA, which could not get the transmission rights, were silent on the coverages except when the two stations were protesting.

Summary of all the coverages of the Controversy on Coverage Rights

(ANOVA)

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F.Ratio	F. Tabulated F.0 .05, 2,6
Between Groups	686.29	2	331.15	0.44	4.47
Within Groups	4713.33	6	180.82		
Total variation	5399.33	8			

If F. calculated is lesser than F. Table, we accept the null hypothesis of non- equality of means. In this case, F. calculated is 0.44, and lesser than F, whose Table Value is 4.47. That is to say that the station's coverage of the news did not differ significantly. We thus accept the null hypothesis and conclude that the station's disposition to news coverage on the controversy do not vary significantly. However, on examination of the issues, there are material differences as PRTV gave more coverage to the issue, even though it was protecting the station's right to air the matches. All stations were protecting its corporate interest of their organizations and owners.

4.1.2 The Fuel Price increase and NLC strike

The three stations differentially reported the issue particularly as it affects the interest of its owners. NTA gave more prominence at certain points of the coverage particularly where the interest of the Federal Government was involved. In all, AIT gave more prominence to the issue than the other two stations. NTA was silent on certain aspects of the story. The three stations at a point buried the story inside their news bulletin to water down the effect of the coverage.

For instance, before the increase of the pump price of petroleum product, the Presidency, along with the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) organised a sensitisation workshop on the liberalisation of the downstream petroleum sector of the economy. On December 12th, 2001, NTA's four-minute report showed NLC President, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, reiterating his support for the liberalisation of the petroleum sector. Oshiomhole stated that: "the world has changed, and if we do not recognise the change, we will be behaving like someone in a railway station who does not know that the train is moving. If you do not get in, those who have moved in will leave you behind". This report was in support of the Federal Government's programme on privatisation

In the NTA report in which two minutes 57 seconds was dedicated to the NLC president, Oshiomhole also stated that the gains of liberalisation include encouraging new refineries, provision of uninterrupted petroleum products to the people. The Chairman of Petroleum Product Price Review Committee (PPRC), Chief Rasheed

Gbadamosi was also shown agreeing with NLC President on the need for deregulation of the petroleum sector. He stated that there was a need to protect consumers. Chief Gbadamosi further said that in the event that crude oil prices get very high, appropriate interventionist mechanism would be set to moderate the volatility in products pricing. Here the prominence given to the report by AIT and NTA were very high compared to PRTV, which did not report the event.

NTA carried this news as a second lead headline and also as its third story for the day. AIT carried an abridged version of the NTA news report at 7.30pm using it as its fourth story on the day. However, NTA carefully avoided where the NLC President stated that it was opposed to such liberalization, if it meant increase in pump price of petroleum. This aspect was reflected in AIT's report of the day, which also added that, if prices of petroleum products are to be increased, it should be after more refineries have been licensed and become operational.

The three stations on 22nd December 2001 aired an interview by Group Managing Director of NNPC, Chief Gaius Obaseki, telling Nigerians of an impending discussion with independent petroleum marketers to find a way to curb smuggling of petroleum products across the border. NTA carried it as the sixth story of the day, dedicating 2-minutes 5 seconds to the report. AIT carried it as the fourth story in its bulletin, while PRTV used it as its fifth story. It was on the headline of the news in all the stations.

The next day, there was a meeting of independent petroleum marketers where NNPC met with marketers to sensitise the public on the impending price increase. This was reported by NTA as its third story for the day, devoting one minute 6 seconds to the report. AIT dedicated one minute 20 seconds to the news report, and it was the third headline of the news bulletin in the day, and the fourth story on the bulletin. PRTV also used the report in its news the next day but without footages. There was prominence given by all the stations, even though differentially.

On 31st December 2001, the PPRC Chairman announced a price hike in petroleum products at Abuja. It was the lead story and headline on all the three television stations. NTA reported the story for three minutes, while AIT's report lasted for two minutes 4 seconds and PRTV One minute 37 seconds. This prominence was high because the two stations wanted to prepare the minds of Nigerians towards the price increase, a case of the government using television to pacify the people.

However, on the same day, NLC issued a statement stating its opposition to the price increase and said it would go on strike. Only AIT carried the report for one minute 10 seconds. NLC, in the AIT report, also summoned its National Working Committee (NWC) to a meeting within three days to enable the Committee to take a position on the increase in the pump price of petroleum products. On 8th January, the NWC met to discuss the price hike. According to the NTA report, the NLC urged the Federal Government to reverse the increase in the pump price within seven days or face industrial action from workers. It did not state that NLC requested to meet with the Federal Government giving an impression that it would not discuss with Federal

Government. AIT and PRTV aired the aspect of the strike and the ultimatum including the call to all industrial unions to support the NLC. The three stations also carried Gbadamosi's appeal to NLC urging NLC to be patient and consider the gains of the price hike. NTA used this aspect of the appeal for three minutes before the NLC report followed for 20 seconds, while AIT, reported it for two minutes, using Gbadamos's appeal for one minute and PRTV aired the report for 55 seconds. On 12th January 2002, the Federal Government reacted to the ultimatum.

Minister of Information, Professor Jerry Gana was on NTA for four minutes castigating NLC for daring to give ultimatum to the Federal Government and planning to embark on strike. Gana described the NLC hierarchy as saboteurs of the Federal Government's effort of revamping the economy. Gana enumerated the gains accruing from the price hike, which included bridging the subsidy on petroleum products to discourage smuggling across the border, and providing more funds for the government. On the same day, the Special Assistant to the President on Petroleum Matters, Engr. Femi Kupolukon, was equally on NTA to explain the price hike and appealed to NLC to call off the strike. NTA did not invite any NLC leader to balance these reports. PRTV dedicated 59 seconds to Jerry Gana's speech, but AIT carried the two addresses but also went ahead to interview NLC President for two minutes 15 seconds. NTA gave more prominence to the reportage of this issue than AIT and PRTV. However, the prominence given to the President's aides on NTA was more to support the Federal Government's policy of price hike, at the same time, asking for understanding from

NLC, who are perceived to be subversives. AIT gave a more balanced report than the other stations.

On 15th January 2002, Governors of the 36 states held a close door meeting with President Olusegun Obasanjo. At the end of the meeting, Governor Makarfi of Kaduna state spoke for four minutes on the NTA. He appealed to NLC to call off the strike. The Governor highlighted the gains of the price hike and pledged their support for the Federal Government, adding that the long-term benefits of the hike outweighs the inconveniences people may suffer. He urged Nigerians to shun the strike for the sake of democracy. This was after meeting with President Obasanjo, where they were told that more money would accrue to the states with the increment from the Federation Account. NTA highlighted this explanation, because, it serves the interest of its owners: the Federal Government, and by extension, the state government who are beneficiaries from the Federation Account

Head of Service of the Federation on the same day, urged civil servants to ignore the strike and report to work, while the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory promised that all security will be put at alert to ensure that those prepared to work would do so in peace. PRTV carried the Governor's address for 1 minute 25 seconds. AIT however went further from the two reports of the Governor and the Head of Service to interview three persons on the impending strike, two supported, while one was against the strike. NLC was given a black out on the NTA, because it was perceived as standing against the interest of its owners, the Federal Government.

On the 16th January 2002, on the day of the strike, NTA dedicated 50 minutes to report that the strike failed in all the major cities of the country. It also reported union leaders of NNPC and Air Transport workers castigating NLC leadership for trying to destroy the country. The union leaders in support of the Federal Government's stand explained why their unions refused to join the strike. NTA also stated in its report that the strike failed because Nigerians ignored NLC, and that people went about their normal duties both in Lagos and Abuja. The station however forgot, when in the last part of its report from Lagos, it said that "when the situation got better, NTA workers started returning to work at its Victoria Island office". A slip may be, but people could read in between the lines. The film clip showed only about three people going into the office while the whole premises looked deserted. The report also said that workers reported for work at Abuja but did not show any staff on duty, or going into any of the offices.

PRTV showed footages of some empty streets in Jos and simply reported that the streets, markets, shops and offices were empty because workers stayed at home in Jos. AIT also aired clips of some empty streets, markets and shops at Abuja and Lagos. It also interviewed three people in Lagos and Abuja, who narrated how they found it difficult to move about because of the strike in Lagos. AIT also reported the arrest of Comrade Adams Oshiomhole by the police in Abuja. NTA did not report this story.

The next day January 17th when the NLC chairman and four others were arraigned at an Abuja High Court, NTA reported the release of the NLC executives. The station was silent on the arrest and detention aspect, as this may question the right

of workers to go on strike. NTA showed Comrade Oshiomhole and his colleagues just released by the courts. He told Nigerians, in a film report that the release was made possible by the current democracy. His picture was immediately cut off. The next day the station reported that the Court had declared the strike illegal. This was the lead headline and lead news story on NTA.

It was AIT that now showed a more detailed voice actuality of the labour leader saying that the present democratic government has made it possible for persons to be arraigned within 24 hours unlike before. AIT also showed Oshiomhole condemning the police and the judiciary for aborting the strike. He further stated in the news report that the Nigerian workers and people understand that the end is to get the government to listen and evolve policies that will be beneficial to Nigerians, because, the strike was not the end. He further said that the strike was suspended because of a court order. PRTV showed clips of the news of the NLC leaders being released by the courts. This lasted for one minute 3 seconds. AIT had a better balance of stories as it relates to labour and government while NTA had more stories reported in favour of the government even more than PRTV.

When the House of Representatives invited the NLC and the Presidency to arbitrate on the matter, NTA aired 40 seconds of this report without an accompanying film report. On the same day the station showed a film report of Professor Gana for two minutes 2 seconds thanking Nigerians for ignoring the NLC strike. PRTV showed footages of the NLC and officers of the presidency at the National Assembly in its news report for 36 seconds. It was the lead story for the day. AIT aired all these aspects

for one minute thirty seconds. The coverage given to Professor Gana and the NLC leader were quite different by the three stations. NTA has more tendency to report the Federal Government more favourably and either ignore the NLC or report it unfavourably.

