

**AN ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS IN NIGERIA'S  
DEMOCRACY: USING THE NORMATIVE THEORIES OF THE PRESS**

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**Abstract**

*This study examined media systems and operations in Nigeria with particular attention to Nigeria's democracy. The study provides a global perspective of media systems and operations and narrows it down to Nigeria. The researchers also examined the models of media systems and operations. Consequently, three models were identified. They are the polarised pluralist, the democratic corporatist and the liberal models. The researchers also examined the normative theories of the press that provides theoretical explanations on the relationship between the press and the government and how this affect the operations of the media. Therefore, the six theories examined were authoritative theory, the soviet communist theory, the libertarian theory, the social responsibility theory, the development media theory, and the democratic participants' theory. The researcher links these models and theories of media systems and operations in Nigeria's democracy and argues that Nigeria is currently practicing the liberal model with a combination of libertarian and social responsibility. It is recommended that further empirical studies should be examined to ascertain journalists' views on the media systems and operations in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Media Systems, Models, Operations, Theories of the Press, Government*

**DOI:** 10.31039/jgss.v2i5.100

## **1. Introduction**

The mass media do not operate in isolation and media systems do not occur by natural forces, but highly shaped by media policy and regulations. While it will be difficult to distinguish one from the other, they are relatively a political phenomenon (Ali and Puppis 2018). This affirms that there are underlying factors that define media structure and operations within a society. Judging from the varying perspective of scholars in establishing media systems of nations, the nation's political, economic and social environment appears to take the forefront. (See Siebert et al, 1956, Hallin and Mancini 2004, Hafez 2007, Nworgu, 2011, Mullier 2014). From the social perspective, the media system of a nations can be best understood, by having an in-depth understanding of the concept of society (Siebert et al 1956, Asekun-Olarinmoye et al 2018,). According to Advanced English Dictionary, a society is an extended social group having a distinctive cultural and economic organization. In this vein, society is an indispensable factor for human existence, interaction, and communication at large. It is a vane of all social relationship. Simply put it is refer to as the basic facts of human association from the macro level (among the human beings in the society) to the micro-level (among the various sub-system that constitutes the entire society).

No society can exist without communication. Ceaseless communication remains the vehicle of all social processes through which man defines his social experiences. To sustain this, the interrelationship between the mass media and other institutions must exist. Therefore, it is to note that the mass media being a sub-system in the society, serves as a bridge of interaction among other sub-systems and humans that constitute the society and between institutions and members of society at large. Therefore, the nature of society is integral in defining media systems.

By its very scope, media systems operations focus on the relationship between the press and the state. It seeks to examine how the media conducts its activities in a country. The role of the state in shaping the media system in each country as well as in protecting and widening the public sphere is a key factor because the state makes the rules for media professionals. The structural system of government in a given nation, defines the media system and operation in the society. Hafez, (2007) says that the nation-state remains the "main site of communications and cultural policy-making. Hallin and Mancini (2004) aver that the less the state is involved,

the more liberal the system. While the liberal approach tends to demonize state intervention, Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) obliges states to interfere positively to safeguard freedom of expression and ensure access to plural, diverse and reliable sources of information on topics of interest to the public (Article 19, 2009, p. 4). Amongst the sub-dimensions considered in this dimension is the legal and regulatory framework, which includes media laws and policy. Media policy includes regulation as well as decisions made in relation to media structures, organisations and performance (Puppis & d’Haenens, 2012, pp. 221-222). Regulatory approaches to media diversity, for instance, could either follow a market approach with no constraints on who can enter the market or an interventionist approach where governments introduce and safeguard public service broadcasters, public service obligations on licensed commercial broadcasters, provide subsidy or introduce quota regulations (Puppis, 2009, p. 13).

