

Democracy, Globalization and the News Media in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Democracy became a global concept after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War. Since then, this global phenomenon called democracy became the dominant and most preferred system of government and has been embraced in its entirety though in some cases modified based on the dominant/peculiar cultural and political structure of the people till this present day; except of course for a very few and negligible number of countries that have vehemently refused to embrace it as the best means of leading a people. This widespread acceptance has been predicated on two key elements- which is; globalization and the media. Though the concept of globalization is shrouded in strong arguments between a school of thought known as the skeptics and the other school of the argument known as the globalizers, McLuhan's Global Village postulation unraveled this controversy by a simple analogy which links the media as the vehicle with which the concept was made popular and acceptable to the embrace of a large followership. In a symbiotic reward, the media was able to perform its function of news dissemination in democracy, due to advanced information technology occasioned by the consequences of globalization. Despite this advantage, the Nigeria democratic experience is one that has not been able to draw from the advantages herein. The country's democracy is been plagued by different challenges that has affected its emergence since the country attained independence in 1960. However recent occurrence in the just concluded 2015 general elections portend a ray of hope for the growth of democracy in the country after which it can then shift its efforts to the consolidation of its democracy.

Introduction

Throughout the globe, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War, democracy became the dominant and

most preferred system of government and has been embraced in its entirety though in some cases modified based on the dominant/peculiar cultural and political structure of the people till the present day; except of course for a very few and negligible number of countries that have vehemently refused to embrace the concept as the best means of leading a people. Countries like Russia and China even after the cold war have refused to come to grips with the concept of democracy. Apart from this two countries, in Europe and others in Asia have fully embraced democracy.

Democracy as practiced in contemporary times is predicated on the principles of liberty, equality and the rule of law. Its success bask mainly in the doctrine of freedom in whatever form either freedom of expression, discussion of issues whether political or otherwise with all without fear of molestation or incarceration. According to Maciver (1961:5) in Hillman and Bishop and Heden cited in Egbon (2001:9), a society is not free if, law-abiding citizens live in fear of being denied the right to work or deprived of life liberty and pursuit of happiness in a democracy; those who oppose the policies of the government loose no civil rights and those who support its policies acquire them by no civil rights either. In a democracy, minority opinions remain untrampled as the majority opinion.

This goes to say that, the members of society exercise full rights to differ on issues under such rule in line with the existing global charter on human rights enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 1 and 19) which declares that; In line with the tenets of this declaration, a true democracy is that which has in its mainframe the freedom of political association, with right to differ on issues of national importance and the settlement of grievances by resulting to civilized systems either through counting of votes and accepting election results or seeking redress through legal jurisdiction, and all parties concerned yielding themselves to the tenets of the constitution to resolve disputes without resulting to force. This perhaps explains why Sawant (2000) describes it as; a government by debate and discussion of the people and not a rule by arbitrary will and whim or dictate of an individual or a few individuals.

Likewise Akande (2000) describes democracy as, a political process that allows the plurality of political parties to ensure popular participation in political decision making. The definition of Akande and Sawant recognise one of the manifest components of democracy

which is, freedom of expression of the people in debates and discussions. Suffice to say that, there are three other essential requisites of democracy which are; a well-informed citizenry; participation of the citizens in the day to day governance of the society; and accountability to the citizens by those who exercise power on their behalf (Onabajo, 2004:17). The recognition accorded the people in the description of democracy by Akande and Sawant and several other scholars as will be seen later in this discussion does not just pencil down to the fact that elected leaders exercise power on behalf of the people as Onabajo suggest, but also because it is the people that participate in the process of election that usher this leaders to power.

This explains why election forms an important component in a democratic process. One of the basic features of democracy is the periodic conduct of elections (Ayobolu 2003:11). Election is viewed in several societies as, the most important and acceptable way of choosing people to the positions of leadership especially where there are fewer leadership positions with a larger number of people vying for such positions. It provides a positive platform on how leaders should be chosen in a democracy. Democracy and election is a time tested concept that has gained popularity and spread to other countries and almost all the continents of the world as a result of the speed at which information travels due to an unprecedented advancement in information technology (IT) - a phenomenon which today is known as globalization.

