Towards Africa's Renaissance: Analyzing the Influence of Media Convergence on Democracy and Governance in Nigeria.
By
Uchenna A. Ekwo, Ph.D.

Abstract

Literature on media convergence clearly shows that the integration of traditional and new media has tremendous impact on freedom of expression, information gathering, packaging, and dissemination in advanced democracies. However, little is known about the potential impact of media convergence in emerging countries with poor economies and fragile governments. The purpose of this study was to bridge this knowledge gap. The goal of this research was to investigate the influence of media convergence on Nigeria's democracy in relation to freedom of expression, transparency, and political participation. A qualitative phenomenological study design was employed within a purposeful 15 interview respondents drawn from six news organizations. Semi structured interview of journalists covered such areas as free speech, citizen empowerment, and transparency. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis and constant comparison. Emergent themes regarding journalists' perception of the impact of media convergence were coded from the interview data validated through continuous comparison with different views of respondents and observational field notes. The agitation for open society was identified as the greatest strength of media convergence in addition to its transformative role in civic engagement and journalism practice. The results from this study are significant for policy makers interested in reforms in public policy, press, and politics.

Introduction

Over the past decade, media convergence according to Grant and Wilkinson (2009) has become the dominant theme of contemporary journalism practice, education, and research. Huang et al. (2006) argued that at the start of the 21ˢᵗ century, the news media industry began to merge different media —newspapers, radio, television, magazines, and online journalism sites — to distribute news across different media outlets. Erdal (2009) described convergence within and between media organizations as one of the newest catalysts for change experienced by journalists in the 21ˢᵗ century. Erdal noted that radio, television, mobile phones, and the Internet have fused into a multiple media platform that offers integrated news delivery to media consumers. This means that the previous boundaries among various print and electronic media organizations in the way they do business are almost eliminated because technology enables different operations to overlap.

In a sense, a converged media environment is shifting power to citizens who can question the authorities in ways unimaginable in the past. So, the culture of freedom of expression and information abundance has implications on democratic governance and people's participation in decision making that affects their lives. So, this study investigated the status of convergence in Nigerian newsrooms, to what extent Nigerian citizens can be seen to be involved in the process, and what all of this means to journalists currently in the midst of this process.

Background to the Study

Scholars and practitioners are divided as to the true meaning of media convergence. It is also understood from the perspective of ownership convergence such as mergers and media conglomerates, technological convergence of media organizations, and as cross-media collaboration, partnership, and sharing of content (Huang et al. 2006; Lawson-Borders, 2006; Grant &Wilkinson, 2009; Quinn & Filak,2005; Brooks, Kennedy, Moen, & Ranly, 2004; Deuz, 2004; Gordon, 2002; Jenkins, 2006; Menon, 2006) . Whether conceptualized as integration and digitization, content convergence, form convergence, technological convergence, or corporate convergence, media convergence represents the future of the media industry. It has broad implications for the way audience members consume media fare and how the media relates to mass audiences and to their changing idiosyncrasies. Menon's (2006) evaluation of the technical, organizational, economic, and regulatory aspects of media convergence illustrate the challenges posed by this new industry practice.

These different perspectives on media convergence have contributed immensely to understanding the level of newsroom convergence in the United States (Thornton & Keith, 2009). At the same time, lack of uniformity to what actually constitutes media convergence confounds a thorough understanding of the concept. However, Quinn and Filak (2005) examined the various views on convergence and concluded that "media diversification is the past; digital convergence is the present; multimedia integration is the future" (p.12). The method of content delivery has changed over time from an era of isolated media operations to a period in which technology makes it possible for

collaboration and partnership, not just among media organizations but also among media consumers.

   Moreover, media convergence is associated with many changes in journalism practice (Deuz, 2004). Also called multimedia journalism, convergence journalism seeks to bring about more cooperation, partnership, and collaboration among formerly separate media organizations. The coming together of these organizations could take the form of newsroom integration, joint advertising revenue, and other special projects. According to Gilmour (2007) convergence journalism became fashionable when newspapers employed the Internet for news dissemination to capture a wider audience base. Gilmour noted that the Internet had the capability to allow more than one platform for information delivery to a potential audience. Brooks et al. (2004) argued that media convergence has altered the relationship between news organizations and their audience. They pointed out that traditional journalism gave editors the gatekeeper function of deciding for audience members what information is available to them, but in a converged media environment that is mostly Internet-based the audience is at liberty to choose from a variety of information sources. In what Jenkins (2006, p. 19) described as the "migratory behavior of media audiences" convergence enables audience members to search for information or entertainment in any medium and from any source.

   Unlike the passive audience of the past, today's media consumers are more active and wander from one gateway of information to another, either out of necessity or by habit. It is therefore imperative to track the taste and desires of the audience by providing content in ubiquitous channels such as the Internet, cellular phones, satellite radios,

PDAs, podcasts, and other wireless devices. Storm (2005) examined the prospects of involving members of the public in the production and processing of news materials as a major attraction to media convergence practices because it is a source of information empowerment to the audience. Storm further argued that blogs enable members of the public to function as journalists or news professionals thereby making them gatekeepers of news and current affairs. This trend is an indication that in most contemporary democracies, audience members are no longer passive participants in the media communication process. A new paradigm that takes into account the audience's unpredictable choices is imperative, as is the task of having industry professionals ready to literally pursue the audience wherever they go.

The transition from traditional journalism practice to modern journalism practice in a converged media environment will continue to be a challenge now and in the future. Quinn (2005) maintained that multimedia journalism encourages the audience to consume news in different ways while also compelling journalists to present news in new ways and recognizing the centrality of data and information in the life of contemporary media organizations. Quinn's analysis implies that information is the lifeblood of media organizations because it is the most prized commodity traded on the floor of media organizations. Other studies have also conceptualized information as the lifeblood of democracy (Akinfeleye, 1995; Jenkins, 2005; Jensen, 2005). In this connection, therefore, media convergence can be a tool to further journalism's role in a democracy by stimulating social change and empowerment of the audience by converting information to knowledge thereby producing well-informed citizens who can participate in democratic

governance. Media convergence can be a vehicle for interactive conversation among citizens who share a common sociopolitical milieu. When Pascale, Millemann and Gioja (2000) described conversation as the fountain and epicenter of change, their view approximates to the capacity of media convergence to foster many voices instead of few in the conversation about human progress.

Despite its seeming newness, media convergence can be viewed as a modern representation of the media and the public sphere — a historical analysis in which Jurgen Habermas shed light on the role of the media in advancing democracy. In his *Structural transformation of the public sphere*, Habermas (1989) examined the link between institutions and practices associated with the mass media and democratic politics. Dahlgren and Sparks (1991) built on Habermas's conceptualization of the media as a public sphere. Viewed from a classical liberal theory, Dahlgren and Sparks defined the public sphere as a forum or platform whereby the media holds a commanding presence. Analogous to the public or village square or town hall meetings, the media becomes a public sphere where public opinion is shaped for citizens to make informed decisions, and also shape the behavior of public officials.