Other forms of state intervention may include laws and media policies pertaining to access to information, media concentration, ownership and cross-ownership, and political communication particularly during election campaigns, as well as broadcast licensing laws relating to libel, defamation, privacy and hate speech. Furthermore, the media systems of small states are also likely to introduce regulation or other protectionist elements of a “cultural policy toolkit” (Gramsci, 2007) in order to safeguard national identities in the face of commercial competition from larger neighbouring states sharing a language (Puppis, 2009, pp. 14-15). In regions where rule of law is absent or diminished due to state weakness, this dimension is of limited importance but may still be interesting in revealing variations “in structuring the relationship of the individual and society (Verhulst & Price, 2009, p. 139). Furthermore, issues pertaining to the degree of media freedom as well as the legal protections available to journalists are important indicators to consider particularly when studying transformation or authoritarian systems (Amin, 2002). What is certain however is that as the number of commercial televisions increases. This brings to the fore the “most important” and positive form of state intervention – public service broadcasting (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 41).

Hallin and Mancini survey the nature of public service broadcasting across the 18 Western states considered in their study, with the exception of the micro-state of Luxembourg. Public service broadcasting governance models were discussed above under the dimension of political parallelism in so far that these institutions in continental Europe are closely tied to the social and political fabric. Seaton (2005) opines that states have also played an integral role in

establishing, safeguarding and sustaining these “social and a political inventions” by enacting government policies, legislation and “imaginative political will.” Despite the resistance to rampant commercialisation, deregulation, be it controlled or “savage” it is prevalent (Traquina, 1995). Commercialisation has been further expedited by the wave of austerity, which more recently claimed the Greek public broadcaster after it had come to be known as a “haven of waste”. In principle, however, public service broadcasting has been deemed necessary to ensure that the airwaves are used to promote social objectives. A study has linked the prominence of public service in a given national system to “levels of public knowledge” and therefore an informed citizenry, which in turn is necessary for political accountability (Curran, Iyengar, Lund, Brink, Salovaara-Moring, 2009, pp. 6-14). In addition to pedagogic intentions, public broadcasting is deemed a central fixture of a democratic media system serving as an “open system of dialogue” (Curran, 2000, p. 148), which also promotes national consciousness and integration (Hardy, 2008, pp. 51-52).

Furthermore, according to a study by Aarts and Semetko (2003) consuming public service programmes in the Netherlands leads to what Norris called a “virtuous circle”. Meanwhile, consuming commercial media leads to “a spiral of cynicism”, where political involvement decreases. Yet, the PSBs have been generally weakened in recent decades with ever dwindling audiences due to the advent of “deregulation, market liberation, and privatisation” (Curran, 2007). A recent 11 nation study revealed that although public service political programmes can strengthen “citizens’ sense of connection to the political process”, they can also simultaneously alienate some citizens as they are often elite and male-oriented (Curran et al., 2014, pp. 824-825). Moreover, the relations of the PSBs to the configurations of power is also not always as balanced and objective particularly when it relates to civil unrest or conflict where the state is involved. These situations often give rise to the “rallying around the flag” phenomenon (Mueller, 1970, p. 21; Hardy, 2008, p. 55).

In Nigeria, broadcasting was an exclusive preserve of the government until 1992. (Ariye, 2012 Udomisor 2013). To ensure a free press, the post-independence media advocated for the liberalization the media, though seen as enemies of the state. Without intimidation, contested with the government amidst oppression, maltreatment and cruelty. The liberal argument ascribes a level of autonomy to the media as the “fourth estate” of the realm. They are not expected to be subservient to the state or its political institutions. Within this context, it is expected that competing power centres, groups and individuals will have free access to the

media to articulate their views, thus enriching the political process. (Oso 2013). Ralph Negrine sums up this position: “The pluralist description of the social order with its myriad political institutions, groups, and actors all competing, albeit unequally, for power treats, the media as a set of institutions which may act independently in society but which may also be deployed by powerful groups” (Negrine: 1994, p.12).

