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## Impact of Media in Political and Voting Choice of the Electorate (A Case Study of 2003 Presidential Election)

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### ABSTRACT

Scholars have concerned for centuries with the possible influence of the mass media of communication on the formation of public opinion and attitudes, but there have been divergent and diametrically opposed views on the subject. The result of many disputes about the role of the press is, arguably, what the French call a dialogue of the deaf, where nobody hears the other side's argument. The political and socio-economic environment since 1999 and particularly in *the* last two years before the 2003 elections did not present any optimism about a trouble-free atmosphere for the elections. Forman (1985) ones observed as cited in Nwosu (1992:67) that for better for worse, we live in an age which is characterized use widespread use of various channels of communication.

Keywords: Impact, media, political, voting, electorate, presidential, election.

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### INTRODUCTION

The problem of examining the role of the mass media in political communications and their effects on national issues, election campaigns in particular, is not confined to Nigeria anywhere in the world; the press has always been involved in politics, formation of public opinion. Perception of images of candidates for political offices, the definition of social reality and social norms, the education, information, enlightenment and entertainment of public, as well the presentation and clarification of issues, values, goals and changes in culture and society. Some kinds of communication on some kinds of effects' [1].

Scholars have concerned for centuries with the possible influence of the mass media of communication on the formation of public opinion and attitudes, but there have been divergent and diametrically opposed views on the subject. The result of many disputes about the role of the press is, arguably, what the French call a dialogue of the deaf, where nobody hears the other side's argument. The entire study of mass communication is based on the premise, that there are effects from the media, yet it seems to be the issue on

which there is least certainty and least agreement' [2].

The Aristotle and Plato [3]. For instance, acknowledge the immense power of propaganda carried out in the face-to-face setting during their days. Some writers believe that the media are very powerful, while others see the powers of the press as very limited. For example, politicians and journalists are agreed that the role of the media is crucial, though they disagree about how effectively it is being played. Further tribute to this role is paid by the various social scientists that have made research into mass media and political communications a growth point in academic industry. Yet clear and specific descriptions, definition and analyses of what the mass media actually contribute, or ought to contribute to the political communication process are still inconclusive. In the words of C.R [4].

In advanced democratic environments like Britain, Sweden, France and the United State of America just to mention few, the mass media have since been deployed to educate voters. [5] in this sense acknowledged that "in (such) democracies, the media..... usually fine their reason d'etre in their service to their

audience, to whom they provide information..." and education. In doing this, [6] adds that the media assist voters to make an informed choice at election time. The media achieve this in form of news, stories, write-up by columnists, commentaries, features and interpretative stories by journalists. Added to these is political advertising or space and time allotted candidates to show case their potentials. Therefore, leading television presidential debates that are not bias are critical, If not deciding factor during elections. In 1960 the Democratic Party candidate J.F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon of the Republican, as well as the 1992 Bill Clinton and incumbent George Bush debates all in America, are handle examples. In Nigeria, the connection between MKO Abiola and Bashir Tofa in 1993 merits mention. The National Concord newspaper as cited in [7] gives a clinical report of the significance of the event thus:

richest and most developed countries in Africa. Unfortunately, it is one of the poorest and its citizens continue to suffer from relatively high levels of poverty and deprivation. Such poverty is due primary to poor and ineffective institution, which have allowed state custodians (i .e, civil servant and politicians) to squander the country's development potential. Put another way, the absence of democratic governance in most of post-independence Nigeria, and the pervasiveness of authoritarian and corrupt civil regimes, as well as military dictatorships, have" contributed significantly to the mismanagement of the country's development prospect. 2

#### **The Electoral Preparations**

The political and socio-economic environment since 1999 and particularly in *the* last two years before the 2003 elections did not present any optimism about a trouble-free atmosphere for the elections. There were several cases of boundary and inter-communal clashes, ethnic uprisings (especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta Region), Sharia-induced unrests, economic sabotage, and other disturbances, throughout the period. In addition, many civil society organizations had become quite

