
**"OF COMMUNICATION, POLITICS AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION:
SUGGESTIONS ON A NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICY FOR NIGERIA"**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the peculiarly intimate relationship between the Communication process and the political system. The first part of the paper is an expose of the importance and indispensability of Communication to the society, the problem of conceptualization and conceptual clarification and the impact of Communication on the Polity. The second part examines political Communication as a very relevant factor to contemporary problems of political stability in Nigeria, analyzing 60,584 news stories carried by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), (government owned electronic media), between January and December, 1983 to demonstrate empirically the influence of media ownership on political Communication activities — Campaigns, party coverage, elections etc. — in the country. The third part which concludes the paper proffers suggestions and makes recommendations on a National Communication Policy for Nigeria within the limitations to which the writer is exposed.

INTRODUCTION

**WHY IS THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL COMMUNICATION
POLICY BEING STRESSED?**

A logical starting point, perhaps, is to ask the following pertinent questions: Why the obsession for a National Communication Policy? Communication Policy for what, when and how? The answer to these questions is not far fetched. The answer is heavily documented in the importance, the ubiquity and the indispensability of communication. From various familiar approaches, we have been informed of what the society is all about. In the words of the seventeenth century writer, Hobbes (1914)

“the life of man outside society is poor, solitary, nasty, brutish and short”

From the traditional political perspective, we have seen the central facts of society as power and government. And from traditional economic approach, we have seen the central concerns of society as property, production and trade. Societal needs have also been identified from physiological to self—actualization. The Marxian/Marxist historical materialistic/deterministic approach has also indicated that the substructure of the society, that is, the mode of production, determines the super-structural activities (the relations of production) in the society. Important as these approaches, issues and needs may remain, there is no gainsaying the fact that the issue of Communication is equally important if not more important than others because without communication, political, economic and other issues may not be implemented effectively and successfully. All we are saying is that there is

a new emphasis on, what the society stands for. We now know that society is a form of communication, through which experience is described, shared, modified and preserved.

As Wilbur Schramm (1954) put it, "Communication is always a art of something. It represents a relationship not only between individuals, but also between relationships. It is the web that binds society together".

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The importance of Communication has been recognised from time immemorial. Communication is basic to all human processes and without it, human beings cannot perform organized group processes that help coordinate their activities in society and eventual interdependence of lives. Communication — the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning — is the very essence of a social, economic, or political system. This paper focuses therefore on the impact of communication on politics and society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies abound suggesting that communication is so essential in society that man cannot exist as a social entity without it. (Berlo, (1960); Pye, (1963); Deutsch, (1966); Carter, (1971); Mueller (1973); Seymour-Ure, (1974); Chaffee, (1975); Williams, (1976); Ninmo, (1978); Eyre, (1979); Duyile, (1979); Graber, (1980); Kamath, (1980); Unoh, (1981); Gurevitch et al, (1982) and Olayiwola, (1987, 1991, 1993, 1996, 2011, 2012) among other countless experts have written at various times to corroborate the importance of communication in the society. Also, European experts in the sociology of Knowledge and mass society such as Marx, Tonnies, Simmel, Mannheim, Tarde, and Le Bon all asserted that society cannot exist without communication and that communication cannot exist without society. Human—beings, associations, organizations, societies and the nation—state are all built upon and held together by communications — by perceptions, by decisions, by the expectations which people have for one another, by transactions and by their willingness to validate a considerable portion of the expectations by appropriate reciprocal behaviours. It is Communication, that is, the ability to transmit messages and to react to them that makes organisations; hence any thorough-analysis of political organisations or social systems must at least include a consideration of the role of communication. Communication enables a group to think together, to see together and to act together. We do know that broad casting for instance, which is an aspect of communication, is

"the most pervasive and therefore one of the most powerful agents for influencing men's thoughts and action, for giving -them a picture, true or false, of their fellows and of the world in which they live, for appealing to their intellect, their emotions and their appetites, for filling their minds with beauty or ugliness, ideas or idleness, laughter or terror, love or hate" (Qualter 1962).

According to Karl Deutsh (1966) Communication is the cement that makes organizations and that every organization is held together by communication. Communication has an important

role to play in the struggle against poverty, hunger, disease, deceit, oppression, tyranny and other enemies of mankind. Communication is no doubt, an indispensable integral factor in the process of building a virile, just, free, democratic, united and egalitarian society.

