

## MEDIA, DEMOCRACY, MILITARY AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *This study discussed Nigerian military, national security and the role of the mass media in democracy. The media are critical stakeholders in the Nigerian project. During colonial rule, the press led the fight for Nigeria independence. During military rule, the media led the fight to return the country to democracy. The study explained that the press has been the foremost instrument of fighting for equity, justice, unity and the development of Nigeria. Journalists should be empowered to tell the powerful stories that will aid our overall collective development; keep our leaders and institutions accountable; foster peace and unity; as well as inspire a sense of patriotic duty amongst the citizenry. To strengthen the media, which is the Fourth Estate of The Realm in democracy is a task that must be done. The mass media in Nigeria should be used to enhance and sustain the security of the nation. This means that mass media should never be used as divisive instrument among the people of Nigeria but rather should be used for the promotion and consolidation of national unity and integration. It is also recommended that security operatives should work with media practitioners as watchdogs of the society.*

**Keywords:** *Media, Military, National Security, Communication, Nigeria, Press*

### Introduction

The essential cornerstone of human life is provided by communication, which is the art, science, and technical means of exchanging and sending information, thoughts, ideas and attitudes from one person to another. A large group of people that live in close proximity to one another and share a common geographic area are referred to as society. This group is often subject to the same political authority and prevailing cultural standards. Society might be a form of communication whereby experiences are exchanged, described, changed and kept. According to Wilbur Schramm (1954) cited in Olayiwola (2013), communication often takes place in a specific area. It indicates a connection between relationships as well as between people. The internet is what holds society as a whole together. Since the beginning of time, people have understood how important communication is. Without it, citizens cannot participate in organised group processes that assist coordinate their actions in society and eventually lead to interdependence of lives. Communication is fundamental to all or any human processes. The essential foundation of any social, economic or political system is communication, which is defined as the exchange of ideas, information, and knowledge and, consequently, the transmission of meaning. Numerous studies contend that human society cannot function without communication since it is so vital to human interaction. Marx, Tonnies, Simmel, Mannheim, Tarde, and Le Bon, among other European scholars in the Sociology of Data and Mass Society (n.d. cited in Olayiwola, 2013), claimed that society cannot exist without

communication and that communication cannot exist without society. Citizenship, associations, organizations, societies and ultimately the nation-state are all based on and held together by the communications, perceptions, choices and expectations that people have for one another; by transactions; and by the willingness to validate a significant portion of the expectations by appropriate reciprocal behaviours. Any complete analysis of political organizations or social systems must at the very least take the role of communication into consideration because it is communication, or the capacity to transmit messages and respond to them, that gives organizations their identity. A group can think, determine, and act as a unit when they can communicate.

According to Daramola (2011), the simple fact that citizens sleep in groups is the foundation for the concept of society, and it is from this place that social relationships and interaction develop. Men interact constantly, respond to one another, and develop their behaviour in light of a continuous cycle of action and reaction. It is debatably correct that men live together and share similar perspectives, values, beliefs, and customs.

Therefore, a social relationship exists when individuals or groups have expectations about one another's behaviour that cause them to act in a certain way. Because of this approach, society is characterized as the "network of social relationships (Daramola, 2011).

## **Research Methods**

Answers to inquiries concerning experience, meaning, and perspective are typically provided using qualitative approaches from the perspective of the participant. Usually, it is impossible to count or measure these facts. In-depth interviews are used to understand a condition, experience or event from a personal perspective. Small-group discussions are used to investigate beliefs, attitudes, and concepts of normative behaviour. Semi-structured interviews are used to seek opinions on a focused topic or, with key informants, for background information or an institutional perspective (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey, 2016).

The study used a qualitative research approach. A small number of observations or the study of singular events is typically the subjects of qualitative research methods, which place a greater emphasis on interpretation and comprehension. In doing so, the qualitative research approach aims to focus more on ideas, concepts and models. Additionally, we can gather knowledge, gain understanding of a problem's approach or solution, and discover how to launch a new program or plan. The primary research sources from earlier studies that were pertinent to the investigation were used in this study's literature evaluation.