The concept of liberalization of the mass media to a large extent has to do with the deregulation of the broadcast industry in Nigeria. It is therefore Kudos to General Ibrahim Babangida’s administration with Decree 38 of 1992 deregulated the broadcast media that gave room to private individuals to establish broadcast stations across the country and subsequently, established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) saddled with the responsibility of monitoring broadcasting in the country. He (Babangida) ensured that private radio and television licenses were issued before the end of his administration. To the glory of that administration, many private radio and television stations were licensed and commenced operations. No doubt the deregulation of the broadcast industry in 1992 redefined the media space in Nigeria giving room to more robust interactions among media practitioners. The deregulation only provided an avenue for Nigeria to ventilate their wishes and aspirations. Oketunmbi (2007) affirms that one of the most visible effects of liberalization and proliferation of broadcasting houses in Nigeria is wider latitude in programming. In broadcasting parlance, programming is the process of determining and scheduling the contents of broadcast operations. Programming addresses the issue of what would be on air, when, and for how long? Clearly, the contents of radio and television broadcast signals have increased in terms of varieties and durations since the advent of liberalization. Another visible gain of liberalization is a higher altitude in creativity. Meanwhile, the consensus that freedom of expression is a hallmark of modern democracy is common knowledge. And by extending the public arena beyond the confines of the monopolization era, liberalization has created more chances for various stakeholders in the society to express themselves.

Arising from the establishment of private radio and television stations in Nigeria, new insights have emerged including prospects of enhanced remuneration, job mobility, conducive working environment; state of the art broadcast equipment for the professionals (arguable though) and also enhanced programming contents for the listeners and viewers. In doing this, the private media had, and are still recruiting the best hands that the industry can boast of. The fact is that they must recruit.

It can be said that the influence of deregulation has been felt in all aspects of our daily life which is summed up as socio-cultural, economic and political. The Radio as a vehicle for social change emphasizes that the medium should project the best and discourages the worst in the society. NBC broadcast regulation requires that 70% broadcast of be local Nigeria content and by Nigerians (NBC code 2016).

With the deregulation, Radio and Television have provided variety of programmes. The private sector investment in the broadcast industry has created thousands of new jobs as a result of the accelerated development of the sector. The economic influence however transcends the provision of jobs as other auxiliary services which complement broadcasting have also been positively affected; for instance, Advert Agencies have witnessed expansion to handle the myriad of commercials to be broadcast on the various Radio Stations . Consequently, this has led to other openings for graduates of related fields.

In the area of politics, private Radio have made considerable influence on Nigeria's political life including the disappearance of partisan politics and the presentation of opinions with the medium. Most listeners today rely on the private broadcast stations to receive up to date and accurate news of events in and around the Country. Indeed they are seen as alternative vehicles for the dissemination of voices in States where Chief executives have taken absolute control of the State Media to prevent dissenting views.

It is therefore no gainsaying that since the deregulation of broadcast in 1992, their influences have been positively felt. Atoyebi (2002, p.14) quoted by Attah (2006) notes:

The entrance of the private entrepreneurs in broadcasting brought about the introduction of the state of the art equipment into the industry. This has challenged government to provide new professional equipment for public stations. Currently, stations under the auspices of the Federal Radio Corporation are installing about 37 new transmitters while NTA has not only acquired about 167 transmitters to replace the old ones but also to set up stations for each of the Senatorial Constituency.

Today, more stations that are new have emerged under the Federal Government's expansion of its broadcast stations with their state of the art technology. This has enhanced the audio and video signals, as it has now become clearer and clearer.

Taking a cue from the Federal government's expansionist tendencies of its broadcast media to enable it compete favourably with privately own broadcast stations, some State Governments have also acquired new transmitters to cope with the new challenges.