COMMUNICATION: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Conceptual clarification and terminological analysis are no doubt desirable although it is highly debatable whether the goal of precision and universality is attainable. This is not to say that the desirability of such an academic intellectual enterprise is neither contestable nor contested. But there is the need for conceptual analysis at least for purposes of tackling some theoretical problems, difficulties, ambiguities, imprecision and paradigmatic puzzles.

THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

What do we mean by communication? Well, definitions of communication are legion. There are sundry definitions of communication, depending upon the point of view of an analyst. The oldest meaning of the word, in English can be summarized as the passing of ideas, information and attitudes from person to person. According to Williams (1962) communication is the process of transmission and reception. Broadly defined, therefore, communication is a process of sending and receiving messages that inevitably occur whenever human beings or animals are exposed to one another. Cartier and Harwood (1953) define communication as "a process for the replication of memories". Browne (1959) defines it as "the process of transmitting ideas or thoughts from one person to another or within a person, for the purpose of creating understanding in the thinking of the person receiving the communication". Johnson et al (1974) view "communication as a system involving a sender and a receiver, with implication of feedback". Dance (1970) gives a set of fifteen definitions that summarises the whole business of communication:

1. Symbols/verbal/speech: 'Communication is the verbal interchange of thought or idea' (Hoben, 1954, p. 77).
2. Understanding: Communication is the process by which we understand others and in turn endeavour to be understood by them. It is dynamic, constantly changing and shifting in response to the total situation (Anderson, 1959).
3. Interaction/relationship/Social process. 'Interaction, even on the biological level, is a kind of communication, otherwise common act could not occur' (Mead, 1963, p. 107).
4. Reduction of uncertainty: 'Communication arises out of the need to reduce uncertainty, to act effectively, to defend or strengthen the ego' (Barnlund, 1964, p. 200).
5. Process 'Communication: the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc., by the use of symbols – words, pictures, figures, graphs etc. It is the act or process of transmission that is usually called communication' (Berelson and Steiner, 1964, p. 254).
6. Transfer/transmission/interchange: '...the connecting thread appears to be the idea of something's being transferred from one thing, or person, to another. We use the word

- 'communication' sometimes to refer to what is so transferred, sometimes to the means by which it is transferred, sometimes to the whole process' (Ayer, 1955, P. 12).
7. Linking /binding; 'communication is -the process that links discontinuous parts of the living world to one another (Ruesch, 1957, p.462).
 8. Commonality: 'it (communication) is a process that makes common to two or several what was the monopoly of one or some' (Gode, 1959).
 9. Channel/Carrier/Mean/Route: 'P1.) ...the means of sending military messages etc. as by telephone, telegraph, radio, courier' (American College Dictionary, 1964, p. 244).
 10. Replicating memories. 'Communication is the process of conducting the attention of another person for the purpose of replicating memories' (Cartier and Harwood, 1953, p. 73).
 11. Discriminative response/behaviour—modifying! response/change: 'Communication is the discriminatory response of an organism to a stimulus' (Stevens, 1950, p,689). 'So communication between two animals is said to occur when one animal produces a chemical or physical change in the environment (signal) that influences the behaviour of another...' (Frings, 1967, p.297).
 12. Stimuli: 'Every communication act is viewed as a transmission of information, consisting of a discriminative stimuli, from a source to a recipient' (New Comb, 1966, p.66).
 13. Intentional: 'In the main, communication has as its central interest those behavioural situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver(s) with conscious intent to affect the latter's behaviours' (Miller, 1966, p.92).
 14. Time/situation: 'The communication process is one of transition from one structured situation— as—a—whole to another, in preferred design' (Sondel, 1956, p148).
 15. Power: '... communication is the mechanism by which power is exerted' (Schacter, 1951, p.191).

MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

At this juncture, it is pertinent to consider some of the models of communication set up to account for the difficult aspects of the communication process. Despite, or may be because of their inability to agree upon a definition of communication, many scholars and theorists in the field have turned to constructing models of communication as a more satisfying way of generating an understanding and appreciation of the complexities of the communication process. Such models — usually pictorial representations consisting of a series of blocks, squares, circles, arrows, lines, spirals, and so on — identify the components or variables or forces that make up communication and suggest or specify the relationships among those components. Four functions or purposes are served by such models. The first is the organizing function, the second is the heuristic function, the third is the predictive function while the fourth is the measurement function.