Literature review is a systematic approach of previous studies related to a research question, either in wide or narrow scope (Bearfield & Eller, 2008). There were some previous researches and studies about NPM and digital government that can be used to help answer the questions in this research. Also, this research used secondary data.

## **Literature Review**

In today's world, individuals rely heavily on the media to inform them about current events. Additionally, they serve as forums for interpersonal communication within a culture. These are the channels used to simultaneously disseminate data to a sizable, diverse, anonymous and dispersed audience. They essentially consist of billboards, posters, radio, television,

newspapers, magazines and books (print media) (outdoor media). In every civilisation, these media serve as the primary means of communication (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2013). The media is one reliable approach to stay current with our times. No known society has been able to function without communication, suggesting that it may be a crucial aspect of our life. It is the exchanging of meanings between individuals, nations, societies and cultures through the interchange of concepts, opinions, knowledge and experiences. The press is frequently referred to as the Fourth Estate in liberal ideology, making it the society's watchdog. This refers to the media's role as an organ of information gathering and dissemination, educational advancement, surveillance, social enlightenment, and mobilization (Tobechukwu, 2007).

A copyright law to protect writers and publishers, a basic statute intended to protect the common decency and morality against infraction by the system, and another basic statute to protect the state against treasonable and seditious utterances and writings are just a few examples of the basic statutory controls that will apply to almost any mass media system. In the majority of countries, this is a common practice. Due to factors or circumstances unique to the State or Government in question, the media in every nation is submissive to the political establishment. Therefore, a significant portion of public policy issues involving the media in many nations stem from either attempts to strike a balance between freedom and responsibility in media production or from rights conflicts where the government may be persuaded to assert its own superior right by restricting the rights of other social institutions in a particular nation (Gambo, 2008). The issues with press freedom and responsibility are a difficulty for the mass media in Nigeria, as they are in many other developing nations. Media professionals emphasize the right to dissent while downplaying their responsibility to support the precarious process of nation building. As a result, state restrictions or regulations which may result from a variety of reasons are the cause of the press's labours. They will be related to fear, politics, or the safety of the country. But regardless of where they came from, they are inescapably linked to the physical structure and consequently the political organization of the State. The press may be a social institution, and depending on the political, economic, and social structure of the society, it will have a different purpose and personality (Gambo, 2008).

### **Media and National Security**

Although the idea of national security is all-encompassing and permeates every aspect of a country's life, it appears that it has only been applied to ideas related to military might and territorial defence. Communication is crucial to each nation's security since it is the foundation of the human spirit. National security encompasses a variety of factors, including social, physical, economic, technological and social characteristics inside a country that assure the protection of its population; all of these factors perform best in a setting where there is strategic communication. Communication and national security are related, and because they are both symbolic, national security issues also affect communication (Dairo, 2017). The phrase "national security" has long been used to refer to extremely high levels of military security. This meaning has become more and more debatable, questioned, and contentious. National security is a problem that affects more than just the Army, Navy, and Air Force. It is necessary to take into consideration the country's entire capacity for war, as well as our mining, industries, workforce, research,

and all other activities that enter the regular civilian life (Ajao, 2015). Robert McNamara in his book *The Essence of Security* (1968 cited in Ajao, 2015) asserted that security equates to advancement in a culture that is modernizing. Even if it will, security is not a military unit. Although it will, security is not a military activity. Without development there is frequently no security because security equals development.

Every concern about national security has a purpose, and certain protests and mass strikes let the administration know how desperate and distressed the people are. In a similar line, Boko Haram's terrorist acts, kidnappings, and other criminal activities express underlying issues including political agendas, unemployment, and fear among the victims.

All of this is frequently interpreted on social media and highlighted in various ways by the press. There are not many studies that explore the relationship between national security and communication because so many focus on armament and territorial dominance as peace and defence measures, despite the consequences these aspects have for national discourse and national survival.