## **2. Media Systems Operation Models**

Different countries of the world have different media systems operations. Hallin and Mancini's (2004) *Comparing Media Systems* sought to determine the relation between media and politics by comparatively analysing 18 media systems in the West. They proposed a framework consisting of key dimensions influencing media systems such as the development of the media markets, political parallelism, journalists' professionalization and state role as well as other key political characteristics namely state-society relation and the differences in patterns of government (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 65). In line with these dimensions, Hallin and Mancini distinguish between three different models of media systems in an effort to reveal the politics-media interplay within the framework of established western democracies. The three models are the Polarised Pluralist, the Democratic Corporatist and the Liberal Model. They repeatedly warn that the models provided are in fact "ideal types" à la Max Weber where they serve as a simplification of a complex reality usefully capturing the most important aspects of empirical reality. While some heterogeneous national media systems may at times not fit comfortably under each of the categories, the three models identified – they argue – still capture significant characteristics of media systems and political systems, and they enable classifications of individual systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 69).

Indeed, even a cursory glance reveals ill-fitting national media systems grouped with others that are quite different or that fit only after several qualifications including the reminder that the purpose of the work is not only classification of individual systems, but the identification of characteristic patterns of relationship between system characteristics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 11). However, the work lives up to the value of classification as argued by Weber and that it helps "enlarge our thinking" about what has been classified by thinking about the media systems and variations between them through these models (as cited in Patterson, 2007, p. 330). Hallin and Mancini use the influential Four Theories of the Press as a springboard for their study highlighting the argument "the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" as well as Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's attempt at analysing media systems comparatively and "the appeal of being able to classify media systems in terms of a smaller number of models" (McQuail, 2005).

Siebert, Peterson and Schramm are criticised first and foremost for hyper-simplification and failing to empirically analyse the relationship of media systems and social system and

rather focusing on the state-media relationship. Hallin and Mancini, instead, sought to explicate connections between media system patterns and political system characteristics in the West rather than on a global scale. They thus choose cautiously to limit the study to a region in the interest of “comparability” which, they reason, is “more likely in an area than in a randomly selected set of countries” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.7). Hallin and Mancini survey the different political and economic system variables relevant to the comparative analysis of media systems and which impact the four dimensions they put forth. These variables draw on historical and political characteristics that have influenced the media systems of the Western states included in the study. These characteristics include market-related factors such as the development of advertising, the concentration of capital and its effect on the media through clientelist ties, as well as the relation of state and society where and particularly the distinction between liberal and welfare-state democracy; the distinction between consensus and majoritarian government, between organized pluralism or corporatism, and liberal pluralism, the development of rational-legal authority as defined by Max Weber, and the distinction between moderate and polarised pluralism. Based on the political, economic and historical context, Hallin and Mancini propose four dimensions according to which media systems in Western Europe and North America can be compared. Hallin and Mancini’s dimensions almost coincide with those put forth by Blumler and Gurevitch (2005) although they add media market development with an emphasis on the strong or weak development of the mass circulation press to the other dimensions of political parallelism or the “degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties”, the development of journalistic professionalism; and the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system. Each of these complex dimensions is further subdivided into several qualitative distinctions (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 21-22). These models are further explained below.

Furthermore, the BBC, the largest and oldest public service television in the world has a formidable audience, which in addition to the publicly-owned Channel 4 claimed circa 45 percent audience share of the market in 2012 (Broadcasters’ Audience Research Board, 2013). However, in the liberal US model where an “absolutist...fundamentalist interpretation of the First Amendment” applies (Benson, 2011, p. 194), public broadcasting “resembles public service only in name” (Kleinstauber, 2004, pp. 80-81). The US Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is a private, non-profit corporation, founded in 1969, whose members are America’s public TV stations and which receives funds from foundations and individuals alike. 53 However, its audience share remains below two percent (Curran et al., 2009, p. 6). The