With all its complexities, media convergence expands the public sphere and welcomes more participants to independently engage in public debate and discussion of public policy. Dahlgren and Sparks (1991) concluded that the media acts as an umpire that helps to negotiate different and competing interests and opinions democratically. While researchers have criticized Habermas's public sphere for ignoring the effect of the media's inability to reflect contending political forces and offered alternative ways of

organizing the media in a polity, it is nevertheless important to understand that institutions and processes of mass communication share common grounds with political structure and process (Garnham, 1992; Hyden, Leslie & Ogundimu, 2002). Viewed from this perspective, convergence journalism (in terms of partnership and collaboration of different media organizations and integration of wireless communication and the Internet) essentially performs a dual function in the public sphere: accelerator of media democratization and incubator for robust democratic governance. In other words, media convergence has the potential to facilitate democratization and accessibility of the mass media which in turn creates an enabling environment for democratic governance. It is the inextricable connection between politics and the mass media that will guide this inquiry on the impact of media convergence on democracy.

The integrated form of news delivery or information dissemination using a wide variety of media, including interactive media has wide implications for the emergence of a truly democratic culture characterized by freedom of expression, freedom of the press, transparency, and political participation .

Perhaps no problem is as endemic to public administration as the twin problem of trust deficit and corruption among public office holders. Udogu (2008) identified corruption, lack of accountability, and transparency to be among the greatest challenge to political leadership especially in emerging countries of the third world. It is difficult for political leaders to earn the confidence of the people and foster economic and social growth in the midst of corrupt leadership. Udogu (2008) further argued that poor education and information dissemination were partly to blame for the failure of

leadership in emerging countries. The function of the news media is to provide leadership in the area of education and information to empower the citizenry to participate actively in the democratic process. Jenkins (2006) described convergence as a cultural shift that encourages news consumers to be more active and curious seekers of new information and build alliances across different media content. Jenkins further distinguished the characteristics of the old and new consumers of media content.

> Whereas the traditional consumers are passive in character the modern consumers are active. The conventional attitude of old consumers made it easier to control them unlike the unpredictable behavior of new consumers that make them wander from one medium to another. In the past, audience members consume information alone but today they are more socially connected. If the activities of media audience were once unrecognized, the new consumers are now vocal and attracts attention. (p. 19)

The new influence gained by the masses in a converged media environment can be translated into political energy thereby precipitating a new political culture where power truly belongs to the people. This mindset also crystallizes Skinner, Compton and Gasher's (2005) conception of participatory democracy in which citizens are actively engaged in not just putting representatives in power but also involved in setting agenda and shaping policy alternatives. The challenges and opportunities of media convergence are many and given the unstable political condition of most African countries, adjusting some policies regarding media ownership, journalism practice and training, technology, and telecommunications and confronting the digital divide that inhibits access and

participation in the modern world may see Africa's democracy benefit from the transparency and accountability that media convergence unleashes on societies that embrace it.

The media coverage of the recent Iranian election is an example of how a converged media environment can overcome the tyranny of governments that suppress information, alternative voices and basic freedoms necessary for democracy to flourish (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2009, para. 2). It is therefore possible that a converged media environment can trigger unprecedented demand for change in hitherto undemocratic societies. The era of social networking driven by the Generation X, the young, the bloggers, the texters, and the Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace crowds is a precursor to unrelenting agitation for change, more freedom, more of everything, anywhere and on demand (V. Ferreros, personal communication, July 2, 2009). The integration of these social networking channels into the mainstream media as well as its diffusion in remote corners of the world may have unimaginable consequences to how information gathering and dissemination affect democratization of societies. In particular, the extent to which African countries will be affected by these innovations is unclear given the poor state of technology and access to the Internet in most African countries.

This handicap notwithstanding, media convergence as a process has the potential to help in the sustenance of democracy and good governance. African countries have suffered greatly due to poor leadership brought about by secrecy and corruption (Udeogu, 2008; Obe, 2007). Most African leaders have perpetuated themselves in power by abuse of human rights and basic freedoms such as freedom of expression and freedom of the

press while some of them rig elections, manipulate the citizenry, steal from public coffers

and become intolerant to opposing views through over bearing control of the news media

(Berger, 2002; Obe, 2007). Media convergence envisages altering the present trend

because of the transnational orientation of most media organizations operating in

deregulated markets that allow cross-ownerships (Deuz, 2004). Against this background

therefore, the expectation is that a more democratized media will propel effective public

administration in Africa. It is also expected that since most journalists enter into the

profession because of a certain measure of interest in democracy and that journalism can

be a force for positive social change and good governance, media convergence can

impact democratic communication thereby sustaining popular rule and democratic values

in Africa.

For example, the media in Nigeria has remained an important pillar in the

democratic process of the West African country from the struggle for independence to

removal of military dictatorship and restoration of civilian government (Momoh, 1999;

Okigbo & Eribo, 2004; Ojo, 2007; Opubor, 1986, Akinfeleye, Omole & Omang, 1995).

The news media in Africa is largely operated under the traditional model of

diversification instead of today's convergence journalism practice experienced in other

parts of the world. Muhammad (2007) and Fork-Kintz's (2007) analysis of the landscape

of the news media in Nigeria shows a common feature. They are inclined to sole

proprietorship or in some cases purely family business or government operated

enterprises. The media advocate ethnic interests, national integration, and rural

development while the majority of the broadcast media are owned and operated by state

and federal governments while most of the newspapers and magazines are privately

owned (Muhammad, 2007). Unfortunately, a number of government-owned and operated

media organizations are in moribund states while the privately owned organizations are

doing better. Ironically, most of the media organizations owned and operated by

government have more sophisticated equipment and valuable assets than private media

outfits. Whereas public media organizations receive financial subsidy from government,

noted Dokpesi (2003), private organizations receive no monetary assistance and only

depend on advertising revenue. With tax payers' money, the government owned media

organizations can boast of more financial and material resources but less popular with the

masses.

Given this scenario, the introduction of media convergence as practiced in the

United States and other countries could help to integrate the operations of these disparate

entities in such a way as to deliver to the audience quality programming and editorial

content. Embracing media convergence may well be the better option for media

proprietors in Nigeria. However, this requires a change of mindset and a determination to

adjust to new ways of doing journalism as a business. Quinn (2005) remarked that the

success of multimedia journalism is dependent upon the readiness of journalists to change

old habits and adopt new practices that challenge their ego, skill, innovation, creativity,

and patience. Quinn's view touches at the heart of imminent challenge facing the average

Nigerian journalist who has to struggle to put behind old practices including ego and

learn to give the readers and viewers a premier consideration in a converged media

environment. Nordenson (2008) highlighted the impact of the information age on news

production and consumption in the areas of openness, user-friendliness and self government. In a study that examined journalism's future in an era of unprecedented information abundance, Nordenson concluded that the Internet has altered the business model of media organizations. How, the African media entrepreneur balances this reality will shape the contour and terrain of media convergence in the continent.

The focus of this study is therefore to examine the impact of media convergence on democratic governance, considering the power it gives to citizens to use information anyhow, anytime, anywhere and on demand. Since convergence allows and encourages different media organizations to engage in newsroom collaboration and partnership, joint ownership of websites, cross-media sales/advertisement and promotional events and projects, it is possible that the media can maximize this great advantage to enhance political and civic engagement of citizens.