Each nation faces a threat to its security from all forms of communication that take place within its social institutions, such as the family, the church, the schools, and the media. Conflict between religious groups can lead to violence that spreads throughout a rural area and even outside its borders. Nigeria has recently experienced recession, which has affected its image in local and international reporting as well as social media postings and memes. National security challenges within a country also affect the national discourse within the country. It is crucial to understand that national security and communication are components of the national ecology that can either be detrimental or useful when employed in unification (Dairo, 2017).

Human communication is fueled by environmental problems. The current hot topics in the media and consequently, the interpersonal relationships inside a country at a given time can be influenced by national security. The Nigerian economy entered a recession in 2016, which resulted in currency devaluation, high rates of inflation, low oil prices globally, and high exchange rates within the country. The type of information being represented in the local and international media may be significantly influenced by national security. Even issues with national security outside of a country can affect knowledge within that country; terrorist attacks on other countries affect how they interact with immigrants and tourists; suddenly, security measures are increased, border interactions are more formal and professional, and even the relationship between tourists and locals is guided. Conflicts between ethnic groups and religions and kidnapping are two examples of situations that have an impact on how people interact with one another both inside and outside of a country. Security in educational institutions has grown crucial due to the frequent kidnapping of children in schools, like as the 2014 abduction of nearly 200 female students from a faculty in Chibok. This has also had an impact on the country's tourism potential because kidnapping is a concern that discourages international visitors from going and mingling with people directly for fear of disclosing personal information and leading to abduction (Dairo, 2017).

In terms of security and national cohesiveness, the media is crucial. Apart from the laws and military force frequently used by the government to address national security, communication is also crucial since information can be a tool that will be used to safeguard the state, accomplish security, or undermine it. The media serves as a liaison between a country's government and its citizens. As a result, the media transmits and interprets a

country's policy. It is not surprising that press freedom is stressed in democracies in order to protect the independence of the media. As stated in Section 22 of the amended 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the media is entrusted with the facility of monitoring governance and upholding fundamental objectives of state policy. During a democratic setting, public support is vital within the formulation and implementation of national policies. As a watchdog, the media plays a crucial role in investigating, alerting and reporting individuals, activities and practices which will endanger the security of the state (Dairo, 2017).

Without a secure environment, there can be neither sustainable, poverty reducing economic and social development nor political development. As a result, the press need to reveal all the aspects of security mentioned in their reportage. In the same vein, Olayiwola (2013) states that there are other key issues relating to sound security coverage that the media need to be aware of. They include the following:

- a) Security as a public good;
- b) Comprehensive approach to security sector transformation;
- c) Coherent external interventions;
- d) Commitment of national leadership to a reform process;
- e) Local ownership and capacity;
- f) Confidence building measures; and
- g) Importance of a long-term perspective, to mention just a few.

Olayiwola (2013) states that security sector and security community are also to be reported. The totality of the actors that affect the security of the state and its population constitutes the “security community”.

Nigeria's national security entails the defence of its resources, borders, sovereignty, and legitimate institutions. To ensure the nation's just and equitable living circumstances is the goal of national security (Ali, 2013). Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a former president of Nigeria, stated in March 2001 that the concept of national security shall be the aggregation of the security interests of the individuals, communities, ethnic groups, political entities, and institutions which inhabit the territory of our great country, Nigeria. He made this statement in recognition of the need for closer co-operation and collaboration among the various security agencies and all other components that make up the Nigerian society. The President went on to list the main goals of national security, which included strengthening the Federal Republic of Nigeria, advancing its interests and goals, containing instability, controlling crime, doing away with corruption, fostering real development progress and growth, and enhancing the welfare and wellbeing of every citizen (Wali, 2003, cited in Ali, 2013).