When Femi Falana, Lagos based lawyer took the PPRC to an Abuja High Court, a few days later, over its illegal status to make law for the country, NTA and PRTV ignored the story. In a two- minute news report, AIT used it as second lead headline and its third news report for the day. AIT stated that Falana was seeking a declaration that PPRC was not competent to determine and fix prices of petroleum products for the country. Generally, the private television station gave a more balanced coverage to the issue than the two government owned stations.

Table 5
Summary of all the coverage of Fuel Price increase and the NLC strike
(ANOVA)

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F.Ratio	F. Tabulated
Between Groups	2311.4	2	1155.7	5.59	3.33
Within Groups	5585.8	27	206.88		F. 0.05, 2, 27

Total variation 7897.2 29

If $F_{\text{calculated}}$ is higher than F_{Table} , we reject the null hypothesis of equality of means. In this case, $F_{\text{calculated}}$ is 5.59, and greater than F_{Table} value of 3.33. That is to say that the station's coverage of the news differed significantly. We thus reject the null hypothesis.

However, AIT had more coverage when we examine the material significance of the coverage. It had more balanced coverage and reflected the views of the other side than NTA and PRTV. We thus conclude that the station's disposition to this coverage had more attention paid by AIT than the other two stations. That is to say that when there are issues affecting the interest of the citizens, which may not be favourable or in the interest of the government, it is more likely to be reported and presented by the private stations.

4.1.3 Coverage of the Motion on the Impeachment of the President

Generally, AIT gave a more balanced report and higher prominence to the impeachment than NTA, which tended to give prominence to issues only favourable to the President and gave almost a total blackout to those that were in support of the impeachment. PRTV was almost silent on the issues because it belongs to the ruling government in power.

On August 13, 2002, the House of Representatives passed a motion alleging that President Olusegun Obasanjo should resign within two weeks or face impeachment

for constitutional breaches. The same day, Alhaji Farouk Lawan, Chairman, House Committee on Information announced at a press conference that the House has constituted a committee to compile the constitutional breaches of the President, which shall be submitted to the caucus committee of the party within two weeks.

NTA, which has a camera and a reporter permanently attached to the House of Representatives, ignored the motion and the press conference. The motion was completely omitted from its network news. The next day, the station had a 56-second news report, without an accompanying film report that the House deliberated on the impeachment of the President and the 2002 budget implementation. It simply stated that a committee would submit its report within two weeks. NTA watered down the issue of impeachment. The report was buried beyond the first 6 minutes of its bulletin even though it was its second headline. The station took this action probably because it was not prepared to report the Federal Government, its owners, unfavourably.

However, AIT gave this report prominence in its headline. It was the first story on the news bulletin for the day. Two minutes were used to present the report on the motion on impeachment, and 58 seconds to the press conference. PRTV reported the motion as its lead story, lead headline, and dedicating one minute 48 seconds to the report. Responding to the ultimatum by the House, President Obasanjo, on the “State of the Nation” address on 26th August 2002, described the motion by the House as a joke gone too far. In a 48-minute address, which was aired live by the three stations, the President stated that the House was bent on tarnishing his image and his preparation for the 2003 election.

On 27th August 2002, the Senate resumed sitting from a recess and at a special session, supported the motion by the House of Representatives. Senator Jonathan Zwingina moved an 18-point motion of constitutional breaches by the President. Senator Gbenga Aluko supported him. The Senate resolved to set up a committee to investigate the alleged breaches. NTA, which covers the Senate, ignored the report in its bulletin. Instead it had a lead story on the President. It was a solidarity visit by the Cross River State Elder's Forum, led by Chief M.T Mbu. In the report, President's spokesman, Tunji Oseni, through a press release, stated that the President said he would not compromise on matters of principle. In a two-minute report, this was used as the second lead story and third headline for the day. NTA took this action because the report would portray its owners in bad light.

The Chairman of the People's Democratic Party, (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh, who visited the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghalli Na'abba, to appeal to him over the impeachment motion, was given one minute 46 seconds. Ogbeh in the NTA news report said that the crisis would affect the chances of the party, since there is no way the party can be in a state of disorder and generate confidence in the public. He further said that the party would meet with the President to discuss and find amicable solution to the problem. Na'abba was given almost a black out, because, he was regarded as standing against the interest of the Federal Government. He was shown only during the visit with a voice over.

AIT also aired only the resolution of the Senate; it was its lead headline and lead story for the day. It also added a background analysis on the issue and interviewed

three other Senators on the motion passed by the Senate, dedicating three minutes to the report. It also aired the visit of the Elders Forum in one minute four seconds and the visit of the PDP Chairman for 58 seconds. PRTV reported the motion passed by the Senate as its lead headline, lead story and gave it 45 seconds in its news report at 6.30pm.

Following the blackout given to the motion passed by the Senate, the Senate, the next day passed another motion to summon the Directors General of NTA FRCN and VON including the Information Minister. It alleged complicity with the executive arm to scuttle the democratic experiment. Senator Kura Mohammed moved a motion over alleged obvious bias in the reporting of the executive and the National Assembly. It also alleged misrepresentation of the Senate by NTA.

His motion stated “NTA continues to pay attention to activities of the executive in total disregard to the laws governing the setting up of the station, which demands equal coverage for all arms of government and political parties”. The Senate in its resolution agreed to set up an ad hoc committee to investigate the alleged bias in favour of the executive arm. It also resolved to look into the desirability of broadcast stations by the government. NTA reported this summon for 32 seconds as inside story and only stating that the broadcast officials and the minister had been summoned to appear before Senate the next day. AIT, in its news report devoted 2 minutes 43 seconds to this motion. It was used as a lead headline, lead story and devoted 50 seconds to an analysis to ensure that NTA operates as a public service broadcasting station. AIT Chairman had earlier appeared in the Senate twice over the issue before this report. AIT has been

protesting the network status of NTA and also wants it barred from collecting adverts, if it is to carry out its public service functions effectively. PRTV devoted 47 seconds of its news report to the summon, and the motion passed by the Senate. It was its second lead headline and third fourth news report for the day.

On August 28, the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar paid a visit to the National Assembly and met the Speaker of the House. NTA reported the Vice President's visit and his appeal for calm to the House over the impeachment. NTA devoted two minutes 10 seconds to it. But the House Chairman on Information who spoke on behalf of the Assembly after the visit was given only 42 seconds even though Atiku and the Speaker mandated him to speak on the outcome of the visit. NTA did not state that the visit was at the instance of the Vice President. It was AIT that added that aspect coming from Alhaji Farouk. AIT devoted 45 seconds to the visit and 55 seconds to the House Chairman's briefing. Lawan was quoted as saying that the Vice President appealed to the House to reconsider the issue of impeachment in the interest of peace, and the survival of democracy. NTA avoided the aspect where the Speaker stated that the House would be guided by the constitution in all its deliberations. It was AIT that added the aspect of the coverage of the Speakers in 15 seconds. PRTV reported the aspect of the Vice President's visit to the House where he appealed to them to reconsider their stand in 40 seconds. It was PRTV's lead headline and its lead story. The social implication is that there was more prominence given to the Vice President's visit and his speech than the spokesman of the House of Representatives. AIT gave more prominence to the spokesman of the House than the two other stations.

On the same day, the Senate suspended two supporters of the President in the House. Senators Ifeanyi Ararume and Udoedehe were alleged to have behaved dishonourably by taking the Senate to court. The same day, the Senate forced another staunch supporter of the President, Senator Stella Omu to resign her position as Chief Whip of the Senate. Two of the three suspended Senators were reported with film reports and actuality voicing on NTA to bare their minds after their suspension was reported for two minutes as second lead story. AIT only mentioned their suspension in 10 seconds. It was its fourth lead story and headline while PRTV used it as third lead headline and fifth story without footages. NTA gave them more coverage maybe, because they were supporting the President.

On 29th August, while inaugurating the Abia state chapter of PDP, the national Chairman stated that the PDP could not fight the President over his intransigence on certain issues because it would spell disaster for the party. NTA, which reported it in 2 minutes 7 seconds also added that Ogbeh also said that quite often, we are called stooges of the executive, but show me anywhere in the world where the chairman of the party is at war with its chief executive, and the party survives. AIT devoted 20 seconds to the PDP Chairman's story. It was not in its headline and was used far into the story. PRTV did not cover this story.

On August 28th 2002, Bukar Mandara, leader of the National Mass Movement paid a solidarity visit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives over its stand on the impeachment. He stated that Nigerians are now beginning to understand what was meant by constitutionality, which the House was trying to protect. NTA gave almost a

blackout to this report probably, because, this view may not be in line with the Presidency. It was mentioned in 48 seconds. NTA, instead, gave prominence to the visit of a group of women led by the Minister of Women Affairs, Hajia Aisha Ismail, who visited the speaker to appeal to him over the impeachment of the president. It also reported the meeting of the PDP NWC close door session with its ministers on ways to prevent the impeachment. It gave 2 minutes to a statement at the end of the meeting by Mr. Venatius Ikem, spokesman of the party. Ikem stated that the meeting reviewed the state of the nation, which centred essentially on the need to defuse the tension in the polity, particularly the alleged constitutional breaches by the president. The meeting also looked at the need to smoothen grey areas that generate mutual suspicion between the executive and the legislature. AIT carried the three stories. Mandara's visit was given two minutes 48 seconds, Hajia Aisha's visit, 30 seconds and the PDP meeting, 57 seconds. But it was neither in their headline nor in any of the lead stories within the first ten minutes of the bulletin.

On September 11, 2002, President Obasanjo presented a defence on the alleged constitutional breaches to a nine-man committee set up by the PDP. NTA devoted 5 minutes to this meeting, using it as lead headline, with footages of the meeting. It was the first story on the day's bulletin. Although there were moves on the same day in the House of Representatives to commence impeachment procedure on the President by the House, through collection of signatures, the NTA ignored this aspect. It was AIT that reported this as its second lead headline and third story for the day. AIT devoted 2

minutes 4 seconds to the mediation meeting at the State House, and one minute 3 seconds to the collection of signatures. PRTV did not report this story.