Problem Statement

Media convergence is as confusing and evolutionary as it is new and revolutionary. Political and media pundits (Skinner, Compton & Gasher, 2005; Jenkins, 2006; Okigbo & Hyden, 2004; Trippi, 2004) argue that information is power and the news media is the midwife of democracy. Researchers have noted the indispensable role of information and education to democratic governance (Udogu, 2008) and transparency (Norensdon, 2007). However, journalists, public administrators, and citizens do not understand fully the potentials of media convergence to the advancement of democratic ideals. An initial review of literature revealed that the connection between media convergence and democratization of a given polity is unclear. Again it is not known how

media convergence could be achieved in Nigeria and other countries of Africa given the poor state of technology and media infrastructure that enable convergence.

Therefore, the problem is that while communication researchers know the potential impact of the traditional news media in nurturing and nursing democracy (Deane, Mue & Banda, 2002; Okigbo & Hyden, 2004; Willetts, 2001), it is uncertain how convergence journalism, multimedia journalism or new media that integrates editorial operations from print, web and broadcast divisions can impact democratic governance vis-à-vis freedom of expression, political participation and transparency.

This study is a contribution to the body of knowledge needed to address the challenges and opportunities of media convergence especially in Nigeria's nascent democracy. The study focused on the readiness of Nigerian journalists and media proprietors to embrace media convergence in order to enthrone an era characterized by freedom of expression and good governance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory research is to understand the possibility of media convergence to contribute in the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. Media convergence, otherwise called convergent journalism, digital convergence, multimedia or new media is the integrated presentation of news stories and pictures through different media such as the Internet, e-mail, SMS, MMS, radio, television, pod casts, newspapers, news magazines, web 2.0 and web 3.0 and so on. Media General in Tampa Florida exemplifies media convergence (Gilboa, 2003) as well as Arizona Republic and KPNX-

TV in Phoenix, Arizona (Silcock & Keith, 2006). It combines multimedia resources —

print, television, radio, the Internet and collaboration to maximize audience reach. The

media coverage of the recent Iranian election and the subsequent protests demonstrated

that a converged media environment engenders transparency, freedom of expression and

ultimately renders government ownership and control of the news media unreasonable,

unnecessary and indeed unsustainable. This study is also about the future of journalism in

Nigeria epitomized by convergence.

There is a little understanding of the meaning and benefits of convergent

journalism in Nigeria. An essential element of media convergence is that it eliminates

unhealthy competition among media organizations because it encourages collaboration in

content sharing including advertising. The implication therefore is that the fierce

competition among Nigerian media organizations over breaking news that often leads to

inaccurate reporting and sloppy journalism will take a back seat.

Currently, the government control of the news media through ownership, legal

control and licensing of journalists is making the effective management and performance

of journalists difficult. Consequently, there is lack of press freedom and freedom of

expression and abuse of human rights (Obe, 2007). It is the goal of this study to

demonstrate that media convergence could potentially change the political and media

landscape in Nigeria in such a way that it could dilute the effects of government

ownership and control of the media while boosting the credibility of journalists, public

policies, and democratic processes in the country. In addition, by providing multiple

platforms for Nigerian citizens to share and consume information, media convergence

could effectively dismantle the barrier to the perennial information shortage in the polity. If this happens successfully, Nigeria will be following the footsteps of advanced democracies of United States and Canada where as Skinner, Compton and Gasher (2005) noted the 'mediascape' has fundamentally changed due to media convergence that challenges news professionals to find alternative ways of adapting to the new environment.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions that will guide the study include the following:

1. What is the perception of Nigerian journalists in relation to the potential impacts of media convergence on democracy in terms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation?

2. How do Nigerian journalists consider media convergence as effective in supporting free, fair, and frequent elections in Nigeria?

3. What is the perception of Nigerian journalists' regarding the current extent of media convergence in Nigeria?

4. How can media convergence be achieved in Nigeria given the state of technology and media infrastructure?

Research Hypotheses

H_1: Journalists will perceive media convergence as a potential catalyst to more political participation among Nigerian citizens.

H_2: Nigerian journalists expect that media convergence will enthrone an era of transparency and accountability in public life of Nigerians.

H_3: Journalists believe that the potential of media convergence in fostering democratic values such as freedom of expression, press freedom, and pluralism will impact journalism practice in Nigeria.

H_4: Nigerian journalists will perceive the low level of technology, epileptic electricity supply, and poor media infrastructure as threats to effective media convergence.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are described as important road map for research (Potter & Riddle, 2007) because theories guide research by providing clarity to ideas and findings that require testing and interpretation. Potter and Riddle concluded that theories function as glue to important research findings thereby providing a critical platform for justification of certain systems. They, however, lamented the low use of theories in research and warned of its impact on design of studies and education of future generation of scholars. Grant and Wilkinson (2009) also acknowledged the minimal theoretical approach to the study of media convergence. Grant and Wilkinson believed that the application of theory had the potential to expand knowledge and thereby increase the chances of understanding the rapid spread and methods of media convergence, in addition to its consequences. Due to the hydra-headed nature of media convergence there is no one-size-fits-all theoretical perspective that encompasses the concept. It can be viewed from different theoretical lens.

In the light of the foregoing, therefore, the theoretical framework that grounds this research includes democratic-participant media theory, development media theory, uses and gratification theory, and the concept of citizen journalism. The basic tenet of democratic-participant media theory, according to McQuail (1987) is based on the audience's right to "relevant information, the right to answer back, and the right to use the means of communication" (p.122). McQauil further stated that the theory rejects the government control of the news media but favors multiple platforms and horizontal as opposed to vertical communication flow at all levels of society.

Although, this theory was formulated many years ago before the advent of media convergence as practiced today, it appears to capture the very essence of convergence journalism in terms of the democratization of the channels of public communication and information dissemination. Deuze (2004) demonstrated how the core of the democratic-participant theory could impact journalism practice in a converged media environment. According to him, to grow beyond the traditional journalism whereby editors and reporters are gatekeepers to an era whereby audience or citizens have become active participants in newsgathering and reporting may be one of the contemporary challenges facing journalism. News professionals may have to subdue their ego and welcome the participation of non-news professionals in their business. Oyebode (2008) distinguished between democratic participatory communication and development communication and argued that while the former describes the use of the media in western democracies, the latter is applied to countries of the south notably Africa. Oyebode predicated the survival

of democracy in Africa to the ability of institutions and agencies including the mass media to become truly democratic and participatory.

The development media theory on the other hand, emphasizes the role of the news media as catalysts of development. Development media theory also called development communication believes that the mass media, particularly in emerging countries otherwise called Third World countries, should play a role in ushering hitherto underdeveloped societies into a modern world by embracing innovation and new technologies (Rogers, 1986; Okigbo and Eribo, 2004; Nwuneli, 1985; Opubor, 1985). The innovative and participatory processes involved in media convergence are in tandem with the postulations of development media theory.

On the role of the media as agents of modernization, Okonkwo (1990) also pointed out that from the standpoint of developing countries news worthy events and issues include stories about infrastructural development such as new dams, roads, and industries as well as stories that promote national cohesion and patriotism. Oyebode (2008) contended that instead of mere purveyors of information and change, the news media under the development media paradigm are instruments that instill in citizens good ethics and empower them to adopt new ways to improve themselves. Okonkwo (1990) and Oyebode (2008) analysis is symptomatic of the modernization paradigm of development media theory that viewed citizens as passive individuals who just stay to receive instructions from communications experts. This model does not reflect interactivity and mutual exchange and hence its demise. Melkote (2000) distinguished

development communication in the modernization paradigm from development support

communication in the empowerment paradigm.

