Nigeria - Media Landscape

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Overview

The print, television and radio once maintained a three-way stranglehold on the Nigerian reading public. The print typically appealed to elitist audiences — the literates, politicians, power movers, leaders of the corporate world and the rest of the educated class with distinctive affinity for pretty English. In contrast, the radio drew its largest audiences from the opposite group — illiterates who, with a small, battery-powered transistor, could catch up with happenings usually in their locality but sometimes in the rest of the world. The radio-oriented elites tuned in mostly in the mornings at home and while driving to the office.

TV, like radio, drew its viewership from all ends; but because of its reliance on electricity — and electricity has always been big problem in Nigeria — regular access to TV is a function of social status, of the ability to self-supply power. So, print, online and TV had their fair share of dominance on the Nigerian media landscape. Until the turn of the current millennium when the advent of Internet began to have real impact on journalism practice.

Although it was in 1996 that the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) licensed 38 internet service providers to sell internet services in Nigeria, it wasn't until the year 2000 that an Internet-using population began to emerge: just a shocking 0.3 percent. Between 2002 and 2004, it rose to 1.5 percent. By 2007, it had risen to 7 percent. By that time also, the Internet was already redefining the practice of journalism. For example, Sahara Reporters, one of the oldest online news providers, had been founded. News would soon become available in virtual format and on the go — accessible via mobile phones, tablets, and laptop and desktop computers. A 24-hour news cycle was springing, and social media became a major tool for sourcing, presenting, and disseminating news. Not only had journalism practice been altered, the entire media dynamics had been disrupted.

Over the decade that would follow, print newspapering, once the cornerstone of Nigerian journalism, dwindled considerably in patronage. As the newsprint became less important in news presentation and newspapers began to experience a plummeting in numbers, newsrooms started to shrink as it became clear to newspaper proprietors that operation models had to be rejigged.

To compete with emerging digital news providers, print newspapers began to relocate their resources online. But this wasn't just a print phenomenon. As legacy papers opened online versions, the electronic media followed suit. Radio and TV stations would soon discover that they couldn't exist without an online version. And that holds true till today: digital has become the centerpiece of Nigerian journalism, with all of print, radio and TV feeding off the massive powers and rallying numbers of the Internet.

From the pre-independence era till date, partisanship has always been a core component of Nigerian media, print particularly. West African Pilot , the first Nigerian-owned English-Language newspaper, was founded in 1937 by Nnamdi Azikiwe (whowould later become the first President of Nigeria) strictly to fight for independence from British colonial rule. Offshoots of that title, all catering to state or regional interests, include: *Eastern Nigerian Guardian* (launched in Port Harcourt), the *Southern Defender* (in Warri), the *Sentinel* (in Enugu) and the *Northern Advocate* (in Jos). While Azikiwe's paper defended the eastern agenda, Obafemi Awolowo launched the *Nigerian Tribune* in Ibadan in 1949 — five years before he became the first Premier of the Western Region — with a leaning for south-western interests.

Today, politics remains a dominant theme in Nigerian media establishments. *The Nation*, one of the top newspapers, was founded in 2006 by Bola Tinubu, then opposition politician who, in the following years, helped to build the All Progressives Congress (APC) to rival the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and eventually overthrow it in 2015. *The Sun*, another leading daily, was founded by Orji Uzor Kalu in 2001, two years after he became Governor of Abia State. One year before the 2015 presidential election, Kalu launched a sister daily, New Telegraph.

The chief consequence of this intertwining of journalism and politics is that the media sometimes shirks in its obligation to be objective in its coverage of politics in particular and the society in general. A corollary to this is how the public now views media content with scepticism, often sieving the news to separate the story from the interest of the paper. Therefore, the media — the watchdog — sometimes becomes the 'watched dog'. The politics-journalism alliance has also limited the capacity of journalists to build professional careers independent of political influence. It has increased the diffusion of journalism with politics, to such extent that the journalist today is a politician tomorrow and is back to journalism the next minute.

Still, journalism has been one of the undisputed bastions of democracy in Nigeria. The media played an important role in the agitations for an end to years of military rule in the 1980s and 1990s, often finding itself at the receiving end of military might. *Concord* and *The Guardia*n, two of the leading papers of the time, were the subject of frequent military crackdown, many of their senior editors spending lengthy times in jail. The media continued on this path upon return to civilian rule in 1999, with a newsmagazine, *The News*, exposing age and certificate falsifications by Salisu Buhari, the first Speaker of the lower chamber in the Fourth Republic who, after a few denials, had little choice but to admit to the crime, weeping on national TV before throwing in the towel.

State intervention in the media has always been overbearing. Back in the military era, it was in nauseating proportions. Media houses were shut down at the whims and caprices of the state; numerous journalists were arrested and jailed indiscriminately. One, Dele Giwa, was even assassinated. Though unresolved, his death is believed to have been masterminded by the military regime of the time. Return to democracy has lessened the scale of government intervention in the media, but arrests of journalists and invasion of media rights continue. Most recently, for two consecutive days in 2014, the Army, acting under the authority of then President Goodluck Jonathan, seized, and in some cases destroyed, thousands of copies of several newspapers, including *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Punch*, claiming to have received information that materials with grave security implications were to be distributed alongside the newspapers.

Media

Print

Once the giant of Nigerian journalism, the print media has recently witnessed a large-scale weakening of its powers —

exactly the way it has happened all over the world. As would have been expected, the Nigerian print media hasn't been immune to the dwindling global advertising revenue of newspapers worldwide and, latterly, the advent of the Internet.

However, while other countries can reel out figures of dwindling newspaper sales, Nigeria cannot. Instead, the evidence can be found in a Nigeria-centric 'Free Readers' trend. In the 1970s and 1980s, the standing of print in Nigerian journalism could be gleaned from the crowd of people who thronged newspaper stands despite their inability to purchase newspapers. Since they couldn't buy the papers themselves, they crowded out the vendor at each stand, chatting him up for hours in exchange for the chance to read the front pages from afar, or even read the inside pages from magnanimous buyers who were willing to delay their exit by a few minutes. As these people couldn't buy papers but were always seen at newspaper stands, they were nicknamed the 'Free Readers Club'. Their ubiquity made them so important that they soon became the news themselves, a few newspapers dedicating reporters to covering free readers' opinions on important national issues. At newsstands these days, the population of free readers is dwindling — the ultimate proof of the wilting of print newspapers' sales, revenues, influence and following.

In the last decade, many newspapers and magazines that have quit printing, resorting to maintaining only their online versions, include *The News*, *PM News*, *City People* and *Net NG*. *NEXT* newspaper, *Compass* and *Tell Magazine* folded up altogether. In their place has risen a string of online newspapers.

Still, the traditional superpowers have successfully withstood the newspaper *Tsunami*, along with a digital newspaper early-bird and two online-only digital platforms run by reputable legacy newspaper converts. In the former class are *Punch*, *THISDAY*, *The Nation*, *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust*, *Sun* and *The Guardian*; and in the latter are *Sahara Reporters*, *Premium Times* and *The Cable*. These ten, roughly, are the leaders of a news industry populated by hundreds of publications.

Punch is reputed as Nigeria's most widely read newspaper. It is a status it has enjoyed for decades — although the last statistical backup for that feat dates back to two decades ago: in 1998 and 1999, the Research and Marketing Services (RMS), Lagos, published independent surveys that rated the paper the most widely read in the country. Although conservative with regard to its funding models and in-country media partnerships, Punch's journalism is leftist, the paper boasting an endless list of hard-hitting editorials against both civilian and military governments. Punch was founded in 1971 by two friends, Olu Aboderin, an accountant, and Sam Amuka, a columnist and editor of the then leading Daily Times of Nigeria. A disagreement would later see Amuka break away 12 years later to found Vanguard, till date one of the country's legacy newspapers.

Originally known as *The Comet, The Nation*, was bought and renamed in 2006 by Bola Tinubu, then Governor of Lagos State. Over the following nine years, the paper was ultimately an opposition newspaper, earning a reputation for its strong anti-government stance — a feature that has softened remarkably since the All Progressives Congress (APC), Tinubu's party, assumed power in 2015. A survey in 2009 and another in 2011 rated *The Nation* as Nigeria's second most read newspaper; it has been so ever since. *The Nation* enjoyed tremendous advertising patronage from government agencies in the states under the control of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN).