On October 1, 2002, the Yoruba militia, Odua People's Congress (OPC), staged a peaceful procession in Lagos to support President Obasanjo over the impeachment move. In a three-minute story on NTA, which was its second lead story for the day, footages of the procession were shown. The OPC President spoke for 2 minutes denouncing the National Assembly over the impeachment. Dr. Fredrick Faseun, OPC President, stated that impeaching Obasanjo means impeaching democracy. AIT aired it for 58 seconds while PRTV reported it for 25 seconds.

On the same day, prominence was given to 35 members of the House who paid solidarity visit to the President and declared support for the President. In a two-minute report, the defecting lawmakers denounced the impeachment motion from their colleagues. This was the second lead headline and fourth story for the day on NTA. AIT equally gave prominence to the story, dedicating one minute 40 seconds to it, but it was the fourth story on the headline on the day's bulletin. In addition, AIT devoted 43 seconds to Chief Gani Fawehinmi's visit to the Speaker, where he offered to give free legal service to the House if it proceeds with the impeachment. This report was omitted from the NTA and PRTV's reports. For Gani to support the Speaker openly meant to NTA and PRTV that he was declaring himself an enemy of the President, the perceived owners of NTA. NTA responded by giving him a blackout. PRTV gave only 25 seconds to the OPC report and 38 seconds to the visit of the legislators to the President.

NTA gave more coverage to the OPC issue as against the Gani story because OPC was supporting the President, which was a favourable news slant.

When the House Chairman on Information issued a statement to denounce the move of the legislators pointing out that 35 members were in the minority, only AIT reflected it in its report of 5th October 2002. When PDP organised a mediation meeting between the National Assembly and the President on September 23, 2002, the three stations reported it as lead headline. NTA and PRTV used it as lead story while AIT used it as second story for the day. NTA devoted 2 minutes 22 seconds to the report, while AIT had it for one minute 10 seconds. PRTV aired the report for 55 seconds. While NTA and PRTV were careful not to give any unfavourable coverage through their news slant, AIT gave alternative views through their coverage.

Table 6
Summary of all the coverages of the motion on impeachment of the President (ANOVA)

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F.Ratio	F. Tabulated F. .05, 2, 39
Between Groups	682.61	2	331.15	1.83	3.23
Within Groups	7052	39	180.2		
Total variation	1921.88	32			

The reportage here is not significantly different. If F. calculated is lesser than F. Table, we accept the null hypothesis of equality of means. In this case, F. calculated is 1.83 and lesser than F. Table value of 3.32. That is to say that the station's coverage of the news did not differ significantly. We thus accept the null hypothesis.

However, there is a material difference when we examine the attention given by the three stations to the issues. NTA had higher attention (coverage to the stories even though they were all tilted towards portraying the Federal Government in good light, followed by AIT and then PRTV. We thus

conclude that in situations where there are issues to protect the image of the Federal Government the NTA would give it more favourable coverage.

4.1.4 Electoral Bill Controversy 2001

On the 3rd of December 2001, a harmonised bill for the election known as the Electoral Bill 2001 was passed to the President for assent into law. The next day, 4th December 2001, President Obasanjo raised objection to some sections of the bill. This was particularly the registration of new parties. According to the President, he raised objection through a memo to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate President. By 5th December, without the two chambers of the National Assembly sitting to discuss and harmonise the new suggested amendments, a new version of the electoral law was signed into law by the President.

One major issue here is that the President was interested in seeking a second term of office. On 5th December 2001, NTA in its network news lead headline and lead story announced that the electoral law had been signed into law. A major highlight of the new electoral law was that new parties cannot be registered. It was a three minute 40 seconds story on NTA using it as lead headline and lead story. AIT devoted two minutes to the story using it as its lead headline and lead story. It also used footages of the National Assembly and President Obasanjo. PRTV dedicated one minute 40

seconds to the story. It was its lead headline, lead story but only the clip of the footage of President Obasanjo.

However, when 20 members of the House of Representatives led by Nduka Irabor dissociated the House from the electoral act, NTA buried the story inside until the second half of the news. It devoted 40 seconds to it and refused to give details to what the members actually disagreed with. It was AIT that reported the group dissociating themselves from the bill, pointing out that it was not a law of the National Assembly and there was no need for litigation over the issue. It called the bill an electoral fraud. PRTV carried the story where the members disagreed with the electoral bill. The 47- second report pointed out that the whole House would still take a second look at the bill. Here, AIT gave more prominence to the coverage more than NTA and PRTV. The question of protecting the owner's interest suffices. For NTA and PRTV, it becomes difficult to portray the Federal Government, a PDP government in bad light.

On December 18, 2001, during a "media roundtable", a buffet organised for journalists, Senate President Anyim Pius Anyim, stated that there would be no going back on the electoral act. NTA aired it as the second lead story and lead headline. NTA devoted 3 minutes 40 seconds to this report. The Senate President said that the complaints against the Act were not only unfounded, but also belated and diversionary. This was a period that Anyim was alleged to be supporting the Presidency for his assistance to enable him become the Senate President a few weeks earlier. There was a good rapport between the Senate and the Presidency at the time. This was a period

when payment to members which was a problem to the House of Representatives, was not same to the Senate. More money was given to the Senate for committee works while brand new cars bought less than 18 months were written off for the Senators at N600, 000.00 each. It was also a time the House of Representatives were alleged to be running the House on overdraft from banks.

The President has also used funding of the Assembly to control its debates. At that time, only the House of Representatives was alleged not to be cooperating with the Presidency. The House could not pay salary to members. The Senate President was awarded one of the highest honours of the country, the Grand Commander of the Order of Niger (GCON). It was thus not unusual given these combined issues for NTA to give the Senate President prominence in its stories particularly when it was in support of the President. AIT used it as fourth lead story but also interviewed three members to balance the Senate President's viewpoint. The three Senators interviewed during the report by AIT disagreed with the Senate President. PRTV used it as fourth story and it was not on the headline of the news of the day.

However, it seems the Senate President's view was more favourable to the Presidency, and hence, the more prominence given by NTA. AIT had a more balanced report than NTA and PRTV, which are both government owned stations. This could be explained to mean support for the executive arm of government who also appoints the key officers in the stations who also have sympathy for the same ruling party, the PDP.

On December 29th 2001, during a radio interview, President Obasanjo denied tampering with the act. He accused the Speaker of the House of Representatives and four of his colleagues of carrying out the action. This was a lead story on the NTA who used it as lead headline. The station used footages of the President only. But the leader of the House Committee who addressed a press conference the same day, dissociating the House from the electoral fraud was ignored. It was AIT that aired both views, particularly that of the House committee led by Mohammed Kumaila, that the insertion was essentially an Obasanjo affair and not the House. AIT used it as a second lead story and devoted one minute 42 seconds to the controversy. PRTV did not carry this report in its bulletin.

On December 28th 2001, when the Senate held an emergency session over the electoral fraud, it dissociated itself from the manipulation. NTA stated that Senate rejected the version of the electoral bill assented to by the President, which contained in addition clause 80 (1), which did not have the blessing of the Senate. It however did not add the motion by Senator Saidu Dansadau where he said that Obasanjo should be told to assent to the original bill sent to him by the National assembly, failure of which would be followed by laid down procedures of constitutional law making. This was reflected in the AIT report, which devoted 3 minutes and 4 seconds to it.

Also, when the Clerk of the National Assembly was summoned to the House of Representatives to disclose how the electoral fraud came about, NTA ignored the report. The Clerk disclosed that Anyim, in concert with four other Senators coerced him to prepare the new contentious version of the bill. He further said that the action

took place between 2.00am-4.00am. He accused the Senate President as the arrowhead of the alleged manipulation having played a central role in the insertion and final preparation of the controversial bill. AIT gave one minute to this aspect, which was the third lead story of the day. PRTV did not carry the news report.

When the House Chairman on Information Committee on 14th January 2002, addressed the press the same day, NTA also ignored it. It was AIT alone that devoted one minute 49 seconds to the press conference. But when Senator Oserheimen Osunbor, leader of the Senate Committee on Harmonisation of the Electoral Act addressed a press conference in support of Obasanjo's action, NTA devoted 4 minutes 6 seconds to the press conference. It was its lead story for the day. He was one of the leading figures accused by the Clerk of the Assembly for the insertion of the controversial "foreign" proviso. He was also the Chairman of the Joint Harmonisation Committee.

In the NTA news report, Osunbor defended President Obasanjo as having nothing to do with the alleged electoral fraud. He however blamed the two chambers of the National Assembly. He stated that "it was obvious that some people oppose the act because it does not represent their view, suit their ambition and personal interests, but this was not a good reason to fault the act".

In the NTA report, Osunbor said that his committee received the President's letter proposing the amendment through the Senate President. It was considered, deliberated upon, pointing out that there was nothing like smuggling a different clause

into the bill. He said that the Committee acted in good faith, believing that it could accept the amendment proposed by the President. AIT devoted one minute 32 seconds to the report. It was the third headline, and it was used in the bulletin without much prominence. PRTV did not use this story. NTA showed more prominence in the coverage of stories favourable to the President than the other two stations.

On 6th January 2002, when 34 State Governors took the National Assembly to court, NTA and AIT reported it. NTA used it as inside headline, while AIT used it as third headline on their bulletin. NTA devoted two minutes to the report, while AIT used it for one minute 22 seconds; with background reports and two follow up interviews. PRTV did not report this. Plateau State Government is not one of the states involved in the litigation. The station was therefore silent on it. The Governors were insisting on terminating the tenure of Local Governments in their domains in April 2002. They also want to hold council polls by May 2002. NTA showed more prominence in the coverage of this issue than the other two stations

The Speakers of the State Houses of Assembly also took the National Assembly to Federal High Court over encroachment on their jurisdiction by the National Assembly by legislating on the tenure of the third tier of the government. NTA used it as an inside headline and fourth story on the day, while AIT used it as fourth headline. The story came up within the first 10 minutes of the bulletin. PRTV used the story as third headline, devoted 46 seconds to it while it was the fourth story on the day's bulletin. Here, NTA gave more prominence to the story than both AIT and PRTV.

When Gani Fawehinmi, Lagos lawyer took President Obasanjo to court over the alleged electoral fraud, all the three stations used it as inside headline, and inside story. NTA devoted 41 seconds to the story, while AIT and PRTV devoted 46 seconds and 38 seconds to the story respectively. Much prominence was not given to this report by the three stations.