aggressive in their efforts to improve living conditions for their people. In the Niger Delta Region, for example, many youth associations, notable the Ijaw Youth Council and the Isoko Youth Movement, had become impatient with the military government's inability or unwillingness to deal with poverty and environmental degradation in the region. Subsequently, these groups had become involved in violent mobilization to improve conditions in their respective communities and minimize further marginalization. Unfortunately, the even-handed response of the Federal Government to crisis in the Niger Delta Region only exacerbated the problem and intensified the violence. Meanwhile, many citizens of the southern part of the country continued to decry the fact that the military had snatched the/ presidency out of their hands through the annulment of the 1993 elections. In addition, the unending arguments and counter-arguments over issues concerning revenue allocation, resource control, and the need for a national Conference to discuss the future union of Nigeria nationalities continued unabated. At the same time, executive-legislative bickering over attempts to establish constitutional checks and balances forced delays in the approval of the national budget and its subsequent implementation. All these development encouraged many pessimists to suggest postponement of the elections. But the government of president Obasanjo was determined that the election would hold in order to ensure continuity of the democratic process and to break the so-called Jinx".

In preparing for the 2003 election, I believe the federal Government took cognizance of lessons from the mistake of the 1999 arrangement and took pains to harmonize the constitutional provisions and the enabling electoral law and regulations. Especially regarding the establishment of democratic institution, such as the independent National Electoral commission (INEC) and Political parties. Nevertheless, some bottlenecks were thrown into the process although this time, the intervention was through constitution means. Court cases were

filling regarding various arrangements, such as the number of political parties and conditions for their registration. It is to credit of Obasanjo's federal Government that no attempt was ever made to interfere with judicial processes in these electoral matters. Issues were also raised regarding whether all the election should be held on one day or spread over several days [8]. They amount of freedom of speech guaranteed during these periods, as well as the spirit of tolerance demonstrated by the federal Government and the amount of transparency in the dissemination of information by the INEC. Contributed to the general popular acceptance of the preparatory arrangement made for the elections. Those conversant with elections in developing countries have always affirmed that the ground for any possible rigging of election usually starts with the way the registration of voters is handled. Because the INEC adopted computer-based methods, which were considered transparent and fool-proof, the exercise generally received popular acceptance. There was opposition in certain sections of the populace. Especially in the northern part of the country. Against the use of the new national identity cards for obtaining voter cards. The decision to identify to secure voter cards was expected to significantly reduce the cost of preparing for the elections. Thanks to the persistence of the INEC that the new identity card system forms the basis for registration, attempts by overzealous and opportunistic political agents to effect multiple registration were defeated. Several applications for registration were disqualified, ranging from 2 percent in the least fraud-prone area to as high as 34 percent of total applications processed in some districts. Table 1 provides data on the number of 48.92 registered voters by state, as well as the number of disqualified applicants. There are a number of analytical deductions that can be made from table 1 [9]. First, the incidence of disqualification of applications due to attempts at multiple registrations occurred in all the states of the federation. Second, the number of registered voters in the northern parts of

the country as a percentage of the total of registered voters in all of Nigeria 48.92 percent, while the corresponding figure for the southern part of the country is 51.08 percent. After a lot of arguments by some of the registered political parties regarding the system of balloting to be used, the INEC adopted the open-secret balloting system. The latter allows for a certain level of privacy or security. The ballot is thumb-printed and its dropping into the ballot both is carried out in the open and witnessed by interested parties, this system was adopted in place of the one that was supported by some of the political parties, which called for voters to queue behind the pictures or photographs of their preferred candidates. Here again, the INEC's choice proved reasonable and more efficient, especially given the fact that eventually 30 political parties were certified to contest and as many as 20 candidates were qualified to compete for the position of president of the country. An alternative method would have led to chaos and a possible breakdown of the law and order [10].

#### **The role of key political actors**

Democracy as a generally accepted system of organizing the conduct of human affairs in a polity and ensuring the resolution of the conflicting interests of its citizens can only thrive in an environment that encourages and enhances the free exchange of ideas. Politics cannot be successfully practiced in an arm-chair fashion because it is a game pursued in a dynamic process in which the people, as the final arbiter, are watching the efforts of individual actors in their attempts to satisfy people's yearnings for progress and socio-economic development. However, it must be admitted that the practice of politics requiring the emergence of majority rule embodies a game of numbers which may be manipulated if the actors are allowed by the electorate to be fraudulent. Practice politicians know that it is almost impossible to rig an election in an atmosphere of unpopularity. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of politics demands that politicians must appreciate the fact there are "no permanent friends or

permanent enemies" but permanent interests in the political arena. The practice of politics, which essentially involves a practical handling aspirations, adequate knowledge, expertise, experience other remarkably good personal attributes, especially where the political stakes are high. Individuals aspiring to serve the public are some political role must be well informed on those things that matter the most to the people. Hence, Knowledge of the political and economic environment in which one plans to complete for public office I s very essential for success. A politician who ignores or refuses to inform himself of the problem confronting his constituents is not likely to succeed in a competitive political system [11]. For a developing country like Nigeria, an aspiring politician must also be well informed on additional complicating factors such as ethnicity and its several dimensions.