In all 19 states in northern Nigeria, any serious event requiring media coverage does not kick off until the arrival of the *Daily Trust* reporter. Such is the reach and influence of a paper founded in 1998 with only N22,000 by a group of friends, one of whom is Kabiru Yusuf, who currently serves as Chairman. *Daily Trust* broke a jinx — newspapers in northern Nigeria were always a commercial failure. The absence of a strong newspaper from the region had led to the characterisation of the Nigerian media as a southern establishment. With *Daily Trust*, a bit of a balance has been achieved in the media industry in the country.

Radio

Radio has come a long way from its introduction to Nigeria in 1933 primarily for relaying the overseas service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to the public over loudspeakers. Since the then Radio Diffusion Service (RDS) metamorphosed to the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), radio has been embraced by both public and private interests as a medium of mass communication. Its reach is in such proportions that each of the country's 36 states has at least one government-owned and another private radio station. The radio is Nigeria's biggest means of news dissemination (although it remains perpetually in the shadows of television and print/online in terms of influence).

According to a 2015 research by Broadcasting Board of Governors — an independent agency of the US government with the mission to "inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy" — Nigerians are avid consumers of news, with 77.4 percent overall and more than seven in 10 across all major demographic groups saying they listen to the radio for news at least weekly.

Three-quarters of Nigerians said they listened to the radio in the week preceding the interview. In terms of waveband, FM is by far the most commonly used (90.4 percent), while AM (30.2 percent) and SW (19.7 percent) use fell in 2014 (from 45.3 percent and 28.7 percent, respectively). Also, 64.7 percent reported past-week usage of a conventional radio. Of this, nearly four in 10 said they listened to the radio weekly using a mobile phone (37.3 percent) and 12.0 percent reported listening on a car radio. Other methods of listening are satellite receiver (5.1 percent), cable TV (4.0 percent), or the Internet (3.4 percent).

Of the hundreds of radio stations in Nigeria, the two most listened-to are *Wazobia FM* and *Ray Power*. These two topped a poll by Kantar-GeoPoll Media Measurement, and Africa-centric media ratings provider, of the top radio stations in for three months in 2015 spread across eight states: Abia, Edo, Enugu, Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), Kaduna, Lagos, Oyo, and Rivers. The two stations were in close competition for audience, each averaging 11.6 percent of the listening populace. *Cool FM* and *Splash FM* followed with 7.0 percent and 6.6 percent shares respectively. (When the research was narrowed down to Lagos, Nigeria's commercial nerve centre, the top stations were similar: *Wazobia FM* 14.5 percent and *Ray Power FM* 11.8 percent.)

A similar national report for the first quarter of 2017 saw *Wazobia FM* retain its top spot with an average of 9.6 percent of all listeners, followed by *Ray Power FM* with an average of 8.2 percent. *Nigeria Info FM* got the third position with a distant share of 3.84 percent, followed closely by *Fresh FM* with 3.83 percent.

Founded in 2007 by Globe Communications Limited, *Wazobia* (loosely an expression of 'come' in the three main ethnic languages), owes its popularity to broadcasting in street lingo, Pidgin English. It is based in Port Harcourt, capital of Rivers State.

Meanwhile, *Ray Power* began operating in 1994 as the first 24-hour broadcast service station in Nigeria and the first private independent broadcasting station in the country. It is owned by Raymond Dokpesi, a businessman and politician.

The largest radio network is marshalled by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Nigeria's publicly funded radio broadcasting organisation with FM stations across the 36 states and a zonal station in each of the six geopolitical zones of the country.

Television

In the context of a media industry disrupted by the influence of technology, television has managed to retain if not strengthen its appeal to the public. The figures keep growing.

In 2002, only 30 percent of the Nigerian population had a television set in their homes, according to Trade Economics. By 2004, it had risen to 32 percent and close to 34 percent by 2006. By 2010, 40 percent of Nigerians had TV in their homes.

The number of Pay TV households is also on the rise. From 1.5 million in 2011 to 1.9 million in 2012, it rose to 2.3 million in 2017 and is expected to hit 4.9 million by 2021.

Channels TV is Nigeria's leading television station, maintaining a stranglehold on the viewing public for most of the years since it began broadcasting in 1995 — three years after its founding by John Momoh, an entrepreneur and veteran broadcaster whose father was a cook. Channels TV has no discernible political leaning.

A research in the first quarter of 2017 by GeoPoll Media Measurement rated *Channels TV* as possessing the highest TV following with an average of 14.2 percent of all viewers nationally. Next was *AIT*, with an average share of 13.9 percent. *Silverbird TV* achieved the third highest share with an average share of 10.3 percent, followed by *CNN* with 8.6 percent.

Unlike Channels TV, Africa Independent Television (AIT) has noticeable political interests. Its founder, Raymond Dokpesi, is officially a politician — although he wasn't as of 1996 when he founded the station. Only last year, Dokpesi sought to be the chairman of Nigeria's ruling-turned-opposition party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Also important in Nigeria's TV landscape is the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), which prides itself on being the largest TV network in Africa. True. NTA is so large that it has a state-controlled version in every state of the federation. As of 2014, it had a whopping 101 stations in state capitals and major towns in the country.

However, NTA, which, alongside the FRCN, produced numerous outstanding broadcast journalists — including *Channels TV* 's John Momoh — has fallen considerably beneath Channels. NTA literally operates as the official mouthpiece of the Nigerian government.

Digital Media

By April 2014, when *TheCable* — the third of Nigeria's three strongest online newspapers — was founded, there was no print newspaper that hadn't created an online version. There was as well no television or radio station that hadn't established an online presence. That was the extent to which digital media was redesigning journalism practice.

Revenues were rising, too, particularly for the legacy papers which only needed to deploy the might of their print team to online. For them, it was simply a matter of republishing online some of the stories that were originally printed. With this seamless multiplication of strength came revenue that, a few years back, wouldn't have existed.

On the flip side, the print began to ask itself some hard questions, the leading of which was how to maintain editorial appeal in the face of a new 24-hour news cycle championed by a raft of emerging online outlets. In the mid- to late 2000s, it seemed print newspapers were the ones doing the real journalism, the online in a second-class category of journalism wannabes empowered with nothing more than technology. But by 2014, digital media had attracted enough out-and-out journalists who brought respectability and professionalism to the space. Today, three are as strong and reliable as any print outfit.

Premium Times is technically an offshoot of *NEXT*, the multiple-award-winning newspaper founded in 2004 by Pulitzer Prize—winning journalist Dele Olojede. After the collapse of *NEXT* in 2011 — just two years after it was first printed — a number of *NEXT* journalists, led by revered journalist Dapo Olorunyomi, moved online to launch *Premium Times*, fondly

called *PT*. It is left-leaning and is Nigeria's leading investigative newspaper, regularly breaking stories that shape national discourse. *PT* is generally regarded as the leader in the serious online-only category.

Sahara Reporters is the oldest surviving strong online newspaper in Nigeria. Founded in 2006 by Omoyele Sowore, foremost student activist, the medium is an institutional replica of its founder's personality. SR, for short, is simply the relocation of activism to the media space — a policy its management defends proudly and unashamedly. SR is Nigeria's ultimate leak journalism site, having accessed and published tons of jealously-guarded documents exposing corruption in government and human rights abuses. On the flip side, however, much of its good work has been criticised for operating a media trial-like reportage of allegedly corrupt public officials. Not like its publisher cares. TheCable is considered to rank third in the seriousnews online-only category of Nigerian newspapers and is one of the most respected. Founded in November 2011 by influential columnist and former THISDAY editor Simon Kolawole, TheCable was launched April 2014. The news site prides itself for its "speed and simplicity" in news delivery and aims to "deliver knowledge-driven journalism in the pursuit of Nigeria's progress." The newspaper's political leading could be described as centrist.

There is also the International Centre for Investigative Reporting ICIR) founded in Abuja in 2010 by Dayo Aiyetan. It focuses solely on investigative journalism with a mission "to promote good governance and entrench democratic values by reporting, exposing, and combating corruption".