uniqueness of the American case with regards this indicator makes grouping it with Britain, Canada and Ireland under the Liberal Model untenable. Furthermore, the British press and its “external pluralism” presents yet another problem, which makes it sit uncomfortably with the alleged “neutral and information focused” style described by Hallin and Mancini as belonging to the Liberal Model or the Anglo-American style of journalism. Although the authors qualify the use of this term by arguing that the British press is more politically parallel than the other states grouped under this ideal type, the rise of partisan media in the US also challenges the alleged catchall and neutral nature attributed to this style. While they acknowledge the “explicit patriotic stance” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 217) taken by Fox and Clear Channel in the US, where in 2009 the latter provided its audience with tips on organising protests or “tea parties” against government taxes and spending (Stroud, 2011, p. 9), they seem to belittle its dominance or the fact that “if the market demands partisan news, the media will supply partisan news” (Stroud, 2011, p. 176). Furthermore, the inherent biases harboured by the “neutral” approach are also overlooked. A political economy critique of the US media points to how the quest for neutrality and objectivity, “the most insidious bias of all” (Schudson, 1978, p. 160) effectively privileges official sources, decontextualizes the news and offers detached coverage, and focuses on matters that do not harm commercial owners and advertisers (Schudson, 2002b, pp. 9-12). Indeed, it is fair to state that the profit-driven and capitalist media, which is owned “by less and less hands” does suffer from “serious defects” (Schudson, 2002, p. 4). The British press however, as Hallin and Mancini acknowledge, have “distinct political identities” with some being partisan in nature (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 212). With the British tabloid newspapers infamous for their unabashed emulation of Robespierre or the Roman games as they close in on their prey “with both real and sublimated violence” (Seaton, 2005, p. 292).

The Canadian and Irish systems are also in some ways closer to the Democratic Corporatist Model in so far that these two systems are also characterised by a strong public broadcaster. The issue of categorisation therefore emerges once again in this case with Norris blaming the “fuzzy, impressionistic and unscientific” impressions used rather than basing the classification on standardised indicators or a set of explicit decision rules, which could be tested (2009, p. 334). In spite of these nagging issues, the Liberal Model of journalism has been promulgated around the world as the normative ideal (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 300). This is rather ironic in so far that public trust in the media generally and the British press in particular is among the lowest in Europe with 21 percent claiming to trust the press (European Commission, 2012, p. 18) with another poll showing that 72 percent of British citizens do not

trust journalists. Although Hallin and Mancini are accused by Hardy of privileging the Liberal Model, they do mention its drawbacks of the liberal media such as the low newspaper circulation, high level of commercialisation, the lack of diversity in the US and the instrumentalisation and partisanship in Britain.

In terms of pluralism, the US laissez-faire approach does not serve pluralism as it is often the case that well-resourced media dominates and the alternative voices are marginalised (Curran, 2000 pp. 34-36). In addition to hegemony in the broad and complex sense which comprises “a whole system of meanings and values” reconfirming themselves (Williams, 2005, p. 38), the US media in particular, has been guilty of using discriminatory frames such as the study by Robert Entman “African Americans According to TV News” reveals (Luther, Lepre & Clark, 2012, p. 80). The “newsworthy” crimes often reported are perpetrated by African-American although the majority of crimes are carried out by Anglo Americans. Even if the reports are impartial, the minimal contextual information provided arguably accentuates stereotypes (Entman, 2001, p. 3). Indeed “the practices of representation” in the “cultural circuit”, as the late Stuart Hall would have it, further questions the media’s alleged objectivity and inclusion (Hall, 1997, p. 15). Public service broadcasting in Northern Europe as well as the incorrectly-categorised United Kingdom are reported to have more members of disadvantaged groups partaking in the “ritual of watching the evening new” (Curran et al., 2009, p. 20).

Furthermore, unfettered commercialisation and competition is also partially to blame for what is perceived as also partially to blame for the rise of infotainment – a portmanteau joining information and entertainment in news programmes. Although the rise of this phenomenon has been linked to “the decline of ideology” and the rise in populism and political marketing (Blumler, 2005, p. 120), the quest for higher ratings and therefore larger profits have resulted in content “where style triumphs over substance... [and where] soft news about celebrities, crime, corruption” reigns at the expense of politics and public affairs (Thussu, 2009, pp. 7-8).