Globalization has been the elixir behind the global incursion and expansion of democracy into new countries and climes, as well as its spread into supranational polities such as the European Union, the United Nations philosophical thrusts and other Pro-Freedom Advocates. It confronts head on democracy's constantly changing nature; its diversity of institutions and practices; its repeated need to respond to exogenous challenges and, most importantly, its perpetually unsatisfactory quest to make 'real-existing democracy' conform better to 'potentially ideal democracy' (Kriesi et 'al 2013).

All though a lot of scholars still see globalization as a myth, its effects steers mankind glaringly in the eye. It drives institutions and shape their formation and transformation. Globalization describes the link between global activities. The issues of globalization are usually discussed around four different topics which Watkins (2009:18) terms; four distinct meanings of the term. The first according to Watkins

(2009) is the neo-liberal moment; that commonplace economic globalization, full of itself and its right-wing rhetoric, which has brought economic crisis the world is now in and is, as a result, in manifest disrepute (Watkins, 2009:18). The second is Marshall McLuhan's global village phenomenon which the world has become in the last two decades. It's the wired and wireless world of Information Technology (IT) that McLuhan foresaw with remarkable prescience. The third; the death pangs of the Eurocentric world: the rise of China and India and the desperate acts of the neo-cons and the fourth; the deep meaning of globalization (Watkins, 2009) Restriction of the format for this paper will not permit going into nitty gritty of this points. It's however worthy of mention that, all discussions of this phenomenon fall under the points explained above.

No matter the colorations emanating from scholarly perspectives, globalisation explains world trends in terms of their interconnectedness, it explains the shrinking spaces into a single appreciable geographic common place bound by a set of rules by which participants commonly relate. Kaarbo and Lee (2005) says; globalization is a set of processes, rather than an end situation representing unrelenting erosion of all barriers to free trade, increasing worldwide economic integration.

On the political landscape globalization has largely made possible advances in the entire management of democratic processes, particularly the Internet. As the world grows more connected, people in all nations achieve a far greater level of interdependence in activities such as trade, communications, information dissemination, travel and political policy. Ekpo, (2015:80) contends that, globalization has changed the world in many ways we never thought of many years ago. The intrusive impact of technology and various media forms had severe impact on lifestyle and has made the media landscape an important institution in the dissemination of news and by extension, for the proper functioning of democracy.

Through advanced information technology, the way the media disseminates information has taken a rocket form thereby granting it a bullet intensity and precision. In present day democracy, globalization has enhanced news broadcast either through, social media platforms, smart form messages or through customized message centers like Whazzup, BBL and other interactive platforms. Through bloggers news portals, social media users are constantly bombard with breaking

or interactive news reports. The just concluded general election in Nigeria is a typical example of the capacity at which news can travel among users of the social media who are equally the electorates. Statistically it is quantified, as at January, 2014, by a cyber-outfit, Social Media Week Lagos, that, the number of Nigerian active Face book users were 11.2 million, and active net users were 55.9 million (SMWL Report, 2014). The multiplier effects of this was tripled as at the election period to... which explains the fear envisaged by some analyst during the election.

Supporting the above assertion Ebulefu, (2015) relay that, as the country waited in bated breath for the outcome of the March 28, 2015 presidential election, part of the causes for apprehension and anxious moments that drove many crazy came liberally from the activities of Nigerian bloggers and Social Media users. Though some analysts see the proliferation of the social media patronage as a treat to news reportage, this trend has rather than serve as treats to the existing traditional media, strengthened its mass mediation capacity. Today, newspaper distributions both online and hard copy have a spread that is hundred (100) times better than its initial value. Thus strengthening the fundamental roles of the traditional news sources in democracy.

The achievements recorded through globalisation has helped reinforce the view that the news media is a very important institution in the proper functioning of democracy. Lang and Lang (1959:103-112) submit that in democracy especially during elections, “the media force attention to certain issues. They build up images of political figures; they are constantly presenting objects, suggesting what individuals shall think about, know about, having feeling about.” What this simply reveals is that, in a democracy particularly during elections media coverage helps project the various political activities lined up by the regulatory electoral agency including candidates vying for elective positions, so as to keep the electorates informed about the candidates; including the background history on them.

