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## Nigerian Media: A Comparative Media Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

### NIGERIAN MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE MEDIA ANALYSIS

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The comparative media analysis of Nigeria using Hallin and Mancini's model provides an insightful examination of the country's media system. Hallin and Mancini's model analyzes four dimensions: the degree of state intervention, the degree of political parallelism, the level of journalistic professionalism, and the role of the state. They offer three models of media and politics: The Liberal model, the Democratic Corporatist, and the Polarized Pluralist. Nigeria's media system is characterized by high state intervention and political parallelism, significant control over media content by the state, a close relationship between the media and political parties, and a low level of journalistic professionalism, as media outlets often prioritize sensationalism and partisanship over accuracy and impartiality. The thesis provides new insights regarding the applicability of Hallin and Mancini's model, as well as the development and future direction of the print media journalism in Nigeria. The utilization of textual analysis and interviews as the methodology in this research reveals the challenges facing the Nigerian media system, such as limited press freedom and an inability to serve as an effective watchdog of the government. Furthermore, it highlights the need for reforms that prioritize the development of independent media outlets that prioritize journalistic professionalism and ethical reporting, as well as greater press freedom and protection for journalists.

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NIGERIAN MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE MEDIA ANALYSIS

BY

TEMILADE ADEEKO  
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## DEDICATION

To my beloved family,

Thank you for always supporting and encouraging me throughout my academic journey. Your unwavering love, patience, and understanding have been my anchor during this challenging but rewarding experience.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria operates a federal presidential republic, and it is one of the largest economies in West Africa. Nigeria is a multinational state that has over 250 ethnic groups and 500 unique languages and cultures. The three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria are Hausa Fulani in the Northern Region, Yoruba in the Southern Region, and Igbo in the Eastern Region. The official language of Nigeria is English (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022). Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has had six military coup d'état and two civilian regimes before a transitional military government oversaw the return of civilian rule in 1999 (Adeyemi, 1995).

Nigerian media have played a pivotal role in the country's history. Since its inception, the press has used advocacy to frame political issues in the country's democracy thereby cementing its role as the Fourth Estate. The print media in Nigeria has become a popular vehicle for sustained political advocacy and can be divided into four phases. The press during the colonial rule which in turn gave rise to the press during the nationalist movement with resulted in the attainment of independence from the British Colonial administration in 1960. The press after independence was also used as a vehicle of change during the six military coup d'état and two civilian regimes which lead to the adoption of a new constitution in 1999 and a peaceful transition to a multi-party democratic system. Finally, the last phase is the press during the democratic system and the age of social media. It is important to note that military coups are

illegal and unconstitutional means of taking over the government. Since the return to democracy in 1999, Nigeria has had a peaceful transition of power through democratic elections.

The media in Nigeria have been instrumental in shaping public opinion and facilitating political discourse in the country. Over the years, various media outlets have emerged, including newspapers, television, and radio stations. However, the media landscape in Nigeria is also marked by challenges such as censorship, self-censorship, and the government's use of regulations to stifle free speech.

In recent times, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for citizens to express their views and opinions on various issues, including politics, social justice, and human rights. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have played a significant role in mobilizing and galvanizing citizens, especially young people, to demand accountability from their leaders and participate in the democratic process. The #EndSARS protests, which began in Nigeria in October 2020 and were largely focused on calling for an end to police brutality and demanding police reform in the country, is an example of such mobilization.

The study of Nigeria's media and political system through the Comparative Media Systems framework proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) aims to shed light on the relationship between the media and politics in Nigeria. By examining the structure of media markets, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and the role of the state in media systems, the study seeks to assess the applicability of the three models of media politics (Liberal, Democratic Corporatist, and Polarized Pluralist) within the Nigerian context and identify areas where modifications may be necessary.



Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the development of a new framework for comparative research on media and politics in post-colonial societies, especially in anglophone West African countries. By exploring the unique socio-political and historical contexts of these countries, the framework can better capture the complex interplay between the media and politics and provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of the media in shaping public opinion and facilitating democratic processes.

This study uses the established framework for Comparing Media Systems by Hallin and Mancini (2004) to examine the Nigerian media and political system. The study uses Nigeria as a case study to find out if the model can be used to contextualize the Nigerian media and political system and to assess if any reconceptualization is needed for the applicability of the model in Nigeria. Utilizing this comparative research framework, it is possible to create a new model for Nigeria and other post-colonial Anglophone West African nations. Although Nigeria and other post-colonial societies share some similarities with the 18 countries in Hallin and Mancini's model, there are significant differences that necessitate the adaptation of the model for West African countries. Omissions from the existing model include the effects of colonialism, military rule, inter-ethnic conflicts, tribal politics, political partisanship, and their impact on post-colonial societies.

The goal of this thesis is to assess the applicability of Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini's tripartite model of comparative media analysis to Nigeria's media system. Specifically, the thesis aims to investigate if this model can shed light on the complex interplay between media and politics in Nigeria. I expect that the focus on a country other than those included in Hallin and Mancini's study will reveal two things:

1. the applicability and limitations of the model and
2. pathways to creating a new model or modifying it.

What difference would it make to comparative media studies, I ask, if specific histories of colonialism, military rule, interethnic struggles, and tribal politics were to be critical factors in the analysis?

This thesis will be divided into five chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction to the thesis. The second chapter presents the country overview and the history of Nigerian media and politics through its different eras. The third chapter explains the Comparative Media Systems framework proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) and the methodology used in the thesis. The fourth chapter explores the four dimensions conceptualized in the framework: structure of media markets, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and the role of the state regarding the media systems; and applies the three-model paradigm to these dimensions. The fifth chapter considers the applicability of the three models of media politics within the Nigerian context.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **COMPARATIVE MEDIA ANALYSIS: AN INTRODUCTION**

Hallin and Mancini (2004) introduced an influential model for comparing media systems. *Comparing Media Systems: Three models of Media and Politics* (2004) expanded on the only existing model for international media analysis. That model was proposed in a cold-war era book, *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*, originally published in 1956, was authored by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm. Hallin and Mancini (2004) start their book by asking a seemingly simple question raised by the authors of *Four Theories of the Press*, which asks, “why is the press as it is?” (p. 1). To answer the question, Hallin and Mancini continue, “we must turn to comparative analysis” (p. 2).

Hallin and Mancini's (2004) three models of media and politics are a framework for comparative analysis that shows the interrelation between the media and the political system of a country. The framework surveyed the media institutions of 18 Western European and North American democracies to identify the major dimensions and variations in the media and political systems that have helped shape their evolution. The framework identified three major models of the media system, namely, the Polarized Pluralist, Democratic Corporatist, and Liberal models. These models were proposed to help explain how and why the media play different roles in politics. Hallin and Mancini reviewed the origin of the media and political framework of these countries to provide several explanations for their politics, economy, and socio-cultural

differences and similarities. Hallin and Mancini (2004) used these three models to organize discussions about the media systems of each country and to demonstrate how the different media of each country fit or do not fit into the three models.

When comparative analysis is used properly it allows us to discover things we have not noticed and thought of, and it also forces us to clarify the scope and relevance of the concepts we use. Comparative analysis can also open us to the differences and similarities, which allows us to think more clearly about our media systems. “Comparative analysis can protect us from false generalizations and even though it can be ethnocentric it provides a basis for a systematic critique of work that falls into these patterns of overgeneralization and conceptual narrowness” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 4). Another reason for comparative analysis is that it allows us to test the hypothesis about different social experiences.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) placed considerable emphasis on history, as they believed that it is essential to go back to the origins of the press and the political system of a country to trace the development and functionality of the media. Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that the media of a country cannot be understood without adequate knowledge of the nature of government, the political party system, the relationship between economic and political interests, and the development of civil society, among other aspects of society (p. 8). Hallin and Mancini (2004) at the same time, emphasize mutuality between media systems and political systems. This means media systems “reflect” both the social structures they originate from and the effects they have on those same structures (p. 8).

The framework identified four dimensions of the press that influence the press of a country; “the structure of the media market, political parallelism, professionalism, and the role of

the state” (p. 21). The three models of media and politics were conceptualized by Hallin and Mancini based on the variables within these dimensions. Previous studies that have employed the Hallin and Mancini (2004) model of analysis have used the following analysis to examine the four dimensions specified in the theory.

The structure of the media market is the development of existing media systems. It refers to the importance of radio and television as sources of information, media circulation, the influence of neighboring countries on the media, the media audience, and the balance of local, regional, and national media. Hallin and Mancini (2004, pp. 22-25) identified the following indicators to measure the structure of the media market.

1. the rate of newspaper circulation.
2. the gender differences related to newspaper readership.
3. preferred modes of news consumption, comparing newspaper and television news.
4. the separation between high-quality press and tabloids and between commercial and non-commercial press; and finally
5. the relative weights of the national, regional, and local press.

Comparing Media Systems put the development of the printed press at the center of the media market, examining its circulation, qualities, and readership.

Political parallelism is the extent to which the media reflect different perspectives and political orientations and allegiances. The concept of party-press parallelism describes the links between media outlets and political parties to include general political values and being close to certain political camps rather than to parties. Hallin and Mancini (2004, pp. 28-30) identified the following indicators to measure political parallelism.

1. The extent to which media coverage is shaped by journalists' political affiliations,
2. the degree to which audiences consume media according to their political preferences,
3. the separation between news and commentary,
4. political bias in news reporting,
5. and the public broadcasters' dependence on the government.

The professionalization of journalism is the independence of journalism professionals in promoting different rules and regulations and the public orientation of the journalists. Hallin and Mancini (2004, pp. 34-37) identified the following indicators to measure the professionalization of journalism.

1. The first is the degree of professional autonomy that journalists enjoy as a group.  
Autonomy can be limited either by external forces, such as political or economic actors within the news organizations, such as the publishers or the owners.
2. The second indicator of journalistic professionalism is the development of distinct professional norms, such as common ethical principles, for example, concerning the protection of confidential sources.
3. The third indicator is the extent to which journalists are oriented toward an ethic of serving the public interest. economic or political interests, which in turn contribute to diminishing their credibility.
4. The fourth indicator is the instrumentalization of the press.

The role of the state refers to the ability of the political system to shape the structure of the media system. It deals with the regulation and other forms of political pressure, economic subsidization of media, media ownership, media licensing laws, and regulations, and the role of

government as a source of information. Hallin and Mancini (2004, pp. 43-44) identified these indicators to measure the dimension of state intervention. Each of them refers to one type of action in which states might be engaged in the realm of media:

1. provision of subsidies and funding,
2. laws of libel, defamation, privacy,
3. professional secrecy laws for journalists,
4. laws regulating media concentration, competition, and ownership,
5. laws regulating political communication, especially during election campaigns,
6. laws regulating broadcast content and license.

Hallin and Mancini's (2004) observed that countries categorized under the same model tended to have similar responses to the inquiries across the four dimensions. For example, the North Atlantic or Liberal model, which includes countries such as Great Britain, the United States, Canada, and Ireland, is characterized by a high reach for the press, low levels of political parallelism, highly professionalized journalism, and minimal state involvement. Meanwhile, the Northern European or Democratic Corporatist model, comprising the Nordic countries, the German-speaking countries, Belgium, and the Netherlands, features a high reach for the press, relatively high levels of political parallelism, strong professionalization, and significant state intervention, including robust public service broadcasters and press subsidies. Finally, the Polarized Pluralist model encompassing France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, is defined by a press market with limited reach, high levels of political parallelism, weak professionalization, and substantial state intervention.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) admit to the limitations of their study, recognizing that it only covers western countries and overlooks important variables that may be relevant in non-European media systems, such as media freedom and religion. They encourage other scholars to expand and adapt their dimensions, indicators, and models to better capture the complexities of media-politics relations in different contexts. The authors acknowledge that there is a "gap in comparative research" and aim to provide a "theoretical synthesis and a framework for comparative research" on media and politics (p. 16).

