

consolidation and globalisation are viewed as predecessors of capitalism; that the bottom line of corporate media is profit, not agents of a democratic citizenry, but of a business and state elite. Other issues raised are that media industries have become media oligopolies; that critiques of globalisation and corporate power are marginalised; that media audiences are treated as consumers rather than citizens; and that the traditional notion of media having a public interest obligation has disappeared. Also, that democratically based media outlets have expanded; while marginalised provide an alternative to corporate media messages.

Another key factor associated with media consolidation is that media policy is increasingly made outside of national regulatory agencies, in global venues that too often remain unscrutinized and poorly understood. It was in reaction to this trend that McChesney (2001:9) retorted that in the era of globalisation, trade liberalisation, transnationalisation of mass media and global communication technology, the understanding hundred years ago that imperialism is a way of domination through ideology of power and war in the process that shows the dynamics of political relationships driven by power domination, mostly from more powerful colonisers to the less powerful colonised has changed. In its place, a strong imperialism fostered by media ownership styles, processes and channels in a systematic effort at globalising the world with sophisticated and most effective cultural and media imperialism has been utilised as political and economic apparatus of any powerful groups, particularly from developed countries to developing countries.

This paper makes an important critical thinking on media consolidation, its

effect and implications on society with regards to how Nigeria is faring in the globalised world. To enable us follow the arguments presented more logically, however, it is pertinent to make clarifications on the concept and its subsumed conceptual issues. Thereafter, we shall proceed with media consolidation, tracing its roots, effects and implications so as to enable us reach a conclusion and proffer some recommendations.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

The debates and arguments surrounding the effects and implications of media consolidation revolve around cultural imperialism and its influence on political power at the centre which the mass media feature prominently. This has made it compelling for us to make clarifications on the key concepts upon which the arguments are anchored – media consolidation which is the theme of this discourse, cultural imperialism and globalisation which are the key concerns raised by scholars with regard to conglomeration of the mass media.

**Media Consolidation:** Also known as concentration of media ownership, refers to the majority of media outlets being owned by a small number of conglomerates and corporations, which Bagdikian (2000:6) observes, that such corporate ownership of the media and mass advertising effects the news of a nation and influences its political and economic agendas. He views such a trend as detrimental, dangerous or otherwise, problematic since such ownership structure enables the owners to exercise an undue influence over content, thus making the citizens mere consumers and weakening their ability to participate in public debates. That is, media consolidation affects public interest.