THE LINEAR MODEL

There is first of all the linear or classical model which was based on Aristotle's analysis of the basic elements of the communication process. This has come to be regarded as one of the earliest communication and information dissemination models. According to Unoh (1981) Aristotle did specify three constituent elements of the act of communication: the speaker, the speech, and the audience. He defined the study of communication as the search for "all the available means of persuasion" (Roberts, 1946).

THE LASSWELL MODEL

The linear paradigm was taken a step further by Lasswell whose basic model consisted of: "who says what, in what channel, to whom, and with what effect?" The addition of channel of information (presumably in response to the growth of new mass communication media) and the consideration given to the possible effect of communication or information on recipients, both represented significant departures from past communication models, which had tended to either overlook such elements or fail to give expressed recognition of their relevance.

The Shanon—Weaver Model

Shanon and Weaver added new dimensions to models of communication and information processing, by defining communication as "all the procedures by which one mind may affect another," and by producing a communication model (designed essentially for electronic engineering) which has five constituent elements (parts), as follows:-

- (i) A source (i.e. the origin of the message or signal)
- (ii) A Transmitter (i.e. the manipulator of the message to convey or transmit the signal intended).
- (iii) A Channel (i.e. the avenue or facility for transmitting the message or signal from the transmitter to the receiver. This may be rendered less effective by semantic noise, resulting in some distortion of the message).
- (iv) A receiver (i.e. the recipient of the signal or message, or in some sense, an intermediary, or an intervening variable, between the channel and .the destination).
- (v) A Destination (i.e. the thing, person, institution or body for whom the message was intended).

Further Utility of Communication

It is important to point out that communication – be it political, group, mass, instructional, organizational, inter-personal or cross-cultural-communication is useful in many ways.

For example, communication is useful in satisfying one's needs, it can be used to improve social relationships, to influence other people, to satisfy needs for inclusion and affection or to control the environment. Also, it is worthy of note that the elements of communication such as the source, transmitter, message, channel, receiver, destination and a host of others can take various forms depending upon the type of communication encounter.

FEEDBACK

The concept of feedback is also of paramount importance in communication clarification. Effective communication exists only when the receiver gives the message the interpretation intended by the sender. This is done through feedback. Feedback gives us some information to ascertain the amount of fidelity that communication has achieved. Fidelity refers to trustworthiness, the overall effect one generates from one's communication efforts, and it is determined by factors such as:

1. Communication skills;
2. Attitudes;
3. Knowledge level; and
4. Position of both the sender and receiver within a socio—cultural system.

POLITICS

The Oxford English Dictionary defines politics as: 'the science and art of government; the science dealing with the form, organisation and administration of a state, or part of one, and with the regulation of its relations with other states'. The study of politics, says Dorothy Pickles (1964) is born when men begin to speculate about the rules by which they are governed, or by which their ancestors were governed, when they begin to ask whether these rules ought to be accepted, or ought have been accepted in the past, why some societies choose different rules from others, whether it is possible to find the best rules for a particular society, or whether it is possible to discover general rules of conduct which could, or should, be applicable to all societies. Michael Stewart, (1972) says politics starts with the fact of community life; it discusses the problems which that life creates; it also examines and compares the different kinds of community. Alan Ball, (1971) defines politics as an activity concerned with conflict, compromise, decision—making, power and authority. Price regards politics as the study of the general principles on which government can be carried on successfully. Dan Nimmo (1978) defines politics as: the activity of people collectively regulating their conduct under conditions of social conflict". To Max Weber, (1948) politics centres on power, who gets power and for what purpose. For him, the existence of a state is very important in the definition of politics as well as the distribution of power within, the state. Politics, says Max Weber, is a study of the state as the highest political agency for the fulfillment of the common needs and the furtherance of the general welfare of society. Politics begins and ends with the state. The state is a political community or entity which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force or power in the enforcement of its order.

