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**MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: A CRITIQUE OF SELECTED  
RADIO AND TV PROGRAMMES DURING THE ELECTIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study is carried out through the case study method which uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate post-election violence in Nigeria's second republic. The main thesis of the study is anchored on the contention of Gana (2000) that the media in a democracy should "promote the culture of peace, development, people's participation, positive virtues as well as promoting a stable polity" (p. 11). Across centuries, normative theories of politics have been anchored on an assumption that modern representative democracies thrive in an information environment in which the citizens learn and consequently carry out certain obligations. According to Carpini (2004), "the citizens learn about pressing issues of the day, follow the actions of elected and government officials, and communicate their views to these officials" (p. 395). However, theories of direct democracy have established a scenario of richer communication environment that helps provide citizens with motivation, ability and opportunity to participate in on-going political activities through diverse ways. According to North (1967), "politics could not exist without communication, nor could wars be fought" (p. 301). The reason behind this assertion was provided by Deutsch (1963) who stresses that "it is communication, that is, the ability to transmit messages and react to them that makes organization" (p. 77). Isaak (1981) equally makes a similar assertion. He points out that "it is through communication that a political system relates to and copes with its environment" (p. 292). The study is a critique of selected political programmes of radio stations and TV in Nigeria during the elections. This is a period when politically articulate citizens are eager and, in some cases, anxious to know the latest about the on-going elections. Due to the sensitive nature of politics, it is expected that every piece of information that is aired is thoroughly investigated and authenticated to guard against any thing that could induce violence. When this is not done, violence will surely occur. Through a qualitative research method with emphasis on a case study, the study arrived at the conclusion that the post-election violence which erupted in the Old Ondo state was due to non-adherence to the broadcasting code, partisanship and the unprofessional conduct of media men.*

**Keywords:** *election, democracy, post-election violence, partisanship, communication.*

## **I. Introduction**

A subsisting argument among communication scholars is an assertion that “people create conflict situations through their communication or message behavior” (Lulofs & Cahn, 2000, p. 149). From this perspective, communication is viewed as both the cause and the effect of conflict situations.

This study focuses on *Political Platform* and *Verdict '83* which are political programmes created by the management of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) respectively during the first civilian-to-civilian transitory elections in Nigeria’s second Republic of 1983.

Being the first time Nigeria would be conducting the first civilian-to-civilian general elections since independence on October 1, 1960, the objective of the programme was to enlighten the citizenry about happenings and occurrences on the political scene. In furtherance of the assertion of Semetko (1996) that “the vast majority of the people living in democratic societies experienced election campaigns through the media” (p. 269), such a programme under a normal political atmosphere need not induce violence. However, due to the manner of production and presentation of the programme, public peace was disrupted as thousands of people were killed while property worth millions of naira was destroyed in the aftermath of the violence which followed the programme. With the application of a case study method which uses multiple sources of evidence to probe the post-election violence in the Old Ondo State, the study found out that the media contributed immensely to the outbreak of the violence in which thousands of people were killed while property worth millions of naira were destroyed.

## **II. Objective**

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The objective of the paper is to critically appraise the role played by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and Ondo State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) in the post-election violence which erupted during the 1983 gubernatorial election in the old Ondo state as well as the partisanship displayed by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) in the coverage of the 1983 general elections.

### **III. Methodology**

The study adopted the qualitative research technique through the case study method. Wimmer and Dominick (2006), quoting Yin (1994), describes a case study as “an empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 136). This method enriches the study as it focuses on a particular situation through a detailed description of a real-life problem induced by two radio stations belonging to the government under different management boards. The method further offers an opportunity to deal with a wide spectrum of evidence, documents, and historical artifacts which are relevant to the study.

### **IV. Research Questions**

- a. Does communication through radio programmes induce violence?
- b. Does it really matter producing a political programme during elections?
- c. Does the law of the land encourage the production and dissemination of violent-prone programmes?