When thirty politician's parties were finally to participate in the 2003 elections in Nigeria, the INEC found itself unable to cope with the enormous number of candidates vying for public office. The INGE then decided to request more funds from the Federal Government, and seek foreign aid in order to cope with the technicalities of the computer- related arrangements the more establish ones (e.g. PDF, ANPP, and AD) were inundated with applications for elective office. To make the process of selecting candidate to compete for each office more efficient and effective, all the political parties agreed to stage "primaries" or elections whose main purpose was to select candidates, through a competitive

process to represent the party in the main election. Those parties that conducted their primary elections in a transparent manner and were able to reconcile internally conflicting interest of political aspirants stood a better chance of defeating candidates from those parties that either avoided primaries entirely or allowed the conduct of primaries to degenerate into avenues for party disintegration through intra-party bickering, dissensions and acrimonious court cases. In this regard, the AD avoided primaries in many of the political races, especially gubernatorial, while the ANPP lost control of its primaries-these two parties paid for this mistake through extremely poor performance in the final national elections. Furthermore, it was apparent that the process leading to the emergency of the ANPP's presidential candidate, General Muhammed Buhari, a contestant from the North, was a clear breach of the unwritten but generally agreed zoning arrangement. The desire of Igbo-speaking contestants in the party's presidential primaries to produce a consensus Igbo candidate was frustrated by the emergence of Buhari as a contestant. The election of the former military ruler in the primaries must have affected the overall chances of ANPP not only in Igbo-speaking areas, but candidates for the presidential election. The ability of the People Democratic Party (PDF) to put its house in order before and after its well-organized primaries at all levels and particularly for the Presidential election seemed to have guaranteed its subsequent success, all things being equal [12].

**The 2003 Presidential Election Result**

CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Olusegim Obasanjo	People's Democratic Party	24,456,140	61.94
Muhamniadu Bhari	All Nigeria people's Party	1,710,022	32.19
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu	All Progressive Grand Alliance	1,297,445	3.29
Jim Nwobodo	United Nigeria people's Parry	169,609	0.43
Ga'ni Fawahinmi	National Conscience Party	161,333	0.41
Sarah Jubril	Progressive Action Congress	157,560	0.40
Ike Nwachukwu	National Democratic Party	132,997	0.34
Chris Okotie	Justice Party	119,547	0.30
Balarabe Musa	People's Redemption Party	100,765	0.26
Arthur Nwankwo	People's Mandate Party	57,720	0.15
Emmanuel Okereke	All People's Liberation Party	26,921	0.07
Kalu Idika Kalu	New Nigeria people's Party	23,830	0.06
Muhammadu Dikko Yusuf	Movement for Democratic and Justice	21,403	0.05
Yahaya Ndu	African Renaissance Party	11,565	0.03
Abayorai Ferreira	Democratic Alternative	6,727	0.02

Tunji BrathwaiLe	Nigeria Advance Party	6,932	0.02
Iheanyichukwu Gods\ vill Nnaji	Better Nigeria progressive Party	5,987	0.02
Olapacle Agoro	National Action Council	5,756	0.01
Pere Ajuwa	Liberal Democratic Party of Nigeria	4,473	0.01
MojisolaAdekunle Obasanjo	Masses Movement of Nigeria	3,757	0.01
Invalid /blank votes		2,538,246	
Total		42,018,735	100

The success of President Olusegun Obasanjo, which was expected by most Nigerians, did however, not go without criticism from losing political parties and individuals. This is to be expected in a country like Nigeria, which is still getting accustomed to the procedural practice of democratic. In these early stages, it is expected that losers will cry fowl and seek ways to overturn the results of the elections. What appears unreasonable, however, is the behavior of the some political parties which received little as 4,000 votes in the elections but became quite active in the movement to overturn the results of the elections. As expected, those seeking relief, did so on the grounds that the elections were supposedly rigged and that voters were intimidated and the results manipulated to favour certain candidates, primarily those of the incumbent party [13]. Several of the protesting candidates (e.g Buhari and Ojukwu) made claims that could not be substantiated. In fact, at one time Ojukwu claimed that he won the presidential elections outright but at

another, he sought to have the elections annulled and the process started all over again. While it can be claimed that no election of that magnitude anywhere in the world can be undertaken without some irregularities, available evidence shows that the INEC administered the 2003 elections effectively arid fairly and that the results represented the correct wishes of the electorate [14]. Hence, it is time for all Nigerians to abide by the official results and allow the new government to carry out its responsibilities.