Max Weber also argues that politics is mainly concerned with the problem of reconciling the authority of the state with the liberty of the individual. Politics, he says, includes a study of the historical development of the state, an analytical and a comparative study of its present form and a philosophical study of the state as it ought to be. It is a tool which investigates into the phenomena of the state and the distribution of power within the state. "Politics means striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state. When a question is said to be a 'political' question, or

when a decision is said to be 'politically' determined, what is always meant is that interests in the distribution, maintenance or transfer of power are decisive for answering the question and determining the decision. He who is active in politics strives for power either as a means in serving other aims, ideal or egoistic, or as 'power for power's sake', that is, in order to enjoy the prestige — feeling that power gives.

To ancient philosophers, any behaviour of a person that entered into the public realm is politics. For Lenin, politics is participation in the affairs of the state, its guidance, determination of the forms, aims and the contents of the activities of the state. It includes problem of the state structure, the management of the country, leadership of classes, problems of party struggle et cetera. In brief therefore, politics is the authoritative allocation of resources. Politics is the conflict management. Politics is the determination of public goals and the selection of matters of attainment of these goals out of several alternative options. Politics is the exercise of power. Politics is the resolution of conflict, including conflict over the allocation of scarce goods. Politics is the pursuit of collective goals. Politics is the study of who gets what, when and how? (Olayiwola, 1996, 2012).

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

It is crystal-clear from the foregoing review of literature on the concepts of communication and politics that the two concepts are two sides of the same coin mutually inclusive but analytically distinguishable. Lasswell, (1942) complained of how difficult it is to separate "political content" from the rest of the media of communication, According to Pye, (1963) the communication process provides "an essential basis for rationality in mass politics". As a matter of fact, the process of organising sentiments, articulating interest, and encouraging participation in political activity depends very much on the politician's ability and capability to communicate with the people. It is the belief of many political scientists that many aspects of political life can be described as communication and this is why we now have the field of political communication which refers to "communication activity considered political by virtue of its consequence (actual or potential) which regulates human conduct under conditions of conflict" It is also a process in which informational and persuasive messages are transmitted from the political institutions of society through the mass media to the citizenry to whom they are ultimately accountable.

Pye(1973) has pointed out that there is a

"Peculiarly intimate relationship between the Political process and the communication process".

If politics is about power, the holder's possession of and readiness to exercise it must in some manner be conveyed to those expected to respond to it. If politics is about participation, this consists in itself of "the means by which the interests, desires and demands of the ordinary citizen are communicated to rulers". If politics is about the legitimation of supreme authority, then the values and procedural norms of regimes have to be symbolically expressed, and the acts of government have to be justified in broad popular terms. And if politics is about choice, then information flows clarifying alternative policy options must circulate to those concerned with decisions, whether as their shapers or as consumers.

In a special version of the “everything in politics is communication” argument, Almond (1960) has noted,

“All of the functions performed in the political system-political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, rule-making, rule-application, and rule-adjudication- are performed by means of communication. Parents, teachers, and priests, for example, import political socialization through communication. Interest group leaders and representatives and party leaders perform their articulation and aggregation functions by communicating demands and policy recommendations. Legislators enact laws on the basis of information communicated to them and by communicating with one another and with other elements of the political system. In performing their functions, bureaucrats receive and analyse information from the society and from various parts of the polity. Similarly, the judicial process is carried on by means of communication”.

NIGERIA AS A CASE STUDY

Teething problems of nation — building, evolving a stable political system and a sound economy culminating in instability had brought Nigeria to the brink of fragmentation and disintegration after independence and up till today 2012. As a matter of fact, Nigerian government and politics since independence in October 1960, have been characterized by lack of a national ideology, unresolved and recurring issues in the country’s political arrangements — creation of more states and more local governments, revenue allocation, census, ethnic chauvinism, religious intolerance, bad leadership, bad followership, coups, counter coups, abortive, groups, rumours of coups, demand for coups, general violent political disagreement arid over—politicization of all issues, forces and institutions within the Nigerian society. Political communication, media performance and manipulation of media of communication by their owners have been part and parcel of the factors that account for this instability. DudIey, (1973) argued that one central factor of political stability is that “each sectional interest should have an opportunity of expressing itself and that no one interest should be made to override others”. The reverse of this might lead to political instability. Although the evidence that mass media change attitude in campaigns, political communication activities and elections is far from conclusive, the evidence that voters learn from the immense quantity of information made available is much stronger. Lang and Lang (1966) observe:

“The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting object suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about and have feelings about”.