The type and tone of information supplied to the electorate is greatly influenced by journalists. The journalists act as gatekeepers, shaping public perception of current political events and personalities through their reporting and analysis. Indeed, they direct public knowledge of political issues as well as the national political agenda. The importance of the mass media in achieving societal goals—whether they pertain to social, health, infrastructure, political, educational, or security development—has been emphasized. The mass media are among the most significant institutions for socialization and are actually the main sector of the cultural economy that is in charge of disseminating ideas in Nigerian society Pate (2011 cited in Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013).

Foreign media also plays a role in the national security of a nation, what is emphasised and highlighted can influence the perception of the country as a safe and peaceful nation or otherwise. The only way such reports can be countered is if national policies are continuously geared towards portraying the nation in a good light and rather than focusing on all its negatives, local media gives balanced reporting on both good and bad news (Dairo, 2017). Other institutions of socialisation such as the church, family, educational institutions and political establishments basically play reinforcement roles to the mass media by performing their separate functions in the society. This shows that the mass media impact on the society and determine dominant perceptions, values and attitude.

The surveillance and correlation functions of the media are at the core of mobilisation against acts of insecurity. The surveillance role says the media provide information to the society which is used in opinion moulding and attitude adoption. The correlation role says the media relate news and various happenings in the society to the individuals' life and environment. This is done through interpretation and explanation of the implications of happenings on the life and environment of the masses, including implications of acts that breed insecurity on the society. It is expected that through effective information, the society would gradually turn against such acts.

## **Democracy**

For greater part of the twentieth century, media in Nigeria was involved in promoting political awareness, encouraging civic engagement, sensitising citizens to national issues, and shaping public opinions on a variety of political issues. The meaning of the word democracy is best captured in the thoughts of Idowu (2008 cited in Odeyemi, 2010) thus: In the world of today, democracy has become a popular concept in every contemporary discourse. It is now a word that resonates in people's minds and springs from their lips as they struggle for freedom and for a better way of life. In its Greek understanding, the term democracy originally referred to the right of the citizens of the Greek City states to participate directly in the act of governance. The word 'democracy' is known to have been coined from two Greek words: demos (the people) and kratos (rule) which simply mean people's rule. It is an institution of governance which envisages a popular government as practiced in ancient Greece.

However, the circumstances in a modern State make direct participation of all the people in the government of the state impossible, the concept of democracy still put emphasis on the rule of the people, in that sovereign power is exercised by the people but now indirectly through a system of representation. The people choose their representatives who then govern on their behalf. In a democracy, power resides in the people and belongs to the people. In a democracy, the people own the government, but government does not own the people.

Diamond (2008 cited in Odeyemi, 2010) offered a similar meaning to the concept of democracy, 'at a minimum, democracy is a system of government in which all (or virtually all) adult citizens can choose their leaders and replace their leaders in regular, free, fair, and competitive (multiparty) elections.' Of the different arms that make up any modern day society, one organ whose importance can never be over emphasized is the mass media. The Mass media have been described as the fourth estate of the realm, that is, after the executive, legislative and judiciary arms of government in any democratic society. The

mass media are very important in nation building. Governments can hardly survive without effective use of the mass media. This is apparently why the third President of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson, while underscoring the importance of the press in the society in one of his speeches stated: “.... were it left for me to choose whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I shall not hesitate a moment to choose the latter” (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2013). Similarly, President De-Gaulle of France once asked President John F. Kennedy of United States of America, “How can you control your country if you do not control television?” These assertions further underscore the pertinence of the mass media in any society. Governance in itself is communication based. The mass media facilitate the two-way communication process essential in bridging the gap between government and the governed, including the very essential role of ensuring that the basic values and tenets that keep a society together are promoted among the populace (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2013).

In the world today, a form of government that continues to enjoy wide spread support and acceptance is democratic system of government. The Nigerian mass media appeared to have found renewed keenness because of its newly found experience of democracy in 1999 (Owen-Ibie, 1999 cited in Olaiya, Apeloko, & Ayeni, 2013). There is information explosion which leads to increase in the value of the mass media of communication around the world.