Whereas development communication merely prescribes, teaches, and preaches,

development support communication is more participatory and grants citizens unlimited

access to enable them to take control of their destiny. Rodriguez (2000) built on

Melkote's (2000) analysis and suggested that the field of development communication

has witnessed a transition characterized by a power shift from "imposition to

collaboration" (p. 45) and from the mass media to citizens' media. This "journey towards

humility" (Rodriguez, 2000, p. 46) is axiomatic of trends in media convergence whereby

traditional and professional journalists are expected to exhibit some kind of humility to

collaborate with citizens who are unprofessional journalists but have become active

participants in the news gathering and dissemination process. To allow the intrusion of

non-professionals into journalism under media convergence practices could be viewed as

humbling for news professionals.

The uses and gratification theory provides another critical framework in the

present study's attempt to develop a suitable media convergence structure that can have

profound impact on Africa's democracy. The uses and gratification approach,

popularized by Elihu Katz and other communication researchers has remained a pivotal

theoretical framework for the understanding of people's media behavior. In analyzing the

importance of this approach, Katz (1974) argued for more focus on what people do with

the media rather than what the media do to people. This marked a shift from an era where

communication researchers were almost fixated on effects of the media on audience

members with little evidence on the power of the media to change audience attitudes. The underlying assumption among uses and gratification researchers is that audience members select and respond to different media on the basis of external circumstances existing in that society. McQuail (1987) provided a complete taxonomy of needs and satisfaction which audience members get from the media. They include information, personal identity purposes, integration and social interaction and entertainment.

According to Okigbo (1986) audience members expose themselves to particular media output because of determinable social and personal needs while at the same time media uses lead to getting need-related gratification. This dual premise of uses and gratification research is what Vishwanath (2008) called "gratification sought" and "gratification obtained" (p. 8). Vishwanath concluded that audience activity under the uses and gratification theory has three properties: "selectivity, involvement and utility" (p. 17). These three elements are critical in the unprecedented nomadic behavior of audience members in a converged media environment. In the era of digital revolution that fosters media convergence as conceptualized in this study, Jenkins (2006) described digital media metaphorically-speaking as having some kind of liberating effect as opposed to the oppression of mass media because the former gives the audience the freedom to enjoy content that are only meaningful and beneficial to them.

Citizen journalism is yet another concept that guides this research. Citizen journalism is a recent phenomenon enabled by the Internet and wireless communication whereby non-professional journalists engage in news gathering and reporting and sometimes picked by the mainstream media. Johnson and Wiedenbeck (2009) compared

citizen journalism with web 2.0 because it encourages web-driven collaboration, creativity and information sharing while Bowman and Willis (2005) conceptualized citizen journalism as the gathering and dissemination of news by ordinary citizens who are not trained news professionals. Cell phones with cameras, camcorder and other recording devices assist the citizen journalist to break barriers to information dissemination often erected by governments especially in undemocratic states.

On the whole, the practice is grassroots-based and essentially participatory. According to Hamdy (2009) citizen journalism has direct impact on politics because the media provides a platform for free exchange of opinions that may be unpalatable to undemocratic governments without interference or arrests. The recent election in Iran and the protests that followed were covered by the international media mostly through the help of citizen journalists who used their cell phones and amateur cameras to capture scenes of protesters that were otherwise restrained by the authorities in Teheran.

Rodriquez (2000) elaborated further on citizen journalism using the term citizens' media. Rodriguez emphasized that citizens' media empowers the public to develop convenient channels of communication that are socially transformative and consistent with their cultural realities. Citizens' media, according to Rodriguez enables ordinary folks to be part of a conversation about their society, building bridges across different communities thereby fostering "empowerment and conscientization" (p. 150).In the context of this study, therefore, media convergence potentially will expand the boundaries of communication and use of the news media by citizens in determining their future.

As the former US vice president Al Gore stated at the launch of Current TV, democratization of the media involves creating a new generation of citizen journalists by empowering the youthful segment of the population "to engage in a dialogue of democracy and to tell their stories of what's going on in their lives, in the dominant medium of our time" (Berman, 2005). Current TV encourages viewers to post digital video materials and comments to a website from where some of the materials that pass competitive tests are chosen for broadcast on television (Jenkins, 2006). This is emblematic of media convergence which Jenkins described as a significant shift from isolated pattern of media consumption toward an arrangement that links dispersed news consumers. In many ways too, media convergence as a process or practice represents a conducive platform that allows citizens to share their experiences with others in such a way that news content is audience - generated, moderated and consumed. The sharing of information and experiences involves focusing on the kinds of information with potential benefits to the functioning of a democratic order.

This research suggested that a synthesis of the foregoing theories might help to understand the impact of media convergence on Africa's democracy with emphasis on freedom of expression, freedom of the press, transparency, and political participation. This study argued that integrating some of the elements of the foregoing theories and other relevant issues in the African media landscape will enable journalists, public administrators and the citizens to attain their full potentials in a democratic society.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined conceptually (actual meaning) and operationally (as applicable to this study).

Accountability: This refers to holding persons especially public office holders responsible for their actions or inactions. But in this study, accountability is understood from the prism of section 22 of the Nigerian constitution which emphasized the importance of a free mass media in making governments accountable and responsible to the people. Accountability also means monitoring government performance.

Change: This means adopting new practices or alternative methods of news gathering and dissemination. But in this study, change means the utilization of the new media including the social media and mobile telephones by Nigerian citizens to improve democratic governance.

Democratic governance: This means absence of dictatorship, an administrative structure that places high premium on rule of law, pluralism, tolerance and respect for the dignity of the human person. In this study, democratic governance refers to capacity building, citizen empowerment; democracy as a form of self rule and people's sovereignty from elite domination.

Freedom of expression: From an operational perspective, this refers to unfettered opportunity for dialogue between Nigerians and their government and the capacity to express independent opinion on any subject through any medium of communication. Conceptually, freedom of expression is consistent with Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights which states inter alia that: "everyone has the right to

freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the right to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

Freedom of Information Act: This refers to a legislation that guarantees every citizen the right or authority to look into or demand any document or information from government that will inform the person of how the business of governance is going on. The act means that government information is public resource. In this study, freedom of Information act is the FOI bill pending in Nigeria's Senate and House of Representatives.

Freedom of the press: This refers to the ability of the news media and news professionals to report news objectively and accurately without harassment, intimidation or fear of government or powerful members of society. It also includes the absence of legal or quasi legal or economic control of the media and by extension information flow. The operational definition of press freedom is the existence of an enabling environment for reporters and editors in Nigeria to do their job without government control.

Information overload: This refers to too much information available to the audience today in the midst of the proliferation of different media organizations and information outlets. Too much information coming at the same time becomes a burden for the audience because he or she has an overload and may not be able to digest or interpret information as fast as they come. This study recognizes information overload as the excessive concentration on political news by Nigerian news media.