Social Networks

Year after year, the Internet continues to grow in importance — in terms of number of users, connection speed and its use in influencing non-technological fields of endeavour. With Nigeria's fairly high internet penetration of 61.2 percent (as of March 2020) —online media companies are harnessing Internet users' online activity to build their platforms.

For example, in the pre-Internet era, only the media alone could set agenda for the public. But recent years have witnessed the agenda-setting powers of the public. The propriety of the trend is debatable, from the egotistical, journalistic point of view, but these are the times when social media departments of digital newspapers are peeping into the Internet to see what people want to read — the questions they're asking Google, the topics they're typing into major search engines — and informing the editorial department to quickly latch on to it.

As of March 2020, the number of internet users had increased to 91.6 million, according to internet World stats, justifying Nigeria's status as the country with the sixth highest number of Internet users across the globe. *This has seen a corresponding rise in the revenue generation powers the digital space. From US10m in 2011, to US\$15m in 2012, and US\$24m in 2013, it rose to US\$82m in 2017. The Statista statistics portal predicts that Internet advertising revenues in Nigeria would have risen to US\$139m by 2020.*

These figures are understandable, seeing the emergence of Google, Twitter, Facebook and newsletters as advertising platforms. These social networks are particularly critical to the operations of the smaller news platforms who, other than for advertising, rely on them to redirect traffic to their websites.

Courtesy of Alexa, a commercial web traffic data and analytics company, we know that as popular as Facebook is, it is only the fourth most used social network in Nigeria and the fifth most used website overall. As of February 2016, 16 million Nigerians used Facebook — the highest in Africa. On the average, 7.2 million of them were on the site every day.

Ahead of Facebook are Google.com, YouTube and Bet9ja.com. Twitter, boasting 1.8 million users monthly, is the 16th most visited Nigerian website. The social networks ahead of Twitter in Nigeria are Yahoo, Nairaland, Eskimi and Instagram, legit.ng, punchng.com. Nairaland, an online community created by Seun Osewa in March 2005, currently has over 1.9 million

registered accounts and over 55 million Internet users. Meanwhile, Instagram had 3.6 million Nigerian users as of March 2017, 40 percent of them female and more than 80 percent of them aged 18 to 44.

Opinion Makers

Nigeria's 26th most popular website is neither an online newspaper nor the digital version of a print newspaper. Instead, it is *lindaikejisblog.com* — a news, entertainment, fashions and gossip blog founded in 2006 by then 26-year-old Linda Ikeji at a time when blogging was yet unpopular. Fourteen years on, Linda is Nigeria's highest-paid blogger and the undisputed custodian of soft news in the country's cyberspace. Other leading Nigerian blogs are *Omojuwa.com*, *Bellanaija.com*, *Nairaland*, 360nobs.com, *Naijaloaded.com.ng*, *Notjustok.com*, *Stelladimokokokus.com*, *Lailasblog.com*, *Misspetitenaijablog.com*, and *Ogbongeblog.com*.

Sources

Newspapers

- Business Day
- Daily Trust
- Leadership
- New Telegraph
- Nigerian Tribune
- The Guardian
- The Nation
- The Punch
- The Sun
- This Day
- Vanguard

Radio

- Cool FM
- Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)
- Ray Power
- Splash FM
- Wazobia FM

Television

- Africa Independent Television (AIT)
- Channels TV
- Galaxy Television
- Murhi International Television (Mitv)
- Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)
- Silverbird TV
- Television Continental (TVC)

Digital Media

- Daily Post
- ICIR
- Internetworldstats
- Premium Times
- SaharaReporters
- TheCable
- YNaija

Opinion makers

- 360nobs.com
- Bellanaija.com
- Lailasblog.com
- Misspetitenaijablog.com
- Naijaloaded.com.ng
- Nairaland
- Notjustok.com
- Ogbongeblog.com
- Omojuwa.com
- Stelladimokokokus.com

Organisations

Trade Unions

Nigerian journalists have a union, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) that, surprisingly, predates the country's Independence. It was founded in 1955, five years before Nigeria broke away from its colonial masters. The trade union was conceptualised to be the umbrella body for all journalists. However, many journalists are not registered with it, largely because it is weak to protect their interest in an active sense, and also because it is too political. NUJ speaks for journalists often by issuing statements of protest against harassment of journalists, but can itself do little to stop it; its key officials in recent years hobnob with political office holders. Journalists aspiring for political offices often use NUJ as launchpad, the clearest example being Smart Adeyemi, former President of the union who was subsequently elected to the Senate for two consecutive terms between 2007 and 2015.

Higher up the career ladder is the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), the association of the country's gatekeepers. Like the NUJ, NGE is more like a pressure group, powerless to offer tangible protection to editors' most pressing concern. Also, its arrowheads are too close for comfort with politicians. Again, like the NUJ, serving at the top of NGE is a passport to political appointments. Classic example: GarbaShehu and Femi Adesina, the two spokespersons of President Muhammadu Buhari, were NGE presidents — the former for 16 years, and the latter's three-year reign truncated by his appointment as presidential spokesman.

Journalist Associations

As scantily-patronised as it is, the NUJ is still the single biggest conglomeration of Nigerian journalists. But there are a few others, formed primarily on the basis of beats. The most popular of these would be the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), which, as the name suggests, is a union of sports journalists.

Others include the Brand Journalists' Association of Nigeria (BJAN), Association of Nigerian Journalists and Writers of Tourism, Maritime Journalists Association of Nigeria (MAJAN) and the Nigeria Auto Journalists Association (NAJA).

News Agencies

No one knows Nigeria like NAN. Very true, actually — no one covers Nigeria like the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). With 501 editorial staff nationwide, no newspaper boasts of NAN's profound reach and mobility across the 36 states of the country. The agency produces more than 200 stories per day and is therefore subscribed to by all the major Nigerian newspapers.

The only problem is that NAN is no better than a print government mouthpiece, rarely reporting news critical of the government of the day and always leaving its independent subscribers rewriting their headlines after sieving through NAN content.

NAN is also in a perpetual cold battle against newspapers and blogs plagiarizing its content. For many years, the agency hasn't found a solution to the problem of access to its subscribed content by non-subscribers, and the appropriation of NAN stories and pictures by non-subscribers without giving due credit.

Although NAN has a correspondent in New York, it often works in collaboration with Reuters and Xinhua news agencies — the other two popular news agencies in Nigeria.

Audience measurement organisations

One of the big gaps in the Nigerian media is the lack of credible broadcast industry audience measurement data that is accepted by all players in the sector. Three local companies — MPS, Mediatrax and MMS — measure audiences based on the monthly diary recall method, but data sets from these companies are lowly-regarded, often questionable, and rarely available to the public. Also, according to Emeka Mba, former Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), some of the media buying and advertising agencies are themselves the owners of some of the measurement companies. And, even then, the ratings data are not used in media buying decisions, as brands/agencies tend to rely on bespoke/in-house research.

One audience measurement agency that publicly releases its data, though, is Kantar-GeoPoll Media Measurement (KGMM), a fusion of two groups with complementary skill sets: Kantar Media's expertise in audience research and GeoPoll's mobile survey platform. KGMM uses panel-based mobile surveys to collect audience measurement data for TV, radio, and print.

Advertisers and other members of the Nigerian public often rely on Alexa for measuring the audience strength of digital newspapers.

Sources

Trade unions

- Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON)
- Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ)
- Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE)
- Online Publishers Association of Nigeria (OPAN)
- Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN)

Journalists associations

- Association of Nigerian Journalists and Writers of Tourism
- Brand Journalists' Association of Nigeria (BJAN)
- Maritime Journalists Association of Nigeria (MAJAN)
- Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ)
- Nigeria Auto Journalists Association (NAJA)
- Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ)

News agencies

- News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)
- Reuters News Agency
- Xinhua News Agency

Audience measurement organisations

Kantar-GeoPoll Media Measurement (KGMM)

Policies

Media legislation

As the fourth estate of the realm cannot be more efficient that the state within which it operates, the structure and performance of the Nigerian media system are not immune from the shortcomings of governance and legislation in Nigeria.