Table 7.

Summary of all the coverages Electoral Bill Controversy (ANOVA)

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F.Ratio	F. Table F. .05, 2, 30
Between Groups	682.61	2	341.31	8.26	3.32
Within Groups	1239.27	30	41.3		

Total variation 1921.88 32

Here the difference is significant. If F . calculated is higher than F . Table, we reject the null hypothesis. In this case, F . calculated is 8.26, and more than F . Table value of 3.32. We thus reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that the station's disposition to news coverage on the controversy vary significantly.

However, AIT gave more balanced coverage of the issues than the other two stations. AIT was also more concerned on how it could also promote its commercial interest by sponsoring a bill within the period that NTA should be a purely public service station and not to collect adverts. This accounts for its continuous prominence to the story.

Generally, an ANOVA of the reportage by the three stations on all the four issues under study did not show any significant difference (F . Ratio: 8.26; F . Tabulated: 0.32, $P=0.05$). However, AIT gave more attention to the coverage of the stories than NTA and PRTV. Also, AIT had more balanced coverage of the four stories, because it had more views from the two sides involved in the stories. This means that the private stations are more likely to report views from both sides than the State and Federal Government stations.

The media despite their difference in ownership structure have a tendency to protect owners' interests. This is a case of he who pays the piper dictating the tune. Also, despite the non-difference in the level of significance, more stories favourable to the government are likely to be found in the government owned stations than in the private station. Issues that sustain the harmony of the state are more emphasized by the government owned stations than the private stations. Similarly, reportage that are not favourable to the state are more likely to be found in the private stations. The difference is not significant, statistically. That is to say, they all act to preserve the existing status quo of power and domination.

Table 8
Summary of all the Coverage of the four issues under study

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F. Ratio	F. Table
Between Groups	686	2	342.5	0.32	4.26
Within Groups	4713.33	6	785.55		
Total variation	5432	8			

The reportage of all the issues here, were not significantly different. If F. calculated is lower than F. Table, we accept the null hypothesis of non-equality of means. In this case, F. calculated is 0.32, and lesser than F. Table value of 4.26 above. That is to say that the station's coverage of the news did not differ significantly from each other. We thus conclude that the station's disposition to news coverage on the four issues under study is not different.

Table 9 Difference in the Reportage of the

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL STRUCTURE, DEREGULATION AND REPORTAGE OF NEWS IN TV STATIONS

This chapter shall further present research findings as it relates to the issues of role of the state in the structure of the media and the influence of deregulation in the television industry.

5.1 NIGERIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND NEWS REPORTAGE

Generally, respondents agree that television news is not about the poor man but those who are rich. Majority of the respondents agreed that television news is about people who have the means to pay for it. One of them, a viewer said:

TV news is about big men and the people in power. They don't talk about the grass root. There is no social news. They talk about what governors, Presidents and their wives are saying, what they have done, which are not too important. They want to know about themselves. People want to know what is happening in the market. They want to know about economy, education, and health, what is happening to their lives, how will they survive till the next day. About security.

Another discussant at the state television station said: “*TV news today is like a diary. If you don't have a diary to know what government activity is taking place, just go to any of the stations and peruse through their bulletin, and you get a complete diary*”.

At NTA one of the discussants who is a management staff said:

I am not happy, because there is a lot of concentration on people who have money and power, the government people rather than the real people. TV can do more. Sometimes, you want to go and do something. You censor yourself. In the NTA, it is restricted. Sometimes, you do it and it goes on air, government complains. We do not cover the grass root people. We cover politicians, big people, but the real people are not covered. TV can do more. Like NTA, it is restricted. We don't cover the real people.

Another management staff from NTA cited an instance:

TV is not for the poor or those in the rural areas. Not for the small people. We should go to the rural areas and cover them.

We should go deep to the grass root. For instance, during the

entire voters card registration exercise, the entire television reports, both private and public did not go to the grass root to cover the exercise. All the complaints we saw on Television were city centred - voters card, long queues. Even in Abuja, we concentrated on the city. We did not go to the remote areas. No remote village was covered.

Another discussant further adds:

Television news is from state government to federal government. About the National Assembly. You don't hear anything about the man from the village or the grass root. Events take place there and nobody tells you. It is about this minister or that governor or Mr. President. That is why I call it recycled news. By the time you watch NTA network news tomorrow, today, Obasanjo will still appear. But you discover that there are so many things happening at the grass root level. Television has no provision for any of this coverage. It is supposed to cover the nation. It should not be a diary for government. That is what our television is doing.

Most of the respondents who are staff of the three television stations agreed that priority was always given to the people who have the material means of production and who also seek to control the mental production of the ordinary man, by imposing their views. One added that: *“Even the big organizations that can afford to advertise impose their taste on us”*.

Minority of the respondents agreed. One of them said that: *“It is a normal thing for the stations to give their best camera to cover the people in power. If the station has one camera, it will be allocated to the government house. What they say dominate news and ordinary people are forced to listen to them without choice”*.

Similarly, a management staff of a government owned station justified why government officials are given more coverage:

This is where the policy direction of the country comes from.

There is nothing wrong with that; after all they provide the source of funding.. Where human-interest stories clash with the interest of the government, we have to drop it to avoid any crises

Another management staff of one of the television stations further added:

We need variety. We cover all issues. Look, I have invitations from the Rotary club, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and even NYSC members to cover the commissioning of their projects. We send our reporters to all of them, because, they all belong to the society.

Another management staff said: *News should involve both the poor and the rich. In this station, we try to balance this interest. That is why, we have a lot of viewers.*

Given the nature of television in our country today, does the poor have a chance to be presented on television. Majority of the discussants said that the poor have little chance. However, minority of the respondents said that the chances are 50-50. Reasons given for the lesser chances of the poor appearing on air vary. One said:

“There is too much commercial in the news today. Also this present issue of commercial news, which is killing our news”. Another said:

Every reporter is a potential advert canvasser. We are all encouraged to do it. You are expected to bring news that will generate income to the station. When these adverts are many, you drop the news. The whole news can be devoted to adverts and few government activities. That is true. Advert takes precedence over news reports. Given advert drought, governments set a target for the station. A station can even forget their news and air adverts. Most times, stories relating to, and in favour of the poor are dropped because of adverts, and these are the stories concerning the ordinary man. The station does not have any obligation for such stories.

At the AIT, one discussant said: *"Sometimes, in a whole of a week, you do not see anything about the poor. One former Manager said that TV is not for the poor"*. However, the management staff of the three stations do not agree with these allegations. Discussions at all the three broadcast stations show that the marketing departments are given targets of revenue to generate to meet local expenses. The government, in the case of PRTV and NTA, gives them subvention. However, reporters are expected to generate stories that have commercial interest in the case of AIT. When asked what should constitute news, a viewer retorted: *"It is what transpires in the community during a period, things that affect members of the community, majority of the population are ordinary people. There is need to focus on them"*.

Majority of the respondents agreed that news has never been for and about the poor. One of them said: *"Generally, TV news is about celebrities. It is not about the poor man. It is about the rich. No poor man can be shown as a celebrity. Government stations do not criticise objectively. Hence, there is the tendency for praise singing"*.

Another respondent in the FGD in a government owned station added:

TV is a meeting point for big men to celebrate their wealth generally. There is a sharp difference between the reports of the stations. Private stations cover almost everything unlike the government stations. If you watch AIT, you will be impressed. They encourage indigenous artistes. The NTA play foreign musicals too much. It is not good for the industry.

However, when asked about events that will not be paid for, majority of the discussants said that these are workshops attended by top government functionaries.

One discussant at PRTV said:

It is a must when the President and the Governor are there. They

don't even pay for it. . They have their media crew and their stories are given priority. The station must cover any workshop attended by the President or the Governor. Those attended by non-government functionaries must be paid for. Even when it has to do with the lives of the people, it must be paid for. There was one workshop on AIDS, which no government functionary attended, and the organisers had to pay for it to be aired

However, few of the discussants at the NTA said that they do not ignore any invitation. Another discussant from the same station said:

Workshops are not news. They are talk shops. It should not form part of our news. We cover them. When they invite us, they say big men will be there. They say Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ministers, etc. So we cover them. If there is big men or not, we still cover them.

A respondent in one of the government stations said: *“We try to bring them on air through human angle stories, and we try to carry about two special reports on them every day. They can't pay for commercials or LTP”*.

Another discussant said: *“If there is a governor or president, that is a must and must be aired. But we also cover the less privileged ones and sometimes advise them on how it can come up well.*

A third discussant, who is a member of management said:

We don't often cover them, as we would have wished. Sometimes, we don't even have the camera. If they have tapes, we play them and evaluate the orientation of the commercial and the news in it. If they invite us, we cover them when we can. What we do is to advise such people to hire their camera and come and pay for airing. Because, if we have one camera, it goes to the Governor.

The implication for paying for news is obvious. Majority of the discussants agree that if news is paid for, editorial judgment may become compromised and biased to encourage such patronage. One of them at PRTV said:

Sometimes, we cover it and balance it. And cover the negative part also. Our primary responsibility is to protect government. Anything that happens within government circle has to be protected but not advertisers. We may not spare a government organisation. But if it is linked to the Governor, we have to water the story to a point that it will lose its meaning. Such stories may be aired; we also protect our regular customers.

Respondents at NTA stated that all news paid for might not be aired. The management calls it good taste. This is done through daily editorial meetings where reports paid for or adverts are considered to be acceptable or not in line with the policy of the station. A discussant said:

As a policy, every reporter knows that we may cover an offensive material, but it may not be aired. There is subjective judgment when news is paid for. It has to do with good taste, because, no one will pay for a product and allow it to be put down. News judgment is compromised. It does affect news judgment.

Some of the respondents who are mainly management staff disagreed. One of them at AIT said: "Not at all. It is not everything paid for that is aired. We try to know what we collect money for". And who are the major commercial clients. The discussants all agree that they are from UAC, Cadbury plc, Unilever plc, Paterson and Zochonis (PZ) plc, NNPC, NEPA, Banks, individuals or organisations promoting themselves, but if it is for the good of the general public, they don't pay for them. People that make money and promotional items must pay for such coverages.