An updated version of this model addresses newer media developments such as social media. Hallin (2021) acknowledged that comparative research on media systems during its first generation did not consider the rise of the internet and interactive digital media, but recent scholarship has started to address new media from a comparative perspective. A major issue in this area involves determining which variables should be considered to integrate new media into the comparative analysis. Concerning the development of digital media and their interaction with media systems, Hallin (2021) proposed the following possibilities:

1. they may be influenced by existing media system contexts,
2. they may develop according to independent technological or institutional logic,
3. they may develop differently in distinct media system contexts.

According to Hallin (2021), as research accumulates, it appears that a combination of these patterns is likely to exist: reproducing prevailing relationships, disrupting prevailing patterns, or developing in novel ways that are discontinuous with existing patterns.

It's worth noting that some scholars have attempted to enhance media system analysis by expanding the traditional four theories of the press. Development Media and Democratic



Participant studies, for instance, could be viewed as the fifth and sixth theories of media systems. (Dimitrova, 2021). Development Media, according to Dimitrova (2021), is a media model employed in developing nations with lower levels of economic development, which prioritizes aiding national development over media freedom. It is part of the development communication approach that focuses on social transformation, economic development, and incorporating information dissemination in areas such as health, agriculture, and education. The media are seen as tools for development, enabling social mobilization and community participation. Journalistic freedom can be restricted under this model in the name of national development.

Democratic-Participant Media Theory emphasizes non-hierarchical, community-run media that encourage ground-up participation and cultural pluralism. The media operate in a decentralized and pluralistic manner, promoting grassroots participation using community-run radio stations and local public access TV channels as tools for participation. In some developing countries, mobile technology and interactive communication tools are seen as a means of democratic participation. This theory advocates for cultural pluralism and encourages citizen involvement in community affairs, with a focus on providing equal and unrestricted access to information for all individuals regardless of their status or wealth. With this theory, it is important to recognize that the media is not an isolated institution but operates within a larger national context. Therefore, it is essential to situate journalism within the specific boundaries in which media organizations function and journalists operate. The media should be examined from the national context where they operate (Dimitrova, 2021).

In light of these considerations, this study aims to add to the existing literature on comparative media analysis by using Hallin and Mancini's model to locate Nigeria's political and

media systems using the framework proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004). As a developing democracy in West Africa, its inclusion poses challenges to Hallin and Mancini's Three Models because the model used 18 stable, mature, and highly developed democracies in Europe and North America. To shed new light on the functionality and applicability of the three models for comparative analysis in the West African context, Nigeria's media and political system will be studied in this project using the dimensions of the model.

To achieve these objectives, this project answers the following research questions:

**Research question 1:** What does the structure of media markets in Nigeria look like as an element of comparative media analysis?

**Research question 2:** What is the status of the professionalization of journalism in Nigeria?

**Research question 3:** What is the degree of political parallelism in Nigeria?

**Research question 4:** What is the role of the state in Nigeria as an element of comparative media analysis?

**Research question 5:** What are the applicability and limitations of the model proposed by Hallin and Mancini in explaining media and politics in Nigeria?

## **Methodology**

Previous research has employed Hallin and Mancini's three-model paradigm to analyze the functionality and applicability of media systems in the context of South Africa. The methodology used in that context drew from an extensive body of literature on the evolution of the South African media and political system while utilizing two unique resources. The first resource was

one-on-one interviews with top-ranking media company executives and editors. The second resource was the set of materials that provided a historically grounded view of the socio-economic and political dimensions of the Nigerian society in the context of media system development in Nigeria. This methodology “aligns with Hallin and Mancini’s pragmatic and interview-driven approach” (Hedland, 2007, p. 29).

In response to critics and discussing the comparison of media systems methodology, Hallin and Mancini (2010), in their book “*Comparing media systems beyond the Western world*,” explained the methodology of comparing media systems as a historical approach to social theory. According to the authors, their analysis is aimed to provide a concrete, historical analysis of a specific set of media systems, rather than presenting general categories for understanding media systems across time and space. The three models were ideal types that summarized distinct patterns of media system development among groups of countries and should be viewed as specific to the cases from which they were derived. While acknowledging that they could be relevant to the analysis of other systems, they emphasized the need for substantial modifications for cases outside Western Europe and North America. They also suggested that the three models could be useful primarily as inspirations for creating new models based on detailed research into specific political and media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 306).

To research Nigerian media and politics using the three-model paradigm, the methodology employed involves a comprehensive literature review on the evolution of Nigerian media and politics, data collection through archival records, and qualitative interviews with media journalists in Nigeria. The methodology also used a systematic approach for data analysis. The first step involves defining the research question in the context of Nigeria's media and

politics. Next, the study provides a theoretical framework for the research by conducting a comprehensive review of the Hallin and Mancini model. This review includes a systematic analysis of the four dimensions and the three paradigms. The third step involves gathering data on Nigerian media, politics, and systems. This data will be collected through interviews and social theory-informed analysis of the socio-economic and political dimensions of Nigerian society. The data collected will cover the four dimensions of the model, including the political, economic, and cultural contexts of the media systems.

After data collection, Hallin and Mancini's (2004) three-paradigm model will be used as a framework to analyze and compare the media systems. This will involve reviewing the indicators in each dimension as specified by Hallin and Mancini (2004) and applying the three-model paradigm to each dimension. Finally, the research will conclude the analysis to check the applicability and limitations of the comparative analysis model in explaining media and politics in Nigeria. It also seeks to make additions to the three models by highlighting the issues in politics and media that are unique to the Nigerian context.

The methodology for comparing media systems using the Hallin and Mancini model requires a combination of theoretical and empirical approaches. The research must be guided by a clear research question and a rigorous data collection and analysis process.

## CHAPTER 3

### NIGERIAN MEDIA AND POLITICS: AN OVERVIEW

Although indigenous Nigerian society had no newspaper, it had established functional agencies and institutions (a town crier or bellman, the use of drums across different ethnic groups, and smoke signals) it used in disseminating information and satisfying communication needs (Omu, 1978). The history of Nigeria's media started originally with the establishment of the printing press in Calabar (The southeastern part of Nigeria) by the Rev. Hope Waddell in 1846. The primary aim of the printing press was to produce religious materials like pamphlets, short essays, and stories for the church (Duyile, 1987).

Five years after the printing press the first newspaper "*Iwe Iroyin fun awon Egba ati Yoruba*" was established in 1859 by a British missionary Henry Townsend. "*Iwe Iroyin*" as it was popularly called was the first African newspaper to be published in an African language. At inception, it was published forthrightly in the Yoruba language but later transitioned to a bilingual newspaper when an English supplement was added in 1860 (Oton, 1958; Coker, 1968; Omu, 1978; Duyile, 1987). The primary objectives of the "*Iwe Iroyin*" were to persuade its readers to abandon the African socio-cultural practices in conflict with Christianity and to also establish literacy amongst its readers (Ogbondah, 1985; Ajayi, 1965).

The newspaper championed the British agenda of Christianization, Commercialization, and Colonization (Enemugwem, 2009). The early newspapers paved the growth of western education, Primary schools became a popular source of education, and this laid a good foundation for the establishment of secondary schools (Omu, 1978). The newspaper also helped the merchants advertise their wares and this subsequently heightened the demand for the type of

news that they wanted (e.g., “shipping intelligence”). It also fostered the growth of the printing press in Nigeria by the missionaries. At the end of the 1880s, there were at least five printing presses in Lagos (Omu, 1978, pp. 22-23).

Newspapers of this first era were produced at intervals, which means there were no dailies. They also did not have the technical expertise to run and establish a media house because they often employed a bandwagon method of doing business which affected the longevity of the newspapers in the era. They reported mostly international news instead of local news. The publisher usually lacked any form of training and expertise and would often take on the multiple roles of a news reporter, copy editor, and editor-in-chief (Oton, 1958).

It was impossible to estimate the socio-economic influence of the “*Iwe Iroyin*” because it lasted only 8 years and was produced fortnightly. It also became a weapon for Henry Townsend's ambitious political propaganda (Omu, 1978). Corroborating this, Ekwelie (1979) argued that it eventually became concerned with more mundane matters, as it was mainly interested in local rivalries that were raging between sections of the coastal population.

The second phase in the development of print journalism represented the break from religiously owned newspapers to the rise of secular newspapers (Tommy, 2014). This era spawned the rise of vibrant nationalist newspapers established by journalists turned politicians who utilized the press in the fight for independence and the end of colonialism from the British government (Omu, 1974). This era was different because those who owned and edited the press were actively involved in the politics of the country and helped considerably to increase the scope of the influence of the newspapers. Their arrival added impetus to the political resistance from the educated elites (Duyile, 1987). An example of this was the “protests in Lagos against

the water rate, fueled by the reporting of Nigerian journalists such as Herbert Macaulay, often dubbed the father of Nigerian nationalism” (Duyile, 1987, p. 104).

The arrival of three nationalist thinkers gave way to the development of the second phase of the press in Nigeria. John Payne Jackson a pan – Africanist thinker from the Republic of Liberia, and his son Thomas Horatio Jackson of the “*Lagos Weekly Record*” in 1890 and Sir Kitoyo Ajasa of the “*Nigerian Pioneer*” in 1914 played a vital role in the early resistance movement which kept colonialism in check in Nigeria (Coker, 1968; Omu, 1974; Duyile, 1987). Though Sir Kitoye Ajasa was often criticized as an opponent of African nationalism because of his conservative ideas and close working relationship with the colonial authorities his impact on the early nationalist movement cannot be erased (Coker, 1968; Duyile, 1987). Another development in this era was the emergence of the commercial printing press which was not established by newspaper publishers. These printing presses offered technical support to the editors-in-chief and publishers (Coker, 1968).

Nigeria witnessed significant changes in both media and politics at the turn of the century. In 1899 Nigeria was divided into three zones: the Royal Niger Company, the Niger Coast Protectorate under the Foreign Office, and Lagos under the Colonial Office. In the same year, the Niger Coast Protectorate was transferred to the Colonial Office, and this became the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria (Geary, 2013). The Royal Niger Company was a British-chartered company that operated in West Africa during the late 19th century. It was involved in trade and exploration along the Niger River and its surrounding areas. At the time, Germany and France were also showing interest in the region and engaging in trade with the Royal Niger Company. However, the British government, fearing competition from other world powers,

decided to take control of the region by declaring it a Protectorate (Best, 1996). By declaring Northern Nigeria, a Protectorate, the British government was essentially asserting its control over the region and transferring the territories of the Royal Niger Company to the Colonial Office. In 1914 the Southern and Northern Protectorates were amalgamated to form Nigeria with Lord Lugard becoming the first governor-general of unified Nigeria (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

Another significant event that happened was the British government started paying more attention to the Nigerian Press. In 1903 it enacted the first Newspaper Ordinance to regulate the establishment and operations of newspapers in the Southern Protectorate, at the time there was no established press in the Northern Protectorate (Coker, 1968; Uche, 1989). In 1909 the Seditious Offence Ordinance law was enacted (Coker, 1968; Nwuneli, 1985; Duyile, 1987). In 1917 Lord Lugard introduced another Newspaper Ordinance as an amendment to the law enacted in 1903 (Uche, 1989).

The year 1908 also saw for the first time the establishment of a newspaper with the name Nigeria in it. "*The Nigerian Chronicle*" was founded by Mr. Christopher Kumolu Johnson (Coker, 1968). He brought "Indigenization" or "Nigerianization" to newspaper ownership (Duyile, 1987, p. 87). This heralded the second newspaper with "Nigerian" in its name. The "*Nigerian Times*" was founded by Mr. Sapara Williams a Lagos-based lawyer and James Bright Davies (Coker, 1968; Duyile, 1987). It is important to note that apart from Rev. Henry Townsend all other publishers and owners of newspapers in Nigeria up until this time were descendants of freed slaves from Sierra Leones who had migrated to Lagos (Coker, 1968; Omu, 1978; Duyile, 1987).