The intersection of politics and journalism has given rise to a situation where, rather than legislate the media, democratic governments sought to infiltrate and influence media operations to suit their own interests. Influencing, rather than legislating, the media has led to the abandonment of the legislative structures put in place decades ago to prevent the media from becoming a lord unto itself. In the days of military rule, the Nigerian media was a victim of over-legislation in the form of ruthless decrees promulgated to pave the way for the harassment of journalists, closure of newspapers, and stifling of press freedom. These days, it is under-legislation that is the bane of the media.

Accountability systems

Accountability systems in Nigerian media are not all-encompassing; they vary, at the end of the day, according to the organisational culture of the specific media house or the professionalism of its editors. This is easily evident in the digital space, where a newspaper's sole response to publishing an erroneous story is to activate the delete button; meanwhile,

another newspaper, finding itself in a similar situation, retracts the story and offers the public a corrigendum, or corrects the story with the complement of an Editor's Note clarifying the edits.

Regulatory authorities

The Nigerian Press Council Act No 85 of 1992 (as amended in Act 60 of 1999) is the piece of legislation touted to revolutionise media legislation in the country, to maintain high professional standards for the press through an agency known as the Nigerian Press Council (NPC). The Council was so empowered that it could summon any Nigerian to its meeting to give evidence and to be examined as a witness in any case brought against journalists or newspapers. It could also suspend errant journalists from practice for a period of up to six months.

Close to three decades after the establishment of the Council, there are no recent examples of sanctions against journalists or newspapers. Nigerian journalism is replete with shining lights who adhere to globally acceptable standards of ethics. But the system is not entirely free of unethical and biased reporting, suppression of stories and corruption, against which the NPC has been toothless to act.

The NPC is also inconspicuous in matters relating to its mission "to proactively respond to the needs of the Nigerian mass media and the public by facilitating — through complaints resolution, research, training and workshops — the sustainable development of journalism profession, curricula and accreditation of journalism training institutions in Nigeria."

Much against the lofty ideas that birthed its establishment, NPC currently operates in the realm of a pressure group, its executive secretaries often seen giving speeches at events and issuing statements to journalists and the public.

The broadcast industry story is the complete opposite. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the broadcast regulator set up in 1992 by Decree 38 of 1992, later amended as an Act of the National assembly by Act 55 of 1999 and now known as National Broadcasting Commission Laws of the Federation 2004, CAP N11, regulates and controls the broadcasting industry, among other responsibilities.

NBC maintains strict regulatory control over the Nigerian airwaves, with zero tolerance especially for Not To Be Broadcast (NTBB) content. Only in November 2017, it fined 23 broadcasting stations to the tune of N2.849m for various breaches of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code.

Sources

Laws, regulations and institutions

- National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)
- National Broadcasting Commission Act No 38 of 1992 (as amended)
- Nigerian Press Council
- Nigerian Press Council Act No 85 of 1992 (as amended in Act 60 of 1999)

Education

Universities and schools

So many tertiary institutions in Nigeria offer journalism-related courses. At polytechnics, Mass Communication is a very popular course. At universities, aspiring journalists usually opt for courses such as English Language, Communication and Language Arts, History and International Affairs.

It is common occurrence for science students or Arts students who didn't take any of these courses to pick an interest in journalism. They usually proceed to the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ), Lagos. Established in 1963 by the International Press Institute (IPI), with Headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland, NIJ is one of the foremost training institutions for journalism, media and communication studies in Nigeria and Africa. The not-for-profit Institution is owned and operated by professional associations in the media industry: Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), NGE, NUJ, NAN, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCN) and the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR). There was also the defunct Times Journalism Institute founded in 1965 as the training school of the defunct Daily Times newspaper.

The first degree-awarding school of journalism/mass communication was established in 1962 at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Subsequently, the University of Lagos UNESCO-supported Institute of Mass Communication (Now rebranded Department of Mass Communication) was established in 1967. In the broadcasting segment, The Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation's Training School (renamed Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria Training School) was founded in 1957 to cater to broadcast journalists.

Lately, the School of Media and Communication (SMC) of the Pan Atlantic University (PAU) has emerged as both a rival and complementary force to NIJ's quest to produce topnotch Nigerian journalists. Another non-profit educational institution, PAU was established in 2002. Affluent students seeking a career in journalism enroll for its undergraduate programme. Also, NIJ graduates apply to PAU's SMC for a master's in communication.

However, a new trend in Nigerian journalism is seeing the rise of brilliant journalists who didn't formally study journalism-related courses, particularly at undergraduate level. Examples abound.

Oluwatoyosi Ogunseye, multiple-award-winning journalist, arguably Nigeria's most successful young journalist, studied Biochemistry at the University of Lagos. Ogunseye, Editor of Sunday Punch until January 2018, is currently the Head of Languages, BBC West Africa.

Idris Akinbajo, Editor of Premium Times, studied Food Science and Technology at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) for his first degree, while 'Fisayo Soyombo, pioneer Editor of *TheCable*, studied Animal Science at the University of Ibadan.

These journalists, and lots more, are proving that journalism can be self-taught. In this age of technological advancement and information glut, the Internet is replete with enough training resources and materials for any willing, passionate aspiring journalists.

Professional development

There is no rule in Nigerian journalism compelling journalists to attend a specified number of professional training courses in any given period. It is first a question of the journalist's individual thirst, and afterwards a function of his employer's disposition to training.

The finest of journalists understand that knowledge is infinite and training must be continuous; that is why the most successful Nigerian journalists are usually the ones who are keen on applying for relevant training opportunities.

Media Development Organisations

Nigeria's media development segment can be broadly categorised into three subgroups.

The first consists of non-governmental organisations: Foundations owned by local media organisations and international media development organisations that work in collaboration with local media organisations. This first group also establishes advocacy groups for HIV, human rights, democratic advancement and good governance. Some of the organisations in this category include: the Development Communications Network (DevCOM), the African Media Support Initiative, the Multimedia Centre for Democracy, the Centre for Development Communication (CDD), the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA), the African Radio Drama Association (ARDA), the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), the Centre for Free Speech (CFS), the Media Rights Agenda (MRA), the International Press Centre, Media Career Services (MCS), Media Information and Narrative Development (MIND) and Africa Media Development Foundation (AMDF). Among these, DevCOM, African Media Support Initiative, Multimedia Centre for Democracy, CDD, NPTA, ARDA and NAWOJ are largely focused on issues such as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, human rights, democracy and good governance; while CFS, MCS, IPC, MIND and AMDF are primarily focused on capacity building and ICT, advocacy for freedom of expression, training, publications and research.

The second group is comprised of media foundations owned by local media organisations, including The Cable Foundation, The Daily Trust Foundation and Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism. These foundations are owned by local media organisations such as *The Cable* newspaper, *Daily Trust* newspaper and *Premium Times* newspaper. The Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ) and The Cable Newspaper Foundation (CNF) could be considered the most active in this category and both are owned by two of Nigeria's largest online newspapers: *Premium Times* and *Cable Newspaper*. The PTCIJ promotes a "truly independent media through investigative journalism, open data and civic technology" while CNF employs journalism as a platform to "advance transparency and accountability in government." The Daily Trust Foundation is supported by the MacArthur Foundation in Nigeria.

The third group comprises international media development organisations such as FES Media, Internews Nigeria, and BBC Media World Service Trust. These organisations work in collaboration with local media houses towards capacity building for journalists and freedom of expression.

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- African Radio Drama Association (ARDA)
- AMDI-Report-Nigeria
- Cable newspaper foundation
- Daily Trust Foundation

- National Popular Theatre Alliance
- Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism

Telecommunications

Mobile network ecosystem

The Nigerian mobile market is considered Africa's most lucrative. This was also acknowledged in the 2019 Jumia Mobile Report, which noted that Nigeria is Africa's largest mobile market with accounting for over 172 million mobile subscribers, and a mobile penetration rate of 87% of the population. This figure represented a 6.4% growth increase, compared to 162 million subscribers in 2017.. According to the report, the mobile telecommunications sub-sector contributed 7.4% to the country's total GDP in 2018, compared to 5.5% in 2017. Also, it estimated that "44% of mobile subscribers in Nigeria are using 3G technology and 4% are using 4G technology as compared to over 18% 4G penetration in South Africa and 16% in Angola. Nigeria's mobile broadband penetration is forecast to rise to 55% of the population by 2025, with 70% having 3G connectivity and 17% having access to 4G networks." It forecasts that "Nigeria will contribute 4% of the estimated 700 million new global mobile subscribers", placing above other African countries as a major contributor to increasing mobile penetration in the world.