However if there is a regular patronage from a particular government or organisation, are television stations likely to air news that may affect their interest? A discussant at NTA agreed. He said: *"Like NNPC is our good client. But if there is a fuel problem today, we will cover it and report, no matter what they pay us. Another said: We are not likely to cover stories that will affect such interest. We will rather turn it down"*. We however did not find any clear-cut policy about coverage of non-government related activities by any of the three stations. Editors and other managers were expected to use their discretion in deciding which non-government activities were to be paid for particularly, those not attended by top government functionaries.

At AIT, one of the respondents who is a marketing executive agrees that the station is unlikely to offend the major commercial organisations because *that is where our pay comes from in the long run*. One said: *"Those that patronise us, what we do is to water down the issue, and balance it by cross checking"*.

Another discussant at the station said: *"Definitely. We will not carry any negative news against them. We try to be modest about them, and not crude"*. What this means is that the basic of journalism, which is objectivity, is compromised.

Has there been any particular complaint from any of your advertisers about your report? What happened afterwards? *"None that I know"*, a respondent said.

However some reports by television stations also make commercial patrons to think otherwise. One discussant at NTA said:

Once, NNPC complained that we did not use the lead of a story from the speech of the President. We corrected it later by repeating the story and taking our lead from the President. Another one was a mistake of sorts, but it was my fault, and we had to correct it. They had already paid for the quiz programme and they want value for their money.

Minority of the discussants at PRTV said: "*They complain but not directly*". One discussant said that "many times, news about the poor are not allowed on air not just because they cannot pay, but because, their stories offend the sensibilities of the power that be". One cited an instance:

There was coverage on military pensioners around Area 10. A television station was airing it and many people were interested in this pathetic story. About 15 minutes later, the story was removed from the air. I later met the producer of the programme and asked why the programme was discontinued. He said that it was a directive from the Presidency. Because it was touching a sensitive area relating to the masses, the government could not tolerate it. AIT also did the same story, except that it was not discontinued

Majority of the respondents at the three stations want an improvement on the news bulletin by airing more news related to the ordinary man and things that affect the people directly. One discussant who is a viewer, said:

I want them to look at development news. I want them to look at the entity called Nigeria. What has the man in Okene done to improve the lives of the people, not what the Governor of Kogi State is doing on a daily basis. Where you have a radio and television station showing him for 26 hours in a day, that is not what the people want. I wish the people in government knew that people have become selective in what they are watching. Many people who have no alternatives tune off.

Another expressed his dissatisfaction with the way news are carried at the station:

This is because, it does not impact positively on the people. When you carry propaganda and use it as news and I am

interested in what is happening in my country, I have to tune to a foreign station. This does not tell too well about the media in my country

In the content analyses, the coverage of the NLC strike as a result of the hike in the fuel price shows significant difference. All the three stations gave a high coverage of the issue. However, the coverage by the three stations shows different perception on the role of petrol by the government and the people of Nigeria. This explains the lack of consensus between labour and government. This therefore means that our broadcast stations are pandering more towards the coverage of government related activities than those that affect the welfare of the citizens. Those who therefore belong to the ruling class and could therefore pay will always have their views aired.

5.2 DEREGULATION AND NEWS REPORTAGE

Commercialisation as presently practiced by television stations is a core aspect of deregulation of the industry and by extension the structural adjustment programme. It is a situation where stations begin to raise revenue by charging fees for news reports they normally do free. For television stations, that is creating slots for news to be aired that may not necessarily pass the judgment of editors. Some may not meet the rigorous checks but may still go through some checks.

Deregulation is one of the key components of the privatisation programme. Privatisation is a specific strategy towards market control including political and material, whose origin is traced to specific periods in the rise of capitalist mode of production. It is the actual transfer of ownership from public to private. The objective is to make profit. News that should interest the public may not be aired.

Majority of the respondents agree that deregulation was good for the industry. They stated that this is the best thing that has happened to the industry. because it promotes competition. One respondent said:

This is the best thing that has happened to the industry. There is pluralism of views. There are today 350 broadcasting stations, including the cable. Communities are interested in developmental news, and in a language they will understand. However, TV is driven by content and there is need for a lot of the stations to improve on their content. It determines what money you make. For the private stations, the growth is slow, but for the government, it is high because, the government believes that it can be used for propaganda.

Another discussant at the PRTV however expressed some fears: *"If you take a story that will dent the image of the government, even when you are a private station, they will not take it lightly"*.

All the three respondents who are members of management agree that competition brings about good programming, which is good for the public. The discussant at AIT said that we have to utilise our skills to stay in this competitive market: "News is tilted against the ordinary man". He further explained why this is so:

The private stations try to look at other areas to strike off. When you see poor people on TV, it is to show a situation of squalor and poverty. They tell you the problem has happened and not how it can be remedied. Private stations use it to whip up sentiments and emotions for their growth and support. At the end of the day, they see that the low-income people support them, and that translates to more viewers, and hence, more adverts from agencies. It all comes back to economics.

As a policy, all the three broadcast stations accept fee for certain types of news, which is regarded as commercial, or in the stations' parlance, Let Them Pay (LTP).

This is a core aspect of commercialization at the stations. One discussant said that: *"this is mostly news where a Governor does not attend"*. One of the key aspects of deregulation is commercialisation. NTA has 50-minute news. It is by regulation expected to take about nine minutes advert. However, as the respondents at NTA said, "sometimes it over runs into 20 minutes and in such cases, some news items have to be dropped".

At the AIT, the one-hour news is by regulation expected to take in about nine minutes adverts. But a discussant said that "the more advert we get the better for us. We can take as much advert as we can". However, PRTV seemed to be different. In its 30-minute news, which should take about four minutes advert, most times they don't even have the adverts. However, a management staff of NTA refutes the allegation that news will be relegated for adverts. He said: *"It may extend to 10-12 minutes, but certainly not up to 15 minutes"*. The discussant said that over running the news is not allowed and many times, producers are queried. *" Given the LTP nature of news, commercial stories may extend up to 25 minutes of the 50 minutes at NTA"*, another discussant at NTA said. However, when news is paid for, does it affect news judgment? One participant said: *"Of course. Nobody pays for his product just to be run down"*. Another said that there have been complaints, a few times from NEPA and NNPC on how they run certain news items. But we have our house style. Despite these claims, the tapes viewed showed that all the three stations overrun the advert timing for the period of the newscast.

On choice of stations, majority of the discussants said they liked what the private stations particularly AIT is doing. One said: “ *I am permanently tuned to AIT. I don't like the nonsense at NTA*”. Another gave reasons why deregulation of the industry is welcomed.

TV news is about people in government. The government stations don't talk about the grass root. There is no social news. They talk about what governors, Presidents and their wives are saying, what they have done, which are not too important. They want to know about themselves. People want to know what is happening in the market. They want to know about economy, education, and health, what is happening to their lives, how do they survive till the next day.

Another participant who is a viewer said:

I am not happy. Why will our stations be repeating themselves about the same people? Look at the news in some of our stations. It is from the President to the Governors, to ministers to Commissioners. Does it mean that if they don't come to a function, it is a failure? This is the image our stations project.

Another discussant at PRTV said: “*When they talk at functions and they don't see themselves, it is usually trouble for the station. But who is an ordinary man to ask a station manager to ask why he was not on air?*”

One major difference between the private and government owned stations, all the participants agreed was that the private station is likely to air news, which will not be in the interest of government more than a government owned one. One discussant at NTA said: “*the private stations behave as if they don't have anything at stake. NTA must preserve the unity of this country*”. All the participants in the discussion agree that

profit motive to run the stations is paramount. But two management staff of the stations disagreed: "*We cannot take money for everything. We perform social service too*".

On pluralism, majority of the respondents say that the competition is such that the stations are struggling who will report the President or the Governor better. They also agree that this is usually translated into economic gains of patronage of adverts or contracts. One of them said:

I have taken my time to compare the content of news of both government and state owned stations. During the voters' register, they were all just following the Electoral Commission Chairman. They all concentrated in the towns. During the fuel strike, they were all careful not to hurt the government. This is because, in our economy today, government is the biggest patron. Even though the private stations are a welcome development, the orientation of television reports is all the same. They are all struggling to cover the big men, the people in government. We certainly need a change to justify this deregulation.

The content analyses show that there was no statistically significant difference in the reportage of the four stories by the three television stations. However, AIT has higher attention scores (1190) as against NTA (938) and PRTV (838). That is to say issues relating to the government and where their interest is concerned are not likely to be reported differently. However, the analyses of the reportage show that private stations do report news not favourable to the ruling class than government owned ones despite differences of class interests. For instance when the NLC announced that it would embark on strike as a result of the increase in price, NTA was almost silent on the issue. It was AIT that gave a good coverage of the event. For NTA Nigerians would have believed that the strike was a flop.

Also, during the motion for the impeachment of the President, NTA was also silent on the story, when the issue was raised at the House of Representatives and the Senate. Similarly, during the electoral bill controversy, the NTA was reluctant to air news that was anti establishment. It was from AIT and PRTV that the viewers heard these reports. Similarly, it was only PRTV that aired a different view from NTA and AIT during the coverage rights controversy of the Nation's cup in 2002. This agrees with pluralism of ideas, that has accelerated deregulation of the broadcast industry; that is to say, plural views are tolerated as long as such dissents do not threaten the interest of capital.

In this way, commercialization further limits access to be heard on news by those who can not pay for it. Items that may not be newsworthy but bring money into the organization such as Annual General Meetings, birthday parties, become news materials resulting in problem of objectivity and balance in news. Such material calculation allows journalism ethics to be filtered through it.

CHAPTER SIX

**SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

The previous chapters focused on the objectives of the research, the methodology, some relevant literature review and the research findings. In this chapter, we will discuss the implications of ownership, deregulation and the social structure on reportage in television stations in the country.

6.1 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The findings show that ownership plays a leading role in the reportage and presentation of news.