Apart from the missionary's vernacular religious newspaper published in 1885 by the Church of Scotland Mission, there was no record of formation or newspaper ownership in the Eastern Region of Nigeria until 1914 when "*Aurora*" a weekly newspaper was established by Mr. William Coulson Labor (Coker, 1968; Duyile, 1987). In Northern Nigeria, the first newspaper to be established was "*Gaskiya Taƙi Kwabo*" in 1939. The paper was produced in Hausa (the most widely spoken language in Northern Nigeria) "because the northerners were illiterate in English and literate in Hausa and Arabic" (Coker, 1968, p. 21; Duyile, 1987). It was created by the British colonial administration (Duyile, 1987; Best, 1996). The establishment of this newspaper was prompted by rumors that the British Government intended to transfer Nigeria and other West African colonies to Adolf Hitler. The administration recognized the urgency of addressing these rumors and saw the need for an efficient means to dispel them. Although they had "*Jarida Nigeria Arewa*" an official monthly bulletin published in English, Hausa, and Arabic it was not effective in informing the people about local, national, and international news (Best, 1996).

Another set of nationalist pressmen emerged in Nigeria in the 1930s, these were a group of foreign-educated Nigerians who had returned. The most popular of them was Nnamdi Azikiwe who later became the first President of the Republic of Nigeria. Zik as he was popularly called established several landmark improvements in the Nigerian media and political sphere. Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe established the "*West African Pilot*" in 1937 which was the first daily newspaper in Nigeria. For the first time, the Nigerian Press saw a "measure of sensationalism" that emphasized human interest stories through the introduction of new features and columns like the sports page, gossip, and women's column. (Coker, 1968, p. 20).

He was also the first Nigerian to establish a chain of newspapers with Zik Group of Papers. Nnamdi Azikiwe's press established the first dailies in Eastern Nigeria with the "*Eastern Guardian*" in 1940. In 1943 the group established the "*Nigerian Spokesman*" at Onitsha and "*Southern Nigeria Defender*" in Warri (Onitsha and Warri are cities in the Eastern part of Nigeria) (Coker, 1968; Duyile, 1987). The group also acquired "*The Comet*" which was founded by Duse Mohammed Ali in Lagos Colony. After acquiring the newspaper, it was transferred to Kano (Northern Nigeria) in 1949 and renamed the "*Northern Advocate*" (Coker, 1968; Best, 1996; Duyile, 1987).

A notable highlight of the history of Nigerian media press since 1937 has been the expansion and development of the industry. The massive impact of World War II on society and politics encouraged the growth of newspapers in Nigeria. In their quest for leadership and recognition, the major newspapers made significant improvements to their production and presentation (Omu, 1978). The "*West African Pilot*" became the main driver of nationalist ideas and propaganda, establishing itself as the leading newspaper in West Africa. This success sparked fierce competition between existing and emerging newspapers in Nigeria.

The focus of the press shifted with the prospect of independence after the emergence of political parties, and the press became a major weapon of party politics and electioneering campaigns in Nigeria (Oso, 2001). When Nigeria gained independence, the three major political parties that took power at the federal and regional levels established newspapers as part of their fight for economic and political dominance. For example, Nnamdi Azikiwe used the "*West African Pilot*" to create a political following that was directed toward the National Council of Nigerians and Cameroons (NCNC) in the Eastern part, while the "*Daily Service*" became the

official organ of the Action Group in the Western part of Nigeria. In the same vein, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) took over the “*Gaskiya Ta Fi*” in the Northern region when it was established in 1949 (Agbaje, 1993; Oso, 2001).

Following Nigeria's independence, the media landscape underwent a series of transformations. One significant change was the emergence of government-funded newspapers in the 1960s, alongside privately owned party newspapers. Within a brief period, government-owned newspapers became the dominant form of ownership, although their circulation did not match that of privately owned papers (Bamiduro, 1984). The ownership structure of Nigerian newspapers changed significantly over time, with government-funded papers emerging as the dominant form of ownership, particularly during military rule. Under military regimes, press control became increasingly repressive (Elebute, 2015). During the seven military administrations that ruled Nigeria between 1966 and 1999 - Aguiyi Ironsi, Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Mohammed/Obasanjo, Muhammed Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida, General Sani Abacha, and General Abdusalami Abubakar - various measures were implemented to control what was perceived as excessive behavior by the press (Adeniyi, 2016).

Apart from suspending the Federal Constitution, they implemented extrajudicial measures to manage the press and stifle the freedom of the press to circulate opposing perspectives and ideas, particularly those that were critical of the government. Under the General Gowon administration, almost all the twelve states established newspapers, and privately owned newspapers were no longer in circulation, except for the “*Nigerian Tribune*” and “*Daily Times*” (Oso, 2001).

In 1975, during the Murtala Mohammed/Obasanjo regime in Nigeria, the government took ownership of the “*New Nigerian Newspapers*” and acquired a 60% equity share in the “*Daily Times*”, effectively making them government-owned (Oreh, 1976). Although the government claimed that this takeover would not affect the independence of these establishments, the move was seen as an attempt to control the narrative in the country and suppress any dissenting opinions. The government's takeover of these powerful newspapers was necessary for them to maintain their hold on power and avoid facing any challenge to their legitimacy or policies. It was also intended to ensure positive coverage of the government's activities and policies, thereby securing public support (Oso, 2001).

The establishment of the Second Republic in Nigeria in 1979 marked a transition from military to civilian rule in Nigeria. During this period, newspapers were largely partisan, meaning that they aligned with regional and party interests, as well as state military governments. Except for “*Sketch Press Limited*,” which was owned and operated by the governments of Oyo, Ogun, and Ondo States, all state-run media outlets were owned and controlled by their respective state military governments. This allowed them to control the narrative and suppress any dissenting opinions. The major privately-owned newspapers during this period were “*The Standard*,” “*The Star*,” and “*The Statesman*,” which were owned by states under the control of the Nigerian People's Party (NPP); “*The Observer*,” which was owned by Bendel State under the control of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); and “*The Herald*,” which was owned by Kwara State under the control of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). However, following the 1983 elections, there were changes in ownership. “*The Herald*” became the property of Kwara State, which was under the control of the UPN, while “*The Star*” was

acquired by Anambra State, which was under the control of the NPN (Olayiwola, 1991). This further cemented the partisan nature of Nigerian newspapers at the time, with ownership reflecting the political interests of the states and parties in control.

In 1984, General Muhammadu Buhari became the President of the country and assumed power and displayed his disdain for the press, subjecting journalists who violated the law to military tribunals with no right to appeal. He enacted Decree No. 2, which granted the government powers to detain individuals, including journalists, indefinitely for acts deemed harmful to state security (Ogbondah, 1992). When General Babangida assumed power in 1985, he abolished Decree No. 2 and released the two journalists jailed under Decree No. 4. He also promised to uphold press freedom but subsequently reneged on this promise, maintaining his predecessor's oppressive policies. He failed to repeal Decree No. 2 or the constitution suspension and modification decree and established the Press Council to regulate the press (Ismail, 2011).

Subsequent military regimes, including General Sani Abacha and General Abdulsalami's, maintained these oppressive laws. The decrees remained in force and were a requirement for all newspapers to register with the government and procure licenses. From a board appointed by the Federal Government, the military continued to draft press laws to constrain the press, as they believed it had become too influential. It was not until the civilian regime took power in 1999 that these laws were revoked.

For almost thirty years, the press operated in a repressive environment characterized by pre- and post-publication censorship, newspaper house closures, newspaper seizures, detention, and physical abuse of journalists. These retaliations were often taken against the press whenever it dared to take a critical stance. One extreme example was the assassination of Dele Giwa, the

founding editor of “*News watch*”, Nigeria's leading news magazine, in October 1986 by a letter bomb believed to have been sent on the orders of a high-ranking official of the military regime. The killing of Giwa, an outspoken and persistent investigative journalist, was perceived as a covert message to the press and a warning to other journalists who might have been motivated to engage in investigative journalism (Ette, 2000). Despite the challenges faced by the press, investigative journalism is important for exposing corruption and stimulating debates on public affairs. To revive the craft, some suggest restructuring the journalism curriculum to include practical training in investigative journalism and establishing synergy between journalism schools and media institutions (Onyenankeya & Salawu, 2020).

Radio broadcasting was introduced to Nigeria during the colonial era by the British in the 1930s as part of their efforts to control and influence the local population (Uche, 1985). The first radio station, the Radio Diffusion Service (RDS), was established in Lagos in 1933 and operated as a government monopoly until 1959 when the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS) was created (Udomisor, 2013). After the establishment of the relay station on Victoria Island, Radio Nigeria was established through the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) per the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation Ordinance of 1956. Radio Nigeria was divided along with the three regions of Nigeria, each under the control of the corresponding region, with headquarters remaining in Lagos (Raufu, 2003).

However, the regionalization of Radio Nigeria was marked by political bias and inadequate coverage, which led to the establishment of the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC) by the Western Region, spearheaded by Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Uche, 1985). Chief Obafemi Awolowo played a significant role in the history of radio and

television in Nigeria. On 31st October 1959, “*Western Nigeria Television*” (WNTV) was launched, serving as the first television station in Nigeria and Africa at large (Ume-Nwagbo, 1979).

The 1980s and 1990s saw the proliferation of private radio stations in Nigeria. The deregulation of the media sector by the government in 1992 led to an explosion of private radio stations across the country (Ariye, 2010). These private stations gave voice to previously marginalized groups and helped to expand the range of content available to Nigerians (Oketunmbi, 2007). The liberalization of the media sectors also led to an increase in competition among radio stations, which drove improvements in programming and helped to raise the overall quality of radio broadcasting in the country (Ariye, 2010). In recent years, the rise of digital media has had a significant impact on radio broadcasting in Nigeria. Many radio stations now have an online presence, allowing listeners to access their programming from anywhere in the world (Anyanwu & Nwokeocha, 2015). Radio broadcasting has played a significant role in the history of communication in Nigeria. From its early beginnings as a government monopoly to the proliferation of private radio stations, radio has been a key medium for nation-building, development, and communication in the country.

Although the Nigerian press is often considered to be the most vibrant in Africa, limitations exist. While the press is free to express opinions on many issues, there are limits on what can be said about the government (Okoro, 2004). Nigeria is currently in its Fourth Republic, which marks the country's longest period of uninterrupted civilian rule. However, the Nigerian government is still plagued by instability, particularly due to the politicization of regional, ethnic, and religious identities. Ethnic minorities fear domination by larger groups, and

religious tensions continue to lead to violence and riots. Unfortunately, the government has done little to alleviate these social tensions, and in many cases, government control has been at the root of the problem. Corruption in government has been rampant, and politicians have used government funds to extend their power and gain support in their communities. This has created a system of patronage where only those in power have access to government funds. Elections have been characterized by violence, intimidation, and vote rigging, as incumbent politicians have typically sought to guarantee their election through undemocratic means.

The failure of civilian administrations to promote stability and responsible rules allowed the military to take a strong role in governance. Nigeria was governed by military regimes for much of its history, with military coups being a common occurrence. Military regimes claimed to restore stability and end corruption, but they have proven just as irresponsible and corrupt as civilian governments. Military rulers spent lavishly on public works projects, stole public funds, and provided lax oversight of public expenditures.

The press has a vital role in reporting and exposing injustice, corruption, and elite privilege, but its ability to influence politics in Nigeria is limited. The country's democracy is fragile and vulnerable, complicated by religious and ethnic political suspicions, as well as social media disinformation and propaganda. Political reform through investigative reporting and exposing journalism must remain the media's focus in Nigeria.

In conclusion, media influence on Nigerian politics is limited, and the press alone cannot transform the country's political landscape into a transparent and open system that promotes public engagement and national consensus. Nigerian politics needs a broad-based reform effort that includes improvements to education, poverty reduction, and equitable distribution of



resources. The press can play a role in this effort by continuing to report on and expose corruption and injustice, however, the responsibility for reform ultimately falls on Nigerian society. Political and social reform efforts require the participation and commitment of citizens across all sectors of society. This includes civil society organizations, community groups, and the private sector, as well as the government.