Invariably, the more the candidates are exposed to the rules of the processes and to people vying for elective positions, the more informed they will be able to make wise choices. This is because, when the people are well informed about the candidates and other aspects of the rules in an election period, they are very likely to behave in manners that will see to the smooth outcome of the elections. To this Burns (1977:45) comment that, the success or failure of any electoral process

is largely dependent on the role of the mass media. This explains why societies attach so much importance to the media “Burns (1977).

Thus in a democracy the media is required to raise the bar as it is expected to act in its capacity as agent of socialization. The media does this through certain functions that Norman (2010:322) captions; civic education and democratic animation. According Norman, civic education is imperative in any society. Through civic education, the media specifically can assume a continuous role in which citizens are enabled to understand, appreciate and contribute to the effective workings of various political systems. As relayed by Norman, the learning process does not only concern general ideas about political systems but also, the best practices available. Norman concludes that, with the provision of a civic education, “the greater the likelihood that, citizens will use it to make very relevant choices within their situations.”

In the final analysis, Norman, assert that, “democratic animation is an important part of the performance to the coverage of elections by the media. It refers to social engineering of the citizens through civic journalism. According to this scholar, some impact that democratic animation has on the citizens is that;

- i. It facilitates meaningful involvement and participation of the citizens in political life particularly in elections.
- ii. It inculcates a sense of civic duty, civic pride, civic responsibility and accountability in the citizens who are equally the electorates.
- iii. It enables the electorates to exert pressure on their leaders to account for their actions and decisions.
- iv. It creates self-confidence building aimed at citizens so as to actively demand and question policy decisions hence providing checks and balances for good governance.
- v. The Informed electorates are enabled to appreciate the performance and failures of those they periodically elect and thus exercise a ‘performance voting’ as opposed to ‘mobbing voting’ which seems to be more popular in most African countries.

In addition Baker (2002:132-3) notes that, “democracy requires a free (media); a (media) to which it gives relatively specific assignment. A

free and independent (media) can make important structural contributions that are as great as or greater than any constitutional and administrative devices". What Baker probably suggest here is that; in as much as democratic rule rely on the constitution, the role of the media is equally if not even more desirous and may even play stronger parts, as it is the media that has the central-petal force that propels the processes in a democracy (Baker, 2002:133).

The media provides and equate background information about candidates to the audience. The media equally educates the people on their roles to ensure free and fair elections and at the same time ensure compliance to the rules by which the various stake holders in the elections management process like, electoral umpires, monitoring teams, and other relevant institutions including the media outfits themselves are guided.

Conceptual Clarification and theoretical Framework

The definition of democracy is one that has always been shrouded in controversies amongst scholars over the years. While some scholars see democracy as a system of government where decisions are made based solely on consultations and representation; others see democracy as a concept, as a political system under which all or the most significant group in a population participate in a political process and have access to effective representation in the process of making governmental decisions which entails the allocation of resources. Supporting this views, Kabongo (1986:35) assert that, democracy transcends the mere rituals of periodic election to one that ensures the coexistence of plurality of opinions guaranteed by freedom of expression under the rule of the majority. This view of Kabongo (1986) which sees democracy as stated above may be narrow and short sighted as it tends to negate the essential elements or ingredients of the concept of democracy which is, the, 'all-inclusiveness' of individuals or members of society that characterize the concept as defined by other scholars. Likewise, Okpeh (2002:56) says: Democracy is all about the popular majority participating in the decision making process on who leads and what policies are to be adopted in the governance of society. Okpeh's consideration of democracy as a prerogative of the majority falls short of the required ingredients that support the concept.

The phrase 'popular majority' as used in Okpeh's definition out rightly defeats the concept of democracy which is an all-inclusive system of governance and, undermines the heterogeneous nature of members of

society who form the active elements and are the focus of what democracy accomplishes. This heterogeneous people are, the cardinal players on which the concept of democracy draw its strength of meaning. More so the recognition of the diverse nature of the people becomes even rife in societies made up of a multi-ethnic and diverse cultural and ideological groups like in Nigeria where, ethnocentric and lopsided views may see members of society belonging to divergent groups and not necessarily to a so called majority. Perhaps the definition of Sawant (2000), which describes democracy as; government by debate and discussion of the people and not a rule by arbitrary will and whim or dictate of an individual or a few individuals to some extent captures in part the essence of democracy.