Over the past decades, the relationship between the media and governments in Nigeria has been a highly controversial, drawing attention from a wide range of communication scholars, social scientists, and independent research institutions. While perspectives and findings differ on the role of the press in the country as well as its relationship with governments, there is a consensus that the concept of governance will not be complete without effective and uncontrolled participation of news sources in disseminating national and political issues. Likewise, democratisation in contemporary Nigeria appears unattainable if Nigeria’s stakeholders in urban and rural communities are not fully and actively engaged in the act of governing. The citizens of Nigeria, in particular, must be made to appreciate the importance of participating in the control political coverage, the independence of news sources, national security, the political process and challenging unpopular government decisions and actions. The press should play the crucial function of advocating for citizens’ understanding of government activities, public policies, and national security.

The media all over the globe is regarded as a political instrument and in advanced societies, the mass media are actually an integral part of political life, serving for most people as their major and only link with the government and providing for them the information which they require to make political judgment on the basis of their political attitudes. In every society, the mass media plays important roles in the society or social system. That is why no government can do without the mass media. In addition to providing information about the political process, the mass media can confer status and legitimacy on political leaders and issues. This is known as status conferral function of the mass media. The mass media can also set the political agenda for the society by deciding what political topics the people should talk about. The agenda setting function of the mass media is an important aspect of the institutional linkage between the mass media and politics (Umechukwu, 2001 cited in Tobechukwu, 2007).

It is obvious from the stated argument that the mass media have a lot of influence on politics through the presentation of politically crucial information to vast heterogeneous, transitory and anonymous audiences. Decisions made by media professionals determine what information becomes available to the media audiences and what remains available. By putting stories into perspective and interpreting them, media personnel assign meaning to information and indicate the values by which it ought to be judged. The media also have the power to control much of the raw material needed by political elites and the general public by thinking about the political horizon and planning political action. At times, media professionals can generate political action directly through their own investigations or indirectly through their capacity to stimulate pseudo-events. By creating and sustaining political values, the press are also important tools for maintenance of political stability and social equilibrium.

Nigerians have for long aspired for democracy and they have been repeatedly frustrated. For nearly 30 years out of Nigeria's 61 years of independence from colonial rule, the frustration of Nigerians with shattered democratic aspirations were caused by authoritarian military regimes, which engineered transition to civil rule programmes to gain legitimacy but then systematically subverted this to continue to hold on to power by military fiat (Jega, 2011). The morning of Saturday May 29, 1999 saw Nigeria return to another experiment at democratic norms and institutions with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo sworn in as President and Commander-in-Chief of the nation's armed forces. Ever since, the polity has been filled with different policies, strategies and programmes aimed at consolidating the process and the values of democracy into the system and laying a solid foundation for its sustainability.

In modern day government especially in democratic polity of Nigeria there exist three arms of government namely the executive, the judiciary and the legislature with the media being the fourth estate of the realm. Media as an institution checkmates the excesses of the other three arms. The press remains the fourth estate of the watchdog and the conscience of the nation. It is the organ that informs the public about the activities of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The media also monitor, report the activities of the people and championing the cause of the people.

### **Military in Democracy**

Political intimidation is a weapon of warfare deployed by the military to psyche the enemy. It is a psychological approach to warfare. This has been extrapolated into the democratic milieu since 1999. The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) has been used as a mechanism to intimidate political opponents to toe the same part with the executive. Impeachment had been used as an instrument of intimidation. This had been successfully employed in the impeachments in Oyo, Plateau and Anambra States respectively (Frank & Ukpere, 2012). Journalists suffered arbitrary arrest and detention in the hand of the military during military rule and the trend continues since the return of democratic dispensation in 1999. The military as an institution is not disposed to another centre of order or dissention. It has no pedigree to tolerate 'opposition' or dissention of view on its directives. This has been imprinted in the psyche of Nigerians and practiced in the democratic arena. This was manifested during the infamous moves towards the third-term of governance. Any person perceived as tumbling block was intimidated with the Economic and Financial Crime