A study comparing the public service institutions in Denmark, Finland, the UK and the US has revealed a connection between the “patterns of news coverage and levels of public knowledge” (Curran et al., 2009, p. 14). Unsurprisingly, the study by James Curran and his colleagues reveals greater public ignorance in nations where public service broadcasting are weak or not present thereby accentuating the importance of “the architecture of the media

system” – or how the media are organised (2009, p. 22). Still, Kees Brants argues civic-minded Europeans ought not to panic over the encroachment of infotainment with deregulation and commercialisation in Europe (1998, p. 329). Nonetheless, and as will be discussed and critiqued in the following subsection, Hallin and Mancini have announced the “triumph of the Liberal Model” the so-called "wave of the future", tensions, contradictions and important countertrends notwithstanding (2004, pp. 247-248).

### **3. Six Theories of Media Systems and Operations**

Media system and operations have been theorized to explain the relationship between the press and the government and how this affects operations of the press. This set of theories are summarily described as the normative theories of the press which deals with the performance of the media and relationship with other structures (political, social and economic) within the environment where it operates. It simply means that the mass media in a given society takes the shape of the social, political and economic structure and are conditioned by the existing government where it operate ( Daramola 2003, p. 40).

The normative theory can also be referred as the political press theory. Reason been that it ties the operation of the mass media to the political environment in which the media operates. Normative theories of the press as originally formulated by Siebert and his colleagues in 1956 and extended by McQuail in 1987 saw the media system of different countries as approximating to one of four (later six) ideal types, each represented by a different media theory, which in turn derives from the political and economic characteristics of the country in question. Siebert classified the Saudi Arabian media as conforming to his Authoritarian theory of the media. An important objective of the present research was to assess the adequacy and accuracy of this classification particularly in the light of the later formulated "Development Media Theory" (something which was in itself to be critically examined in the context of historically changing conceptions of development).

Frederick S. Siebert, Wilbur Schramm and Theodore Peterson’s normative Four Theories of the Press (1956) sought to explicate differences in the world media by comparing the libertarian, authoritarian, social responsibility and Soviet communist concepts, their “ethnocentric perspectives, inconsistent structure, questionable typology and problematic assumptions” (Merrill, 2002, p. 133). The initial four Theories of the press were expanded by Denis McQuail (1987) who proposed two new theories; the democratic participant and the

development theories, referring to countries in transition from colonialism to independence. Raymond Williams meanwhile suggested four systems based on organisational form rather than ideologies, including the commercial, paternalistic- “authoritarian system with a conscience”, the authoritarian and the democratic (as cited in Mellor, 2005, pp. 49-51). Hachten (1981) put-forth the “revolutionary concept of the press” whereas Sparks and Splichal (1988) suggested the commercial and paternalist media system typologies (as cited in Jakubowicz, 2010, p. 2). However, the fundamental question posed by Siebert et al. of why the press is as it is and the fact that the media often takes the “coloration” of the social and political structures in which it operates (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 1) continue to resonate. Indeed, their question and premise have been addressed by subsequent researchers including Hallin and Mancini’s study on media systems in the western world, which resulted in a typology of media models for western media systems based on a set of theoretical indicators and empirical data.