Reforms have already started to take place in Nigeria, particularly in the areas of demanding government accountability and transparency, thanks to the power of collective action. The #EndSARS protest of 2020 is a prime example, where Nigerians mobilized through peaceful protest to demand police reform by abolishing the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Similarly, in the recently concluded 2023 election, Nigerians demanded accountability in the electoral process from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This was achieved through the creation of real-time result-viewing applications. These actions demonstrate Nigerian society's belief in the power of numbers to effect change and hold those in power accountable.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYZING THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF COMPARATIVE MEDIA ANALYSIS

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), there are four dimensions to be considered in a comparative framework: the structure of media markets: the development of a mass press, professionalism, political parallelism, and the role of the state. This section examines these four dimensions in Nigeria's media system.

#### **The structure of media markets: The development of a mass press**

Hallin and Mancini (2004) distinguished the structure of the media market through the “nature” and “development” of a mass press (p. 22). The authors emphasized mass circulation of the press, differences in newspaper readership, gender differences in newspaper readership, the balance between local, regional, and national newspapers, degree of clear separation between “sensationalist press” and “quality press” (pp. 22-25). Hallin and Mancini (2004) also made the distinction between the vertical and horizontal process of communication. The horizontal process involves communication between “a small elite conducted through newspapers that are both sophisticated and politicized in their content”. An example of this is the newspapers of Southern Europe. The vertical process involves communication between “political elites and the ordinary citizens” (p. 24).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) also argued that a country that does not develop a mass-circulation press in the 19th or 20th century will subsequently never develop one. As such the “presence or absence of a mass-circulation press has deep implications for the development of

the media as political institutions” (p. 24). This means communication would remain an exercise between the elites.

In the Nigeria context, Omu (1974) explained three factors that limited the development of mass circulation in Nigeria. The first factor is the lack of a unified transportation system across the country. Until the beginning of the 19th century traveling between Lagos and its surrounding areas was primarily on Foot, The roads were no better than the forest paths, which were unsafe as a result of the “intermittent Yoruba succession wars” (p. 82). This issue is still prevalent. Nigeria does not have a structured means of distribution and circulation of its print media. Every attempt to establish one has failed, partly because of practical problems but mainly political and ethnic differences. Nigeria’s vast geographical size, poor transportation infrastructure, and inadequate distribution channels make it difficult to reach every part of the country with print media. This means that even if a distribution system is established, it may not be able to efficiently reach all parts of the country. Nigeria is a diverse country with over 250 ethnic groups, and political tensions are often high. This makes it difficult to agree on a unified system for distributing and circulating print media, as different groups may have conflicting interests and priorities. Each publisher is responsible for its distribution which can be very costly (Maringues, 2001). Most of the publishing houses are concentrated in Lagos and its neighboring cities and states. The prevalent mode of mass circulation press is truck-based. This means the publishers transport their prints daily via road to other regions of the country. It takes about 12-15 hours to transport newspapers from Lagos to other parts of the country by road (Ojo, 2008).

The problem with this system is if the trucks get delayed the newspapers do not get circulated as and when due. This has harmed the development of Nigeria’s media because, “in

countries where mass-circulation newspapers are absent, the mass public relies heavily on electronic media for information about political affairs” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 24). Broadcast media, especially the radio, remains the most popular source of information in the country. The radio network stands as Nigeria’s most popular media of information (Iwunna et al., 2022). Radio broadcasting in Nigeria was exclusively owned and controlled by the government until 1992 when General Ibrahim Babangida liberalized it through the enactment of Decree 38. However, the opportunity for individual ownership of the broadcast media had already been granted by the 1979 Constitution but was not implemented until 13 years later. This deregulation had a significant impact on the media landscape in Nigeria, allowing for more accessibility for Nigerians (Ukonu, 2005).

The second factor that limited the development of mass circulation in pre- and post-independence Nigeria was the low literacy rates. For pre-independence Nigeria in his report on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria 1912-1919, Lord Lugard pointed out that in Southern Nigeria in 1913 only one out of every 180 children of school age “had any sort of education whatever.” This means that more than 99 percent of the children were not in school (as cited in Omu, 1974, p. 82). In modern-day Nigeria, Nielsen (2021) gave an analysis of the literacy rate in terms of region, poverty levels, gender, and age. The southern region has the highest literacy rate, it also has the lowest differences between male and female literacy rates. This correlates with what was prevalent in prehistoric Nigerian society because the print media developed more in the southern protectorate. Illiteracy is still a significant problem in Nigeria, The Federal government reported that about 65 to 75 million Nigerians are illiterate out of a population of about 170 million people (Agency Report, 2017). With a significant percentage of

the population unable to read and write, the market for print media is limited, which reduces the demand for newspapers and magazines and limited the development of mass circulation in Nigeria.

There is also a gender difference in terms of readership in Nigeria in urban and rural areas of the country because of literacy rate and economic independence. The female literacy rate in Nigeria is also amongst the highest in West Africa (Sasu, 2022). Although the literacy rate is one of the highest in West Africa there is still a significant difference between male and female literacy rates in urban and rural areas. “As of 2018, the rate among men living in rural areas of Nigeria reached roughly 60 percent, whereas female literacy rates in the same areas were 35 percent” (Sasu, 2022). The economy also affects the literacy rates in the country. Young women from larger-income households are 4 times more likely to be literate than young women from (Nielsen, 2021). Gender gaps in Nigeria reflect historical differences in literacy rates as well as differences in the function of media to the different genders. For instance, when women were historically excluded from the media sphere, they mostly never develop the habit of reading newspapers just like e.g., Southern Europe (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

The third factor that limited the development of mass circulation in pre- and post-independence Nigeria was because low sales of newspapers. Omu (1978) gave two reasons for this in pre-independence Nigeria. Firstly, Lagos was a relatively small colony, that relied on word of mouth to circulate its local news. Another explanation was the communal and interdependent lifestyle of Lagosian made the practice of borrowing newspapers inevitable. According to the Nigerian Times (1915), a single copy was borrowed “in succession by “three or four or more” (as cited in Omu, 1978, p. 83). This lifestyle is also evident in post-independence

Nigeria through a group called the “Free Readers Association.” The Free Readers association is an informal group comprising of mostly young adult men, they are called Free Readers because “no one buys the newspaper they read.” Their modus operandi is to gather around newspaper vendors “read the headlines” and “debate the issues of the day” without paying full price for the newspaper (Busari, 2015, para. 1). To avoid losing sales the vendors allow them to read the headlines for a small fraction of the full price. Once they are done reading the vendors put it back on the stands for sale. This undermines the economic viability of the press in Nigeria by reducing the revenue generated from sales, which has contributed to the lack of the development of mass circulation press.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) also acknowledged the issues language has on readership and circulation of the press. The authors conceded that mass-circulation will be easier if there were no “regional” or “linguistic” segmentation of the media market (pp. 25-26). In Nigeria, the reality is there is linguistic pluralism. Although English is the lingua franca of the country there are still about 500 indigenous languages. Most of the media carry out their activities in the English language except those that were specifically made in the indigenous languages. The problem with this is how many of the audience can read, write and understand the media's role in politics with the low literacy rates in the country. How many of these 500 indigenous languages can be used for the dissemination of information?

Apart from issues of language and literacy affecting the mass circulation of the press, there is also the issue of access (Rodny-Gumede, 2015). In many post-colonial societies, the standard of living and purchasing power is low, as there is also economic inequality. The standard of living in Nigeria is another factor that affects access to newspapers. With a poverty

rate of over 40%, many individuals may prioritize basic needs such as food and shelter over purchasing newspapers (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). However, it is worth noting that some newspapers have developed digital versions of their publications, which may be more accessible to individuals who cannot afford physical copies.

Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 288) explained differentiation theory as a mechanism through which media are separated from political groups. Here the media play an increasingly central role in politics and social life by establishing ties with individual voters and other social actors. Differentiation and de-differentiation can lead to the separation of politics from the media, as well as a reduction in the gap between the media and business, as Hallin and Mancini have posited (Hadland, 2007). Social media in Nigeria are leading the way with “differentiation.” The emergence of new media platforms such as social media, blogs, and online news sites has disrupted the traditional role of legacy media and challenged their monopolistic authority in speaking truth to power.

Social media have become the primary source of breaking news and online platforms are more likely to be more critical of the government than legacy media, leading to a shift in opinion and debate to digital media. The impact of internet technology on governance in Nigeria is notable, as social media are breaking down barriers between leaders and citizens, providing greater access to information and opportunities for public engagement (Okoro & Emmanuel, 2018). For example, during the 2015 elections, social media were used by citizen journalists and civil society to inform the public about the collation of election results in various states, leading to increased political awareness among young people and contributing to the unexpected victory of the opposition party All Progressives Congress (APC) over the ruling People's Democratic

Party (PDP) (Apuke & Tunca, 2018). The study by Obisesan (2022) revealed that social media played a crucial role in the 2019 General Election in Nigeria by empowering citizens through debates and narratives. These played a significant role in setting the agenda for both the ruling class and citizens' democratic expectations.

In summary, Nigeria's media system has gone through different phases of development, each characterized by different media system types. The fragmentation of the press and the control of the press by various political and ethnic groups create obstacles to the formation of a shared national identity and a platform for national unity in Nigeria. The government's control of the media limited the development of a mass-circulation press. The shift towards a liberal model in the 1990s led to the emergence of privately-owned media organizations and increased competition, which facilitated the development of a mass-circulation press. However, challenges such as high illiteracy rates and the lack of a structured means of distribution and circulation of print media continue to limit the reach of the press in Nigeria.

### **Applying the Three Models Paradigm for The structure of the media markets: The development of the mass press.**

The Democratic Corporatist Model, also known as the North/Central European model, is distinguished by the presence of press freedom and a thriving newspaper industry with high circulation. The model has a history of party newspapers and other media associated with organized social groups. Although it coexisted with the commercial press throughout the twentieth century, it started to wane in the 1970s. In Nigeria's media landscape, the characteristics of a Democratic Corporatist model are noticeably absent both in the media



industry and political system. However, in Nigeria, the media industry is heavily influenced by the government, and media organizations often face significant pressure to censor or self-censor their coverage to avoid offending political authorities. This environment has created an atmosphere where press freedom is often limited, and critical voices are suppressed. In the political sphere, the dominance of powerful elites and the prevalence of corruption have contributed to a lack of cooperation and communication between the state, employers, and employees. This has resulted in a weak civil society and a limited ability for citizens to hold their leaders accountable.

In contrast, the Polarized Pluralist Model is characterized by an elite-oriented press with relatively low circulation and a greater focus on electronic media. The development of freedom of the press and commercial media industries came later, and newspapers often required subsidies due to their economic marginality. Nigeria's media market shares several characteristics with a Polarized Pluralist model with an elite-oriented press. In Nigeria, the media landscape is highly polarized, with media organizations often aligning themselves with specific political or ethnic groups. This has resulted in a lack of objectivity and impartiality in news coverage, with media outlets often promoting their interests and agendas. Furthermore, the media market is dominated by a few large media organizations, which are often owned or controlled by powerful elites. In addition, Nigeria's mass media market has low circulation due to the lack of a centralized means of circulating newspapers. This has made it difficult for newspapers to reach a wider audience and has contributed to a greater emphasis and focus on electronic media. Electronic media, especially radio is the most accessible and cheapest form of media for Nigerian society, making it the primary source of news and information for many people.