It is strongly arguable that, democracy is not just a rule by a popular majority. Supporting this assertion, Maciver (1961:5) in Hillman and Bishop and Heden cited in Egbon (2001:9) insist that; democracy cannot be the rule of the majority or the rule of the masses rather; a way of governing whether by majority or otherwise; primarily for determining who shall govern, and broadly to what end. Egbon (2001: 9) on this strength argues that the Greeks practice of democratic rule occurred at a period in history when there was neither representation nor party systems in the governance of society; thus the concept lacks the structure of ascribing such cliché ‘popular majority’ often ascribed in the definition of democracy by some scholars.

As a result, any attempt in defining democracy must see it as a system of government where all citizens of a country have equal rights to represent and be represented. Such definition must see democracy as an all-inclusive government where policies are determined by public opinion, and sometimes by representation. It is only the definition that considers these elements that may have presented democracy in its modern form compared to the Grecian ancient notion and style of democracy where representation is absent. Cardinal to the concept of the present form of democracy is that, all members have equal right to participate in the political decision of the society. This consideration perhaps underscores the wide acceptance of Abraham Lincoln’s definition between (1809 and 1865) which sees democracy as, government of the people for the people and by the people (Lincoln, 1863) in Epstein (2011:819).

As simple as Lincoln’s definition may seem, it speaks volumes-it explains in clear terms, the involvement of the people in making a

choice on who should govern them, among several contestants vying for an elective position. It is thus worthy of note that, election form an integral part of a democratic process. It is worthy to mention that, democracy, elections and the people who are the recipients of its dividends may not have been a successful venture without the support of very key institutional elements like globalization and the media.

The concept of Globalization is one phenomenon that has been keenly argued by scholars of different discipline. The arguments involved in its structure, features and functionality has constantly polarised scholars along schools of thought. Prominent among the arguments is, two schools of thoughts the first one which says, globalization is a myth-the skeptics, and the second group the globalizers (Panda, 2009:37) uphold the veracity of the concept. Among these two schools of thoughts, (Mosco, 2006, Hirst and Thompson, 1996) insist that globalization is a myth and that, globalization is just a coinage adopted just to see the world with one eye. According to them, it is the apatite of the privileged. They state further that, it is the supreme myth of all that people invested their hopes and dreams in the expectation that the world would come together that has never been. This point of view that this scholars held to accounts for the reason that Panda (2009, 37) refer to them as skeptics.

On the other hand, the globalizers according to Held et'al, (2003:1) favour the argument of the veracity of globalization. These scholars, Giddens (1990) and Castells (1996) considered globalization 'as a central driving force social, political that are behind the rapid growth reshaping modern societies and world order' (Rantanen, 2005:5). This two arguments may be valid in their own rights depending on which side or perspective of the divide it is looked from. For instance scholars of media studies would want to identify with the later argument of Giddens and Castells which considered globalization to be the driving force social, political, that are behind the rapid growth reshaping modern societies and world order because it conforms to the 'Global village' theory that was propounded by McLuhan in 19....

The global village theory sees the media as the medium through which the idea of globalization as a concept has been disseminated to the world. This submission clearly shows the link between the arguments of the skeptics who see globalization as the hope people have that the world would come together and that of the globalizers who reasoned that globalization is the only explanations for evident rapid growth that

was reshaping Morden societies. There is no doubt that, the media accounts for the missing link and as such can no longer be discarded as a myth. In other words, through advancement in information technology, news is easily disseminated to the utmost crannies of the earth and as such makes the media a very useful and indispensable institution in the proper functioning of democracy.

The impetus with which the media supports democratic processes and initiative is derived from its agenda setting role. Agenda setting is a media theory which was propounded by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. The theory implies that the mass media in its daily functions pre-determines what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society. On their part, Dennis and Merrill (1991:91) state that, “the media are most powerful in furnishing and setting agenda for members of the public... The news coverage of campaigns can be a significant source of issue knowledge for voters (Kiouisis & McCombs, 2004). Cohen (1963:13) contend that newspapers “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” While the news may not determine what the people should think, the news suggests which issue is salient and tells people that such an issue is something they should be thinking about (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; see also Hetherington, 1996; Mendelsohn, 1996; Mondak, 1995).