Journalism practice: This term refers to the trade of journalism whereby reporters and editors and other media practitioners engage in series of activities that result in news

or information, education and entertainment for the audience. In operational terms, journalism practice means those media professionals employed in various Nigerian newsrooms as reporters and editors involved in news gathering, editing, and dissemination.

Media convergence: This refers to the integration of media content across different media such as radio, television, newspaper, magazine and online. It is the practice of sharing, collaboration and partnership among different newsrooms to deliver news to the audience at anytime, anywhere, and on demand. In this study, media convergence is used interchangeably as convergence journalism, digital journalism, multimedia, and new media. This study views media convergence as the status of collaboration and partnership among Nigerian news organizations in terms of content sharing and exchange of staff.

Political participation: This term refers to civic engagement, involvement in the political process, voting in elections, informed political debate, democracy, demand for basic rights, good governance, and civil society initiatives, student and labor activism etc. The foundation of a democracy is the ability of the people to influence the government through openly expressed public opinion. For the purpose of this study, political participation means voting in Nigeria's presidential election and involvement in election campaigns as well as important debates prior to elections.

Transparency: For the purposes of this study transparency refers to absence of secrecy in public administration, and incorruptible practices of journalists and politicians. Conceptually, it means openness in government activities and programs as well as in the

private sector. It also includes the definition given to the term by Transparency

International, the global anti-corruption watchdog.

Definition of variables

Journalists' perceptions of the impact of media convergence on transparency as

measured by the ... support for of freedom of Information legislation and the extent to

which journalists think government information is open and accessible to them and the

rest of the citizens.

Journalists perceptions of the impact of media convergence on freedom of

expression as measured by the ability to report and comment on government activities

without interference or harassment and the ability of citizens to access the various media

of communication to voice their opinion on issues that affect their lives.

Journalists' perceptions of the impact of media convergence on political

participation as measured by the ... level of voter turn -out, increased interactive political

discussion in the media by citizens, exposure of election fraud.

Journalists perceptions of the impact of media convergence on elections as

measured by the ... use of SMS, phone cameras, Internet, email and social media to share

election results and other events from polling booths.

Journalists' perceptions of the extent of media convergence currently in Nigeria

as measured by… use of multimedia tools by journalists; partnership and collaboration

among news organizations in Nigeria in the areas of staffing, marketing, and content

sharing.

The prospects of media convergence in the face of current state of technology and media infrastructure… measured by the availability of constant public power supply, broadband technology, satellite communication, latest media equipment, and wireless communication tools.

Assumptions and Limitations

Four basic assumptions underlie this study. First, that media convergence is an antidote to democratic governance. It is similar to the assumption in the stimulus-response theory of the media that suggests that media effect was automatic and had a bullet effect. The fact that media convergence could potentially unleash unprecedented flow of information among the citizenry is expected to increase political participation and thereby push a rather docile society to wake up and become more responsive to democratic aspirations. A converged media environment will empower the people to be more active participants in what constitutes media content. It will make it possible for them to be not just the gate but also gatekeepers in the flow of information in a democratic society.

Secondly, it is assumed that the Nigerian media is a monolithic entity that is likely to respond positively and embrace convergence. This is regardless of the ownership pattern of the media in this West African country. The media is largely owned by government, public organizations and corporations and individuals.

The third assumption is that media convergence will probably bring to an end the government control and ownership of the news media. The widely held belief that knowledge is power partly explains why some governments adopt hierarchical, secretive

and controlling structures in information sharing (Lenihan, 2002). All too often, the purpose of government's involvement in the media industry is to manipulate public opinion to their favor, and since a converged media environment fuelled by the Internet makes government manipulation of citizens impossible, it makes no sense for government to meddle in the media business anymore.

The final assumption is that necessary media infrastructure exists in Nigeria to accelerate the transition from traditional journalism to convergence journalism. The technology, telecommunications, broadband and uninterrupted power supply are available for optimal media convergence. It is also assumed that many citizens have access to mobile telephones, computer and the Internet. The study assumed that journalists and media proprietors will embrace convergence as innovation worth exploring. So, the maturity and readiness of the media industry in Nigeria is taken for granted.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are as follows: Nigeria is a vast country of more than 150 million people with journalists spread across the 36 states and Abuja Federal Capital Territory. It was impossible to survey all the journalists, media owners, media educators and politicians in these states due to constraints of time and resources.

Constant power outages in Nigeria and poor working conditions of media workers as well as regular workers strike including government employees and unionized media workers may pose serious challenges in gathering of data and getting necessary cooperation from research subjects.

Scope and Delimitations

The sample for this study was limited to practicing journalists in Nigeria who have worked for at least five years in their respective media organizations. Others are editors, reporters, photographers, anchors, newspaper columnists from both government owned and privately-owned news organizations. Media professionals outside the media industry or retired journalists were not included in the sample. Therefore, only practicing journalists were invited to participate in the study because they are more likely to understand the meaning and implications of media convergence than retired and older practitioners. Moreover, all interviews were conducted in Nigeria and not outside the country.

This study was restricted to the soft ware component of media fare and avoided the technical or technological details involved in media convergence. This means that the fusion of telecommunications and other technological innovation that drive convergence received little or no attention.

Significance of the Study

Most media studies, as Garnham (1992) phrased it are "simply too media-centric" (p. 360). By this he meant that research and discussions merely revolve around prevailing political and media structures. The relationship between democracy and a virile communications system is well established but what about exploring a relationship that truly supports democracy, transparency and freedom of expression? It is therefore appropriate to conduct a study that moves a step further to examine fluid trends in mass

media practice in relation to its potential change in political behavior in a fast changing world.

Research and discussions on the benefits of media convergence seem to focus primarily on the so called developed democracies with little or no consideration for emerging countries. This study refocuses attention on Africa's most populous country – Nigeria to explore how media convergence could help or hurt its nascent democracy. It is an important addition to the global conversation on the promise or peril of media convergence not just in established democracies but also in fledgling democracies.

Again, previous studies have concentrated on the technicalities of media convergence and the costs or benefits to the media industry without substantial consideration to its value to promoting good governance especially in poor countries.

With so much emphasis on the high cost of media convergence, this study attempted to establish whether it is a dangerous pill for poor countries to swallow or not especially as some media organizations that experienced convergence in the past is abandoning the idea to their more familiar traditional method of journalism practice (Thornton and Keith, 2009).

Nevertheless, it is expected that by embracing convergence, the Nigerian media industry will enhance the prestige and remuneration of journalists and reduce the neglect of members of the public who largely see them as poorly paid rabble rousers. Imbued in media convergence is the gradual elimination of competition among hitherto fierce opponents in the news business. Instead of pursuing news differently, media organizations will collaborate and thereby reduce tension and struggle for scoops that in

most cases result in fabrication and inaccurate reporting and ultimate loss of media credibility. Above all, the possibility of a newspaper or radio reporter to appear on television, to provide news analysis or report news enhances his/her profile. Similarly, the television reporter can present news on radio, online, and newspaper with a byline. All these may be new to the Nigerian journalist and therefore keep them engaged and intellectually alert.

Above all, this study is significant for the Nigerian polity because it could signal the end of government control of the news media and trigger accountability, transparency and increased political awareness among the citizenry. It has therefore wide implications for social change and for policy makers in government and the media industry. It also has an impact on journalism training and education.