### **V. Literature Review**

In every democratic society, the press as a whole is regarded as the marketplace of ideas. The broadcast media in such societies, according to Akpan (1985), “exist to serve the information needs of the citizenry” (p. 252). In meeting these societal

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information needs, the editors, commentators, anchormen and women, and journalists generally work on the principle that the public is entitled to all the facts in a political situation, and that on the basis of these facts they can make informed decisions. Politics, especially voting, thrives on people making informed decisions.

Many of such programmes which meet the societal information needs are produced and delivered through a public service programme. According to Uyo (1987), “a broadcast public service programme promotes or publicizes a public organization, event, programme or campaign as the station’s civic contribution to society” (p. 37). Quoting a German commentator, Bertolt Brecht, Popoola (2003) says, “even God is guided on world affairs by the press” (p. 93). The truth of the matter is that members of the public are usually guided on every issue related to the conduct of an election through a well-packaged public service programme.

For these reasons, Justice Sawant (2000) describes the press as the life-line of democracy as well as the ‘ears’ and ‘eyes’ of the people:

The press is a powerful institution in a democracy. There is no subject on which it cannot comment and there is no institution which can escape its criticism. The media help to preserve and promote democracy by safeguarding the independence of its institutions including itself and ensuring accountability of them all. (p. 32)

A former American statesman, Abraham Lincoln, understood the centrality and critical role of the media in democracy. Edwards (1996) quotes Lincoln as saying “with public sentiment, nothing can fail, without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions” (p. 192).

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Akinfeleye (2011) similarly quotes a renowned American philosopher, democrat and President, Thomas Jefferson, who declared poignantly that if he were to choose between having a government without a newspaper, he would not hesitate to choose the latter (pp. 12-13). It is, therefore, saying the obvious in the context of North (1967) once more that politics cannot exist without communicating through the press (p. 301).

In a related development, Edwards (1996) argues that the press performs a dual role in every democratic society. First, he contends that “the press occupied a position that is analogous to that of a middleman providing necessary information about the affairs of the state and politics” (p. 190).

He states further that as watchdog, it carries out investigation into activities of public officials and exposes scandals. He was, however, quick to add that the founders of the US, especially former American statesmen such as Washington, Jefferson and Madison, never anticipated a scenario in which the watchdog role of the press would turn into an attack by engaging in what a US political scholar, Larry Sabato, calls “a feeding frenzy.” That is, a situation where a critical mass of journalists pursue the same story intensely, excessively and sometimes uncontrollably. Edwards maintains that “they did not foresee that journalists would seize the center stage in the political process, creating, not reporting, the news and altering the shape of politics and the contours of government” (p. 191).

However, a major reason why the media wielded such an enormous power was given by Helge through a piece entitled “Democracy, Civil Society and the Media in Africa in the Nineties.” According to Helge (1995), the media are at the centre of the democratic process and their situation can be used as a barometer for explaining the depth of political change. “Citizens participation through the media is indispensable in

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order to carry out coherently the economic and cultural development of society” (p. 335).

Edwards (1996) further presents the views of the foremost European leaders, Lech Walesa and Jiang Zemin, who equally spoke of the role of mass media in governance (p. 33). While Lech Walesa, a Polish leader, said “would there be Earth without the Sun?,” Jiang Zemin, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist party, said “the power of the media is so enormous that chaos could result if the tools of public opinion are not tightly controlled in the hands of true Marxists.” Edwards (1996) similarly quotes a Chilean opposition who upset Augusto Pinochet in a plebiscite saying, “In 15 minutes of television time, we destroyed 15 years of government publicity for the dictators.”