Challenges in Nigeria’s Democratic Experience since Independence

Since Nigerian attained independence in 1960 and embraced constitutional democracy as its form of governance, rather than making progress, the country’s democracy according to Ogundiya (2010:81) has been regressing towards what Diamond (2008) termed, “democratic reversal.” The country has found itself undulating between democracy and military interference which eventually subjects the people to untold hardship. Its attempt at conducting elections has always run into hitches. The first attempt at conducting modern election in Nigeria was under the Clifford constitution of 1922 (Omonijo, 2008: 30). The second attempt was in 1965.

However, the two elections were adjudged to be marred with irregularities. As in the first attempt (Osoba, 2007:36-44, Ngou, 1989:81) affirm, majority of the eligible voters were disenfranchised, while in the second attempt, voting was restricted to only Lagos and Calabar, and as such cannot be accepted as a representation of the people’s choice. Achebe, (1993: 78) reveal that, the two previous

attempt at conducting elections under civilian rule generated crisis, which culminated into the collapse of the two republics due to several electoral frauds some of which allegedly were aided and abetted by the media.

Within the aforementioned periods, the populace encountered great hardship as, they were subjected to arbitrary rules perpetrated by a military autocracy. In the entire 39 years (1960-1999) out of the total of 55 (1960-2015) years of its independence, the people were exposed to stringent measures that negate their rights as free citizens and denied them the opportunity to choose freely. Instead coercion, subjugation and force was adopted as means of enforcing policies while decrees were used as legal frame for prosecution. These periods witnessed the removal of freedoms of expression, association, procession in groups and other forms thus leading to distrust by the governed against the mechanisms of governance and their governors. The voice of the media was grossly muscled with obnoxious decrees. The general feeling of animosity, fear and lack of believe in government policies were very evident.

As a result of the above characteristics of military autocracy therefore, when democracy became entrenched fully in 1999, though it was embraced with great enthusiasm by the people, none the less it became very difficult for the democratically elected government to enforce policy changes that will better serve society and further entrench true democracy. Under the new dispensation, efforts at policy changes often met stiff opposition, while others no matter how well intentioned were sternly resisted. The means of communicating policy change by the government were seen to be crude. If and when the people were taken into consideration in planning, the governments result to outdated policies of ancient misrule.

The resultant effects of this is a gradual breakdown of law and order and destruction of democratic processes as well as the rise of different infra groups like, The Odu dua' People's Congress (OPC), Afenifere, the Movements for the Emancipation of the Ogoni Communities, the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign States of Biafra (MASSOB) and most recently, the rise of the terror group, Boko Haram, all clamoring for special attention. Likewise, the struggle for power increased; states mounted pressure on the central power through infra groups for recognition. The incumbent ruling political parties and their elected leaders held on to power at all cost, using both machinery

of government to overpower their political opponents. Electoral clientelism and vote buying which are widely perceived as major obstacles to economic development is evidently practiced by the political class during elections.

Also During elections, there were evident general disobedience for the electoral act by both the electoral umpire, the political party members, the politicians vying for available seats and even some of the electorates who are used in scuttling the electoral processes and election proper sometimes. Ballot snatching, ballot box stuffing, distortion of figures, and senseless assassination and complete disrespect for the constitution all featured prominently during elections till this present time. The constitution and the judiciary (lawyers) staff who are supposed to interpret it all have their flaws. While the selection of the tribunal panelist are often lopsidedly done by the Judiciary hierarchy

Also ethnocentrism was not spared in the power play. Rather than taking up a central campaign for change, preference and sympathy developed in defence of fellow tribes' men even when it is clear that such tribesmen are corrupt, incompetent and not fit to rule. So strong were these biases that, it threatened the peace of the country and portend danger for democracy. What may come to mind at this point is, where was the power of the media to correlate all the segment of society. Unfortunately they too were caught up in this tales of wows. The Nigeria news media landscape was always known to be polarised along ethnic lines. The news media has being like that since the country's chequered democratic history till this day. This posture confirms the postulation of Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956) which says that, "the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structure within which it operates."