The NCC subscribers' statistics for the month of March 2020 estimated there are 189,282,796 active subscribers in the Nigerian telecommunication industry comprising all Global System for Mobile (GSM) generations (188,989,051), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) mobile (126,269), fixed wired/wireless (107,491), and Voice over IP (186,254) with a teledensity of 99.16.

There are four major mobile network providers in Nigeria: MTN, Globacom, Airtel and 9Mobile. The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) report for the first quarter of 2020 estimates that the telecommunication sector contributed for 10.88 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Several factors account for the growth of the Nigerian telecom industry but the most significant is a population of more than 200 million people. However, penetration rates differ across the country. The National Bureau of Statistics Q4 2017 report estimated that mobile subscription is higher in south-western and North-central states than the in rest of Nigeria. Southwestern states of Lagos, Ogun and Oyo have the highest mobile subscription with Lagos alone accounting for 13.18 percent of subscriptions in the country. The top three states were followed by northern states of Kano and Kaduna accounting for 5.08 percent and 4.57 percent respectively and south-south state of Rivers accounting for 3.76 percent. Bayelsa state in the Niger Delta region (south-south) has the lowest mobile subscription rate of 0.65 percent in Nigeria.

The growth of mobile subscription is attributed to access to cheap smartphones, which has made it easier for many Nigerians to own a device. However, the rural population has lower rates of access and use of mobile phones compared to the urban one. Consequently, it is estimated that about 40 million Nigerians do not have access to telecommunication services and this has an adverse impact on the uptake of mobile phones in the country. This has resulted in a widening digital divide between rural and urban regions of Nigeria, according to an Economic Intelligence report, commissioned by Accenture. Attempts at the expansion of telecommunication services to rural areas have been unsuccessful because of a drop in investments in rural telephony.

While the Nigerian Government is keen to deepen broadband penetration to 30 percent by 2018 which is dependent on

mobile networks, 'regulatory and physical challenges' are considered impediments to the spread of telecom infrastructure in Nigeria. While Internet speed is high in commercial centres across the country, it is sporadic in rural areas and in some cases, non-existent. For instance, GSMA's Speedtest Global Index ranking of mobile and fixed broadband speeds of countries around the world for April 2020 ranks Nigeria at 108 for mobile internet speed and 150 for broadband. The 2017 Open Signal Survey of Internet Speed pointed out that Nigeria's internet is slow because of 'lack of last-mile infrastructure.' When measured against the number of Nigerians living in rural areas, estimated at more than 40 million, this has an impact on the uptake of mobile phones across the country.

However, multi-SIMing has become prevalent, with individuals owning multiple SIMs to access telecom networks at different locations across the country. Some Nigerians have different SIMs for different occasions. There are telecom networks that some Nigerians use when travelling to their villages (depending on the part of the country it is located), there are some for better network services in city centres and others for cheap data and tariff plans. 9Mobile is considered to have the most affordable data plan, Airtel is reputed for its quality customer service, MTN for its wide network coverage and Glo for affordable tariff plans. The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) has introduced Mobile Number Portability to enable mobile subscribers to switch to another operator while retaining their original phone number. While this initiative was lauded for holding a lot of promise for the quality of the service and its costs, it has been beset by challenges. These include certain requirements that a subscriber can only initiate porting at an operators' shop; a two-day period of processing for porting and inter-operator rivalry over processing porting of high-value subscribers.

In its bid to enhance expansion of infrastructure, the Nigerian government has encouraged network sharing and outsourcing of tower infrastructures to third parties, yet it is estimated that the country needs about 80,000 towers to meet the needs of rural areas. The tower segment of the telecommunication sector is dominated by IHS Towers, which controls more than 60 percent of the market and Globacom, which manages its own towers.

Company profiles

The Nigerian telecommunication is dominated by GSM operators as shown by NCC data above. There are four major companies operating within this segment including MTN, Globacom, Airtel and 9Mobile. However, there are other telecommunication companies such as Ntel, which runs a 4G LTE service, Smile, ipNX etc.

MTN Nigeria is a South African company with subsidiaries across Africa and the Middle East. MTN was among the first two GSM operators to launch in Nigeria when it secured an operating license from the NCC in 2001. It is reputed for its extended network coverage, which is considered an advantage in a country as Nigeria with a large landmass and population.

Globacom Limited is the first indigenous GSM mobile provider in Nigeria and has also expanded its service to other African countries such as Ghana, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire, where it provides GSM services. In 2010 Globacom made history when it launched its Glo 1 international submarine cable, the only of such kind in Nigeria, which provides sufficient bandwidth for the West Africa sub-region.

The company 9Mobile (formerly Etisalat Nigeria) was launched in 2017 after Etisalat defaulted on its US\$1.2bn loan. Today 9mobile is a Nigerian private limited liability company owned by Emerging Markets Telecommunication Services Ltd (EMTS). EMTS acquired a Unified Access Service License from the Nigerian Communications Commission in 2007 which enables it to provide fixed telephony (wired or wireless), digital mobile services, international gateway services and national/regional long-distance services, in addition to spectrum assignments in the 900 and 1800 MHz bands. It also launched its 4G LTE services in October 2016, with the aim to deliver high-speed data and quality voice services in Nigeria.

Airtel Nigeria has evolved over time. It started operations as Econet Nigeria before changing the name to Vodacom, then

VMobile, Celtel, Zain and most recently Airtel. The change of names is a consequence of changes in the ownership structure of the company. Airtel Nigeria's operations started in 2010 after taking over ownership from Zain.

Ntel is an offshoot of Nigeria's national fixed and mobile operator (Nitel and Mtel). Both companies were acquired by NatCom Development and Investment Limited (Natcom) through a liquidation process supervised and approved by the Nigerian Bureau of Public Enterprises in May 2015. Ntel operates as a national carrier, international gateway and mobile telecommunications company. Ntel operates 4G LTE services across the country.

Smile provides 4G LTE mobile broadband services, with a data speed of up to 21Mbps, in all its countries of operation. It launched Africa's first commercial 4G LTE network in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in May 2013 – revolutionising the way people access information online. Since then, Smile has extended its coverage in Tanzania to seven regions and also launched commercially in Uganda in June 2013, with coverage expanded to 14 cities. In March 2014 Smile launched West-Africa's first 4G LTE mobile broadband services in Nigeria with coverage now extended to eight cities.

IpNX is one of Nigeria's fastest growing Information and Communications Technology companies, serving a multitude of needs across enterprises, small businesses and residents with innovative, world-class services. As a pioneer and a leading fixed-network operator in Nigeria, it provides a number of solutions to various industries and market segments using industry-leading technology such as the country's very own Fibre-To-The-Home (FTTH) cable technology, as the core access network infrastructure, and fixed wireless radio services (WiMAX). Fortunately, there is no law or policy that requires telcos to share users' data with the government in Nigeria.

Main trends

The rise in uptake of smartphones in Nigeria has resulted in the use of several mobile apps. The SimilarWeb app store ranking for June 2020 listed the following 25 apps in this order of ranking: 1) Whatsapp Messenger 2) Zoom Cloud Meetings 3) Facebook lite 4) OperaMini Fast web browser 5) Jumia Online Shopping 6) WhatsApp Business, 7) Xender Share 8) Instagram 9) TikTok lite) Telegram 11) Snapchat 12) Phoenix Browser 13)Facebook 14) Opera News lite 15) Opera news Breaking-Local 16) Facebook Messenger 17) Audiomack 18) Twitter 19) Truecaller 20) Boomplay21) Messenger lite 22) MyMTN23) Playit 24) Emoji Keyboard 25) Trust Crypto Wallet.