Even though this study focuses on the radio induced violence that erupted after the gubernatorial election in the old Ondo state, violence, according to Ali (2003), was part and parcel of Nigerian political life before the attainment of independence:

Those who were old enough at the time would remember the myriad of political violence that attended the general elections of 1959. This trend continued both at the regional elections and reached a crescendo at the general elections of 1964. (p. 32)

It could be recalled that the south-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria once acquired the epithet of wild – ‘Wild West.’ Quoting Mackintosh, Oyediran (1979) refers to the zone as “the cockpit of Nigerian politics particularly between 1962 and the time of military take-over of political power in 1966” (p. 20). Oyediran further quotes Billy Dudley, a renowned political scholar, who equally described the zone as “the problem area of the Nigerian federation.” The fact of the matter, according to Jinadu (2011), is that “typically, elections are approached with a deadly and incendiary do or die

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attitude by political parties, candidates and their supporters” (p. 57). Ake (2001) similarly deplors such attitude by African political class, “They placed more value on capturing political power for themselves and grew increasingly fearful about what seemed to them to be the grave consequences of losing to their rivals in the competition for control of state” (p. 5).

In another study, Ake (1976) accuses the Nigerian political class of turning politics into war by another means, “They recruit political warriors, establish private armies and engage in a war of attrition among one another either in the form of intra-party or inter-party conflict” (as cited in Jinadu, 2011, p. 57).

The basic goal of the media according to Opubor (1985) is “fact-finding and fact-giving. That is the function of news operations, determining what is, and saying that it is, and saying so publicly” ( p. 230). A development which questioned the integrity of the media during the period under review in this paper was the relegation of core professionals to the background in the day-to-day administration of broadcast stations. Reflecting on this unfortunate scenario, Uche (1989) recalls that in a bid to ensure absolute control of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), and for it to be effectively utilized by his party for political spoils against the other political parties that were in opposition, ex-President Sheu Shagari redeployed the Director-General of the NTA who had been in the broadcasting industry since its inception in the country to the ministry of communications to be an adviser on frequency allocation (pp. 70-71).

According to Uche (1989), “Shagari then appointed a political stalwart in his party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), a former lecturer in the History Department at the University of Lagos, Walter Ofonagoro, as the new Director-General” (p. 70). Uche adds:

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The president further appointed his fellow political party man as the Chief Executive of NTA to make sure that the other political parties were not given fair deal in the election campaigns and coverage. He wanted the NTA to portray only himself, NPN party members, supporters, their programmes and accomplishments. (p. 71)

Nasser (1983) further articulates the role of such people to be that of dishing out information which they think the public needs. “The tastes and wants of the public count very little in such gatekeepers’ criteria of news selection” (p. 59). The NTA and her sister station, the FRCN, pursued this partisanship agenda in a shameless manner such that they lost their credibility as well as public confidence. Going by the trend of discussion on both the FRCN and NTA, it was undoubtedly clear that the selection of panel of discussants on both the FRCN’s *Political Platform* and NTA’s *Verdict’83* was based on sentiment. The discussants made no pretension that they were sympathizers of the ruling party as they never express any critical view that could reduce the chances of the ruling party from securing a re-election. Rather, it was an indirect campaign whose goal was to tilt the opinion of the public in favour of the ruling party. They failed to provide sound opinion which could help prospective voters make informed voting decision whereas Nasser (1983) says that people have a right to know what their government is doing. The “news must provide essential facts for them to form sound opinions on public issues” (p. 47).

While it is an indisputable fact that mass media are expected to monitor governance in keeping with their watchdog roles, the fact remains that news must be presented in a factual, accurate, and sincere manner without the bias of the reporters. The stations that were involved in this study are yet to fully reclaim their lost glory at present because many of their viewers and listeners still prefer private television

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stations or radio to NTA/FRCN. The NTA's election theme, 'Verdict' '83', was changed by the enlightened public to 'Void 83'. The partisanship agenda was pursued vigorously through news presentation and programming.