The Nigerian Media Performance in Democracy

That Nigeria has had a chequered democratic journey thus far is no longer in contention. Since the country embraced democracy in 1999, its effort at democratisation which is a process of evolving from an authoritarian to a democratic system has always been fraught with irregularities. In other words, this world wide phenomenon called democracy has almost been a mirage in Nigeria despite its efforts at entrenching democracy. A general assessment of news media performance in Nigeria reveals that, before independence, the press was known to be vibrant and nationalistic in their news reportage.

They were known to be objective and non-partisan. Ajibade (2003:12) affirm that, “the growth and development of the press saw the newspapers expressing strong nationalist sentiments characterized by, pungent criticism of British colonial policies...” The press was known to fight vehemently against colonial rule. Catherine de Gale (nd) notes that ... the press played an important role in bringing colonial rule to an end. The press was thus recognized as a social force for liberation (Sambe 2010).

However, at the turn of a new dawn, the press is seen to shift their focus from their dogged arbitrariness with which they fought colonial rule to a standstill and became partisan. Uche (1989:99) reveals that, “When Nigeria attained independence in 1960, the mass media orientation shifted towards tribal and sectional loyalties in preference to the goal of national unity, identity and integration. Abayomi (2003:109) on his part reveals that, the press got enmeshed in ethnic politics within the overall affairs of the nation and this added ethnic posture... made it to lose focus as a watch-dog.” The news media in Nigeria seem to maintain this posture long after independence and deep into democratic dispensation till this day as, available scholarly literatures suggest.

The news media in Nigeria has been seen to have embraced partisan bias since 1965. Orhewere (2003:140) argues that, “the Nigerian media has not shown enough commitment to professional ethics thereby contributing to electoral crises in Western Nigeria in 1965 and subsequent elections. Apart from Orhewere, other scholars, (Coleman 1965, Kukah 1967, and Achebe 1993), all have accused the news media of partisan bias in their coverage of elections.

Criticism Rose Against Media Role in Politics

An independent media is a vital feature of any liberal democracy. If the government was able to control all the information regarding its own actions then it could most certainly escape all accountability and even have an unacceptable level of influence over its citizen's actions. This is why the importance of a free press cannot be under-estimated. In a liberal democracy, the aim of a free press is to continually scrutinize the government and provide people with accurate and impartial information so that they can act on it accordingly (Lynch, 2011). A common charge against the media in Nigeria is that it increasingly seems to lack the principles of objective and impartial reporting. Instead, many media organizations seem to be taking one side of the

political spectrum and at best provide relatively biased coverage or at worse act like virtual propaganda machines for a particular political party.

Certainly, some issues are subjective, hence there can be no universal line of thought. As such requiring all news organizations to passively report only what they see and not include an analytical perspective, would to a certain degree, defeat the purpose of having a free press. However this does not mean the news should be titled or skewed such that takes away the truth from its contents. Scholars and sceptics been concerned about the sanctity of the press have therefore engaged in identifying how the media influence the truth that they hold sacred. From scholarly studies it has been proven that, there are diverse ways by which the news are influenced. These are, government interference, private ownership influence, and arbitrary laws from regulatory bodies, regional affiliations and ethnicity. It is very difficult to completely remove political influence and enforce a perfectly neutral media. The media today does not just report the news but also represents the views of certain segments of society. As such, many news organizations cater to liberal or conservative lines when it comes to political information.

These trends it is assumed affects the journalist's decisions as he prepare and presents his news reports for publication. Nwachukwu (1998:4) recounts an instance, when the erstwhile publisher of Concorde Newspaper asked the then editor of the newspaper Bayo Onanuga to apologise to President Ibrahim Babangida then a Military ruler in Nigeria for a report that was published about the corrupt activities of the administration. The editor refused and resigned with three other members of staff. Afterwards, the publisher wrote an apology letter to the military ruler and published it in one of the Nigerian dailies (Daily Times of 23rd April 1992). Though not empirically proven, other forms of both external and internal pressure are seen to continue to impinge on the performance of the media to the extent that the public perceive the newspaper's report as bias and unbalanced. Accusations of ethnic and regional bias are often levelled against the Nigerian media. In a thesis, Malaolu (2004: 53-60) devotes a section to the Nigerian newspapers whom he described as 'champions' of ethnic interest.