On the other hand, despite the growth of mobile phone ownership in Nigeria, the uptake of mobile money has been, at best, limited. Cash remains the most popular form of payment in Nigeria. According to estimates of the Nigeria Central Bank, there are about 50 million unbanked Nigerians with only 6 percent of financial transactions in the country conducted through mobile money. The CBN has registered about 21 mobile money operators but only a few of them are active. Some of the active money operators are those operated by commercial banks such as United Bank for Africa/AfriPay (U-Mobile), Zenith Bank (EazyMoney); Guaranty Trust Bank (GTMobile Money), FirstBank/Pridar (First-Money), Stanbic IBTC (*909# Mobile Money) and Ecobank (Ecobank Mobile Money). However, Paga, a private operator, is the leading mobile money operator in Nigeria. However, the entry of Telcos to the mobile money services segment is considered a game-changer. On July 25, 2019, the Central Bank of Nigeria licensed Yéllo Digital Finacial Services Limited, a subsidiary of MTN Nigeria Communications Plc, the biggest telecom mobile operator in Nigeria.

In addition, there are other telecommunication-based platforms that have enabled subscribers to access services such as health advice, educational tools and government services. According to the GSMA report on digital inclusion and the role of mobile in Nigeria, mobile operators and local investors are leveraging mobile communication to deliver content to subscribers.

Some of these include:

- · the Nova-Lumos mobile electricity, a joint venture between MTN and Nova-Lumos to provide electricity to MTN subscribers resident in rural areas that are not connected to the electricity grid
- · the m4change programme, a e-health project that supports the health of pregnant women and new mothers in Abuja and Nasarawa state;
- · Glo-National Health Insurance, a partnership to enable Glo Subscribers to access healthcare in exchange for premia paid over the phone;
- · the Nokia Life+ English Teacher mobile app, a partnership with UNESCO that enables that allows primary school teachers access professional support free of charge;
- · iPolice, an e-government project enables Nigerians to report crimes and provide other information to the police.

Despite these laudable efforts of digital inclusion, a widening digital divide has emerged between rural areas and city centres. This is caused by the lack of requisite digital infrastructure for mobile telecommunication in rural regions.

Mobile coverage

The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) data for the month of March 2020 estimated there were 189,282,796 mobile subscribers with a Teledensity of 99.16 percent (defined as the number of active telephone connections per one hundred inhabitants living within an area). According to this data, MTN is the largest mobile network provider in Nigeria with 65,034,615 subscribers followed by Globacom with 46,203,703, Airtel with 45,238,335, and EMTS Limited with 16,838,403. Other mobile providers have a negligible subscriber base. Furthermore, NCC data shows that MTN is the leading mobile network provider in Nigeria with a market share of 38.93 percent followed by Globacom with 27.44 percent, Airtel with 27.14, and EMTS with 6.41 percent. In the same vein, the NCC's Market Share by Technology, which shows the percentage of subscribers utilising telecommunication services with regards to the various technology in use in the Nigerian telecommunication sector, confirmed that the market is dominated by GSM. Mobile GSM comprises 99.8 percent while mobile CDMA, 0.00%, Fixed(wireless/wired), 0.06% and VoIP,0.10%

In terms of Mobile Portability Number trends, NCC data indicates that 16,046 mobile subscribers ported from one network provider to another in the month of March 2020. Among these, 9Mobile has the most ported subscribers with 8225 followed by Airtel, 5594, MTN, 1,975 and Globacom, 262.

However, the telecommunication network coverage is largely limited to urban areas, while network services in rural areas are either poor or non-existent. It is estimated that one-third of the Nigerian population has no access to telecom network services and hence are excluded from telecommunication services. While there are attempts to bridge this digital gap through the Nigerian government's rural telephony project, the outcome has been largely unsuccessful. A National Rural telephony project conceived under the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, through a US\$200m concessionary loan from China, was met with challenges and did not achieve its objectives. However, some individual network providers have embarked on independent rural telephony projects but the cost of providing service to rural areas and poor Return on Investment (ROI) have discouraged investments in this aspect. The situation is worse in the Northeast of Nigeria where Boko Haram and Herdsmen/Farmers conflicts have discouraged deployment of telecommunication infrastructure.

The Northeast is also identified as one of the regions lagging in terms of digital inclusion in Nigeria. Specifically, women are

the most affected in the Northeast and Northwest regions of Nigeria. This is at least partly linked to the low access to education for young girls in the region, often due to early marriage, which affects their level of both traditional and digital literacy. These factors in turn have influenced the digital exclusion of women in Nigeria.

Mobile ownership

According to Jumia Mobile Report 2019, Nigeria has a mobile penetration of 87 representing a 6.4% growth increase, compared to 162 million subscribers in 2017.. It was also highlighted that out of the 172 million mobile subscribers in 2018, only 36 million use smartphones representing a penetration of 18.37%. Furthermore, it also identified that access to affordable smartphones entering the Nigeria market as a critical factor to the uptake of smartphones in Nigeria. Asian brands are dominant on the Nigerian smartphone market "because of their Africa-specific strategy of introducing lower price point smartphones into the Nigerian market". In 2018, Fero, Samsung, Nokia, Infinix, and Tecno were rated the leading smartphone brands in Nigeria. A trend on the smartphone market is the return of Nokia to the top league of smartphones in Nigeria.

On the other hand, a disparity in ownership of mobile phone between men and women was highlighted by the same report stating that there were more male than female mobile phone shoppers in Nigeria; while men accounted for 63 percent of mobile phone shoppers, women were 37 percent. The GSMA 2018 report on mobile gender gap identified some factors that limit uptake of mobile phones among women such as handset cost/SIM cost, reading difficulty, credit cost and network coverage. This suggests that women are less likely to own phones than men in Nigeria. The report also noted that there is a significant gender gap in the usage of mobile phone especially for mobile Internet. It estimated that women are, on average, 26 percent less likely to use mobile Internet than men. Some factors such as data cost, social norms, network coverage and access to Internet-enabled phones were identified as barriers to mobile Internet use among women.

In the Northeast and Northwest regions of Nigeria, certain social mores have been identified as barriers to women ownership of mobile phones. Religion and culture forge some of the societal norms that exclude women from participating in mobile technology in the northern part of Nigeria, where it is believed that women should not engage in social communication with other men except their husband or close relatives. This discourages ownership of mobile phones among women in the region.

In addition, Pew Research report on mobile phone ownership in Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya and Uganda, identified text messaging is the most common usage of mobile phones among men, women, youths and the elderly. This is followed by taking pictures and making videos. However, this is where the similarity ends. It is estimated that only about one-third use their phones to look up information about politics (35 percent), health and medicine (32 percent) or consumer goods and prices (30 percent). Men are also more likely than women to engage in two of these three information-seeking behaviours: getting news and information about politics and looking up consumer information.

Smartphones are mainly used to access the Internet and social media. This can be inferred from the number of Internet users which shot to 126 million in 2019 with 61.2 percent penetration according to Internet World Stats. This figure includes those accessing the Internet through GSM, CDMA and VoIP. For instance, out of the 36 million smartphone users, 24 million are active on social media through their phones. While social media penetration in Africa is estimated at 17 percent, in Nigeria it stands at 12 percent. However, this figure does not account for those accessing social media through a desktop computer, laptop or tablet, but only through smartphones. According to Pew Global Attitude survey, 80 percent of smartphone owners in Nigeria use their phones for text messaging, 65 percent to take pictures or video, 44 percent to access social media, 34 percent to make or receive payments, 17 percent to look for or apply for job, 44 percent to get news about politics, 32 percent to get news about health information and 33 percent to get information about prices

While smartphones have aided information dissemination through social media platforms, their use brings also challenges. One of these is the spreading of misinformation and fake news on social media platforms. The Nigerian government has acknowledged the growing challenge of misinformation on social media platforms with the launch of a national campaign against fake news. It is anticipated that in the run-up to the 2019 general elections, the country would witness a deluge of misinformation/disinformation/fake news on social media.

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Innovation

Landscape analysis

The Nigerian startup ecosystem has witnessed growth over the years. Lagos, Nigeria's megacity, has been described as Africa's most valuable startup ecosystem and many factors account for the pride of Lagos as the hub of startups on the African continent. The most significant is the market size of Lagos, which has seen investors bet on the country's technology ecosystem. This was acknowledged by the Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology (MEST), which opened its first incubator in Lagos on November 21, 2016. Despite this growth, the local startup ecosystem is limited to tech-savvy Nigerians, while most people are not informed about it. Even at the popular computer village in Ikeja, Lagos, there are more traders than tech-savvy people looking to explore opportunities in the Nigerian startup ecosystem.