Commission (EFCC), administrative panel report and gazette and the declaration of the office of the vice President vacant, which processes were all declared as constituting 'functus officio' (procedural irregularity) by the courts. The conduct of democratic elections in Nigeria bore a mark of warfare and events in a garrison state. During elections military men and policemen are made battle ready. They are seen everywhere, their sights engendered fear in the civil populace. International borders are always subjected to unnecessary closure. Considerable contradictions marked the preparation and execution of the elections as some candidates' names were not included in the ballot papers. This was a further attempt to stifle democracy. It matters little whether an ex-military officer is the President or not. The values were learned by all from the military and may continue to be replicated in the democratic arena (Frank & Ukpere, 2012).

The military governance is a one party phenomenon where dissent is an anathema. A dissenter is promptly detained. 'Miniere Amakiri' a chief correspondent of a Nigerian Newspaper (Nigerian Observer) had his head shaved just because he wrote a piece that was unpleasant to the former Governor of Rivers State 'Alfred Di-ete Spiff', in Port Harcourt. In 1978, the military proscribed the Newbreed Magazine and many journalists suffered humiliation. This dialectics were replicated in 2007 in a democracy thus; in May 14, 2006 during the debate for the tenure elongation (Obasanjo wanted the parliament to approve a 3rd term for him). African Independent Television (AIT) aired the debate live, thereby scaring away those who would have debated in favour of the elongation. The State Security Service (SSS) assaulted AIT reporters and stopped and destroyed the master tape of a documentary entitled 'a tenure elongation'. In April 2007 during the election acclaimed to have been widely flawed, the State Security Service (SSS—the Secret Police) again invaded the studio of the station during the airing of 'a documentary on Nigerian political development'. In post-Obasanjo era, Yar'Adua had re-enacted same with Channels Television and ThisDay Newspaper' respectively even with the claim of due process and the Rule of Law' as the mantra of his regime. This was an indication that beyond 2007, the military values pervaded the polity. The dialectics of the garrison state in a democratic setting is explicable (Frank & Ukpere, 2012).

### **Establishment of Press**

Section 39 (1) and (2) of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 dwells on the right to freedom of expression and of the press. Section 1 states Inter-alia: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference". Section (2) states without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium of dissemination of ideas, information and opinions.

However, Section 45 deals with restriction on the derogation from fundamental rights. Sub-section 1 of section 45 highlights therefore among others that nothing in Section 39 (Right to freedom of expression and of the Press) of the Constitution shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society:

- a) In the interest of decency, public safety, public order, public morality or public health;
- b) For the purpose of protecting their rights and freedom of other persons.

Since the major duties of the Press, therefore are to inform, educate, and to entertain, it is suggestive that the torts of slander and libel limit the Press while journalists are expected

to perform their duties within the ambit of constitutional provisions and laid down rules and regulations.

### **Roles of Mass Media**

It should be mentioned that the most essential component of democratic practice is conveying ideas in order to win the support of the people in order to fully understand the relationship between the mass media and democracy. Due to the nature of democracy, journalists have faced significant difficulties. Politicians must compete in order to control the public opinion market in a democracy. The requirement to be fair and impartial in the editorial management of news from different organizations as well as the space provided for such news materials present problems to the fourth estate of the realm. This is even more during election when candidates of different political parties canvas for peoples votes. Leman (2015) argues that a major feature of any democracy is the electoral process/elections. It is the period in which the voters exercise their sovereignty through the power to vote. Election is therefore a tool for regeneration, rejuvenation and reinvigoration of the entire democratic system. It is thus important for the dynamic interaction within the political system. The role of the journalist within the system, especially against the background of his professional responsibility, cannot be overemphasised. Apart from mediating between the contestants to political offices through fair reporting and space allocation, the journalist also influences the available choices of candidates to the voters. In essence, the journalist is highly influential in the process of the people deciding on whom to vote for in the election.