Uche (1989) stresses that the partisanship agenda was pursued to an extreme point that a newscaster, Chuma Edozie, caused a major air wave shock when he announced his resignation shortly after he had been cued on screen to read the 7.00 P.M. news bulletin (p. 71). According to Uche:

Edozie who had been primed to read the bulletin, scanned the scripts and discovered that one of the stories contained false information. He immediately threw down the bulletin and let loose in full glare of viewers, 'I am fed up with this false information. I hereby tender my resignation. I can't continue with this stuff, no, no, no, I am fed up', he screamed and walked out on camera in apparent disgust. ( p. 71)

The implication of the above scenario was vividly captured by Nasser (1983) as follows, "Gatekeepers of these media, whether editors, reporters make judgments about what is newsworthy and what is not" (p. 43). Therefore, news lost its values and credibility as it became an instrument of insult and falsehood to be used against opposition parties whereas the "media are supposed to be a critical watchdog and to that extent they are supposed to be courageous, impartial and forthright in their reportage," as maintained by Osa, the Director and Editor-in-Chief of the *Insider* magazine ( as cited in Olukotun, 2003, p. 173).

Uyo (1996) notes that electronic media are instruments of social change adding that "they can bring about social change through their messages" (p. 108). In radio and television, the message is the programme and behind every programme is a producer. Conversely, without a producer there can be no message. However, it has

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been asserted that whether messages that are produced can bring about social change depends on a number of factors. According to Uyo (1996), the first factor is to consider the nature of the political and economic environment in which messages are produced or in which their producers operate. The second factor is the nature of the people for whom the messages are produced. The third factor has to do with the nature of the media organizations themselves, including their personnel with reference to their professionalism. The political programme produced during the period under review did not bring about social change, which is very vital in governance; the result was violence (p. 108).

A number of political scholars further attributed the production of violent-prone programmes during the period to the high freedom enjoyed by mass media in the country during Nigeria's second republic. Mazrui (2006) captured press freedom in Nigeria then thus:

Freedom of the press was so excessive that newspapers sometimes came close to inciting violence, which would be a journalistic offence in such countries as Britain. In other words, press freedom in Nigeria was greater under Shagari than in most Western countries. (pp. 254-255)

## **VI. Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on the communication perspective of the conflict behaviour theory and the Magic Bullet theory of mass communication. According to Lulofs and Cahn (2000), it has been established that people involved in conflict and their relationship to one another could create conflict situations, but it has equally been asserted that people create conflict situations through their communication or message behaviour. Within this context, communication is viewed as both the cause and the effect of conflict situations (pp. 148-149).

In all the cases cited in the next segment of this paper, it will be seen that communication was the main cause of the violence which erupted during the elections in Nigeria. The communication theory that has been used to explain this situation is the linear model of communication and conflict. This model views communication as a process of sending and receiving messages. Some communication studies in the past concentrated on the sending or encoding of messages as well as on how some people in certain situations tend to engage in certain kinds of message production behaviours. These studies raised questions that are related to goals, purposes and intentions of message senders.

It is interesting to also note that other communication studies focused on the receiving or decoding of messages as well as on how audiences are likely to react to messages. In other words, the interest of communication scholars in this context is related to probing the effects of messages on receivers. They were equally interested in probing issues related to fidelity. Most times, they asked “ Did what was received have the same meaning as what was sent?” Such questions on fidelity, according to Lulofs and Cahn (2000) “helped communication scholars to focus on important issues such as phrasing conflict messages correctly” (p. 150).

It is instructive to stress that the conflict that erupted during electioneering periods as a result of a certain political programme on the radio could be narrowed down to the question of fidelity as well as the prevailing political atmosphere in the polity. A major probing thesis of the Magic Bullet theory was on why people react instantaneously or immediately to a media message (Lowery and Defleur, 1995, p. 13). The theory is quite interesting such that it has been given different names by various communication scholars. For instance, Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1989) call it the “stimulus-response theory, the hypodermic needle theory

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and transmission belt theory” (p. 163). Severin and Tankard Jr. (2001, p. 3) as well as Bittner (1989, p. 373) simply refer to it as “bullet theory” or “hypodermic needle theory” while Blake and Haroldsen (1975) describe it as “mechanistic stimulus response (S-R) theory (p.121). Okunna (1999) on her part describes it as “hypodermic syringe theory” (pp. 161-162) because it was believed that the media message acted like the content of a hypodermic syringe when emptied into an audience.