Ethnicity has always been a major factor in Nigerian politics. As can be gleaned from table 10, the three major contenders represent Hausa/Fulani (Buhari), Igbo (Ojukwu) and Yoruba (Obasanjo). Under a tacit agreement among politicians and political parties, the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group was not expected to present a candidate this time around. It appears that the emergence of buhari represents the belated effort of the hard-liner among the Hausa/Fulani group who felt the

group had been marginalized by the first Obasanjo government. Such a claim, however, appears not to have shared by the majority of Northerners. Secondly, both Obasanjo and Buhari were military rulers with records that the voters could easily examine. When all is said and done, Obasanjo's was a more progressive military regime, especially considering the fact that it was his government that returned Nigeria to civilian rule in 1979. These achievements appear to have benefited his candidacy. The campaign launched by Buhari for the presidency of Nigeria betrayed a desire by the former military ruler to use any means necessarily, including such divisive issues as ethnicity and religion in Nigeria politics. Arguing that Muslims should only vote for Muslims candidates, and that the Islamization of Nigeria was just a matter of time, he effectively betrayed a preference for the kind of politics that is likely to destroy Nigerian Unity and along with it, the nation itself. Apparently, as seen from the results of the elections, some Northerners embraced Buhari's brand of politics and voted for him and his party (the ANPP). Many Muslim dominated communities in the North voted for the ANPP, contributed significantly to the loss of the PDP in the Kano gubernatorial election. On the other hand, in many Southern states, voters instead saw Buhari as a fanatical fundamentalist Muslim who was intent on exacerbating ethnic group and religious conflict in the country and forcing the disintegration of Nigeria's fragile federation. As a military ruler (in 1984), Buhari enacted draconian anti-press decrees, which muzzled the press and made it very difficult for both the print and electronic media to expose the military's exploitative, repressive and anti-development leadership. Today, he remains quite unpopular among the press, partially because of his extremely poor record as a ruler and also because of his unwillingness to cooperate with the Oputa Commission, which had been set up to reconcile Nigerians to one another over human rights abuse during several decades. In fact, his problems with the press forced him to decline participation

in the 2003 presidential debates organized by the media. As for Ojukwu, it was apparent that he came into the political turf belatedly believing he could be accented as a consensus candidate of Igbos, who were searching for a candidate to satisfy their yearning for an Igbo president this time around since the failure of Dr. Alex Ekwueme at the . JP primaries. Unfortunately, he was unable to overcome several obstacles to his candidacy. First, many Nigerians were still unwilling to forgive him for leading the secessionist movement that degenerated into the bloody civil war. Second, he was made many pre-election speeches that painted him as an unrepentant secessionist and one incapable of leading a United Nigeria. Finally, in recent years, many young and capable Igbo elites have begun to preach a more progressive form of politics that seeks to secure opportunities for the group's growth within the Nigerian polity and hence, have tended to distance themselves from the old guard. In fact, this new leadership has convinced most Igbos that their future lies with a unified and strong Nigeria and hence, have been working to deemphasize ethnicity and adopt a more pragmatic approach to politics; and support only candidates (regardless of their ethnic origins) that can enhance the ability of the Igbos to improve their welfare [15]. This more practical approach to politics emerged as an important constraint to the candidacy of Ojukwu, which was based primarily on ethnicity and not on a well-articulated program to enhance Igbo welfare.