The mass media occupy a central position.

The mass media in Nigeria have not been fair to the electorate and the masses of our people in certain matters. This, we believe, has been due largely to the issue of ownership. This position has been confirmed by research evidence. One reason for concern about media ownership and control is expressed in the old adage that “he who pays the piper calls the tune” - or at any rate is less likely to have to listen to uncongenial and discordant tunes.

Ownership of mass media by the group in power at one time or another has always been the surest killer of objectivity which is one of the cardinal ethics of mass media practitioners. Owing to the influence of media ownership, some mass media have thrown all the norms and journalistic ethics to the wind; and are doing the very opposite of what society and the public require of them. They use the media to disseminate blatant and injurious falsehoods, to propagate rank prejudices and divisive doctrines, to parade immorality and to exhibit down-right ignorance. Onyeozi, Fred E.C (1983) observed that the mass media have come to be one of the most important instruments through which those in power seek to influence the political thinking of their subjects and persuade them to see the government as legitimately serving the public interest and therefore deserving of public support. They do this in a number of ways:

1. Deliberate distortion of the information being disseminated to their audience, the citizens;
2. Deliberate exclusion of some vital pieces of information, especially if those pieces are likely to lead the citizens into drawing a conclusion that the leadership does not favour;
3. remaining simply quiet over some crucial issues where the population is thirsting for information; and
4. Diversion of people's attention from very important issues by crowding people's mind with trivialities.

Agbaje, A. (1985) has also observed in a study that the political affiliation of media ownership determined the editorial direction of the Nigerian Press in their coverage of political parties in the campaigns that led to the 1983 elections. This paper uses case studies of some government-owned electronic media coverage of political campaigns, political party stories, stories on party programmes, activities and personalities. It analyses 60,584 news stories of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (F.R.C.N.), the Nigerian Television Authority (N.T.A.), and the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (B.C.O.S.) from January to December, 1983. This is based on the campaign leading to the 1983 general elections and events that ensued which culminated in the military intervention again in Nigerian Government and politics. The intention is to demonstrate empirically the influence of media ownership on political communication in the 1983 Nigerian General Elections. The news stories were content-analysed as documented in the News Information Offices, Documentation Units and Libraries of various electronic media being reviewed as case studies. The aim, as pointed out earlier, is to examine the hypothesis that "patterns of electronic media ownership have had some influence on political communication processes in Nigeria's 1983 general elections. By the time the 1983 election campaigns took off, there were about 40 Radio Stations in Nigeria and about 30 Television Stations. Today each State has the presence of Federal Government radio and Television in addition to State Government owned. Out of the 40 Radio stations, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was controlling 28, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) had 5, the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) 3, the Great Nigeria Peoples' Party (GNPP) turned UPN/NPP governments of Gongola and Borno States were controlling one each with the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) turned NPP

governments of Kano and Kaduna also controlling one each. Similarly, out of the 30 Television stations in the country, at the time, the NPN Federal Government owned 22, the UPN State governments, owned 5, the NPP 2, and one was owned by the PRP turned NPP government of Kano State. (See Table 1). With this ownership structure, it was to be expected that the media would become megaphones (mouthpieces) of their owners during the elections, thus reflecting the influence of media ownership on political communication in Nigeria's 1983 general election.

THE FEDERAL RADIO CORPORATION OF NIGERIA (F.R.C.N)

The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (F.R.C.N.) carried news bulletins of various kinds between January and December, 1983. These included National News Summary comprising 06.00, 08.00, 11.00, 14.00, 17.00, 20.00, 21.00, 23.00 and 24.00 hours bulletins, National Network News Bulletins at 22.00, 07.00 and 16.00 hours were also carried by the Corporation, as well as News panorama, Editorial Reviews and External News Bulletins. Between January and December 1983, the F.R.C.N carried a total of 21,468 news stories, making an average of 1,789 news stories monthly, Out of the 1,789 stories carried in January, 1983, about 739 or 41.3% were on elections, 43 or 5.81% for the GNPP, 27 or 3.65% for NAP, 452 or 61.16% for NPN, 96 or 12.99% for NPP, 20 or 2.70% for PRP and 101 or 13.66% for the UPN.