In the final analysis, if media convergence experience in Nigeria becomes successful in bringing about good governance in this strategic and most populous African country, it is expected to have a ripple effect in the entire African continent. This study would be put on record as having identified a solution to the intractable problem of leadership, civic engagement and citizenship that have long bedeviled Africa.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

This chapter explored different ways of understanding media convergence. It viewed media convergence as the integration of various news delivery channels including new and old media of communication. Convergence also involves newsroom collaboration, cross-media partnership, and media merger. In particular, the chapter

attempted to explain the implications of a converged media environment to the sustenance of democracy and freedom of expression.

In addition, the rationale for the study which is based on the uncertainty about the impact of media convergence on Africa's democracy was discussed. The chapter also introduced the research questions, assumptions and limitations, and theories that guided the study.

The next chapter will focus on a comprehensive review of literature following a detailed search in various data bases, journal articles, books, and other sources. Chapter 2 will describe and explain in a systematic way the most relevant, current published information related to media convergence. Its focus will be an integrated critique of the concepts contained in the communication and related literature that is applicable to the socio-economic and political dynamics that account for a successful convergence journalism environment. The chapter will examine legal and other obstacles against convergence as well as illuminate on the intersection of media, democracy and development in Africa and underscore the importance of convergence in advancing democratic governance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The last decade of the 20th century marked an era of unprecedented changes in the news media industry. The growing influence of the Internet altered the landscape of the media world for both news professionals and news consumers. The significance of this period was the end of media diversification which had allowed for a division in practices among news organizations in terms of professionalism, business and the way they related to their audience (Quinn, 2005). According to Quinn and Filak (2005) digital convergence and multimedia integration represent the contemporary and future practice of journalism.

In this chapter, literature addressing various disciplines such as public policy, communications, management, information technology, and political science, is explored. Specifically, the review covers the early stages of media convergence, the various forms of convergence, and the potential of convergence to foster democratization, social change, good governance, citizen participation, openness, and information overload. The various obstacles to media convergence are also explored.

The review is guided by information obtained from multiple sources including current journal articles, books, websites, unpublished seminar papers, and speeches. Other sources are research databases such as ProQuest, EBSCO host (Communication & Mass Media Complete; Academic Research Premier), New York Public Library, Walden library, Questia online library, and Google Scholar. The following search terms were used: media convergence; convergence journalism in Africa; multimedia journalism; Africa democracy; ownership of media organizations in Africa; information overload and

democracy; elections in Nigeria; and media management in Africa. More than 161

articles were accessed but only 118 were found to be relevant to the topic under

investigation.

Evolution of Media Convergence in a Changing World

Around the world, journalism is undergoing fundamental changes in both theory

and practice (Deuz, 2004; Quinn, 2005). According to Jenkins (2006) these changes

encapsulated by the term *convergence journalism* represent the future of a media industry

that involves using both the old and new media to provide choice to the audience and

change in industry practices.

The early development of media convergence, according to Quinn (2005) is

traceable to countries in Southeast Asia, South America, Western Europe, and

Scandinavia. In the United States, convergence journalism started during the last decade

of the 20th century, when newspapers and television stations began to exploit the capacity

of the Internet to disseminate news on multiple platforms (Gilbour, 2007). Many reasons

account for the popular embrace of media convergence around the world. Thornton and

Keith (2009) attributed the trend towards print and broadcast media partnership to the

desire to halt declining audience share while Garcia Aviles, Meier, Kaltenbrunner,

Carvajal, and Kraus (2009) argued that processes towards media convergence were

accelerated by the deregulation of legal aspects of communications business, media

digitalization, and worldwide expansion of the Internet. Garcia Aviles et al studied

newsroom integration in Austria, Spain, and Germany and concluded that convergence is

reshaping the landscape of journalism practice in a number of ways such as newsroom collaboration and cross-media partnerships.

Their comparative and qualitative study using case study method maintained that journalistic convergence should not emphasize the process as technologically driven; instead technological creativity enables the process of convergence to attain measurable objectives in different settings. In other words, any media convergence project should result in unique outcomes depending on set goals. This view suggests that media convergence could be structured in such a way as to pressure public officials to be more responsive to the aspirations of citizens, and to promote accountability and transparency.

Whereas Garcia Aviles et al. (2009) and Gilbour (2007) might have disagreed on the role of technology in fuelling media convergence; they were largely in agreement on the role of media economics. Gilbour argued that the decline in newspaper readership and dwindling advertising revenue are responsible for the overwhelming embrace of convergence because under such an arrangement, newspapers collaborate with radio and television as web partners and therefore minimize potential threats from newly set up internet-based media outlets such as Craigslist.org which appears to have taken over many classified advertisement from newspapers. Quinn (2005) also pointed out that the popularity of media convergence is born out of the need to reach as many audience members as possible, to grant them unlimited access to information when and wherever they want it as well as to implement the cost-cutting measures inherent in a converged media environment.

The adoption of media convergence and the spread of the phenomenon underscore the desire of citizens to demand freedom to express their opinion in any media without barriers of any type. Storm (2005) recognized the importance of freedom of expression in a democracy and stressed that the application of media convergence potentially will ensure that citizens become active participants in the democratic process. Storm stated that "convergence is in many ways an enabler or gate-opener to the public" (para. 4). When audience members engage in blogging and postings on the Internet, which are occasionally picked by mainstream media, Storm concluded that such activity amounts to the public doing the work of journalists and therefore involves the public in the gate keeping function traditionally meant for the professional journalist.

In the traditional media setting, the editors and reporters are the gatekeepers of information and news and therefore decide what news is made available to the audience. Studies on the gate keeping concept in news gathering and reporting (Snider, 1962; White, 1950) demonstrated the subjectivity of reporters and editors in deciding what news is and what ultimately gets reported for readers, viewers, and listeners. The era of media convergence reverses the situation and gives the audience greater control in determining what is news. Deuze (2004) underscored the transition of control from journalists to the news consumer and stated that "new media technologies challenge one of the most fundamental 'truths' in journalism, namely the professional journalist is the one who determines what —— the public—see, hear and read about the world around us." (p.146). In line with this trend, Deuze suggested that editors and reporters must recognize

this shift and accept it as one of the major challenges facing journalism today. Changes in industry practices have profound ramifications for convergence journalism.

The challenge of embracing change is therefore central to understanding media convergence and its impact in a democracy. Lewin (1951) postulated three steps in which change occurs in society: "unfreezing," "moving," and "freezing" (p. 4). For change to occur Lewin believed that the force field or system has to be altered; in other words, something must dissolve or melt the system to allow a transition to a new level before freezing again to make the change part of normal behavior or practice.

Consistent with this change procedure, the unfreezing stage of media convergence meant a need to alter the field of media communication; this need is triggered by the potentials of the Internet and the loss of newspaper advertising revenue and circulation while the transition stage is on-going and the re-freezing amounts to what have become a converged media environment in United States and other advanced democracies. Schein (1995) elaborated on Lewin's (1951) theory and explained the "unfreeze" process as the stage when the prospects and benefits of envisaged change are contemplated. He coined the phrases "*survival anxiety"* and *"learning anxiety*" to convey the worry that goes with potential change: whether it will work or not and the degree of resistance that may confront such change efforts. Schein argued that for change to occur these anxieties must be overturned through the creation of adequate psychological safety. This condition, he believed could be achieved in an environment that promotes skills acquisition in a planned manner, minimizes learning anxiety and thereby catalyze change.