The most remarkable phenomenon of the elections, which Obasanjo's opponents wanted to use to prove their charges to rigging and other electoral malpractices, is the unprecedented success of the PDP in all the six States hitherto controlled by the AD. The PDP went on to win the majority of seats in all the Legislative Houses. In addition, the party also captured 5 of 6 gubernatorial seats, narrowly conceding only Lagos to the AD. The PDP campaigned more effectively than all the other political parties in these States and in addition, was aided by the fact that the AD, which before the 2003

elections had controlled these States, had performed poorly and failed to get its message to the people. Perhaps the AD's failure was attributable to the fact that the party leaders were quite confident that the people would retain them as their representative at both the federal and state levels. Many Yorubas, however, saw a second term for Obasanjo (himself a Yoruba) as the only opportunity for the Yorubas to remain relevant in national politics. As the election neared, many Yorubas did not see anyone among themselves, other than Obasanjo, capable of capturing the presidency. Hence, they considered the pragmatic choice for 2003.

Both the ANPP (Buhari) and APGA (Ojukwu) bitterly protested what they claimed was vote rigging and manipulation in the six States of the South-South zone. Their position was supported in part, by the comments of the one or two foreign observer teams (e.g, the European Union Observers Mission Report). In this regard, some analysts have argued that even if hypothetically the votes obtained by the PDF in the six "disputed" states were disallowed, Olusegun Obasanjo would still have won the elections and would still have satisfied the two constitutional requirements for proclaiming the winner of the presidential election, namely majority vote and 25 percent of the votes cast in each of the states constituting two thirds of the states of the Federation [16].

#### **Theory of Political Advertising**

According to [17], the assimilation hypothesis derived from social judgment theory suggests that exposure to political advertising campaigns encourages people to "assimilate" or equate their feelings about related attitude targets. The essence of this concept according to them is the negative reaction to political advertising will color attitude towards other forms of adverts. They further argued that the competing possibility termed the "contrast" hypothesis, suggests that the negative response to political campaigns actually makes commercial advert appear more appealing than it would have been in the absence of political adverts. The conclusion to the

argument, therefore, is that commercial advertising is evaluated more favorably than political advertising: they attempt to distinguish political advertising from commercial advertising by identifying the following Political advertiser frequently engaged in "comparative" advertising in which the opposing candidates program and performance are criticized and even ridiculed. There is no comparable date for any commercial advert campaign; the "comparative" element is unlike to be so prominent Political advertiser do to adhere to any codes or procedures intended to protect the public from the inaccurate and unsubstantiated claims but commercial advertisers voluntarily subscribe to a "code" of advertising ethic. Political advertiser seek vote at any cost, even including a degraded sense of public regard for the candidates and electoral process. Discouraging people from voting seems to be more feasible than political adverts than persuading supporters of one candidate to vote for the opponent. However, positivity is the currency of product advert.

- **Political Campaign** - [18] defined political campaign, as organized efforts by a political party or candidate for public office to attract the support of voters in an election. He further said political campaign include five basic elements: professional public relations, polling, broadcast media, direct mail and the internet. The above definition clearly shows that Political advertising is just an element of Political Campaign. We briefly describe these elements as follows:
  - **Professional Public Relations**- They specialized in politics, conduct opinion polls, produce television commercials, organize direct mail campaign and develop advertising messages candidate will use to mobilize support.
  - **Polling**- This is the survey of voter's opinion. Political consultants use this information to run campaigns. It resembles



business efforts to market products.

- **Broadcast Media-** This includes TV spot adverts, infomercial, televised debate, talk show interview (TV and Radio), the electronic town hall meeting and the World Wide Web sites.
- **Direct Mail-** This is used to raise funds for the party and candidates. It communicates to voters.
- **The Internet-** This is the use of websites to provide candidates' biographical data, candidates' positions on major issues, endorsements from prominent supporters and other campaign materials.

#### **Position of the media in the 2003 presidential Elections.**

Media performance during the Nigerian elections was flawed, as it failed to provide unbiased, fair and informative coverage of the political parties and candidates contesting the elections [19]. This was a result of a variety of factors: the financial instability of the media, the low purchasing power of the population, illiteracy, electricity shortages, media reliance on sponsorship for survival, a media culture of deference to the party of power, problems of professional development and the weakness of both government and self regulation. Media outlets were largely unable to overcome these barriers and provide adequate coverage of the 2003 elections.

Federal and State- owned media were biased in favour of the parties and candidates in power. These media have a particular obligation to provide impartial and unbiased information to the electorate, because they are publicly owned because of their advantage in reaching the largest number of people in Nigeria. However, detailed analysis carried out by the EU shows that they failed to live up to this obligation. The privately owned broadcast media monitored gave greater access to the major political parties and candidates in opposition, however to a large extent to

those presidential and gubernatorial candidates able to pay for access to the media. This led to a generally uncritical treatment by the privately owned media of the parties and candidates.