### **3.1. The Authoritarian Theory**

This theory is meant to advance and encourage the vested interests of a particular class and in turn the state. Information was seen as a secret property of few ruling elites and truth was thought to be centred only in the chambers of power to guide and direct the citizen. Its claims is that intellectual abilities of the masses are low and incapable of managing information. Authoritarian governments exploit the efficiency of the press within their power to maintain order and social stability. It was an effective tools in the hands of those who wish to maintain the status quo. The media are seen as “servants” of the state and are only obliged to support and promote the policies of the government and the government use it to create a favourable climate and attainment of state goals. The media are forbidden form government criticism and dissent. Under this system, media are most time owned by government and private individual loyal to the government also are allowed to operate with license, which can be withdrawn at any time if loyalty to government is questionable. The media are regulated closely through various channels such as government agencies, unions or ministries etc. the purpose being to ensure the dissemination of the views of the dominant class or group. Other form used to control the media includes, regressive legislation, heavy taxation, censorship etc.

### **3.2. The Libertarian (Free Press) Theory**

The libertarian theory, as outlined by Siebert et al, like the Authoritarian theory, rooted in European political philosophy. However, the resemblance ends there, the fundamental beliefs

about the nature of the state, the individual and knowledge being completely at odds with Authoritarian rule. The individual is seen as being capable of attaining self-fulfilment, and knowledge. The state's role is only to facilitate the achievement of this goal. The libertarian philosophy emerged in opposition to the domination of ideas of Divine power, in support of rationality and the power of reason. But the libertarian press theory emerged, according to McQuail (2005) with the liberation of the "printed press from official control in the Seventeenth Century. A free press became an important 'component' of a free, liberal democratic society. The media, under this theory, operates as a watchdog. They provide society with a means of implementing the right of free speech to individuals, which is one of the main tenets of a free society, in theory at least.

### **3.3. The Social Responsibility Theory**

This theory was formulated in the U.S.A. in the early decades of this century. It was initiated by the Commission on Freedom of the Press and the writings of Hocking. Its emergence is widely seen as an attempt to remedy the situation created by the liberal system mentioned above. With technological advances in communication the free ideological market, like the free market economy, resulted in concentration of cultural power in the hands of those who owned the means of production. This meant the elimination of minority views and opinions from the cultural market. Those who have access to the media, profit-motivated groups, will do everything they can to maximize profit at any cost, which in the end benefits them and harms the rest of society. This, as McQuail (2005) says, abolishes the individual and social benefits promised.

### **3.4. The Soviet Communist (Totalitarian) Theory**

As the name suggests, this theory is derived from the general characteristics of the Soviet mass communication system. Though in one sense, this theory seems little more than a variant on the Authoritarian theory discussed earlier, it differs in that it derives its validation from particular interpretations of Marx and Engels. The theory gives the working class the power to control cultural production. It is only the communist party's officials and members who have the right to own and use the mass media of communication, a practice based on the belief that "The dominant ideas and institutions of any society are the ideas and institutions of the dominant economic class". (Siebert, 1976).

The great size of the working class required a leadership which was vested in the communist party. The interests of the working class were to be respected and protected by the party. In other words, the party turned to central power as in the authoritarian system, where every decision or project was initiated by a leadership. The main difference is that the ruling party in the Soviet system, unlike the authoritarian, have to represent a somewhat larger class and diversity of interests. This diversity of interests resulted in a communication system, again somewhat more diverse than in the authoritarian system where the media are tied very closely to a single view adopted by the government.

### **3.5. The Democratic Participant Media Theory**

This theory emerged in the "developed liberal" societies as a response to the perceived failure of the liberal theory of communication in a manner analogous to the social responsibility theory's formulation to rectify some of the shortcomings in the libertarian theory. The theory advocates the right to communicate to all citizens either as individuals or groups, and holds that the media must serve the needs of all its audiences. In the words of McQuail (2005) in this theory "individual citizens and minority groups have the right of access to media - the right to communicate - and the right to be served by media according to their own determination of need; the organisation and content of media should not be subject to centralised political or state bureaucratic control.

### **3.6. The Development Media Theory**

This theory was suggested by McQuail in 1987. It differs markedly from those thus far mentioned, in that it is derived not from the developed world, but from the Third World. These countries show some common features that justify classifying them under this theory. Most of them have gained their independence relatively recently, and still remain dependent on the industrial western power politically, economically and, culturally. These countries are incorporated into a world economic system which is dominated by the western capitalism. The industrial western world owns the technology which the developing countries have to obtain, if they are to develop on the western model. Most of the advocates of developmental communication have seen the media as playing a very important role in bringing about national development.