Secondly, Lagos is home to some of the continent's leading e-commerce platforms such as Jumia and Konga and has also given rise to some leading startups of the continent such as Andela, iROKO and Flutterwave. Andela is a software warehouse that recruits and trains talented software developers for the global economy; Flutterwave is an online payment solution provider aiming to build payment infrastructure that connects Africa to the global economy; and iROKO is Africa's first mainstream online streaming website with access to more than 50,000 Nollywood film titles.

These startups are known to have attracted global investors from the Silicon Valley. This was acknowledged in the 2017 Global Startup Ecosystem Report which estimated the Lagos startup ecosystem is worth US\$2bn According to TechPoint Funding report for the first quarter of 2020, Nigerian startups raised \$55.37m with more than 99% funding accruing from foreign investors. It is estimated that Fintech startups accounted for 82.2% of the total funding and less than 1% of the total sum raised was from local funders.

Lagos remains the hub for startups in Nigeria and continues to attract global attention. Startups have attracted more early-stage funding in Lagos than anywhere else on the African continent. In May 2019, Microsoft opened one of its African Development Centre sites in Lagos aimed at recruiting world-class Nigerian talent to create innovative solutions for global impact. Also, in December 2019, the Lagos State government launched a \$700,000 fund dedicated to tech startups.

Consequently, the Nigerian startup ecosystem has caught global attention attracting leading global technology icons from the Silicon Valley. Facebook's founder Mark Zuckerberg, Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella and Google's CEO Sundar Pichai, have all visited Nigeria, to explore investment opportunities in the country's startup ecosystem. Both Facebook and Google have tech investments in Nigeria. Facebook opened its first tech hub in Lagos in 2017 while Google opened its first Google Launchpad Space outside the United States in Lagos in the same year. Subsequently, Google also hosted its first ever Google Developers Launchpad Start for startups in Lagos.

Profiles of main tech parks, accelerators, hackathons

The Nigerian government recently introduced startup Nigeria under the National Social Investment Programme to support a private-sector-led innovation hub for the development of the country's technological capacity. It is conceptualised as a 3-month incubation programme to support innovative idea-staged companies across Nigeria with funding, mentorship and training. Startup Nigeria, domiciled in the office of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria claims its "curriculum is specifically designed to move companies from ideas to viable products/services to market." The World Bank has also invested more than US\$6m to support technological innovation in Nigeria.

The growth of the startup ecosystem has necessitated leveraging accelerators, tech parks and hackathons for capital and human resources to complement their businesses. This has resulted in the mushrooming of accelerators, hackathons and tech parks all over Nigeria. There is no doubt that the increase in several types of hackathons has created local awareness about digital technology.

There seems to be a reinvigoration in the startup scene in Nigeria with many Nigerians talents emerging victories in both regional and global tech competitions. In February 2020, Global Air Drone Academy won the Grand Prize winner of £20,000 in the African Drone Business Challenge in Rwanda.

In October 2019, Abdulhakim Bashir, a young Nigerian shrugged off keen contest from 750 contestants from 73 countries to win a global Startup Innovation competition at GITEX in the United Arab Emirates. Bashir entered into the competition with Chiniki Guard an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered technology that tackles shoplifting. He won \$10,000 for his outstanding innovation. Earlier in 2018, a group of teenage girls from Regina Pacis Model Secondary School in Onitsha, Southeast of Nigeria, won the top prize at the 2018 Technovation World Pitch Summit, the world's largest tech entrepreneurship program in the United States. The team of five girls developed a mobile application called FD-Detector to tackle the problem of fake pharmaceutical products under the guidance of Mrs Uchenna Onwuamaegbu-Ugwu, their mentor. At the beginning of the decade, it would have been difficult to contemplate that a team of teenage girls could attain such a feat on the global stage of technology innovation. This feat points to the growing interest in digital technology in the country.

It is important to note that this awareness is more likely limited to elite schools in commercial centres across the country. Schools in rural areas are likely to be excluded from participation in technological innovation because of a lack of requisite infrastructure. For instance, electric power supply is very sporadic in the country and this would mean that rural dwellers would have to rely on generators to power computers and charge phones.

While there are several of these entities nurturing tech entrepreneurs, a few stand out for their reach, resources and creativity:

- · Creation Hub (CCHUB) is a preeminent technology incubator-turned-accelerator. When Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg visited Nigeria in 2016 CCHUB was his first stop. CCHUB is reputed to have influenced businesses across diverse sectors of the Nigerian economy: Wecyclers (environment); BudglT (fiscal transparency); Traclist (e-commerce); LifeBank (Healthcare); re:learn (education); Truppr (wellness); GoMyWay(transportation); GoVOTE(election), SafeOnline (digital security); Lags Innovation Hotspots; and i-HQ. CCHUB is funded by Omidyar Network, Google and the Sainsbury Family Trust.
- · Passion incubator is a technology incubator/accelerator with expertise in innovation programme design and tech investments. Passion has also contributed to the establishment of several tech startups including Waracake, Talkingbookz, Beattrafik, Medrep, Easyspace and Stylista.
- · 4440NG is a joint venture between 88mph and L5Lab. It basically invests in mobile and Internet startups. 440NG has the

following startups in its portfolio including Pass.ng, Gingerbox, Taja, Fuelvoucher, Youngsoul, ourprayerbox.com, Jay Osbie, Ella.ng, Obiwezy.

- · Leadpath Nigeria was launched in February 2015 as a seed capital fund that provides short, medium and long-term funding to small and medium-sized startup businesses in areas such as software, web and mobile technologies. Their investment band ranges from US\$25,000 to US\$100,000 for seed investment and several millions of dollars for follow-on funding series.
- · Wennovation Hub, established in 2011, describes itself as the pioneer innovation accelerator in Nigeria. It has offices in several cities across Nigeria including Lagos, Ibadan, Abuja and Kaduna. Wennovation focuses on what it describes as social impact sectors such as education, agriculture, healthcare and infrastructure. It also claims to have supported over "300 startup teams and over 6,000 youths physically with as much as US\$2.5m raised by startups within its network and more than US\$66m raised as follow-on funding by startups within its founders' network."
- · Zone Tech Park, located in Lagos, is one of Nigeria's leading tech parks. It comprises five halls for events and meetings, a 650-seater conference hall and a car park with the capacity to accommodate more than 150 cars. In addition, the park provides an excellent Internet facility, free co-working areas, multiple event areas and food. Some of the products that have been launched by the park include *peerless*, an electronic learning management system; *nativesmart*, a native language system; *outwork*, an online work platform for everyday HR, a web-based and mobile-friendly HR solution.
- · Abuja Technology Village (ATV) is a special economic zone located in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, Abuja. It is designed for technology research, incubation, development and commercialisation in four broad technology domains such as ICT, biotechnology, minerals technology and energy technology. The ATV is also a member of the international association of science parks and areas of innovation.

The growth of the Nigerian technology ecosystem has brought about diverse hackathons that enable computer programmers, hackers, coders and developers to interface with one another. Some of the popular ones are listed below:

- · Codefest Nigeria Hackathon (LAGOS) is dedicated to undergraduates and serving members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) who are interested in software codes.
- · Blockchain Developer Meetup is a monthly meetup for blockchain developers in Lagos, Nigeria.
- · Figma X GitHub Lagos Hackathon is an annual event takes place in Lagos, Nigeria. IT is for UX designers, UI designers, user researchers, interactive designers, developers, PMs and other techies who are interested in hacking with Figma API.
- · #HackQuantum Series is a blockchain hackathon in Lagos.
- · Vanhack-Nigeria Meetup helps tech talents to increase their chances of getting job opportunities overseas. It takes place in Lekki, Lagos.
- · Lagos Blockchain Hackathon (LBH) is held in collaboration with the Canadian government and brings together entrepreneurs, innovators, developers and the blockchain community in Lagos.
- · AR/VR Africa Hackathon: Lagos is focused on innovation and creative learning in augmented and virtual reality. It takes place in Lagos, in April.