Similar to the Democratic Corporatist Model, the North Atlantic or Liberal Model also had early press freedom and mass-circulation press, but the circulation of newspapers is now lower than in the Democratic Corporatist societies. Nigeria's media market does not share many characteristics with the Liberal model. This model emphasizes press freedom and independence, with little government intervention in media activities. However, in Nigeria, there has historically been limited press freedom, with media organizations often facing pressure and censorship from the government. Additionally, the development of mass circulation of newspapers in Nigeria has been slow, this is due to factors such as low literacy rates, poverty, and the lack of a centralized means of circulating newspapers. These factors have made it challenging for newspapers to reach a wider audience, limiting their influence in shaping public opinion and promoting democracy. Furthermore, the concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few powerful elites has also limited the development of an independent and diverse media landscape.

Despite its strengths, the three-model paradigm developed by Hallin and Mancini struggles to accommodate changes in media systems. This is because the study focuses on 18 countries that have experienced decades or even centuries of political and media system stability, making it difficult to apply to countries that have undergone different political experiences such as military coups. Although the model provides a general understanding of the causes of change and assumes that it leads to greater differentiation, it requires modification when applied to countries that have experienced more recent and significant change. Differentiation and de-differentiation do not always lead to a reduction in the gap between media, politics, and business.

When I asked the three interviewees what the current structure and development of print media is in Nigeria, they gave the following responses:

“The print sector is suffering a lot because people are caring less and less about it. You have the internet and one of the issues with social media is that and has taken a chunk of the audience. People are now driven by the internet revolution. They know that they can find news on the internet and even besides finding news, the news is also finding them like even when you do not go out searching for news the news comes to you and that's like accidental exposure.” (Interviewee, 2)

“The print industry is at its lowest right now and circulation is poor because patronage is also low. The print media is barely surviving but thankfully one of the things that help it maintain stability is this institutionalized culture, where some of the ministry's offices need daily supplies of newspapers no matter what is happening. Also, libraries and corporate offices request daily supplies of newspapers.” (Interviewee, 1)

“Politicians and entrepreneurs also advertise and congratulate each other on major milestones through the newspapers and this helps the newspapers make some money and also maintains a bit of stability. But this is also reserved for like the top newspapers but generally, the industry is suffering.” (Interviewee, 3)

Finally, analyzing the development of the media market with three models of media and politics proposed by Hallin and Mancini in the case of Nigeria, the press and media largely conform to the Polarized Pluralist because it is defined by a press with limited reach press, a gender difference in readership and the preferred modes of news consumption is through the radio.

### **Professionalism**

Since the transition to civilian rule, the rules and requirements for journalistic professionalism in Nigeria have taken a different turn. Nigeria's media played an important role in politics and governance, but now that the media and the public no longer have a common enemy (colonial

and military governments) the media must now expand the scope of journalistic practice to include one that serves the interest of the public.

In defining professionalism Hallin and Mancini (2004) establish that formal training is not essential for the practice of journalism, instead emphasizing journalistic professionalism, not professionalism as defined by other occupations. It is most often when it concerns journalism rather than other media-related occupations that the issue of “professionalization” or “journalistic professionalism” is raised (p. 34). The authors also defined four indicators for journalistic professionalization: autonomy, distinct professional norms, public service orientation, and instrumentalization.

Autonomy in journalistic professionalism deals with a “corps” of journalists not necessarily with an individual journalist. It looks at the overall autonomy of a country’s journalism sector. Journalists work in an industry where “mass production” is the norm and they rarely own their means of production and are usually salaried employees. This means control over the work process is “collegial”, and journalists maintain a system of checks and balances and a sense of authority over each other (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 34).

Distinct professional norms consist of shared standards that are distinct to the journalism profession. The authors described distinct professional norms as “the existence of a set of shared norms distinct to the profession,” the degree of consensus those who practice journalism enjoy, and their relative influence on news reporting irrespective of their “political orientations,” and the propensity for a journalist to “define their standing in terms of the opinion of fellow journalists and not outsiders like political leaders” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 35-36).

Public service orientation, another important element of the concept of “professionalism” is the notion that journalism is oriented towards public service. One-way public service orientation can manifest is through the establishment of a formally organized system (i.e., press council) to help with journalistic self-regulation (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 37).

At inception, the media in Nigeria was rated high in content, quality, and ethics. They were a powerful influence on the political sphere and were very critical of the government. Now the selection of what to say and publish is not always based on the “principles of fairness” but sometimes on the promotion of ethnic, religious, or political agenda (Christopher & Onwuka, 2013, p. 38).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) also drew a contrast between professionalism and instrumentalization. Instrumentalization is the control of media by outside actors i.e., politicians. The authors found that newspapers established primarily or in part to serve political interests use them as instruments to intervene in the world of politics. When media is instrumentalized it lacks autonomy; it becomes media that serves individual interests, not the public interest. Media can also be “instrumentalized” for commercial purposes. Examples of this are demands from advertisers for influence over editorial content, to more subtle kinds of pressures. This ultimately means that professionalization can be threatened either by political instrumentalization or by commercialization, and indeed in many cases by both at once (p. 37). The Nigerian media system is threatened by both political instrumentalization and commercialization.

In terms of the professionalism of journalists in Nigeria, a popular unethical practice predominant in the Nigerian media system is Brown Envelope Syndrome (BES). This is the exchange of money and other incentives for good standing in the press, it is essentially bribery

by those who want to be portrayed favorably in the press (Nwabueze, 2010; Ekeanyanwu & Obianigwe, 2012; Eke, 2014; Ibbi, 2016). The origins of BES in Nigeria could be traced back to the culture of presenting visitors with “kola nut” as a practice of hospitality which is common in many African societies. It could also be traced to the reign of the military government where corrupt business practices were the order in every sector of the country. (Nwabueze, 2010, p. 498). During the Babangida regime (1983 – 1993), what is now known as the 'settlement' syndrome became very prominent (Oso, 2013).

BES is an epidemic in West African societies, there are similar variations of this in other parts of the continent. For instance, it is called “soli” or “solidarity” in Ghana and “gatu” or “gratuity” in Liberia (Okafor, 2014, p. 23). This syndrome is having a crippling effect on Nigeria’s media, it has led to a decline in the quality of news, values, and morality in journalism, it is a sad truth that in present society upholding ethical principles in Nigeria is more of a fantasy than reality (Okoro & Chinweobo-Onuoha, 2013; Eke, 2014). Although the name is brown envelope such monies could be in any color of envelope, or as money transfers, landed properties, automobiles, or all expensed paid trips (Eke, 2014; Ibbi, 2016). What qualifies as a brown envelope are outlandish gifts or monies given in exchange for favorable press coverage under the guise of showing appreciation or hospitality.

Poor remuneration, conflict of interests, weak internal regulation and code of conduct, weak professional regulation, and unpaid salaries are what contributed to the rise of unethical practices amongst journalists in Nigeria (Idowu, 1996). Some media publishers and editors justify the nonpayment of salaries on the grounds that journalists already make enough from the brown envelope (Ojo, 2018). It is becoming more and more worrisome when journalists demand

some sort of remuneration before news stories are published, hereby performing their duties at the behest and interest of a selected few for personal gains instead of for the interest of the public. This unethical principle of the brown envelope also happens at the institutionalized level. According to Omenugha and Oji (2008), it occurs when sponsored news programs are “officially placed as sponsored news programs” hereby blurring the line between advertising news content and responsible ethics (p. 14).

Ownership also affects the autonomy of journalists in Nigeria because most of the newspapers published are privately owned. The publishers see these establishments as an investment that must yield profit or as a tool for their burgeoning political ambitions (Ibbi, 2016; Pepple & Acholonu, 2018). It is therefore implied that damaging news stories about the publisher or the political party they represent are not to be published. The lack of formal training is also a major problem because it leads to an increase in unqualified journalists getting into the field for a quick money scheme or the fame that comes with the position (Eke, 2014). In recent years there has been an increase in political appointments of journalists as press secretaries, media advisors, and consultants (Oso, 2013).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) established that “where political parallelism is strong, with media organizations strongly tied to political organizations, and journalists deeply involved in party politics, professionalization is indeed likely to be low, journalists are likely to lack autonomy, except for the extent that they enjoy it due to high political positions. Journalism is also likely to lack a distinct common culture and distinct sense of social purpose, apart from the purposes of the political actors with which the media are affiliated” (p. 38).

The ethical framework developed for Nigeria is the Nigerian Press Council in 1979. This was not the first of its kind. In the search for an acceptable code of conduct in journalism, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) was formed in 1955, and in 1962 the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) was also formed with its code of ethics. One of the codes of conduct of the Nigerian Press Council is the achievement and maintenance of the highest professional and commercial standards by the Nigerian Press decree (Nigerian Press Council, n.d.).

However, the press council is not completely above board with its practices. “House of Representatives Committee on Public Accounts has accused the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) of fraudulently spending N8.301 million for renovating its building in Abuja. At an investigative hearing, sequel to queries of the office of the Auditor-General of the Federation (AGF), the committee chairman, also accused the council of engaging an insurance broker for N5.118 million without due process” (Oham, 2017). This was culled from a news article from The Guardian newspaper. The question now is who will enforce the code of ethics and ethical standards for journalists when the ones in charge are involved in their unethical scandals.

As the age of social media and numerous advertising-based broadcasters expand, the question arises of how underpaid journalists can hold governments accountable. The Nigerian press is predominantly owned by different factions of the ruling class and business entrepreneurs, which makes it challenging for the media to offer a sustained critical perspective on the country's political economy due to the market and economic forces in play. To stay afloat, media outlets must seek out materials that will sell, leading to the prioritization of news for public consumption over public service.



In conclusion, the Nigerian media have a rich history of playing a significant role in shaping the country's political landscape. However, in recent times, the media have become increasingly weak due to various factors, including ownership and economic dynamics. Despite the challenges, the media remains an essential tool in holding governments accountable, and efforts should be made to strengthen them.

### **Applying the Three Models Paradigm for Professionalism**

Hallin and Mancini's (2004) indicators for journalistic professionalism are autonomy, distinct professional norms, public service orientation, and instrumentalization. Polarized Pluralist countries have had limited development of media markets and weaker professional organizations and unions compared to Democratic Corporatist countries. As a result, the level of professionalization remains lower, although this is not due to a lack of education or skill among journalists. These countries have been more subject to external forces, particularly in politics and business, which have often influenced their journalism.

On the other hand, Democratic Corporatist countries have a high level of journalistic professionalism and autonomy, and strong associations with organized political forces and formalized systems of self-regulation of the press. Finland and Sweden were early adopters of formal journalism education, which has helped promote a distinct professional identity. The level of journalistic autonomy is also relatively high in these countries.

In Liberal countries, journalistic professionalism is high, with strong traditions of political neutrality and a common informational writing style. However, formal institutions of self-regulation of the media are less developed than in Democratic Corporatist countries,

although they are more developed than in Polarized Pluralist countries. Self-regulation is largely informal, and editors have grown in stature.

In the Polarized Pluralist region, limited development of professional self-regulation and the influence of external forces, mainly from politics and business, has weakened the consensus on journalistic autonomy versus instrumentalization. Commercial owners, whether private or state-linked, have used the media to wield influence in the political world, making instrumentalization a significant form of control. The Polarized Pluralist countries have a relatively high degree of instrumentalization of the media.

Regarding journalistic professionalization, Nigeria bears little resemblance to the Democratic Corporatist model. While Nigeria has experienced instances of journalistic professionalism in the past, there is also clear evidence of its degradation. Despite the presence of a formal system of self-regulation that implies a democratic corporatist leaning, the system is weak, incomplete, and occasionally disregarded by industry players. The state does intervene, but it does not do so substantially in terms of subsidies.

There is also formal educational training to help promote a distinct identity amongst journalists. The foremost of them is The Nigerian Institute of Journalism, a leading institution in Nigeria that specializes in training journalists and professionals in the field. They offer a variety of programs, including specialized courses and short-term certificates, and have state-of-the-art equipment for practical 21st-century journalism. Established in 1963 and fully operational in 1971, the Institute has been in the business of training and re-training journalists for over 50 years, making it the best choice for anyone interested in mass communication (Nigerian Institute of Journalism, n.d). From the interview that was conducted, it was evident that despite the

availability of these formalized institutions there are still low levels of political participation.