#### **4. Media Operations in Nigeria's Democracy**

Based on the discussion so far, this paper argues that Nigeria operates the liberal model of media system. Regarding theory, the media system in Nigeria is libertarian and social responsibility. A good example of the liberal model in Nigeria is the deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria in 1992 with a corresponding implication on Nigeria's democracy. With the deregulation, private broadcasting began in Nigeria. Private broadcasting has made considerable impact on Nigeria's political life. The flamboyance, excitement and conflict which were not available during the sole ownership by government are now back in full force. Apart from informing Nigerians daily of political developments within the country and around the world, private broadcast media have also endeavoured to present different shades of opinions-politically, since its emergence. Indeed, during the thick of Nigeria's political crises following the annulment of the June 12 elections by the Babangida regime, most viewers and listeners relied on the private stations to give them up to date and accurate news of happenings around the country. A case in point is the deaths of both General Abacha and Chief M.K.O Abiola which were reported first by some private stations Like the AIT before the NTA. This is most encouraging when juxtaposed against the hitherto prevailing scenario in which radio and television news were criticized for their placidity and predominance of government related stories. As such, the private stations have come to offer alternatives to the discerning public.

For the political class, gone are those days when incumbents will use executive powers to prevent opponents from utilizing Federal, Regional or State media as was the case between Chief Awolowo and the Colonial Government then (Asemah 2011). The media system in Nigeria is, thus contributing to Nigeria's democracy through political socialization. Political socialization is the process of internalizing the political norms of one's country. It is an indicator that determines the extent to which one is familiar with the political dynamism of his or her country. The common indicators of political socialization includes, an understanding of a country's political history, its leaders, party system, voting pattern, voting procedure, party dynamites, electoral bodies, campaign guidelines qualification for verifying, qualification to contest election, legislative, system, separation of powers, form of government, tier of government and their powers as well as limitation, procedure for registration of political partners among others.

Political socialization is a very important indicator in measuring political advancement of a country. For example, in a country where citizens are largely ignorant of the entire political

dynamics, it will be very difficult for them to participate. Political participation is a product of political socialization. Political socialization is very essential to a nation's collective advancement. Ahmond and Bingham cited in Ofoeze (2001) note that political socialization performs the following function: shapes and transmits a nation's political culture, maintains society's culture from one generation to the other, has the capacity to transform a population or part of it, to view and experience of politics in different dimensions and rapid changes of extraordinary events and have the capacity of generating political culture even where none existed. The role of the media in Nigeria is also recognized in the Constitution.

This is enshrined in section 22 of the 1999 (as amended) Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states: 'The press, radio television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people. This provision in the Constitution gives the press the duty to hold the government accountable to the people. Therefore, this paper argues that the media system is essential for Nigeria's democracy through political socialization. This is needed in a democracy.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this study, the researcher provides an overview of media systems and operations. In doing so, the researcher provides a global perspective of media system and operations and narrows it down to Nigeria. The researcher also examined the models of media systems and operations. Consequently, three models were identified. They are the polarised pluralist, the democratic corporatist and the liberal Model. The researcher also examined the six theories of the press that provides theoretical explanations on the relationship between the press and the government and how this affect the performance of the media. Therefore, the six theories examined were the authoritative theory, the Soviet communist theory, the libertarian theory, the social responsibility theory, the development media theory and the democratic participants' theory. After these, the researcher also examined the media system and operations in Nigeria's democracy and argues that Nigeria is currently practicing the liberal model with a combination of libertarian theory and social responsibility. Therefore, it is recommended that further empirical studies should be examined to ascertain journalists' views on the media system and operations in Nigeria.



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