2. The broadcast stations cover the ideas of the ruling class more than those of the lower class.

3. The private stations do cover stories that are not favourable to the government than the government owned ones.
4. Commercialisation of news in television stations has further reduced the access of those who belong to the lower class from having their ideas heard because they lack the ability to pay.
5. Despite the differences between the private, and government (State and Federal) ownership, the difference in coverage of issues are not quite different.

6.2 DISCUSSION

The discussion focuses on:

1. The state, legitimation and power
2. Ownership and Domination
3. Deregulation and mental production

6.2.1 The State, Legitimation and Power

From the research findings, the following could be deduced about the role of the state and the television industry in the country:

The process of legitimation involves presentation of news in a way that one could be perceived as neutral; reportage of stories in a framework that seeks to be

impartial. This framework comprises the professional ethics, a set of working ideology, which emphasises on neutrality, objectivity, but at the same time offer configurations which are strikingly selective and drawn from extremely limited views.

Here distinction must be made between those who are actually in control of the commanding heights of the stations, the owners and the ruling class. The ruling class, according to Mohammed, (2000:18) constitutes the bureaucrats who actually make the policy. There is also an emerging managerial elite who manages the stations, but really has no power. This group carries out the day to day administration of the stations. There is also the political elite, who has political control but no economic power, and the intelligentsia. These sub groups of the upper class have different roles in the broadcast stations. They all work to sustain the stations but at different levels.

Television stations effectively achieve their objective of mobilisation and persuasion at the will of those that direct and control them. Such control is regarded a valued property, particularly, for those seeking political and economic powers. This control allows them to direct, and attract the attention of the people and to manipulate problems and solutions in ways that favour those with power.

Although television stations in the country are not alone in the task of indoctrination and persuasion, they are the most important and most powerful. This is because, they have immediacy characteristic, wide coverage capacity and ability to influence other mass persuasion instruments, at the same time still claiming professional neutrality. For as Alubo (1988) points out, "*the Nigerian state is cloaked in*

ideological neutrality". This neutrality, he further argues" is an obscurantist attempt to misinform the people", and that:

Ideology is a form of consciousness, has origin in social practice and involves the entire society --- ideologically, it is dialectically related to and only determined in the last instance by the economic base --- it is a class phenomenon within which it has no material base (Alubo, 1988:48)

Ideology plays a leading role, for when people believe that their social institutions (such as television stations) are neutral, the ground becomes fertile for manipulation. Moemeka (1989:13) and Schiller (1976) have argued that manipulation succeeds best when evidence of its presence is non-existent; when the manipulated believe that things are the way they are naturally and inevitably.

Thus, the claim to ideological neutrality does not absolve television stations from gate keeping, agenda setting, all of which mould attitudes and behaviour that support the ideology of the ruling class.

It more often helps to more forcefully obtain the acquiescence and support of the masses for maintaining the status quo Television news as a social product are neutral only in the sense that they do only what they have been employed to do. They can be used to liberate or dominate, depending on the prevailing ideology (Moemeka 1989:8).

Television news in the country has a tendency to give more prominence to those in government and those who can pay for its services. For instance, all the three stations studied gave high coverage to activities of the President and the National Assembly, who all belong to the ruling class. However, private stations gave more prominence to news that are not favourable to government. This stems from their more balanced

reportage of issues unlike the government owned stations that choose to remain silent as shown in the issues of the impeachment of the President, the fuel price strike and the electoral bill controversy.

Reportage of news related to the poor is also low in the bulletins of the television stations, because they cannot pay for such access. What the ordinary man hears and his judgment is limited to the dominant view of those who have the means of production. For as Marx states, “*those who have no means of production have their views subject to those who have*”. That is to say, that television news in the country gives more prominence to the rich, and those who are in power. This is why, AIT, PRTV and NTA most often, support activities that serve to preserve the status quo.

The use to which television, like other ideological state apparatus such as education and religion, is put in any country is a function of the social structure. The mass media do not exist in isolation but are part of the complex structure of power and control existing in such society (Mohammed, 1994; Alubo, 1995). The implication of this is that, the ruling class serve their interest and those of their allies using television news to . Opubor has highlighted this issue when he stated that:

The messages produced within such a system of communication are directed and controlled by an elite who have almost pre-emptive access to the media, understands its technology and use it in a one way manipulative fashion, exhorting the masses to be patriotic. The content of communication is almost certainly oriented towards the interest of the controlling group, and to maintain their position of power and privilege. Consequently, the majority may find the content of the media irrelevant and irresponsible to their needs and views (Opubor 1978 :18).

Thus, the mass media, both private and government owned, along with the state apparatus act as a kind of secretariat for communicating ruling class interests which also seek to have them accepted. Althusser (1974:136) agrees with this. He states that "*the mass media is the ideological state apparatus whose function is to act as the ideological partner to the repressive apparatus of the state in capitalist societies*". Althusser further states that the state requires appropriate ideas for the reproduction of submission to the rules of the established order. Thus, apparatus such as television stations, which may not be directly linked to the state, are utilised. The action of the state is therefore perceived as neutral of class interests, which in turn gives legitimacy to the ruling class ideology. There are also likely to be found more unfavourable stories about government in private stations. Nevertheless, within the ruling class, and particularly in the arena of mental production, dissents are allowed.

In the coverage of the fuel crises, Akinterinwa (2001:28) states that strike is a constitutional element in any democracy. It constitutes the main instruments of dialogue between a complaining public like the NLC, and the government. Such complaint has to be addressed in its proper context if a lasting solution has to be found. Despite the illegality of the strikes as pronounced by the courts, and reported by the three stations, NLC believed it acted to protect the interest of the public, which was downplayed by the NTA and PRTV except in the AIT. NLC enjoyed people's legitimacy in terms of the strike, but in the eyes of the state, it was illegal, and the court lent a judicial weight to this.

The coverage of the strike shows that the television stations in a bid not to offend the ruling interest sided with the state, even when people's legitimacy was at stake. News coverage such as the fuel crises, impeachment of the President and the alleged electoral fraud however has implication in reproducing the power relations and ideology in the society. Issues are covered with "balanced views" in such a way to suggest that the effect is minimal or may not have any effect on the lives of the people. As Hall (1977), points out, "*this reproduction of power relations appears more central an issue than its incidental kickbacks*".

The content of television and its form of presentation serve to relay and reinforce dominant definitions of the situation and to exclude alternatives. The primary goal of those in the power structure is the preservation of their dominance and promotion of ruling class interest. The public involvement may consist primarily of passive acceptance of the power elite's' domination, which in most times, is due to the indoctrinating influence of television.

The agencies of the mass media particularly television, are in reality, crucial elements in the legitimation of the state. The television stations are expected to perform consensual roles of emphasising harmonious relationship necessary for development. Thus, stations are not prepared to emphasise on what would divide the country or escalate crises "but on the unity of the system". Despite the emergence of private stations, Nedzynski (1973:26) points out that men who own and control the mass media are most likely to be men whose ideological viewpoints are soundly conservative. In

the case of television stations, the impact of their view is likely to be direct and immediate”.

There is also a close link between the activities of those in the executive arm of the state and the state. The executive arm formulates the broadcasting policy through the NBC to protect the interest of the state, particularly the executive arm.

Thus, news coverage will have a tendency not to offend the interest of the state. This is seen by the high news coverage of the issues under study. The implication of this for the society is domination of the interests of those in power.

Milliband (1965) agrees that the state serves the interest of the capitalist class. He argues that this is so because, the capitalist class controls the state, particularly as the interest of the state pre-dominates the activities of government. In this situation, the state acts as an instrument of class expression and as an agent of bourgeois domination. *"It is an executive committee for managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie"* (Marx 1975).

However, some relative autonomy is given to editors to operate. Editors can report certain stories that may seem to offend the owners or make the story objective, by reporting the other side of the story. Such mental domination is not carried out openly, but through the mass media, which mask and conceal their real intentions. There is also room for dissenting views. This explains the differential reportage of the four issues investigated in this study. For instance AIT reported more side of labour to balance their views as could be seen from the reportage of the fuel price increase. This seems different from NTA, which refused to air the decision by NLC to embark on

strike, while AIT will report such story, hence, the difference in the level of significance. Also, the coverage of the motion on the impeachment of the President and the electoral bill controversy showed similar trend.

Alubo (1995:26) has stated the role of strikes and militancy in general as a means of achieving privileges in Nigeria, as it has become catalysts for social change in many societies, both developed and undeveloped. In a situation of controversy such as the NLC strike, television stations, being an ideological apparatus will side with the state. Coverage of working class actions has become what Marcuse calls repressive tolerance.

This is a situation where dissenting views are aired on television, as long as criticism is kept within limits and confined within defined targets. Such reports are usually followed by other views to provide a "balance" or by a programme soon after in the schedule, which cancels the point or suggests that both views are equally valid or equivalent. For instance in the coverage of the fuel price hike, and the NLC strike, there was a lot of prominence given by the television stations on the issue. But they were usually followed by reactions by interviewees, who are mostly, those with establishment views. Most of them were urging the NLC to give the government a chance, or that they should not sabotage the good intentions of government, or that development would follow from the revenue that will accrue.

Those who urged the NLC to embark on the strike were usually given a blackout in the reports. This provides an alibi that helps to consolidate the existing

system to arbitrate its conflicts and to absorb the anti-capitalist forces. Like one of the respondents during the focus group discussions indicated:

Things that would divide the country, or heat up the system would always be downplayed by the news bulletin, while those that will unite, those from the owners and government will be highlighted

So far the attempt is to link the media, state and legitimation. In Nigeria this research findings show that the roles played by the mass media, both private and government owned are not different. The state ensures that control over the media is not only maintained, any station which act contrary to the dominant class interest, is censored. This is carried out through the professional ethical code and other form of economic control. Economic control is the major avenue through which censorship is carried out. Advertisers and other patrons of the media can only continue to do so, if offending stories against them are not aired.

According to Dokpesi (1997), large investment is required to set up television stations. This therefore means that only those who are wealthy and seek power could afford to do so. That is, only the private owners of television stations and government can propagate the dominant ideas of the ruling class, to further consolidate their power, privilege and wealth.