The gist of the theory is that people are vulnerable to mass media messages. Putting it succinctly in the perspective of Defleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989), “the basic idea of the theory is that media messages are received in a uniform way by every member of the audience and that immediate and direct responses are triggered by such stimuli” (p. 164).

In the words of Severin and Tankard (2001), the theory therefore suggests that “if media message hits the target, it will have its desired effect” (p. 24). The desired effect, according to Daramola (2001), is that “once people listen to a message, they will comply” adding that “all the communicator needed to do was to get the audience to listen and the deed would be considered done (p. 45). Popoola (2012), in a study on the relevance of the theory in explaining the behaviour of media audiences in Nigeria and some North African countries says, “the theory is still very relevant in explaining the behaviour of mass communication audiences to media message.”

McQuail (2010) equally flays scholars who faulted the relevance of the theory in explaining the behaviour of media audiences (p. 458). While noting that undue weight was given to the scholarly contributions of Katz and Lazarsfeld’s *Personal Influence* (1955) and Klapper’s *The Effects of Mass Communication* (1960), whose goal was that of deflating the potency of media power as conveyed through the Magic Bullet theory, McQuail declares:

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One reason for the reluctance to accept a 'minimal effect' conclusion was the arrival of television in the 1950s and 1960s as a new medium with even more power of attraction (if not necessarily of effect) than its predecessors and with seemingly major implications for social life. (p. 458)

## **VII. A Critique of FRCN and OSBC Public Enlightenment Political Programmes during the 1983 Elections**

The traditional functions of mass media in governance and democracy have been variously articulated by several scholars. Whitney (1975) says they inform people; they update them on happenings in the polity; they educate, broaden and deepen the people's perspectives (p. 69). Uyo (1987), however, stresses that Whitney was trying to re-echo or recast the three major activities of communication identified by Harold Lasswell (1948), namely:

- Surveillance of the environment.
- Correlation of parts of society in responding to the environment.
- Transmission of the social heritage from one generation to another.

The above functions are, therefore, major goals which every political programme on radio or television must try to attain during elections. For these duties to be carried out professionally, the government in every political community is expected to guide the mass media by enunciating relevant laws. As regards news, chapter five of the *Nigeria Broadcasting Code* states that "News and Current Affairs Programmes shall be guided by the ethical standards of journalism" (p. 52) and that programmes devoted to the discussion of controversial public affairs, such as elections, shall ensure the fairness and balance of views. Irrespective of the ownership pattern of a broadcast station, that is, whether the station is owned by the federal, state, local government, corporate bodies or is individually owned, these rules prevail. In the case

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of FRCN, Uche (1989) says FRCN is guided by 9-point objectives. Among those that are relevant to the subject matter of this paper are: promotion of national unity through a balanced presentation of views, ensuring prompt delivery of accurate information, providing an enlightened discussion programme on topical issues as well as providing special broadcasting services in the realm of education (p. 47).

In line with the above objectives, especially that of providing an enlightened discussion as well as special services, *Political Platform* was introduced by the management board of FRCN during elections, when the citizenry would be eager to have the latest information about developments in the polity. At times, it could feature a 'talk'. At another instance, it could be 'an interview' while at another, it could be a discussion.