It is in appreciation of the foregoing that there has been a universal agreement that the journalist must be properly guided especially in the reportage of elections. Elections, it should be noted, are not ordinary events. Elections are normally conducted within the framework of an Electoral Law. The election law provides the foundation for other activities, including news reports, involving the electoral process. Several regulatory and professional bodies, taking a cue from the Electoral law, always introduce guidelines to guide many activities including media reportage of the election and the electoral process (Leman, 2015). Leman stated that the Nigeria Union of Journalists and other organisations such as the Nigerian Press Organization, the National Broadcasting Commission, and the Guild of Editors have always agreed on strict guidelines for journalists covering the election. This is not peculiar to Nigeria. Indeed, it is a universal practice in all democratic countries.

Guidelines on election for the mass media underscore the universal appreciation of the important role of the journalist as news managers through whose eyes the average reader or listener sees events. The point of departure of most election guidelines is the acknowledgement of the professional skill and competence of the journalist. The Guides, however, specify the legal framework under which the reportage of election news will take place. In addition, given the highly sensitive nature of elections and its importance especially in a multi-party democracy and multi-ethnic polity such as Nigeria, the election Guide seeks to provide very detailed and specific direction to journalists and media practitioners who have a responsibility to report on the election. Press coverage and reportage of security sector transformation must be set within this broader international picture. Since conflict and insecurity themselves have been regionalized and globalised,

regional and global collective security mechanisms being strengthened to counteract them should be covered and reported as well. The Nigeria press rightly turned attention to the education of the citizenry as well as informing them about the government activities immediately after independence. The misdeed, excesses and inadequacies of the Nigerian political elites were adequately x-rayed with the result that Nigerians witnessed true democracy. Unfortunately, this patriotic posture of the media was misinterpreted as rabid opposition by the Nigerian political elites. The Nigeria Press operates within the prevailing Nigerian society which is largely illiterate and gullible. So each time Nigerian political elite runs foul of normal norms, good behaviour, good reputation and character, and if the Nigerian press scoop on same, s/he plays the ethnic card. Hence such phrases like Lagos/Ibadan axis press; Lagos Press, Ngbati Press and South West press crept into the political elite's consciousness. Never has it been in the character of Nigerian political elites to take criticism in good faith (Olayiwola, 2013).

Nigeria is an environment where journalists work without secure tenure of office, adequate remuneration and conducive atmosphere dominated by half baked democrats among others; and where media practitioners are kidnapped, assaulted, insulted and/or even killed. The political division in its greed has used the mass media as tool for egotistic and sectional loyalties. As a result, media reports have significantly heightened anxiety and created suspicion among the citizens. There are also, issues of ownership and control of the mass media, "he who pays the piper, dictates the tune", freedom of the press or lack of it, ethnicity, religion, economic factors, the political system, social factors, infrastructures, transportation, circulation, accommodation, medication, remuneration, working tools, security and among others. Between 1985 and 1999, the Nigerian press more than any other institutions in Nigeria put everything they had on the line for the survival of this country and enthronement of democracy. But for the Nigerian Press, Babangida would not have stepped aside in 1993 as the politicians including those in the winning party compromised their victory and reputation for ministerial appointments and other perquisites/ pecks of offices. The Nigerian media sustained June 12, 1993 election issue, when Chief Olawale Abiola won the Presidential Elections, but the military dictator, Ibrahim Babangida annulled the election. The media did this more than any other body or organisation.