Interviewee 2 recounted their experience with brown envelope syndrome as follows:

“At the end of an event or the program, you will find journalists just looking around and they are waiting for whatever the minister would drop. Sometimes it is even coordinated very coordinated, usually from maybe the NUJ (Nigerian Union of Journalists) or some other affiliate bodies. They coordinate these things, collect their amounts, and decide the angles these stories go. So instead of journalists reporting facts they are reporting public relations materials and content.”

Interviewee 3 also emphasized how the absence of professionalism in the Nigerian media can undermine the impartiality and credibility of the news content.

“So, this makes the news slant on how journalists report issues. It kills objectivity. People fight for these monies at the end of the day, it influences the angle you report from, you know, reporting the facts, you're reporting what whoever is giving the brown envelope wanted to report. Even though you study the truth most of the time it is not even true. But it is just what it is. And it's a big problem. As a journalist, your first obligation should be to the truth and that the audience to which you report, but sadly it is not so.”

Nigeria does have several commonalities with the journalistic professionalism that is evident in the Polarized Pluralist model. The media in this model are frequently used as a tool to intervene in the political world. Polarized Pluralist systems have weak consensus on journalistic standards and limited development of professional self-regulation and the extent to which journalists are oriented toward an ethic of serving the public interest. These characteristics are also evident in Nigerian media and politics. The interviewees explained different reasons for this and expressed their frustration as follows:

“Public interest is putting the people first, being a watchdog and society depends on you to report truthful occurrences to them. Brown envelope syndrome is one of the issues that has affected the public interest and journalism practice in Nigeria. And it's just about the “guys” up there weaponizing poverty, which is like a national problem, and they know that because journalists are poorly paid.” (Interviewee, 1)

“It gets to the point where you have journalists in factions, for example, you have those against the ministry, and you have those supporting the ministry and that's because of the

pecuniary gains that they get from it. You have to ensure that anything that comes out of his office is projected as positively as possible. So, they have turned journalism into publicity. PR and journalism are not the same. As a journalist, your job is not to create goodwill your job is to report things.” (Interviewee, 3)

In Nigeria, there is a consensus on journalistic standards that are marked with deterioration. Journalistic autonomy is under deterioration and instrumentalism is on the rise. The Nigerian experience of journalistic professionalization highlights the complex interplay that exists in Polarized Pluralist countries.

### **Political Parallelism**

Hallin and Mancini (2004) identified several indicators that can be used to assess the political parallelism of a country and the closeness of a country’s media to its political system. The first indicator is the Media content; this examines the extent to which the different media reflects the distinct “political orientation” in their news and entertainment reporting (p. 27). Another indicator is “organizational connections between the media and political parties or other forms of established organizations in the country including “religious establishments, cooperative unions, and trade union's” (p. 28). The third indicator is the extent to which media personnel are active in political office, “tendencies for the career paths of media personnel to be shaped by their political affiliations” (p. 28). The fourth indicator is the “partisanship of media audience”. The last indicator is the role and practices of journalists in the country. Journalists in some countries take on the role of “publicists” by influencing public opinions while some take on the role of “providers” (p. 28). A system where the media content reflects the distinct views of the owners, where there is a clear connection between the media and political parties, where media personnel are active in political office, and where the media audience is partisan suggests

a system where political parallelism is strong. These indicators are going to be used in the Nigerian media and political context.

In Nigeria, newspapers are primarily owned by private individuals, and broadcast media is majorly owned by the government both at the federal and state levels (Musa & Mohammed, 2004). In Nigeria, ownership may not directly determine the content that is published, but it can exert "overt" or "covert" control over how news and editorial content are presented. This can have an impact on the objectivity of editorial decision-making within the newsroom. (Okon, 2018, p. 51). Most of the newspapers established in Nigeria are established by either politicians or entrepreneurs who are either currently in power or by proxy (Ojebode, 2011). The independence of the editorial team is undermined by the publisher or owner's influence in either business or politics (Ekeanyanwu, 2007). This is more glaring in the coverage of politics and elections, the editors are often faced with the challenges of balancing the interests of their owners and the principles of objectivity in news reporting (Aghamelu, 2013).

A study by Mordi and Ogbu (2017) on the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria showed the influence of newspaper owners on their content. The newspapers that were politically affiliated used the media to launch hateful attacks on their political opponents. Newspapers owned by entrepreneurs that had political affiliations with the ruling party were also biased in their news reporting. Another study by Nwammuo et al. (2015) also revealed that during the 2015 elections, newspapers that were owned by politicians covered more political stories while newspapers owned by entrepreneurs covered more economic stories. The study also found that newspapers that were politically affiliated slanted their stories to match the political affiliations

of their owners. Apuke (2016) revealed that a major dilemma for editors during this period was balancing the interests of the publishers and the public interests.

The plural nature of Nigerian society because of its diverse ethnic groups has contributed to audience partisanship. This has made it difficult for the media to provide a national platform for any project (Oso, 2013). Ethnicity, tribalism, and tribal politics have been recurring themes since the advent of the media as a means of communication in Nigeria (Ojo, 2013). Ethnic groups use the media to get publicity and support for their ethnic and tribal issues (Onifade, 2015). Since access to resources is largely determined by ethnic identity, this inevitably leads to tension amongst the different ethnic groups (Votmer, 2008).

Ethnicity is a predominant feature of Nigerian society, and this affects the struggle for power and the control of resources. The ethnic group in power controls the country's resources across all three levels of government (Federal, State, and Local governments). The struggle is mostly amongst the three major ethnic groups, and this has affected the development and economic influence of the ethnic minorities that are rarely in power. A truly diversified media system must go beyond the ownership system currently conceptualized in Nigeria i.e., between the government and private individuals (Musa & Mohammed, 2004). For diversity to be truly visible in Nigeria ethnic minorities need to be included in both ownership and control. This way Nigeria will have a representative media that will create an environment for the expression of national interests.

Another contributing factor to audience partisanship is the physical location of the newspapers. The lack of mass circulation makes newspapers mostly dominant in the cities they

are published, and this limits access to a variety of newspapers from other regions. Abati (2000) also identified religion and the geographical location of the press as a reason for audience partisanship. There is a disparity between the press in the Southern region and the press in the Northern region because of their ideologies on western education. According to UNICEF (2022), the Northern region has a net attendance rate of only 53% of its children eligible for primary education enrolled in school even though it is free. This can be attributed to the socio-cultural norms and ideologies that discourage formal education in Northern Nigeria.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) identified two environments that the media systems use to handle the diversity of political loyalties: external pluralism and internal pluralism. External pluralism is when the media reflects the points of view of the different tendencies in society while Internal pluralism is when the media systems abide by institutional and political ties. A system characterized by external pluralism will have strong political parallelism and vice versa (p. 29). In Nigeria, the degree of political parallelism is quite high. The country has a diverse media landscape, with many newspapers, television stations, and online news outlets that reflect a wide range of political views and opinions.

Additionally, Nigeria has a multi-party-political system with many active political parties, which creates a high degree of political competition and division. The media in Nigeria tends to align themselves with political parties or interest groups, which can be seen in their editorial stances and coverage of political issues. This creates a high degree of political parallelism in which the media reflects the political divisions and party competition in the country. However, it is important to note that the media in Nigeria face significant challenges, including government censorship, harassment, and violence. These challenges can limit the

ability of the media to fully reflect the diverse range of political views in the country and to provide independent and objective coverage of political issues.

### **Applying the Three Models Paradigm for Political parallelism**

Press in Polarized Pluralist countries has a strong political inclination, and there is high political parallelism. The journalism style in this region emphasizes commentary. Newspapers tend to represent specific political views and their readership reflects those views. At times, newspapers mobilize readers to support political causes, playing an activist role. Political parties usually influence public broadcasting. Interviewee 2 gave a different perspective on the issue of audience partisanship in Nigeria's press.

“For example, the history of radio in Nigeria was something that was regionalized firstly and then also had political coloration in it, especially for newspapers and even television stations. Outfit represents the interest of the region and only very few have this national outlook. And even when they have a national reach and a national outlook, there is this sentiment that is always visible when it comes to reporting about certain ethnic groups or a certain region. So, this regionalization cannot be washed, it cannot be taken out. It is a critical aspect of how the media culture and the media environment works in Nigeria and it affects how the entire job is done, it affects professionalism.”

Journalists and media owners often have political affiliations, and it is not uncommon for journalists to transition into politics and vice versa. In all Polarized Pluralist countries, political considerations play a significant role in broadcasting, especially in publicly owned media and news and public affairs programming. This is evident from the fact that the news agenda is shaped by political policy rather than journalistic judgments of newsworthiness.

Countries with the Democratic Corporatist model have organized social groups that exert significant influence over social, political, and cultural affairs, and the media system is closely intertwined with them. The press has been utilized as a tool for identifying, organizing,



discussing, comparing, and conflicting among these social groups. Political parallelism can be seen in the ownership of news media, affiliations of journalists, owners, and managers, readership trends, and media content. In such countries, newspapers associated with political parties, trade unions, religious institutions, and other social groups are an integral component of the media system. Partisan allegiances often divide newspaper readership, particularly in socialist circles and in societies characterized by religious pluralism. In the case of Nigeria, Interviewee 3 gave a different reason for audience partisanship and linked it to the lack of involvement of women in Nigerian politics.

“News consumption generally relates to those who are interested in politics and current affairs. News consumption is something that you know is meant for people who are interested in politics for interested in current affairs, who's in power, who's doing what, and what declaration is the President giving. What law is the Senate passing, you know, so. And then putting Nigerian context. The political scene is heavily, heavily dominated by the middle class and mostly men. They dominate in politics; I do not have numbers of how many women ran for office in the ongoing elections. There's meant to be like an affirmative action for a certain number of women to run I think 35% and the reality is like only 10 ran.”

There are notable variations in the prevalence of political neutrality or partisanship across Liberal countries. In the United States, Canada, and Ireland, political neutrality is the typical stance of newspapers and broadcasting also tends towards neutrality. However, in Britain, external pluralism is still dominant, as the press closely mirrors party politics.

The application of Hallin and Mancini's indicators to the Nigerian media reveals a strong presence of political parallelism in the media and political landscape. In Nigeria, newspapers are often established by politicians or businesspeople with political ties, compromising editorial independence. The pluralistic nature of Nigerian society has contributed to audience partisanship, making it difficult for the media to provide a national platform. Overall, while

Nigeria's media system represents a variety of political parties and views, there is a need to address the issue of the under-representation of non-elite views and rural populations to ensure a more diverse and inclusive media landscape in the country. Media personnel in Nigeria are also active in politics and their political leanings often influence their career paths.

In conclusion, applying Hallin and Mancini's indicators of political parallelisms, such as media content, connections between the media and political parties, and the political affiliations of media personnel, we have analyzed the media system in Nigeria. Using political parallelism as a mode of analysis it is evident that Nigeria's media system falls under the category of the Polarized Pluralist model based on the degree of political parallelism observed in the country, as well as the partisanship of media audiences and the role and practices of journalists. Political parallelism in Nigeria refers to the degree to which the media system is aligned with the country's political parties and other established organizations. Nigeria's media system represents a diverse range of political parties and views, but unfortunately, non-elite views and rural populations are not fully represented. Although Nigeria has a multi-party system, most of the political parties are dominated by the political elite, and their views are primarily represented in the media. This can lead to a lack of diversity in political discourse and can marginalize the voices of non-elites and those from rural areas. Furthermore, the media industry in Nigeria is concentrated in urban areas, making it challenging for those living in rural areas to have their voices heard. As a result, the views of rural populations are not fully represented in the media, which can contribute to a lack of understanding of their needs and concerns.