There is a vibrant and prolific print media in Nigeria, which generally succeeded in disseminating more detailed information about more parties and candidates than the broadcast media. Nevertheless, newspapers did not remain impartial; federally owned newspapers favoured the ruling party in terms of space and tone, while privately owned newspapers tended to favor candidates of their choice. Individual journalists and programmers succeeded in the face of greater difficulties in alerting the public to some of the complexities of these elections; however as a general rule the media served to confuse rather than clarify the issues.

In a positive development, the Nigerian media organized some useful initiatives to improve political communication during the elections. Most of the parties and candidates were able to present their views to the electorate through the presidential debates broadcast on public and private media, an event organized by a group of Nigerian media organizations. There was also a significant amount of information provided about the elections in general and voter education. Also, the programs broadcast by the public and private media from the INEC Media Center provided useful service in disseminating election information.

There are few laws regulating the media coverage of elections and they are inadequate to cope with the new political and media landscapes of Nigeria. For instance, the 24-hour campaign silence cannot be enforced during staggered elections. The role of the broadcasting regulatory authority - the National Broadcast Commission (NBC) - during the elections was low key and the lack of a decisive body enforcing the rules left an open playing field for violations to take place.

#### **Political Advertising and campaign in Nigerians' 2003 Presidential Election**

The past two decades have witnessed the increase use of

political advertising in Nigeria. Prior to this period, political rallies, personal contact and speeches have been popularly used for mobilizing electorates support for election [20]; [21]. This probably might be as a result of development in information technology and the realization of the potent force of media communication in packaging not only products but ideas. However, in Nigeria smear campaigns against political opponents started a long time ago. This is most especially by the dominant political party against opposition parties. Electoral campaigns are marketing ac Lions employed to get votes in election. It enables parties and their candidates know how to allocate their resources and develop better knowledge about how and why voters make their choice [12]. However, most of these political adverts and campaign are negative advertising. According to [11], the uses of negative adverts are due to several amongst which include: fear of losing election, paucity of ideas and probably of settle old scores between perceived political "enemies".

For example, during the second republic, in kwara state the dominant party, national party of Nigerian (NPN) in trying to tell the opposition that their candidate is popular sang this *songisaraki mi gboro titlo mi gboro. Oloye migboro titi, o migboro.*

This means Saraki (NPN financier and strong man) is shaking the city, he is shaking the city. The chief is shaking the city, he is shaking. The opposition party, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), counter with tins song: *Ile won na un ni (x2ce). Ile abere wo bi ile ekute, Ile won na un ni.*

This song literally means: this is their house (x2ce). Their house like the rat's house (you have to bend down to enter). This is their house. This song was trying

to discredit the National Party of Nigeria's members as poor not only of material well-being but of ideas. In 2003, the supporters of All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) in trying to defy the opposition party leaders conied this party slogan: Up Lawal! No Shaking! Second term! Continuity for-ever!!!!

The People's Democratic Party (the opposition Party) replied with Slogan: *Poku Lawal* (Poku Lawal is an adulterated form of Up). *Bukolafor Governor.*

This means unimportant Lawal, Bukola for Governor. The political advert: wars in the media were popular in the Fourth Republic. Examples of these political advertising wars are in the Appendix 1. In Lagos State, we have the political advert war between Alliance for Democratic (AD) and the Progressive Action Congress (PAC). Alliance for Democratic informed the electorates that the opposition party, the Progressive Alliance Congress replied with "Let's do what?" and urged the electorates to vote for their party and candidates. There was a similar scenario in Kwara State between All Nigerian's People Party (ANPP) and the opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP). The Advert for All Nigeria People's Party urged the electorate not to "serve the son" because they have "served the father". The People's Democratic Party gave its own bomnshell by remaining the electorates of failed promised by the All Nigerian People's Party. One important thing about political advertising is that it is interesting and sometimes offers the electorates reliable information about the candidates. Nigerian electorates are now being exposed more to political adverts than ever and this has consequently made them to be conscious about the of political decisions they would want to make in the choice of their candidates for elective post.