The main focus of this paper is the post-election violence which rocked the old Ondo state following the release of the results of the gubernatorial election. The two strong contenders to the office of governor of the state were late Chief Adekunle Ajasin of the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and late Chief Akin Omoboriowo of the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

The election took place in the month of August, 1983, and was the second and last election during the second republic as violence which followed the elections was one of the major reasons cited by the military for taking over the reins of government once again in Nigeria. At this point in time, the NPN was the ruling political party in Nigeria with Alhaji Sheu Shagari as the executive President.

Writing about the build up to the election, Uche (1989) argued that in a desperate bid by the NPN to snatch power from the opposition parties in states outside their control, the ruling party between June and July 1983 commissioned seven new radio stations in Akure, Owerri, Enugu, Abeokuta, Calabar, Jos and Ikeja:

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It is worth noting that all the stations were located in states that were controlled by various political parties opposed to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) at the centre... Also, these 'illegal' stations were commissioned at the heat of the 1983 national election campaigns to elect a president, governors, senators and representatives of the Federal and State Houses of Assembly. The result of such an unplanned and unnecessary competition was that there were no less than 48 radio and 32 television stations in Nigeria in the early 80s. (p. 56)

Soon after their establishment, the stations made no pretension that they existed as the official mouth-piece of the NPN. This was very clear in their programming and news contents.

As it happened during the first republic when public trust and confidence in the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) dropped, following the shameful role it played during the 1964 western regional elections, a similar experience occurred during the 1983 elections. Quoting Uche (1989) once more:

The NBC had tried to support the government in power during the 1964 Western Region Election riggings. The election had been controversial and substantiated allegations of region-wide election riggings had been proved. But the NBC still went ahead to broadcast the results of the discredited election. This angered some people in the Western Region and their reaction to the NBC was that of cutting off their rediffusion boxes which were relaying the NBC programmes in the region. (p. 53)

The same scenario was repeated by the FRCN in the old Ondo state. Popoola, through different studies in 2003 and 2004 on the violence which followed the controversial announcement of the winner of the gubernatorial election in the state, observe that there was a curious delay in the announcement of the results. While the

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delay lasted, rumour took over that the result might be manipulated in favour of the NPN which was not quite popular in the state. This rumour became a reality as when the result was released, it was through the FRCN, Akure zonal station, and it was in favour of the NPN candidate, Chief Akin Omoboriowo. After the release of the results, the station launched a new phase of support for chief Omoboriowo to the extent of intermittently playing a popular record of pop singer Christy Essien Igbokwe entitled "Give Peace a Chance." The Ondo State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), which was supporting the UPN candidate, late Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin, then incumbent governor of the state, in a retaliatory and combative fashion resorted to playing the record of late reggae star Bob Marley entitled "Get up, Stand up, and Stand up for Your Right." The above corroborates the declaration of Singer (1970) that the "media can provoke a riot, create a culture of rioting and provide lessons on how to riot, spread a disturbance from place to place" (as cited in McQuail's, 1987, p. 266).

Notwithstanding the modification of the Bullet or Hypodermic Theory by DeFleur (1970), cited in Popoola (2012), in which he punctuated the direct effect of media message with personality, attitude, intelligence, interest, etc., people decoded the messages from the two radio stations and instantly took to the streets, attacking all identified members and leaders of the NPN. They did not spare their property as well. At one stage, the OSBC announced that Chief Omoboriowo was fleeing the state in a Peugeot 504 salon car, going as far as giving the registration number details of the vehicle. The people swung into action immediately and were desperately searching for Chief Omoboriowo in all Peugeot 504 cars as if in pursuit of a common criminal. In the ensuing fracas, houses were razed; some of which are yet to be rebuilt even at the moment. The violence which followed the conduct of that election was therefore

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one of the identified reasons for the military take over the reins of government again on December 31, 1983, thus ending the second republic's attempt at civil rule in Nigeria. Adamolekun (1985) says:

Judging by the violence and alleged electoral frauds that had characterized the preliminary electoral contests, there was widespread fear that the August/September elections could be marred by serious violence and extensive rigging. These fears became fulfilled prophecies. Law and order broke down completely in several states with Ondo and Oyo states as star cases that attracted international attention. (as cited in Popoola, 2003, p. 98)