### **The role of the state**

Hallin and Mancini (2004) identified the extent to which a state intervenes in the media of a country. The state naturally plays a significant role in shaping the media of any society and country, but the authors differentiated between the “extent of state intervention and the forms it takes” (p. 41). The forms of state intervention include the provision of subsidies and funding, laws of libel, defamation, privacy, professional secrecy laws for journalists, laws regulating access to government intervention, laws regulating media concentration, competition, and ownership, laws regulating political communication, especially during election campaigns, laws regulating broadcast content and license (p. 43). A distinction can be made between systems that have a relatively liberal system like the United States where state intervention is limited, and the media are left to the market forces and systems where state intervention is manifested in the ownership, funding, and regulation of media (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 44).

Since the inception of the newspaper press, Nigeria has experienced colonial, military, and civilian government and under all these administrations there have been several attempts to muzzle the press by the state. During the colonial administration, there was a Seditious offense bill, a Newspaper Ordinance of 1903 and later 1917, and a Publications Ordinance of 1950 (Eribo, 1997). These bills were introduced because the colonial administrators and governors feared the impact of journalists on society. The Newspaper Ordinance of 1903 was introduced by the Late Sir Ralph Moor to check the growth of newspapers in his constituency because he was afraid that the press might mislead what he called “an ignorant population” (Omu, 1968, p. 290). The Seditious Offence Bill was also introduced because the press was accused of deliberately stirring the Yoruba people against the Europeans (Omu, 1968, p. 292).

Even after independence, these laws were not abolished by the new government and the laws became even worse during the military junta which heralded an avalanche of repressing laws from the military government (Nwanne, 2014). Examples of some of the laws are Circulation of Newspaper Decree No 2. 1966, The Defamatory and Offensive Publication Decree No 44. 1966, The Newspaper (Prohibition of Circulation) Decree No. 17, 1967, Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree No 11. 1976, Constitution (Suspension and Modification) Decree No. 1, 1984 (Momoh, 1996, p. 124-125). The most repressive and obnoxious of them all was Decree No. 4 of 1984 because it was a combination of the existing laws on sedition, criminal libel, and injurious falsehood but with stiffer penalties and the facts and truth could not be used as a defense.

The constitutions of Nigeria have consistently enshrined the right to freedom of expression and the press. The 1960 Independence Constitution, the 1963 Constitution (when Nigeria became a Republic), the 1979 Constitution, and the 1999 Constitution (during Nigeria's transition to a democratic government) all provided for this right, as stated in section 24, section 25, section 36, and section 39, respectively (Okoro, 2004; Oduah, 2015).

However, section 45 (1) of the 1999 Constitution appears to contradict section 39 by allowing for the validity of laws that are reasonably justifiable in a democratic society, despite potentially infringing on the freedom of the press as outlined in section 39.

- a) In the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health, or
- b) to protect the rights and freedom of other persons.

In more recent times there is still state intervention in the form of repressive laws that are a flagrant infringement of the citizens' rights to freedom of expression. Freedom House (2021)

reported that in 2018 and 2019 the national assembly passed an Electoral Act amendment bill aimed at strengthening the equal airtime obligations of the press, making voter registration and results more accessible, and extending the federal electoral regulations to local elections but the incumbent president vetoed this bill four times citing inconsistencies with existing laws.

The Freedom of Information Bill was first presented in the Nigerian Legislative Assembly in 1999, but it was not enacted into law due to the reluctance of the legislators. The bill was eventually passed in February and March of 2011 by the House of Representatives and Senate, respectively. The purpose of the bill was to make public records and information more accessible and to protect public officers who disclose certain types of official information without authorization. However, there has been little information about the impact of the Freedom of Information Act, and the practice of shrouding government activities in secrecy has continued (Nwanne, 2014).

In 2019, the senate proposed two bills that would have limited the right to freedom of expression of online users. The bills were the Prohibition of Hate Speech Bill and the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation and other Related Offences bill. These bills would give the government arbitrary power to shut down the internet and limit access to social media, and they would also make criticizing the government punishable with penalties of up to three years in prison (Amnesty International, 2019). There are sections in the bill that contravene international human rights standards. For example, section 4 of the “hate speech” bill prohibits “abusive, threatening, and insulting behavior,” which can be opened to various interpretations. This section poses a threat to any critical opinion of the government. Both bills, if passed, are set to criminalize offenders with punitive measures like fines, and prison time of up to three years

for exercising their right to freedom of expression. For the hate speech bill, offenders could face the death penalty or life imprisonment (Amnesty International, 2019, para. 4). Ultimately, these bills did not become law as they were widely criticized and met with protests from civil society groups and other stakeholders concerned with protecting human rights and free speech.

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), the most important form of state intervention is public service broadcasting. State intervention in public broadcasting includes laws regulating broadcast licensing and broadcast content including language, political pluralism, and domestic content (p. 44). Public service broadcasting is severely hampered by the Nigerian government at times. For example, The National Broadcast Commission (NBC), the regulatory body in charge of the broadcast media sent letters to broadcast stations requiring them to downplay the issues of insecurity and threats made by the Boko Haram group. NBC justified this by arguing that news reports on the insurgency might incite more violence (Akinpelu, 2021). In October 2020 after the #End SARS protest, NBC fined all media organizations that reported the protest (Wodu, 2021).

In June of 2021 Twitter, the microblogging and social networking service was suspended. The President through the Ministry of Information accused Twitter of undermining the corporate governance of the country because Twitter had deleted a tweet made by the incumbent president who is also a former military head of state. The now-deleted tweet read “Many of that misbehaving today are too young to be aware of the destruction and loss of lives that occurred during the Nigerian Civil War. Those of us in the fields for 30 months, who went through the war, will treat them in the language they understand.” Twitter perceived this tweet as offensive because President Mohammed Buhari was referring to the Nigerian Biafra civil war that claimed the lives of an estimated one to three million Igbos from the Eastern part of Nigeria (Princewill

& Busari, 2021). After the Twitter ban, NBC mandated all social media platforms and online broadcast services in Nigeria to apply for a broadcast license (Wodu, 2021).

In a political climate where there are draconian laws and the government tends to be dictatorial, restriction of the right to freedom of expression can pose several threats to civil society. This will eventually lead to failure to freely report news and control of information from the government.

### **Applying the Three Models Paradigm for The role of the state**

For Polarized Pluralists the state has historically played a significant role in society, including the media system. The state's involvement is complex and reflects both authoritarian and democratic traditions. The state's intervention is limited by factors such as a lack of resources, political consensus, and clientelist relationships. The state has also owned media enterprises in Southern Europe, particularly in broadcasting. Commercial media ownership is also prevalent in the region.

In Democratic Corporatist countries, the state's power is limited, and there are strong protections for press freedom and public access to government information. These countries view the state's duty as providing conditions for all citizens and groups to participate fully in social life. Direct state subsidies for the press are present in all Democratic Corporatist countries except Switzerland and Germany. However, there is a significant level of regulation to ensure that media is not solely a private business.

In Liberal countries, the state's role is limited, and the market and private sector have a larger role. In the United States, limitations on the state's role are significant, primarily due to the

First Amendment's legal tradition that distinguishes it from European media systems. In Nigeria, the role of the state in terms of revenue and subsidy for both print and broadcast media was further explored in the interviews and the responses are as follows:

“The government does not have measures to support them financially and it is capital intensive nature of the business. They support patronage, what I mean by patronage is if you probably follow stations closely you notice that they are like documentaries of state governments that always run on these stations. If you look a lot more closely, you will notice that these documentaries do not appear in all television stations or radio stations.” (Interviewee, 1)

“After COVID. I think NBC gave 10% off licensing fees for print media. Prints in Nigeria are renewed I think every 5 years. So, the last time my organization renewed was about 10 million naira approximately 20,000 dollars. And then NBC because of COVID-19 removed 10%. These things are also not cast in stone. They are seasonal. And you know, they are not available all the time.” (Interviewee, 2)

Nigeria's media system can be classified as a Polarized Pluralist media-state system, according to Hallin and Mancini's framework. The state has a significant influence on the media, with a history of anti-press measures and draconian laws that are occasionally used by the state. There have been controversies and debates between the media and the state, particularly regarding the role of the press in a developing democracy. These tensions highlight the challenges faced by the media in Nigeria and the need to protect press freedom in the country.

In conclusion, using Hallin and Mancini's (2004) framework for comparing media systems using the four dimensions Nigeria can be seen to largely fall under the category of Polarized Pluralist. In terms of political parallelism, Nigeria's media system has historically been heavily influenced by the state. The state has controlled much of the media, and there has been a lack of political pluralism in the media landscape. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of independent media outlets, and some progress has been made toward political pluralism in the media.



In terms of journalistic professionalism, the level of training and education for journalists in Nigeria is generally low. Journalists often lack the skills and resources needed to perform their duties effectively, and there is a lack of regulation and oversight of the media. The level of professionalization in the Nigerian media is relatively low, with many journalists lacking adequate training and resources. This has contributed to a culture of sensationalism and a lack of editorial independence. Additionally, the Nigerian media have struggled with issues of self-censorship, particularly concerning reporting on issues related to corruption and government malfeasance.

Nigeria's media system is largely driven by commercial interests. Many media outlets are owned by large corporations, and there is a focus on generating revenue through advertising. This can lead to a focus on sensationalism and entertainment, rather than serious journalism that serves the public interest. However, several smaller, independent media outlets are not driven by commercial interests and can provide more balanced reporting.

Overall, the role of the state in Nigeria's media system has been significant, with a history of state control and a lack of political pluralism. However, there has been some progress towards greater political pluralism, and there are several independent media outlets that can provide more balanced reporting. Low mass circulation of the daily press, high political parallelism, weak professionalization, and strong state intervention in Nigeria make the media system more Polarized Pluralists than any other model in the theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **APPLICABILITY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS MODEL IN EXPLAINING MEDIA AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA**

Hallin and Mancini's model proposes three different media systems - the Liberal model, the Democratic Corporatist model, and the Polarized Pluralist model - that are used to categorize and analyze media systems in different countries. While this model can be useful in analyzing media systems and their relationships with politics in Nigeria, it also has its limitations.

Hallin and Mancini's (2004) model is useful in understanding the relationship between the media and politics in Nigeria. The Nigerian media landscape is characterized by a mixture of different models. The Nigerian media is not completely free, as it is controlled by political elites, who also own media outlets. However, there is some degree of press freedom, and the media can criticize the government to a certain extent. The media have played a significant role in Nigeria's history, including the anti-colonial struggle, post-independent government criticism, guerrilla journalism against military dictatorship, and during the unstable period of democracy that ensued.

The model's liberal media system type, characterized by a clear separation between media and state, exists in Nigeria to some extent. Despite ownership patterns that are linked to the state and ruling class, Nigerian media outlets still have to some extent a degree of independence and can report critically on the government, especially with the proliferation of social media. In addition, the democratic corporatist media system type, which is characterized by the state's active involvement in regulating media and supporting public service media, is partially present

in Nigeria. This is reflected in the state's attempts to regulate and control the broadcast media and retain ownership of most of the broadcast media in the country.

The Hallin and Mancini model is not without limitations when applied to the Nigerian media system. One limitation is that it does not adequately account for the role of ethnicity, religion, and regionalism in Nigerian media. Nigeria is a diverse country with many different ethnic and religious groups, and the media often reflects these divisions. Media are also often divided along regional lines, with some regions having more media outlets than others. These regional and ethnic differences can impact media coverage and the relationship between the media and politics. Interviewee 2 indicated in their response other reasons for the relationship between media and politics.

“The two biggest issues when it comes to how Nigerians are polarized along ethnic lines and religious lines. But maybe there's something else that might not be so pronounced. I think we're also divided across political lines and then economic lines, and this affects the way the audience engages with media agencies. They probably feel like I'm not done feeding myself and taking care of my needs. Why would I go spend 150 or 200 naira, to buy a copy of the newspaper when I can watch it on TV or even just do something with that money? Another reason is political apathy. What's the government doing for me? So will I have to go and read about all the nothing they are doing?”