- · Policy Hackathon brings together policy-makers with a focus on the regulatory environment for innovation and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. It is a project funded by the Federal German Ministry for Economic Cooperation. It also takes place in Lagos, in March.
- · All-Female Hackathon is usually held in celebration of the international women's day in Lagos.
- · Coding 101 (Learn How To Code) creates an avenue for interested participants to learn machine languages such as python from programmers. It takes place in Lagos.

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- Zone Tech Park

Traditional forms of communication

Summary

The diverse forms of traditional communication in Nigeria are cultural vehicles through which members of different groups communicate with one another. And these have been helpful in fostering unity, exchange ideas, resolve contentious issues and vexing problems and sharing information. Various forms of traditional communication have been identified in Nigeria including town criers, wooden and metal gongs, talking drums, blasts of local guns, age groups, the open market, setting fire on bushes and the palm frond. In addition, these diverse forms of traditional communication are classified as *Aroko* in Yoruba, an indigenous Yoruba semiotic device.

The town crier

• Traditionally, in the early hours of the day, the voice of the town crier is often preceded by the sound of a gong. The

town crier announces important meetings, ceremonies, messages and imminent troubles to the entire community. The town crier also serves as a traditional communication link between the legal head and the villagers. He is considered a community journalist, who bears and delivers the message of the community to all and sundry. The town crier is expected to possess some level of oratory skill and broad knowledge of the community norms, values and heritage. Among the Igbo in the Southeast of Nigeria, the town crier is known as *Onye Ogene*, he is known as *Mai Shela* among the Hausa and is usually selected by the *Sarki* or the village head. A major assignment of the *Mai Shela* is the announcement of the date and time for the new moon, indicating the commencement of the *Ramadan* festivities. Among the *Yoruba* of southwest Nigeria, the town crier is known as *ghohun-gbohun* and his duty include the announcement of the days of celebration for the *Egungun* and religious festivals. As of today, the town crier still plays a prominent role across diverse communities in Nigeria.

The talking drum

• The talking drum is beaten or struck with well carved sticks to produce sound. In the Southeast, it is called *Ekwe Ikoro* and is used for both official and social functions. In its official function, the talking drum is used to summon meetings, make official announcements at ceremonies and for uniting the people during a war. On the social front, talking drums are used to cheer people up during festivities and ceremonies such as new *Yam* festivals, wedding and chieftaincy ceremonies. The talking drum is very prominent in Yoruba land, where it is called *Gangan/Dundun*. The origin of the talking drum has been traced to the old Oyo Empire in Southwest Nigeria. In Yoruba culture, the talking drum is used to communicate diverse messages. It is prominent in palaces across the southwest of Nigeria where it is deployed to communicate challenges ahead and methods to overcome such challenges. In the North, it is called *kalangu* drum and it is used during festivals, coronations and special occasions.

Age groups

• Age groups are age-old institutions in most Nigerian towns comprising males of the same age brackets ranging between one to five years. The age group institution is very popular in the Southeast of Nigeria where it plays a prominent role in community development and social networking. These are called *Ndi Otu Ogbo* and are reputed for contributing to the development of communities. There are records of community projects embarked upon by different age groups such as providing pipe-borne water, cottage hospitals and road construction.

Ivory horns and long brass

• They are found useful in communicating long messages and to herald important events. The long brass horn is common in northern Nigeria while ivory horns are predominant in the Southeast of Nigeria, where they are also used as a status symbol indicating royalty and class among titled men and women. The long brass is called *Kaakaki* (trumpet) in northern Nigeria while the short trumpet is called *Algaita*. The long brass is symbolic of royalty and it is played at events at the palace of the emir or any title holder, during festive periods like *sallah* or *durbar*.

Smoke signals

• A smoke signal is a form of visual communication used in Nigeria for long-distance communication. It is identified as one of the earliest means of communication patterns between distant communities and it is still used to communicate information based on agreed codes, for example to signal danger or to gather people to a common area.

The Open Market

• The open market is one of the cornerstones of the Nigerian society. There is hardly any village/town that does not

have a market in Nigeria. While the market is a space for economic activities, it has been identified as an avenue for communication activities. According to the study on Traditional Media Of Communication As Tools For Effective Rural Development published by *Iproject.com* it serves as a "natural infrastructure for multi-directional dissemination of news, opinions and rumours and is important for agitation." It is also an avenue for the propagation of the faith and for politicians to solicit votes of the common people.

Palm frond

• Palm fronds have diverse use among different ethnic groupings in Nigeria. In Yoruba traditional communication, the palm frond is considered an *Aroko*. It is symbolically used to communicate restriction, embargo or inhibition in Yoruba traditional communication. When one sees palm fronds tied to a pole or struck to the ground in a land that is being cultivated or built on, it is a symbol that there is conflict over the land. In Igbo land, it is called *Omu*, a sacred motif. It is placed on coffins to indicate that someone has died and it is also a common sight in many shrines and sacred places.

Colour schemes

Colour schemes are used to convey different meanings for diverse purposes. Some of the colours that have been
found useful for communication include red, white, black, green, yellow, brown and turquoise. Red signifies danger;
black is evil and white is love.

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Conclusions

Conclusion

The Nigerian media landscape is a changing climate. Once dominated by print, radio and television, it is experiencing a disruption by digital platforms. The chief limitations of journalistic excellence are the poor remuneration and the overlapping of journalism and politics often to the detriment of objectivity. However, despite all these limitations, Nigeria — considering its delicate religious and ethnic makeup — cannot afford a state without the media. Chaos would be the irrevocable end-result.

The advent of digital technology has impacted technological change and innovation. This is evident in the country's startup ecosystem, mobile ecosystem and the uptake of mobile phones. The population with access to smartphones has also been on the increase but digital divide remains evident between the rural poor and urban rich centres of the country. Though the government, with the support of the World Bank, is working to bridge this divide, not much progress has been made.

On the other hand, the Nigeria media is facing multiple challenges arising from mis-and-dis-information and the intrusion of digital technology into media business.

First, digital technology is disrupting the business model of many legacy media organisations with adverse consequence on advertising revenue as well as journalism professionalisation in the country. The hitherto role of serving as custodians of the news is no longer exclusive to the traditional media; it is now shared with social media influencers and online media organisations. Even though most traditional media organisations have functional online presence, there is as yet any media organisations able to provide paid-for-content in Nigeria. Nigeria's leading daily newspaper, The Punch experimented with it but beat a retreat because of copyright challenges in Nigeria. Media content produced by traditional media organisations are copied and shared online by bloggers and social media influencers without consequences. Thus, making it difficult for legacy media organisations to profit from their content. Unfortunately, the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) do not seem to show much concern about copyright infringement by bloggers and online media. Also, funding for traditional media organisations has remained a recurring problem and payment of salaries to journalists is considered a luxury. Only a handful of media organisations are able to pay monthly salaries.

When these challenges are combined with misinformation and disinformation, it becomes a double whammy for the Nigerian media. In recent times, there have been several incidents of "fake news" reporting in the traditional media. For instance, there was a report on visa denial to a popular Nigerian Bishop by the US Embassy which turned out to be untrue.

Also, it is expected that the relationship between the media and political actors will gravitate between cordiality and suspicion. On the one hand, political actors are expected to deploy the media to achieve certain political ends. On the other, they are likely to seek to malign the media for lack of cooperation. The Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari was recently quoted as saying that he is disappointed in the Nigerian press for not giving his administration required credit for the agricultural revolution it has recorded in the country. Whether Buhari's statement is subjective or objective, it is seen as an attempt at agenda setting for the media to favourably report on the activities of his administration. Unfortunately, the media has shown resilience even in the face of military dictatorship and this is not expected to change anytime in the near future. However, intimidation of journalists and media organisations is likely to continue. So many journalists and media organisations have been harassed and intimated while some journalists have lost their lives.

In addition, the media is expected to remain fragmented along the two centres of production: The southern press axis of Lagos-Ibadan and the northern one of Abuja. These two centres of production are also likely to fall across ethnic and religious lines. This could also manifest in the media through slanting of stories along ethnic and religious sentiments.

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