Guiding Principles of the News Media in Democracy

The single guiding principle underlying the role of the media in democracy is that without media freedom and pluralism, democracy is

not possible. This has been underlined in the decisions of numerous international tribunals. It has also been stated very clearly in the recent past by the United Nations Special Reporter on Freedom of Expression, which went on to elaborate a series of steps that governments should take to guarantee freedom of media especially during elections.

These border on a number of different dimensions to media freedom especially during elections:

- Freedom from censorship.
- Freedom from arbitrary attack or interference.
- Free access to necessary information.
- Pluralism of voices in the media

The last of these is points (Pluralism of voices in the media) is especially important. It is often interpreted to mean that the media should be owned by a variety of different interests, resulting in something of a “market-place of ideas”. This is important, but it is only one aspect. For countries emerging from authoritarian rule like Nigeria and Ghana usually characterized by tight state control over the media, ensuring pluralism within the publicly funded media may be equally important. This is because often it is only a government-controlled national broadcaster that has the capacity to reach all sections of the electorate. In order to ensure that the publicly funded media are not, in practice, government-controlled, a clear regulatory intervention may be required. This is the central paradox of the management of media in elections - the frequent need to establish a fairly complex regulatory system in order to enable the media to operate freely and without interference. At stake are three interlocking sets of rights:

- The right of the voters to make a fully informed choice.
- The right of the candidates to put their policies across.
- The right of the media to report and express their views on matters of public interest.

These rights, which are essentially all aspects of the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and applies at all times, not only when there is an election pending. But it is the very formality of the election process - the fact that it is conducted according to procedures that are clearly set out in law - that has stimulated the interest of those who are concerned with issues of media freedom. How far media freedom and pluralism

are respected during an election period can be a fairly sensitive index of respect for freedom of expression in general which in itself, is an essential precondition for a functioning democracy. Conversely, an election can be an ideal opportunity to educate both the authorities in their obligation to respect and nurture media freedom and the media in their responsibility to support the democratic process.

Looking at relations with the media from the perspective of the electoral management body (EMB), two other important principles come into play: transparency and confidentiality. Transparency means that the operations of the EMB are open to public scrutiny and hence accountability. Confidentiality means that the security of the EMB's operations is safeguarded against those who have no right to unauthorized information and who may undermine the integrity of the election process. Clearly, these principles may come into conflict in practice. Complete transparency and confidentiality are clearly incompatible. However, establishing the precedence of these principles in any given case may be less difficult than it might at first appear. It will almost invariably be true that the plans and activities of the EMB should be open to public scrutiny. It will, without exception, be true that the vote itself should be secret. The borderline cases in between are likely to be few.

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in Article 2 [distinctions of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status] and without unreasonable restrictions. To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections this shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors. Taken together, these provisions have been understood to impose an obligation on governments to ensure the diversity and pluralism of the media during election periods.

Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The deductions from this study is thus that, the media role in democracy after its initial fluffs especially after independence still stands till this day 2015. However, there seem to be a ray of hope considering the mileage achieved in the recently concluded April 2015 general elections which saw for the first time in the history of Nigeria, the ruling political party (The People's Democratic Party) loosing several political seats to the opposition the All Progressive Congress

(APC) party and conceding defeat. A feat that has been achieved between 2000 and 2004 by other African Countries like, Ghana, Mauritius and Mali where very peaceful elections were conducted and the oppositions handing over power from one political party to another. The achievement recorded in the recent election points to the fact that, there definitely prospect for the future.

It is a sign that the electoral climate can change for the better, the politicians themselves can turn a new leave and begin to play by the rules as dictated by the Nigerian constitution, the peoples votes can begin to count and in the future, clientelism, ballot box snatching will become a thing of the past, while deliberate voters choice of their preferred candidates will become respected in the counties democratic experience. It also indicate that, the ruling parties will in the future respect decisions of the electoral umpire (INEC) and the INEC will endeavor to play by the enabling relevant acts as it empowers it and not allow itself to be used. Then and only then can the country begin to shift its attention to the consolidation of its democracy.

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The challenges posed by globalization to the Nigerian culture industries are enormous considering the devastating effect of decades of authoritarianism and their. 110 J. Public Adm. Policy Res.Â They continued, saying that the media as cultural products reflect the values of their producers and the social realities in which they are produced. In this era of globalization and deregulation, the question now is. 112 J. Public Adm. Policy Res.