The history of the Nigerian press is one of active involvement in the political process. During the colonial period, the press served as a medium of sustained public debate and political protest, an uncompromising advocate of administrative and political reforms, and a seething critic of the excesses of the colonial order. By its political activities, the press not only stimulated the emergence of nationalist movements but also played a prominent role in the constitutional development of modern Nigeria. In fact, the press was among the major weapons used by the nationalist leadership to gain and consolidate political power and governmental control Bamiduro (1985 cited in Olayiwola, 2013). Olayiwola (2013) states that the press served, throughout the life-span of the First Republic, as an important and indispensable medium of political communication between and among the various political parties and governments. In this respect, the press reflected the diversity of thoughts and feelings as well as created and mirrored public opinion on many fundamental political issues of the time. Olayiwola (2013) added that:

Nigeria's vibrant media played an influential role in the struggles over democratization and a reformed polity in these years. Defying censorship laws, closure of media houses, detention and abduction of journalists and the mysterious disappearance of key opposition

figures, a section of the media, drawing on a protest motif dating back to the colonial days, carries the struggle against the monumentally corrupt military class to a new pitch.

## **Theoretical Review**

### *Social Responsibility of the Press*

1. One aspect of the media's social responsibility is to protect individual rights by acting as a watchdog against the government.
2. Retaining its independence from outside pressure by remaining self-sufficient.
3. Assisting the political system with information, dialogue, and debate on current events.
4. Educating the populace to empower it with the capacity for self-government.
5. The economic system is primarily served by advertising, which connects buyers and sellers of goods and services.
6. Providing entertainment.

These components show an expansion of Harold Lasswell's functional model from 1948. According to Lasswell, the press's roles in any society or nation include environmental monitoring, societal response to the environment analysis, and the dissemination of cultural legacy. One of the media's societal obligations is to adhere to the impartiality guideline and use some maturity when reporting the news. Let the media's priorities correspond to the realities of the society it covers. This leads to the media professionals' on going complaints about the military's failure to provide information to the press. This is a result of people not knowing how the military interacts with society. The limitations of the military as an institution must be openly acknowledged by the media in order to obtain the full picture of media-military relations. No military can address all the flaws in society. Due to the nature of their work, the military is unable to provide the media with information based on rumours. Additionally, until the proper conclusion of the investigative procedures, the security services are not in a position to provide specific information once an offense has been committed and recognized. The military cannot unilaterally notify the media until all the complexities of the case are resolved in the interest of justice and fairness, which may in some situations, involve the judiciary, prisons, or other government authorities. Therefore, news reporting requires our mass media workers to practice patience as well as caution. They should discuss, and write maturely in order to avoid damaging the image of the Police which by its nature represents both the government and the country in the public eyes. The media must develop new attitudes towards objectivity and by so doing they will be assisting in the effort of the national development as well as orderly social change, to do this requires editorial restraint and subject balance. The history of the relationship between the media and the governments is one of sporadic anomalies, and the growing tendency for governments to take crucial decisions which underpin the structure of information industries stem from these anomalies. As Napoleon cited in Gambo (2008) said that "three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets."

## **Conclusion**

The media, military and the government must co-operate to ensure peaceful and progressive society. The military must receive the favourable attention of the media. The

power of the written or spoken word has significance influence on the society. The power of the media as agents of national mobilisation is obvious in the history of revolutions all over the world. At this stage of Nigeria development, it is necessary for the Nigerian Military to undergo a re-structuring exercise that would result in a greater co-operation and popular support.

### **Recommendations**

1. The mass media in Nigeria should be used to enhance and sustain the security of the nation. This means that mass media should never be used as divisive instrument among the people of Nigeria but rather should be used for the promotion and consolidation of national unity and integration.
2. The mass media should continue to function as a watchdog of the society and as a fight dog by exposing political evils and dishonesty in government and political circles. However, Nigeria as a developing nation needs a press more attuned to developmental reporting than with conflicts and crises; and that the mass media should exercised caution in the reportage of politically-motivated conflicts.
3. Regular workshops on conflict reporting, journalism ethics, mass media in a multi-cultural society, reporting terrorism, professionalism in journalism, among other are essential to continually keep media newsmen abreast with trends in mass media use in combating insecurity in Nigeria. This would ensure that the mass media are not used to worsen the problem of insecurity due to lack of knowledge on how to handle this specialised journalism area. It is recommended that the military and other security operatives should work with media practitioners as watchdogs of the society.

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