In all the stations, the managerial elite who control the day-day administration and execute the in-house editorial policy of the stations serve the owners' interest. When owners are seen as neutral and interfering in the day –to- day operations of the stations, it gives legitimacy to such a station. Owners' interests are best served when

they do not participate directly in the day-to-day running of the stations. For instance, editorial positions of AIT, NTA and PRTV are focused on protecting and sustaining the interest of their owners. This continues even if there is a change of management. The appointment of top management positions of the stations is usually based on loyalty to the establishment and its owners.

This means that dissenting news detrimental to state interest will be censored. This is the same with NTA, PRTV and AIT. Their decision cannot be antithetical to government. For instance, during the fuel price increase, the favourable number of reports and the prominence given to such stories changed in relation to the protest by the NLC. According to Gramsci (1968), the premises, which sustain this rationality, are embodied in the dominant definitions of situations and represent or refract the existing structure of power, wealth and domination. These are masked through the intervention of professional ideologies. However, some form of autonomy is permitted within the stations, but the main role tends to be understood by everybody.

In the NTA, part of the research findings showed that the executive arm of government, which also appoints the top directors of the NTA, is always given priority in the reportage of news. It is the same story at PRTV where the PDP government is given prominence. At AIT, the corporate interest of the station is protected through appointment of friends and loyal staff into the board.

Generally, the findings show that on different issues, the private and government stations did not vary much. The implication is that the stations, both

private and government owned, in capitalist society such as Nigeria, are allowed to have dissent views which gives them credibility which enables them to assume neutrality. This functions to legitimise the existing social system in the interest of the dominant economic class. In the unfavourable reportage of stories such as the NLC strike, motion on the impeachment of the President and the electoral law controversy, the privately owned station had a higher number of reports than the government owned ones.

The private stations tend to be more critical of some government policies. However, they are not neutral agents in ideological conflict. As Ibrahim (1989:16) points out, "*Whatever motive of establishing these stations, the media is not a neutral agent in ideological conflict. They help to confer legitimacy of existing arrangement in the society*". He further highlights the findings of dissent opinions by the private stations. Writing on unfavourable reportage of the 1989 SAP riot by Nigerian mass media, he said, "*the Nigerian mass media showed partisanship in the coverage of events particularly if it affects the lower class*". He also said that "the private mass media were less antagonistic in their reportage than the government owned media"; adding that the Nigerian mass media is part of the ideological state apparatus, as they all operate in a manner to display partisanship in favour of the ruling class. While the public owned stations try to protect the interest of the government, the private stations tend to be on the side of the ordinary man by presenting the other side of the story. This gives it some credibility in the eyes of them viewers. However, choosing which reports

to present among so many other stories available to the station ensures that even the government is protected.

By repeated and selective reportage of these events, they set the agenda for issues that require mass participation. However, the reality is that, because of the cost of setting up a station, only those who have such means can own stations. The implication is that the ordinary man will for long be excluded from controlling this ideological apparatus, and hence their ideas will continue to be subordinated to the ideas of the ruling class.

Generality of Nigerians supported the strike against increase in pump price of fuel (Akinterinwa, 2001:28). It may not be against the strike per se, but *apriori*, because they contest government policy on and attitude of the Bretton Woods and other financial institutions vis-à-vis petroleum subsidy in Nigeria. As Akinterinwa further pointed out,

Nigerians at the domestic level look at the newly found entente between the federal and state governments as conspiratorial. The federal government said that whatever money is saved from the price hike will be shared by the three tiers of governments. This is despite the fact that nothing has been done in concrete terms with savings from past price hike of petroleum products (Aknterinwa: 2001:28).

This explains reasons why all the state and local governments supported the price hike, which was widely reported by the three television stations. All the stations collaborated with the establishment, against the will and legitimacy of the people. This explains why NTA gave a blackout to the strike; PRTV watered down the story as if it

had no effect, while AIT interviewed many people to "balance" the views. Whether government or private owned, as in the case of Nigeria, the capitalist neo-colonial structures are always preserved. The state only intervenes on the side of the domestic and foreign capitalist interests in major class conflicts. As Ayu (1983) points out, "The state indeed intervenes to dislodge regimes that threaten to move to the left to prop up dependent capitalism in crisis".

6.2.2 Ownership And Domination

The research findings show that the three television stations have a tendency to give prominence to the reportage of issues that affect their owners. The total number of stories in the content analyses, show that the privately owned television station provided more coverage than the government owned ones in the reportage of the fuel price strike, impeachment of the President, and the electoral bill controversy. The social implication as earlier discussed, is the common determination to support ruling class ideas.

The ability to give certain events prominence than others is intricately linked to class rule. Those who lack the economic power or resources would have their voices systematically excluded from the media. The voices that survive, therefore, would be the least likely to criticise the prevailing distribution of power and wealth. Consequently, those who challenge the arrangements will not have their views aired at the stations, because, they cannot command the necessary resources needed for effective communication to a broad audience. Milliband (1965:26) agreed with this

dictum. He asserts that owners of the mass media by its capital-intensive nature belong to the ruling class. Their ideas are therefore the ideas of the stations.

Like Enzensberger (1978:110) states, whether the ownership of a country's media is rested in private hands or government, the media are megaphones for the ruling class, who turn them into tools for retaining and controlling power. The prominence given to stories favourable to the Federal Government by NTA shows that more government stories are likely to be found in government owned media than in privately owned ones.

However, some of the issues examined showed some difference. Even though the controversy was an upper class disagreement over control of the apparatus of the state, it was reflected as an issue affecting everybody. This tendency also agrees with Gramsci who said that, "*the mass media tend to universalise upper middle class practices as if they are shared by all*". (Gans 1979:86).

Most of the editorial positions of the stations were anchored on open partisanship in favour of the owners. Since majority of the people obtain their information through these stations, and given a situation where the control of this social imagery is concentrated in the hands of those who own property, news reportage will thus be tilted towards issues that will preserve the interest of capital. The subordinate class assume the information they receive is "neutral". However, a great selectivity is involved before such news are presented. This is unknown to the viewer. This selectivity can be seen in the difference in the prominence given to the coverage of the

fuel price increase, motion for the impeachment of the President and the electoral law controversy, which was high in all the three stations. As Marx points out,

The class, which has the means of production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that generally speaking, the ideas of those who seek the means of mental production are subject to it. Hence, the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas (Marx 1975:146).

There is no significant difference in the coverage of reports that are favourable to its owners as in the case of the controversy over the Nation's cup broadcast rights. Here the stations tried to protect its owner's interests or the corporate interest of the organisation. Even when there is a difference in coverage, as in the case of motion for impeachment and the electoral law controversy, such difference from time to time give it legitimacy. This disagreement and difference in reportage agrees with Hall (1977) that the mass media functions to colonise people's minds.

The stations would therefore draw their values from those whose values they are familiar with, and avoid those, whose voices are against the ruling class. The stations end up reporting a one-dimensional view, which will not hurt the system, in order to maximise their audience. The styles of news reportage may vary, but not to the extent that the station could be considered to have committed class suicide. Given the high number of favourable stories to government by NTA and PRTV on issues relating to the Federal Government, it could be deduced that news more favourable to the federal government, are more likely to be found in government owned stations than in privately owned ones. Here, the dictum of he who pays the piper dictates the tune prevails. This agrees with Mills who stated that " the men in the mass is told what to

think, feel, do and hope for by the mass media directed by the elite to ensure that people accept the status quo" (Mills; 1956:249).

Ownership therefore plays a significant role in the reportage of events in the television stations as reflected in the coverage of, and the prominence given to the fuel price increase and the NLC strike, the electoral bill controversy and the motion for the impeachment of the President. The result did not show any significant difference. However, private television stations reported more unfavourable stories against the government than the government owned ones. Such difference further gives credibility to such stations as representing the poor strata of the society. Since the privately owned station has a higher number of unfavourable reportage of unfavourable stories than the government owned ones, the inference is that the privately owned stations are more likely to have reportage of unfavourable news about government than the government owned ones. Thus the second research question, there will be problem of neutrality and objectivity given ownership influence on news reportage is sustained.

6.2.3 Deregulation and Mental Production

Television stations, in response to the challenge of commercialisation of their news and programmes have left the major criteria of news, objectivity, to the dictate of ability to pay. The research findings show that adverts or commercial news are given priority over news that affect the people in all the stations. In many cases, reporters are encouraged to search for commercial news, while the stations' marketing departments are given targets to meet.

The implication of this is that in the search to generate more revenue, stations pander to the interest of advertisers, especially in the packaging of their news. This further helps the station to consolidate their patronage of such advertisers. The sociological implication is that only the few and powerful, who have wealth, can gain access into news coverage of the stations, particularly through these overbearing advertisements. The danger is that, since most of these patrons are in commanding heights of the economy, they influence the reportage of news.

Part of the research findings is the undue time allocated to adverts. In some cases, the stations over run their advert time limits, even when this is outside the LTP. The implication is that less time is allocated to issues that touch the lives of the ordinary man or people oriented news. Advertisers thus gain undue access, which they continue to sustain. Through this, they gain awesome capacity to indoctrinate viewers. This means that those who are located politically, socially and philosophically outside this well-defined range of opinion will have their views restricted.

Deregulation according to the proponents, was expected to usher in plural views in the television stations. Expectations are that our rural population will also have more enlightenment particularly on development programmes. However, the contrast is the case, since our rural population is poor, uneducated, and as such lack the purchasing power to buy most of the goods advertised by these stations, and so, are left out of television programming. The needs of the rural populace are so simple that even the need to have these goods advertised on television does not arise.

It therefore becomes very difficult for any of the trans-national

corporations or big organisations to sponsor any programme about the country's rural needs. For in the calculation of these tncs or big organisations, money spent on advertisements is a form of investment that must be recovered in form of profit at a later date. The rural areas are not a source of potential profit for these organisations. The implication is that there will be a paucity of rural news sponsored on television. News will therefore have a tendency to be urban oriented (Moemeka 1973:161).