In February of the same year, a total of 1,098 stories were carried on elections, Out of this number, the GNPP had 70 or 6.37%, NAP 67 or 6.10%, NPN 564 or 51.41%, NPP 124 or 11.29%, PRP 53 or 4.82% and 220 stories or 20.03% were carried on the UPN.

In March, 1983, 1,097 news stories were carried by the FRCN out of this number, 103 or 9.38% election stories were carried in favour of the GNPP, NAP had 109 or 9.93%, NPN 503 or 48.83%, NPP 142 or 12.94%, PRP 90 or 8.19% and the UPN recorded 150 or 13.67% election stories.

In April, 1,320 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 133 or 10.07%, the NAP 137 or 10.37%, the NPN 570 or 43.18%, the NPP 154 or 11.66%, the PRP 109 or 8.25% and the UPN 217 or 16.43%. The figures for the month of May on election stories are 1,476 total election stories, GNPP 148 or 10.02%, NAP 170 or 11.51%, NPN 592 or 40.10%, NPP 173 or 11.72%, PRP 122 or 8.26% and the UPN 271 or 18.36%.

In June, 1,371 election stories were carried and the share per parties were, GNPP 147 or 10.72%, NAP 168 or 12.25%, NPN 50 or 36.90%, NPP 198 or 14.44%, PRP 129 or 9.40% and UPN 223 or 16.26%.

In July, 1,531 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 172 or 11.23%, NAP 171 or 11.16%, NPN 558 or 36.44%, NPP 204 or 13.32%, PRP 143 or 9.33% and the UPN 277 or 18.09%.

In August, 1,765 election stories were carried by the F.R.C.N. Out of this number, the GNPP had 204 or 11.55%, NAP 270 or 15.29%, NPN 592 or 33.54%, NPP 223 or 12.63%, PRP 191 or 10.82%, and UPN 285 or 16.14%.

In September, 373 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 20 or 5.36%, NAP 17 or 4.55%, NPN 204 or 56.03%, PRP 14 or 3.75%, NPP 45 or 12.06%, and the UPN 73 or 19.57%.

The October figures are 347 election stories, GNPP 18 or 5.18%, NAP 19 or 5.47%, NPN 200 or 57.63%, NPP 33 or 9.51%, PRP 11 or 3.17% and UPN 66 or 19.02%.

In November, 197 election stories were carried. Out of this number, the GNPP had 12 or 6.09%, NAP 14 or 7.10%, NPN 101 or 51.26%, NPP 21 or 10.65%, PRP 09 or 4.56% and UPN 40 or 20.30%.

Before the military take-over on December 31st, 1983, 151 stories had been carried on elections. Out of this number, the GNPP had 09 or 5.96%, the NAP 07 or 4.63%, the NPN 87 or 57.61%, the NPP 20 or 13.24%, the PRP 04 or 2.64% and the UPN 24 or 15.89%. It is no exaggeration to say that going through the amount of election stories carried on the NPN compared with those stories carried in favour of other parties, the FRCN, because of the ownership factor by the then NPN controlled federal government, demonstrated open support for the coverage of the NPN campaign activities and programmes thus giving preferential treatment to the party on political communication in the 1983 general election. (See Table 2.)

THE NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY (N.T.A)

Between January and December, 1983, the N.T.A. Network News carried a total of 6,908 Network news stories, Out of this, 4,646 were on elections. It was gathered that the NPN was favoured throughout the period in the coverage of events, party programmes and activities, while other parties were given little attention or totally blacked out in news coverage. The N.T.A. political programme of 'verdict 83' was no exception. The N.T.A. was then being controlled by the NPN controlled government. The following table shows the number of election stories carried during the period under review and the percentages of news stories carried on each of the competing political parties in the 1983 elections.