#### SUMMARY

This paper has shown that the political affiliation of media ownership determined, to a large extent, the editorial direction of the Nigerian mass media in their coverage of political parties and the campaigns that led to the 1983 general elections, the last phase of Nigeria's second republic. From the

sequence of news, total coverage, relative percentage, quality and quantity of news, relative closeness to peak hours, actual utilization, headline casting to frequency of coverage in the party program me and campaign, relative political parties and /or Governments which owned the media during the elections were

avored. This resulted in many problems, including the production of biased election stories. The prevention of the media from performing properly and in a neutral manner the functions of informing and educating the electorate on the elections, as well as hampering of the media from upholding their professional, journalistic ethics from impartiality and balance. Whereas a democratic society largely relies on the mass communication network to inform the electorate adequately and on equal terms about the programmes and policies of different political parties and office contenders, [2] regards election campaigns as process that live or die; gather momentum or falter, via the heavy and insistent streams of message that are prepared for delivery to all quarters of the body politic. As he puts it: it is through campaign communication that impulses to participate are energized. Issues are defined, and choices for voting decisions are conveyed in the same vein, [6] argues that: An election campaign exists in the public consciousness largely the way it exists in mass media presentation of campaign events.

The history of Nigerian political communications, particularly during the electioneering campaigns has shown that the pattern of media owners flip *MA* behavior has remained the same since the country's independence 30 year ago.

As Nigerian approaches a third attempt at democratic rule in socioeconomic conditions which are less propitious than on past occasions it will be important for the Nigerian press to

[4] ones observed as cited in [8] that for better or worse, we live in an age which is characterized use widespread use of various channels of communication. These include traditional mass media and internet for a broad range of political and other purposes. Traversing the political landscape of any country reveals that electoral are getting more and more enlightened. What is wholly or in part responsible for this are the mass media. The mass media give meaning and structure to the public sphere. Whatever may be the contribution of other entities

operate in a way which contributes to political stability and national integration rather than underlines attempts at national unity and federal survival. We suggest that if the Nigerian press behaves more responsibly and tries to understand and appreciate the history, politics, economic, cultures and contradictions of Nigerian society, and strives hard to harmonize these diversities in a positive manner, unity and stability may be achieved.

Whatever the pattern of media ownership, the Nigerian media practitioners should strive to maintain the continued existence of Nigeria as a federation in the way they cover events, issues and activities of politicians in Nigeria political communications in 1992 and beyond.

There is a need to regulate media practice in Nigerian communications by establishing a Communication Media Advisory Council as an arm of the National Electoral Commission or a National Communication Commission whose responsibility will be to monitor press performance in political communications and set the media agenda for the coverage of national issues.

There is also a need to reorganize the structure of mass media ownership and control in Nigeria with a view to censoring private ownership of electronic media and diffusion and to regulate against monopoly in order to prevent the misuse of the media by few powerful individual owners or groups of Nigerians or government.

#### CONCLUSION

such as civil societies, [7] argues. The fact remains that the media carry the greater responsibility for providing awareness and education about our pluralist individual candidates, political party and their programmes and the entire election process at all times. But the full scale use of money in political advertising which is an offshoot of political communication, often distorts the political system that alternative communication strategies can overcome to the benefit of voters and candidates. The appropriate choice of medium,

whether newspapers, magazines, billboards, posters, handbills moving vehicle, television, radio, internet and cell phone is. Therefore, important. It is only

when the channel are carefully and routinely employed that the benefit of political communications will be maximally enjoyed.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Campaigns about the electoral process should be a continuous one. This electorate greatly acquainted with all the requirement and process that makes one to be eligible, ones empower they can freely exercise their mandate with utmost ease.
- ii. Government agencies like the National orientation Agencies. NOA and other stakeholders should avoid overreliance the media, interpersonal communication which establishes direct relationship with electorate should be used to complement mass media massage. This is where civil society can play a pivotal role by exhibiting drama to rural communities that need greater awareness.
- iii. With intensive empower, community voting should be replace with individual voting so as not disenfranchise voters. Community voting obviously promotes god fatherism. Absence of this strengthens and affirms our democracy as electorate feel fulfill they freely casted their votes to those they wanted as against being manipulated by chief and god father.
- iv. Voters should realize that whoever they vote will impact on their lives in future. Therefore, they should continue with the gesture of wisely casting their votes free from ethics, religious and social ties as well as other trivial considerations with retrogressive tendency.

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