Another limitation of the Hallin and Mancini model is that it assumes a certain level of media independence, which is often not the case in Nigeria. As mentioned earlier, many media outlets are owned by politicians or other powerful individuals, and they use these outlets to promote their interests. In addition, the Nigerian government has a history of clamping down on the media, particularly during periods of military rule, which further limits the ability of the media to act independently.

The model also assumes that the media's primary function is to inform the public, while in practice, the Nigerian media often prioritizes profit-making and sensationalism over accurate and objective reporting. This has led to the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and falsehoods, which can negatively impact the relationship between the media and politics.

Additionally, the model does not account for the effect of social media on media systems, which is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where social media have become a major source of news, information, and political activism. Social media are playing a vital role in advocating for independence in the ways news is being reported. Social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, have become important sources of news and information for many Nigerians, and they have also played a role in mobilizing citizens for political action. Interviewees, 1 & 2 gave positive and negative feedback on the effects of social media on Nigerian media, politics, and society.

“Social media is positive in the sense that it helped in expanding media audiences’ convergence. With social media news agencies can reach more audiences. Another is revenue generation, talking from personal experience at Brilla Fm where I was, it was basically like a broadcasting organization, but you know three years ago we had to change our corporate development plans to fully incorporate online, and we were able to generate additional income through adverts. Social media and the online space bring up a new market, both in terms of the services being offered and also the revenue being generated.” (Interviewee, 2)

Another positive response to the effect of social media from Interviewee, 2 stated:

“The last election we had in Nigeria. You know, just one week ago. And you find a lot of people who are tweeting results, who are posting results, who are posting updates in real-time. The advent of social media has helped editors in maybe fact-checking.

Social media can also be attributed to the spread of misinformation and disinformation in Nigeria. (Interviewee, 1) in their response to the negative effect of social media in Nigeria politics, media, and society gave the following response:

“Everyone feels they could put out information because they have a smartphone, they have access to Twitter. They could just go on social media and also begin to announce breaking news without putting it into context. Most of these people are very much likely to put out fake news because it is lost on them to have the basic training that an average journalist should have. They don't know how to balance the stories. They do not know about casting headlines and how to be sensitive to the kind of information you put out there, you know.”

Despite these limitations, the Hallin and Mancini model provides a useful framework for understanding the media landscape in Nigeria. It highlights the importance of examining the relationship between the media and political institutions, and it provides a way of analyzing the extent to which the media can operate independently. By using this model, scholars can identify areas where the media in Nigeria may be falling short and suggest ways to address these issues. Hallin and Mancini's model of media systems has been widely used to explain the relationship between media and politics in different countries.

If specific histories of colonialism, military rule, interethnic struggles, and tribal politics were to be critical factors in the analysis of comparative media studies, it would likely result in a more nuanced and accurate understanding of how media function in different contexts. By incorporating factors such as colonialism, military rule, interethnic struggles, and tribal politics, comparative media studies could provide a more comprehensive analysis of media systems in different countries. For example, in a country with a history of colonialism, the media system may have been shaped by the values and interests of the colonial power, leading to a legacy of inequality and underrepresentation of certain groups in the media. Similarly, in a country with a

history of military rule, the media may be tightly controlled and censored, limiting the ability of journalists to report on sensitive topics.

Taking these specific histories into account could also help to identify patterns and similarities between media systems in different countries with similar histories. For example, countries that have experienced colonialism may have similar challenges in creating a diverse and representative media landscape. By highlighting these patterns and similarities, comparative media studies could contribute to a deeper understanding of how media operates in different contexts and the challenges that need to be addressed to ensure media freedom and diversity. The model proposed by Hallin and Mancini can be useful in explaining the media and politics in anglophone West Africa.

## CONCLUSION

Hallin and Mancini's (2004) model has been an effective tool for comparing media systems in Nigeria. This model has provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the different components of media systems and their interrelationships in the Nigerian context. The Nigerian media system operates within a complex socio-political environment, and historical and cultural factors have shaped the development of the media system over time.

In this thesis, I attempted to locate the Nigerian media system within the broader context of media systems worldwide. Specifically, I focused on utilizing the three-model paradigm by Hallin and Mancini (2004) to categorize the Nigerian media system and understand its unique characteristics. The three-model paradigm is a well-established framework that has been used to categorize media systems across the globe, but from my research, I have not seen anyone apply this framework to the Nigerian media system or other Anglophone West African countries. The three-model paradigm developed by Hallin and Mancini has been a seminal framework for comparative media analysis, but it has been criticized for its limited attention to cultural factors. Specifically, the four dimensions of media systems identified by the paradigm have not been analyzed with sufficient attention to cultural contexts. This omission is particularly problematic in the context of Nigerian and African media systems, which are deeply embedded in complex cultural traditions and value systems.

The contribution of this thesis to comparative media analysis could help to address this gap by foregrounding the importance of cultural factors in the analysis of media systems. Cultural factors encompass norms, values, traditions, and beliefs that shape a society. These include language, religion, customs, and other social norms that guide social behavior. Cultural

barriers are difficult to overcome since they are deeply ingrained in society and established over long periods (Dimitrova, 2021). The three-model paradigm lacks consideration for certain important factors, such as ethnicity, religion, social media, and language, that play a significant role in shaping media and political landscapes in contemporary Nigeria. In the context of Nigeria's cultural factors, the three-model paradigm fails to adequately address issues of ethnicity, religion, economy, and democracy that are dominant in the country's media and political landscape. This thesis seeks to shed light on these issues, and their implications for national development.

Firstly, ethnicity has played a significant role in shaping the media and political landscape in Nigeria. The country's audience is deeply divided along ethnic lines, which has affected the development of mass circulation press and access to media. The polarization of ethnicity in Nigeria has also hindered the development of national identity and the notion of nationhood. The current inter-ethnic polarization in Nigeria can be attributed to the fact that none of the ethnic groups in the country willingly agreed to come together under the umbrella of one Nigeria. Instead, it was the makings of British colonialism under the leadership of General Lord Lugard after he amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914. Before that, the different ethnic groups were individual colonies with already established systems of governance and media.

A prime example of the problems of ethnicity and lack of national identity in Nigeria is the reasons that lead to the civil war. The Civil war also called The Nigerian-Biafran War, or the Biafran war, took place between July 6th, 1967, and January 15th, 1970. It was a result of conflict between the Nigerian government and the state of Biafra. The Biafran people sought to



achieve their nationalist aspirations as they believed that coexisting with the Northern-dominated federal government was no longer possible. The events leading up to the war in 1966 can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, there were ethnoreligious riots in Northern Nigeria which created tensions between different ethnic and religious groups, this was a result of political and economic rivalry between the Hausa and Igbo ethnic groups. The persecution of Igbo people living in Northern Nigeria further exacerbated the issue. Additionally, there was a military coup that overthrew the democratically elected government, followed by a counter-coup. This period of political instability worsened the situation. Finally, control over the lucrative oil production in the Niger Delta also played a vital strategic role in the conflict. The region was a major source of revenue for the Nigerian government, and various groups sought to control the resources. This led to conflicts over political and economic power, further contributing to the escalation of the war (Baxter, 2015).

Religion has also had a significant effect on Nigeria's media and politics. Nigeria is a multi-religious country, with Islam and Christianity being the dominant religions. The religious divide has often been exploited by politicians for their gain, leading to religious tensions and conflicts. The media, in turn, have also been influenced by this religious divide, with media houses often being owned by religious leaders or politicians with religious affiliations. This ownership can result in bias and selective reporting in favor of a particular religion or political ideology. Additionally, religious leaders often have significant influence over their followers, including their political beliefs and decisions. This influence can translate into support for a particular candidate or party, which can impact the outcome of elections. An example of this can be seen in the just concluded elections of March 2023 when candidates for both the presidential

and governorship races, such as Peter Obi of the Labor Party and the current governor of Lagos State, Jide Sanwo-Olu, sought endorsements for their campaigns by visiting mega-churches around the country. This division along ethnic lines is even enshrined in the Constitution of Nigeria. Although Nigeria is a democratic government that should ideally not have the religious laws of a single religious group recognized in the national constitution, sections 260-264 and 275-279 of the 1999 constitution establish and regulate Islamic Sharia law in Nigeria, without representation of any other religion in the Constitution except Islam (Busari, 2021).

Economic sustainability has also had a profound impact on the development of the mass press in Nigeria. The low standard of living and purchasing power of most Nigerians means that buying newspapers is not a priority. Additionally, the low levels of remuneration for journalists have led to an increase in brown envelope syndrome, where journalists are incentivized to produce news that serves personal and political interests rather than the public interest. This has also been institutionalized due to the lack of government subsidies and revenue, leading to a focus on profit-making rather than the national interest.

Lastly, the political instability and democracy of Nigeria have been characterized by a turbulent history of transitions between civilian and military governments. Nigeria is currently in its fourth republic and longest run in a democratic society. Nevertheless, Nigeria remains fragile and unstable since its independence (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022).

By exploring the cultural contexts of media systems in Nigeria and how they shape the four dimensions identified by the three-model paradigm, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between media and society. In particular, we can better appreciate how media systems in Africa are not only shaped by but also shape cultural norms and

practices. This understanding could help policymakers and media professionals to develop more culturally sensitive approaches to media development that take into account the unique cultural contexts of different regions and countries. Ultimately, this could help to promote the development of a robust and independent media sector that serves the public interest while also respecting the cultural traditions and values of the societies in which it operates. Understanding comparative analysis matters because the media can be a powerful force for change in both developed and developing countries. In developing countries, media can play an important role in advancing a development agenda and supporting economic growth by stimulating consumer markets. Effective media can improve governance by raising citizen awareness of social issues, enabling citizens to hold their governments accountable, curbing corruption, and creating a civic forum for debate (Dimitrovia, 2021).

Using Hallin and Mancini's three-model paradigm I found that Nigerian media systems and politics sit comfortably in none of the models. Perhaps its closest match is the Polarized Pluralist model, but the fit is not exact. For instance, Nigeria has made significant efforts to promote professionalism in its media industry, including the development of distinct professional norms and institutions such as the Nigerian Press Council and the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, which is similar to the Democratic Pluralist model. These institutions have been established to provide training and education for journalists, as well as to establish codes of ethics and professional standards for the industry.

However, despite these efforts, the Nigerian media industry still faces significant challenges in promoting professionalism, as there is a lack of enforcement mechanisms for professional standards and codes of ethics. While institutions such as the Nigerian Press Council

have established codes of ethics and standards for the industry, there is often limited enforcement of these standards. There are also similarities between Nigeria and the Liberal model in terms of its market-oriented approach. The Liberal model is a type of media system characterized by a market-oriented approach in which media outlets are largely owned and controlled by private entities and operate in a competitive environment. Where in the Liberal model market forces and profit motives play the primary role, in Nigeria government or other external forces play a more prominent role. In a Liberal model, media organizations are free to operate independently and to report on a wide range of issues without government interference or regulation.

For this thesis, I expected that by focusing on a country that was not included in Hallin and Mancini's study, I could reveal both the applicability and limitations of the model, as well as pathways to creating a new model or modifying the existing one. While this research is preliminary and will be further developed in detail in the future, I hope that these initial observations will not preclude the possibility of developing a new African-based model for comparing media systems. Upon preliminary examination, there does appear to be enough evidence of sufficient homogeneity among Anglophone West African states such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Liberia. These countries share a common historical experience, a communal cultural outlook, and tradition, have similar political structures, and face similar challenges. These shared characteristics justify entertaining a conceptualization of an African-based model or models.

Naturally, there will be overlaps with the three current models, but in the end, an African-based model will not only help to locate Africa within the Hallin-Mancini paradigm, but it will also enable countries within the African model to evaluate their trajectories of development

relative to each other. By creating a new model or modifying the existing one to account for the unique characteristics of African media systems, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the role of media in African politics and society. This, in turn, could inform more effective policy and regulatory frameworks that support the development of a robust and independent media sector that serves the public interest.

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