THE BROADCASTING CORPORATION OF OYO STATE (B.C.O.S)

The B.C.O.S. carried a total of 32,208 news stories out of which 17,155 were election stories between January and December, 1983. These are the news on the hour, National News, World News, Oyo State News, News at 5.00, provincial news, Newscope and News summary with their Yoruba translations. All UPN campaigns and election stories were made headlines while the NPN stories were either not carried or when carried at all belatedly as stale news, Such news were only to damage the image of the party. The B.C.O.S. was being controlled then by the UPN controlled government and later by the NPN for about 3 months. As a

matter of fact, former Governor Bola Ige was furious with the B.C.O.S for favourably using an NPN story as a headline. He ordered that the News Division should be revamped and resuscitated under a new leadership. The editor on duty that day was also to be sacked. After all pleas from high quarters, Chief Ige later posted one Mr. Peter Ajayi (now deceased) from the Sketch to the B.C.O.S for three months to oversee, direct, coordinate, plan and supervise whatever news bulletins were being produced before they were to be broadcast. Our research discovered that Chief Ige made use of B.C.O.S. for campaign purposes in 1983 general elections. And before the election results were released, Governor Ige made series of live broadcast for consecutive days, saying that should the results to be declared fail to favour him and the UPN, people should reject such results in the belief that the peoples votes must have been stolen, In fact, the B.C.O.S. carried and announced its own election results without the approval of Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). These terrible events were repeated during the Alao Akala PDP (Peoples Democratic Party) led government that was voted out of office in 2011 and Oyo State taken over by the action Congress of Nigeria (ACN).

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Our attempt in this paper has been to demonstrate that there is a peculiarly intimate relationship between the communication process and the political system. We also demonstrated that media ownership in Nigeria affected adversely political communication process in Nigeria's 1983 election wins and this we believe contributed to political instability. We discovered how the manipulation of electronic media by their owners contributed immensely to the dissemination of false information, distorted news-stories, miseducation of the electorate and jaundiced reporting. This hindered the media from following the ethics of their profession, paralysed their efficient running and management and prevented them from entertaining, educating and informing the public with objectivity, impartiality and balancing. Our contention is that a National Communication policy for Nigeria must take into consideration the following:

1. The Federal character principle;
2. The Constitutional Provisions on mass media
3. The structure, working and operation of the Nigerian Political system.
4. Elections, Campaigns and general Political activities in the Country;
5. All towns, villages and local government areas and communities .must be consulted/contacted and be made to have inputs into the National Communication Policy;
6. The Geo-political zones of the country;
7. A Communication Bureau must be set up by the federal government to handle the issue of a National Communication Policy;
8. The National Communication Policy must recommend and the government must approve with a force of law that prior to the start of official campaigns by all competing political parties in Nigeria, all mass media should be put under the control of an independent National Advisory Council on the media to set the 'agenda' of the campaigns and coverage of political activities.

9. Ethnic and religious considerations.
10. Literacy, Nigerian language of all people-minorities and majorities and the security and safety of mass media practitioner in the coverage of National Issues.

It is our well considered opinion that if our National Communication Policy takes these issues into consideration, we may one day stop witnessing political immobilism, social hullabaloo, economic pandemonium - thus debunking the inevitability of instability thesis" of a renowned political scientist in Nigerian government and politics. We must not fail.

**Table 1
OWNERSHIP OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA BY COMPETING POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 1983 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA**

	Total	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
Radio Stations	40	02	5.0	NIL	0.0	28	70.0	03	7.5	02	5.0	05	12.5
Television Stations	30	NIL	0.0	NIL	0.0	22	73.33	02	6.66	01	3.33	05	16.65
Total Electronic Media	70	02	2.85	NIL	0.0	50	71.43	05	7.14	03	4.28	10	14.28

**Table 2
SHOWING THE NUMBER OF ELECTION STORIES CARRIED BETWEEN JANUARY AND DECEMBER, 1983 AND THE PERCENTAGE OF ELECTIONS STORIES CARRIED IN FAVOUR OF THE COMPETING PARTIES**

	Election Stories	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
January	739	43	5.81	27	3.65	452	61.16	96	12.99	20	2.70	101	13.66
February	1,098	70	6.37	67	6.10	564	51.41	124	11.29	53	4.82	220	20.03
March	1,097	103	9.38	109	9.93	503	48.85	142	12.94	90	8.19	150	13.67
April	1,320	133	10.07	137	10.37	570	43.18	154	11.66	109	8.25	217	16.43
May	1,476	148	10.02	170	11.51	592	40.10	173	11.72	122	8.26	271	18.36
June	1,371	147	10.72	168	12.25	506	36.90	198	14.44	129	9.40	223	16.26
July	1,531	172	11.23	171	11.16	558	36.44	204	13.32	149	9.73	277	18.09
August	1,765	204	11.55	270	15.29	592	33.54	223	12.63	191	10.82	285	16.14
September	373	20	5.36	17	4.55	204	56.03	45	12.06	14	3.75	73	19.57
October	347	18	5.18	19	5.47	200	57.63	33	9.51	11	3.17	66	19.02
November	197	12	6.09	14	7.10	101	51.26	21	10.65	09	4.56	40	20.30
December	151	09	5.96	07	4.63	87	57.61	20	13.24	04	2.64	24	15.89

Source: News Information Office, F.R.C.N., Ikoyi, Lagos.