In a related development, Akinfeleye (2004) provided a similar picture to that of Singer (1970) on the amazing power of the media. He stresses:

By their very nature and practice of their craft, journalists can make or mar the society and the politicians they serve. They can lift politicians up and they can pull them down. They can protect or harm the politicians they serve. They can cause war without participating in it. They can also bring about peace, harmony and concord within the society they serve. (p. 106)

It was, therefore, not surprising that Olurode (2011) says, "election security remains a major concern for election management bodies in most Africa" (p. 95). When the military took over the reins of government on December 31, 1983, all the stations were closed down.

Uche (1989) quotes Brigadier General Tunde Idiagbon, then Chief of General Staff (CGS), justifying the closure on account of "the proliferation of radio and television stations in the last civilian administration to engage in and disseminate open character assassination, all sorts of profanity, slander, falsehood and even pure incitement bordering on treason" (p.58 ) Uche (1989):

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In the prevailing madness, the basic patriotic objectives of setting up stations to inform, entertain and educate were lost as the various political parties ensured that the government under their control engaged in the proliferation of television and radio stations throughout the country. The stations, without exceptions became megaphones of political parties in power, suppressing or grossly distorting information to suit the whims and caprices of politicians and consequently fanning the embers of disunity, disaffection and disorder. They succeeded to such an extent that law and order broke down in many states of the federation. (p. 58)

### **VIII. Recapitulation and Recommendations**

The paper critically examines development in the polity, especially circumstances which triggered violence in the old Ondo state during Nigeria's second republic, following the official release of the results of the gubernatorial election in the state by the defunct Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO).

While noting that it is professional and statutory for radio stations to educate, inform and enlighten the citizenry about goings on in the polity, especially during a period of elections, the paper observes that deliberate efforts should be made to ensure that this obligation is discharged in a professional manner in order to avoid the recurrence of violence.

The paper put forward some research questions in the beginning. The first question asked if communication by radio could produce violence. Going by the account of what happened in the polity during the 1983 elections in the old Ondo state, as presented in the paper, the answer is in the affirmative. Rather than striving towards promoting the culture of peace and democratic sustainability, the stations played into the hands of politicians and became a willing tool for spreading political violence.

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Furthermore, instead of socializing the citizenry in civic culture which will engender purposeful development, the stations rather negatively socialized their listeners in the culture of arson, killing, maiming and instability.

Regarding the second question about whether it really matters to produce political programmes during the elections, the paper notes that in keeping with the aims and objectives of establishing radio stations, whose main goal is that of enlightening the citizenry, it is not wrong for special programmes such as *Political Platform* to be created. However, as clearly presented in the paper, it would be wrong if such programmes are created for selfish reasons rather than the overall interest of people.

The third question asked if the laws of the land encourage the production and dissemination of violent-prone programmes. Going by the provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, the electoral guidelines for broadcast media, as well as the law establishing the radio stations, the answer is in the negative.

Consequently, the paper puts forward the following recommendations.

- a. That everything possible must be done by the government to drastically reduce the authoritative ownership influence which made the government regard radio stations as the mouthpiece of the party in power.
- b. That from now on, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should sanction heavily any broadcast station which errs either by way of producing or airing violence-prone programmes during the elections.
- c. The government should desist from the practice of appointing political charlatans, as heads of broadcast stations, who in turn would perceive this appointment as a direct action towards turning the station to the official mouth-piece of the political party in power.

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- d. There is a strong need for the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to embark on serious enlightenment of the citizenry on the need to always explore the peaceful ways of resolving disagreements in the polity.
- e. The mass media as a whole should carry out from time to time a self appraisal of their programmes/activities with a view to correcting any activities that may be counter-productive, especially in the area of promoting peace and peaceful co-existence in society.

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