The literature of change emphasizes its complex nature. Pascale, Millemann and Goija (2000) viewed change as a complex adaptive system and conceptualized a three-step process namely "unfreezing and aligning," "discovering and disseminating," and "committing and tracking" (p. 209). The first stage as in Lewin's (1951) model, underscores the readiness to accept change, the second stage involves experimentation; and the third stage marks a loyalty to the change and monitoring the results of the change. Pascale et al. (2000) further stated that people are "more likely to *act* their way into a new way of thinking than *think* their way into a new way of acting" (p. 14). In other words, a series of forces propel people to act in certain ways that may amount to change of the status quo. Change is recognized as a constant in human affairs and this is the thrust of complex adaptive systems theory that emphasizes unpredictability and uncertainty of outcomes. Tower (2002) and Olson and Eoyang (2001) recognized the fluidity in human systems and suggested that to cope with competing forces of change, a clear understanding of complexity and complex adaptive system would be necessary to have a planned change of culture and readiness to embrace new practices.

The media industry is experiencing a transition from old system to new, multifaceted, and more complex operating environment exemplified in media convergence practices and methods (Garcia Aviles et al., 2009). Regardless of different perspectives, change theory is particularly important in the examination of media convergence because as Thornton and Keith (2009) noted technology-driven convergence journalism aimed at fighting reduced audience attention has been one of the discussed

changes in journalism over the past ten years. These changes will define the contours and content of the mass media in the years ahead.

Internet Connectivity - Drivers of Development and Media Convergence

Of central significance to media convergence is the adoption of new technologies and a capacity to embrace change. Rogers's (1986) diffusion of innovation theory provides some insight to the understanding of media convergence. Rogers described diffusion as a process whereby innovation is transmitted from one period to another including orchestrated and unplanned dissemination of fresh ideas while innovation is an initiative or practice considered new to individuals in a given society. Rogers noted that new technologies can have positive and negative effects which could impact adoption of innovation or change.

Based on Rogers's (1986) analysis, media convergence has all the characteristics of diffusion and innovation because it is a relatively new concept especially in Africa where as Rogers predicted diffusion has the potential to trigger social change and unprecedented multiple communication exchange. There is a measure of uncertainty in the adoption of innovations such as media convergence because its effects in terms of transforming the political and social landscape of Africa are unpredictable. Nyamnjoh (1996) argued that the appalling application of information and communication technology in the continent remains a challenge for effective social change to occur.

The key to the diffusion of media convergence is the Internet. The Internet, defined as "global network of networks using universal standards to connect millions of

different networks" (Laudon & Laudon, 2007, p. 14) is considered to be the world's most public communication system. Ojo (2005) referred to the Internet as the "international negotiated space" (p. 2) in the information super highway. Its components include World Wide Web, e-mail, short-message-service (SMS) and wireless applications protocols (de Beer, 2004, p. 158). Many writers have advanced the potential of the internet in accelerating human progress in both developed and developing countries (Jha, 2007; de Beer, 2004; Leslie, 2002; Mollgaard, 2007; Loudon & Loudon, 2007; Garson, 2007; and Kohlmann, 2006). These studies are almost in agreement about the indispensability of the Internet in today's world.

The Internet is used for various reasons including marketing, professional practices, social, and political mobilization as well as democratization processes. Leslie (2002) noted that the Internet and the World Wide Web have altered the way Americans communicate while Jha (2007) reported a rapid increase in the use of the internet by professional journalists in the United States. According to Jha journalists make use of the Internet to access news stories, interview news sources, conduct research, seek fresh news and updates and also maintain a two way communication with audience members. In a content analysis study exploring the influence of the internet in the coverage of two separate social protests (anti-WTO protests of 1999 and anti-Vietnam protest of 1967), Jha found that regardless of the unlimited Internet -sourcing opportunities to journalists, the internet had little or no impact on sourcing of news. In other words, the traditional pattern of news sourcing and framing persisted.

However, the application of the Internet towards democratization appears to yield transformational results. De Beer (2004) argued that Africa's participation in a globalizing world would depend on the continent's embrace to the gains of the Internet. De Beer specifically mentioned the new media such as computers, cellular phones, digital cameras, portable digital assistants, and digital books as new vehicles to deliver information differently from the traditional channels of communication such as radio, television, newspapers, books and magazines. The use of one of these new media— cellular phone in Africa— has assumed a revolutionary proportion (Deane, Mue, & Banda; 2002). According to Eribo (2004) the trend towards Internet use and cellular phone communication represent a catalyst for overall human development and ground-breaking device for regular information sharing and interaction. In 2000, about a quarter of the world's 700 million mobile phones were used in developing countries compared to a 2009 estimate of three-quarters of the world's four billion total (Standage, 2009). Also, the Internet usage in Africa has increased from year 2000 to 2009 by 1,359.9% or 3.9 % of the entire worldwide internet usage (Internet World Stats [IWS], 2009, para. 2). A World Bank study of 24 African countries indicates that a mobile network has expanded to cover over 50 percent of the population including 40 % of rural dwellers (World Bank, 2009, Conclusion section, para. 9). Such an explosion has implications on how citizens use information and share experiences. It further lends support to postulations of democratic-participant media theory and uses and gratification theory because of the unlimited access to citizens' use of communication channels in ways that are most beneficial to them.

In Nigeria for instance the National Communication Commission recorded 132.7 million mobile telephone subscribers in 2009, a 50 % increase over the previous year and representing 95 % of the Nigerian market (Nigerian Communications Commission [NCC], 2009). At this rate, Africa is on the match to a communication revolution enabled by information technology and economic liberalization. The integration of communication and information that flow from cellular phone with traditional media organizations such as radio, television and newspaper as well as online media will signal a new frontier for the African populace whose voices were hitherto unheard in the debate and discussion of public policy.

Moreover, de Beer (2004) outlined the benefits of internet-driven access to information: farmers become aware of profitable prices for their products, physicians can depend on updated technology and the electorate in a democracy can make informed decisions. But, to reap the benefits of the internet may still remain an uphill task considering that only 1 percent of the 300 million computers in the world are found in Africa (de Beer, 2004) and the cost of access to the internet including the cost of purchasing a computer is not affordable to majority of the population who are barely surviving (Leslie, 2002). Not everyone view the aspiration to acquire innovative communication technologies like the internet and telephones, as an indicator of development. Eribo (2004) conceptualized a development paradigm based on consumerism and contended that the importation of these products depleted the resources of the rich and ultimately the entire African continent.

Nevertheless, Eribo suggested a synthesis of consumerism and invention for the continent to shirk the dependency syndrome and assume its rightful place in the world's communications technology. Similar to Eribo's view, Franda (2002) also argued that contrary to popular suggestions that the Internet is bridging the gap between the poor and the rich or the North and South, it is actually producing an opposite effect. Drawing from an extensive survey of relevant literature on globalization, politics, economics, and modernization, Franda concluded that the Internet has created a comparative advantage for rich countries over poor nations because it has become a source of wealth and political influence for wealthy nations to the miserable disadvantage of economically weaker nations.