**Table 3
ELECTION STORIES CARRIED BY THE N.T.A. NETWORK NEWS AND THE PERCENTAGE PER COMPETING PARTIES**

	Election Stories	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
January	297	10	3.36	21	7.07	118	39.73	62	20.87	18	6.06	68	22.89
February	360	18	5.00	31	8.61	145	40.27	69	19.16	21	5.83	76	21.11

March	468	19	4.05	35	7.47	239	51.06	67	14.31	37	7.90	71	15.17
April	468	15	3.20	39	8.33	246	52.56	67	14.31	41	8.76	60	12.82
May	468	17	3.63	37	7.90	253	54.05	61	13.03	45	9.61	55	11.75
June	520	27	5.19	35	6.73	292	56.15	68	13.07	41	7.88	57	10.96
July	520	27	5.19	35	6.73	292	56.15	68	13.07	41	7.88	57	10.96
August	520	23	4.42	31	5.96	318	61.15	61	11.73	37	7.11	50	9.61
September	468	25	5.34	29	6.19	286	61.11	47	10.04	41	8.76	40	8.54
October	297	05	1.68	11	3.70	193	64.98	42	14.14	08	.69	38	12.79
November	130	03	2.30	07	5.38	101	77.69	04	3.07	05	3.84	10	7.60
December	130	07	5.38	11	8.46	88	67.69	07	5.38	05	3.84	12	19.23

Source: News Library, N.T.A, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Table 4

ELECTION STORIES CARRIED BY THE B.C.O.S. AND THE PERCENTAGE PER COMPETING PARTIES

	Total Election Stories	GNPP	%	NAP	%	NPN	%	NPP	%	PRP	%	UPN	%
January	924	82	8.87	30	3.24	18	1.94	62	6.70	84	9.09	648	70.12
February	1,205	104	8.63	48	3.98	28	2.32	78	6.47	108	8.96	839	69.62
March	1,468	140	9.53	57	3.88	32	2.17	93	6.33	142	9.67	1,004	68.39
April	1,606	131	8.15	48	2.98	32	1.99	107	6.66	130	8.09	1,158	72.10
May	1,968	130	6.60	41	2.08	19	0.96	92	4.67	136	6.91	1,550	78.76
June	2,005	93	4.63	30	1.49	15	0.74	87	4.33	101	5.03	1,679	83.74
July	2,047	95	4.64	34	1.66	17	0.83	88	4.29	104	5.08	1,709	83.48
August	2,099	87	4.14	33	1.57	27	1.28	59	2.81	87	4.14	1,806	86.04
September	2,109	52	2.46	69	3.27	1,730	82.02	107	5.07	67	3.17	84	3.90
October	1,101	10	0.90	10	0.90	1,009	91.64	41	3.72	10	0.90	21	1.90
November	421	17	4.03	19	4.51	311	73.87	38	9.02	21	4.98	15	3.56
December	202	10	4.95	10	4.95	140	69.30	20	9.90	10	4.95	12	5.94

Source: Documentation Unit/Library B.C.O.S. Orita Basorun, Ibadan.

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The campaign race for the 1983 general elections was opened by the NPN in Gboko, Borno State, on Saturday, 22 January, 1983 It was followed by the GNPP in Sokoto on the 23rd of January, the UPN in Lagos on 29th of January, the NPP in Kano and NAP in Bauchi on 26th February and the PRP was the last Party to launch its election bid in Kaduna, Kaduna State, on 27th February 1983.

The election year came against a background of deepening rifts within the PRP and the GNPP which led to the State Governors Crossing to the NPP, or the UPN and joining the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) and the 'Progressive Governors'.