The logic of capitalism is against wasteful, unproductive and non-profit generating ventures. Television stations whose sole aim is profit, is not likely to give priority to people oriented news because, it is unlikely to generate revenue. The search for commercial slots and news and corporate sponsorship of news items further consolidates the existing urban and elite oriented bias of news in the stations. A station that holds the maximisation of profit as its driving force, rather than the interest of its viewers will usually pander to interest of such commercial patrons, and can not guarantee the quality of news for its viewers. Like Oso (1994:26) has said:

The stark reality is that when profit making becomes the major deciding factor in the operation of any station, public interest suffers. Throwing the country's television industry into the invisible hands of market forces is making capital and the interest it serves become the decider of the form of communication in a society and the range of products they offer.

The major slogan of privatisation of the television industry, which is promotion of pluralism, sounds quite attractive. But they have become main gold mines for the owners. For as this research show, news can be dropped in favour of adverts. In the parlance of the stations, adverts are "timely" and paid for. It is therefore little wonder that news can be interrupted at any time for commercials, as is practiced in many

stations today. What the stations are doing is to deliver the majority of unsuspecting viewers to advertising barons. Mohammed (1994) also points out:

deregulation of the broadcast industry serves the end of making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Naturally, only the rich who can pay for broadcast licences or those who can buy shares in these private stations or at worst, those who can pay for news will have access to the news. Although the view expressed in government owned media might differ on more fundamental questions such as those bothering on the destiny of the existing capitalist order, both private and government owned television stations are united (Mohammed 1994:90).

This therefore enhances domination of the information sphere by those who have the means of production. Media production would therefore be subject to those who have ability to pay for coverage.

Those who have the means of production or can pay for broadcast stations to air their views will therefore have more access to news reportage than those who cannot afford to pay for such news. Such reportage will also tend to favour such patrons of the stations. Reportage of news by television stations, whether private or government owned is influenced by ownership. Despite the difference in the reportage, they all act in common to preserve the existing order.

This is shown by the reportage of the four issues, where all the stations, apart from the tendency to protect its corporate interest, also try to use this identity to generate revenue. Payment for news has therefore made professional ethics a secondary consideration. Owners are prepared to give priority to LTP than news that relates to the daily life of the ordinary man, because of the revenue they generate. In many cases,

reporters are encouraged to search for such commercial news to boost the revenue of the station. In this way, those who can not pay will have their views subject to those who have such means.

6.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY TO KNOWLEDGE

Based on the findings of this study, we have been able to make the following contributions to knowledge:

1. That there is significant difference in the reportage of news between private and public owned stations.
2. The study has also shown that the general belief that the media, particularly, television is the watchdog of the public, the neutral eyes and ears of the public is also a myth in Nigeria. The old belief that the media is the watchdog of the public, the neutral eyes and ears of the society has been explained to be a myth. The conventional norm and standards of determining news worthiness are often put aside when issues such as ownership, class and commercialisation in the television industry overwhelm the need to uphold journalistic ethic of neutrality and objectivity.
3. That television stations, whether private or public in Nigeria do not adhere to the cardinal ethics of fair and objective reportage of news.
4. There is also the need for people to know that despite the ethical issues, which stipulates that objectivity, fairness and balance should be the watchword of

journalism, the practice today panders to the interest of owners and commercial interests. The implication is that news judgment is compromised.

6.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study was centred more on the views of those who are literate and are based in the urban areas. All the participants in the FGDs and SSI were urban residents. Even though a special focus group discussion was held for viewers, the participants were all still urban residents. They would not express accurately the views of those who live in the rural areas and who are denied access to television news. There is therefore a need to do a study that will include the view of those resident in the rural areas. There is also a need to carry out further research on the effect of globalisation on the economy particularly on news reportage. This would highlight certain aspects of news reportage, which may not be controlled by owners or affected by the deregulation of the television industry.

The role of television news in information dissemination in rural development also needs to be further studied. This will help to improve the present method of information dissemination; by transforming the news structure, which emphasises a one-way communication from the urban areas to the rural areas. This will help in better policy formulation and execution in the country. Further more, there is a new emphasis on new communication technology for better viewing and information dissemination. How these issues threaten national economies and sovereignties of dependent countries need to be studied. The impact of such technologies on news production also need

further research, in areas such as web casting, new digital technology and the effect of unmanned stations on rural development.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the short term, access to television news should be democratised. More people should have access to these channels and be allowed to participate in them as equal subjects in the society. This requires communal ownership of television stations which de-emphasises private or government ownership. It also involves decentralisation of television news, reorientation of professional practice to understand the needs of the ordinary man. There is also a need to reconceptualise some basic tenets and assumptions of media practice and ethics. Media workers need to broaden their horizon and socio-cultural assumptions.

2. Television news should broaden scope and focus of news. A major step is to give adequate access and participation to ordinary people particularly, majority of the people who do not have the means of production. News about the ordinary man should be given prominence especially, if it will help to improve their peasant activities or organising them to protect and advance their interest against those of the dominant ruling bloc (Oso 1990). This is possible when television licence issuance is made more democratised by the Federal Government by emphasizing on group or communal ownerships.

3. To check the likelihood of concentration and centralisation of broadcast stations as well as quality of news content, the National Broadcasting Commission, (NBC) should, apart from relying on legal frame work, accord priority of issuing operating licences to communities rather than individual applicants. These will include applicants such as pressure groups, higher institutions and communities that have development- oriented interests instead of those who are interested in profit making. Community owned stations could produce news and other programmes devoted mainly to their local environments, and having self-management. This would assist to maintain the cultural identities of the community concerned, and keep them informed about their immediate neighbourhood. This method will strengthen interpersonal relationships and increase the community's capacity to defy constraints of the government and strengthen awareness of these coherent groups.

4. Groups should also develop critical views towards information offered to them through spontaneous rejection of the fare provided by television stations. Communities and groups could develop attitude of constructive doubt by endeavouring to elicit from the mass of information reaching them, scrutinise and match their communal experience. This would however be possible if there is information from a plurality of sources.

Long term measures involve take over of the broadcast stations by communities who will organize themselves into cells and broadcast their news without the interference of people who own the means of production. It also involves doing away with commercialization of news as it waters down programming.

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APPENDIX ONE

SSI Guide for Station Managers

Station:

Department:

1. Briefly discuss the editorial policy of your organisation?
2. How are the overall decision for news coverages and reports taken?

3. How regular are other departments consulted? Like which departments
4. What are the criteria for choosing an item for reportage?
5. In your opinion, what should TV news carry?
6. how would you describe the news your station carries? State reasons for your answer
7. In your view, what is the image of your station like outside?
8. What is your criterion for giving priority to certain aspects of news to be highlighted while others will be downplayed? Prioritise your news items and state which will be on headline or otherwise?
9. How regular do you have to discuss your news items with other officers. Are there other superior officers you need to contact before you air your news? Who are these superior officers?
10. As a policy, would your station accept fee for a programme that would not have been covered?
11. How often does news reports have to give way to advertisements? What kind of adverts?
12. What kind of workshops do you cover? How regular does your station cover workshops and seminars attended by top government functionaries? And how often do you ignore those not attended by top government functionaries, particularly where there is a Governor and a farmer's cooperative meeting?
13. Who are your regular advert patrons?

14. what is the stand of your organization ever payment for news covered or are there exceptions?
15. List the category of reports that are likely to be paid for?
16. If there is a regular patronage from a particular organization how would you balance such interest?
17. Have you ever received a complaint from the Governor or top placed people or organisations on not properly airing their adverts or that your news put them in bad light? What happened afterwards?
18. Explain if there has been any particular complaint from any of your advertisers about your report? What happened afterwards
19. What informs your coverage of news?
20. What would you say in comparison of news reports between private and government owned television stations if you were likely to carry more reports on any of the above issues?
21. Tell us if there has been a time that the owner of your station drew your attention to a news report on your station? What was his reaction to this story and on what story? Have you ever reprimanded any of your reporters or editors for any particular story. What happened?
22. Explain if you think ownership of a television medium has anything to do with the type of news on your station?
23. Let us discuss if you think that owners of TV stations directly interfere with the station's news.

24. What would you say was your relationship with: 1. Military Government
2. Civilian Government. 3. Politicians
25. Explain whether the poor have an equal chance like the rich to appear on TV? Why?
26. What would you regard as good management of news?
27. Suggest ways for improved news reports on television?

APPENDIX TWO**Focus Group Discussion for Special Group**

1. How do you like to stay current on news?
2. What was your reaction when you heard of: A. The electoral bill controversy in December 2001; B. The coverage controversy of Africa Cup of Nations of Mali 2002; C. The fuel price strike in January 2002; D. The motion at the National Assembly on the impeachment of the President Obasanjo
3. Where did you hear of it? Where was your source of information on this?
4. Evaluate the adequacy of the report of this issue.
5. Explain whether there was any difference in the reportage by NTA, PRTV, and AIT?
6. Enumerate what areas you think any of these stations omitted out of their news reports?
7. Do you think that if some news items had involved other set of people, it could have been different?
8. Let us compare the private and government owned television stations in the reportage of issues affecting them; whether they report more or less:
A. The poor ; B. Owners of television stations; C. Politicians D. Head of State. E. Other groups of people in the society
9. Explain if you think that any of these coverages would have been in any way better?
10. In what ways has liberalisation of the broadcasting industry assisted in

better coverage of events?

APPENDIX THREE

Focus Group Discussion for staff of Television stations

1. What kind of news should television highlight and what news should be downplayed?
2. Who are these superior officers (positions)?
3. What is the length of a typical newscast?
4. What kind of adverts do you insert?
5. What kind of workshops do you cover? Where there is a Governor or highly placed persons or where there is none?
6. How regular does your station cover workshops and seminars attended by top government functionaries? And how often do they ignore those not attended by top government functionaries?
9. As a policy, does the station accept fee for a programme that would not have been covered? How does this affect the news judgment?
10. List the category of reports that are likely to be paid for? If there is a regular patronage from a particular government or organisation, are you likely to carry out news that may affect his interest?
11. Explain whether there has been any particular complaint from any of your advertisers about your report?
12. What happened afterwards?
13. How regular do you have to discuss your news items with superior officers?

14. Who are these superior officers (positions)?

15. Comparing news reports on TV, between the rich and the poor, how would you rank their coverage? Would you say it focuses more on the rich than the poor?

16. If you heard a news report on riot today, which station are you likely to hear it before you believe it.