In a review of World Summit on Information Systems convened by the United Nations in Bamako, capital of the West African country of Mali, Mureithi (2002) also highlighted the challenge of affordability of new technologies by Africans. Africa, Mureithi concluded, is in a "rent position for technology" (p.4) because with the continent accounting for a paltry 0.3 % of world's scientific production, she is unlikely to contribute to the development of appropriate indigenous technology. Therefore, Mureithi predicted that Africa's entry into the information society might take a little longer, a concern echoed by Paul Kagame, the president of Rwanda who called for technology transfer and adaptation in Africa as measures to narrow the gap in information technology (Kagame, 2009, para. 8).

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly declared the "right to communication" a basic human right (de Beer, 2004). In spite of this declaration, a

number of African governments and other countries still impose some kind of state

censorship on the new media in addition to other restrictions imposed by uncontrollable

circumstances. Leslie (2002) demonstrated how a firm grip on information is a source of

power for leaders and therefore the likelihood that they will resist democratizing

electronic media of communication. De Beer (2004) also noted the control of Internet

Service Providers and granting of access to be major forms of censorship exercised by

African governments. Due to the potential of the Internet in distributing knowledge and

information, many governments argue in favor of regulating the content of the Internet to

ensure compliance to basic ethics and democratic norms.

In addition to these forms of censorship are problems associated with digital

divide and poverty. Digital divide refers to a kind of dichotomy that exists in the use of

information technology around the world. It also refers to the disparity in the access to

the computer and the internet (Alzouma, 2005). For example, Garson (2003) evaluated

the use of the Internet in the United States and concluded that there is a digital divide

between those in the lower rung of the socioeconomic ladder and richer ones resulting in

poorer members of society having less technological contact with the Internet.

The digital divide is even more pronounced in developing countries of the

southern hemisphere (Hawkins & Hawkins, 2003). Whether media convergence will

widen or narrow the digital divide among races, regions, classes of people is of concern

to scholars (Riddle and Potter, 2007; Vishwanath, 2008). In 2002, the World Summit on

Information Society (WISS) took aggressive steps to redress the digital gap between

Africa and the rest of the world (Mureithi, 2002). The summit that took place in the

Malian capital, Bamako specifically discussed plans to develop the information society

and welcome Africa into that society. The importance of Africa's involvement in the

information revolution is critical because with majority of the continent's population in

the rural areas and dispersed, Mureithi assumed that information could provide a glue to

connect all citizens of the continent including nomadic farmers.

Although, Africa's entry into the information society has the potential to open the

gates of economic and social opportunities enjoyed by the rest of the global community

to the continent, Alzouma (2005) cautioned against over reliance on Information and

Communication Technology -ICT. He questioned the assumption that information and

communication technologies could resolve the ever growing marginalization of the

continent. To arrogate magical powers to the internet's ability to automatically change

people's condition may be misguided because as Alzouma concluded Information and

Communications Technology (ICT's) "cannot leapfrog beyond the ordinary development

problems Africans are faced with" (p. 351). These perspectives capture the impetus

behind media convergence which in many ways fulfills Marshal McLuhan's prediction of

a global village enabled by the integration of information and communication (McLuhan,

2008).

But, McLuhan's global media theory (1964) did not envisage the shock and awe

that have come to typify the embrace of technology by less modernized African society.

Kowalczykowski (2002) provided an account of an abysmally low rate of internet use

and computer literacy in Namibia. While many African countries are still confounded by

the computer and the workings of the internet, a number of political and economic

barriers still threaten the successful integration of the internet in the African society (Kowalczykowski, 2002; Leslie, 2002). However, there are encouraging signs that internet usage in Africa is rapidly changing due to the efforts of United Nations and other private corporations determined to bridge the digital divide between Africa and the rest of the world. (Mollgaard, 2007; Eribo, 2004) addressed the major concerns about the digital divide which hover around the anxiety, confusion and celebration of technological innovation.

An example of the trepidation associated with the internet was manifest in Kowalczykowski (2002) experience in Namibia where teachers and students in different schools were nervous to touch computer keyboards and often required the help of an expert to navigate the new technology. While the rapid changes of communications technology may be astounding, just like getting familiar with its operations can be challenging, it is clear that these new communications technology can be a source of celebration because as Mollgaard (2007) noted the influence and momentum of the new media have exposed the people to unbelievable methods of encoding and decoding information.

There are many opportunities digital technology has provided to modern journalists which are encapsulated in the complex practice called media convergence. The convergence of different media of communication enables free flow of information or what the United Nations Sustainable Development Networking Program called information democratization. According to the UN, the Internet has given rise to "information democratization" (United Nations Development Program, [UNDP], 2009

para.2) by making it possible for unfettered dissemination of information and knowledge in convenient ways that elevate development across various countries.

Similarly, a number of development reports indicate that the future is bright for Africa's development because of the transformative potential of information technology. Consequently, the United Nations Development Program under the aegis of Internet Initiative for Africa embarked on a series of workshops to emphasize the need for greater connectivity and access to the internet, enhanced bandwidth for internet use and capacity building of human resources (UNDP, 2009). The World Summit on the Information Society held in Bamako, Mali declared among other things that:

> All citizens should have the means to use information and communication technology as a public service; new technologies must be consistent with needs and financial capacity of rural dwellers and more people should be encouraged to utilize voice and other applications that will enhance their participation in the information society. (Mureithi, 2002, p. 3)

The information society envisages that the 51 African countries that attended the World Summit on the Information Society can be propelled by the various models of media convergence to encourage their citizens to use cellular phones to text information, voice or capture images of events and send to the internet or to radio and television stations or newspapers and magazines.

There are however, myriads of setbacks in achieving a desired information society in Africa prompting Mwangi (2003) to mock the idea of the Internet's capacity to

"leapfrog" the continent to development and Weare's (2002) warning that relying on the

Internet as "*deus ex machina*" (p. 1) was misplaced. The lack of infrastructure is a serious

handicap in the attempt to ensure that Africa is connected to the rest of the world.

Mureithi (2002) noted that since internet access to Sub Saharan Africa (a key component

of belonging to the information society), was still the lowest in the world, it would be

difficult for the region to participate actively in the information society governed by new

technologies.

Besides, some African communities do not have electricity needed to power the

computer and even those that have, especially in the urban centers, are in constant

darkness because of epileptic power supply from the public power supply companies.

The vast literature on internet use in Africa demonstrates a rural versus urban effect in the

use of Information technology. Kowalczykowski (2002) therefore, noted the

contributions of the private sector to mitigate the effects of lack of infrastructure in many

African countries. The World Bank is a leader in this sector. According to Alzouma

(2005), the bank through its Global Information and Communication Technology

Department insists that developing countries should oversee a coordinated national ICT

strategy to promote a knowledge-based society that can catalyze development. Another

private sector initiative is taking shape in East Africa. Dubbed the *digital express*,

Seacom Network is investing $700 million to integrate the region into the mainstream of

the global knowledge economy.

This massive infrastructure investment is expected to bring about new industries

with capacity to create content and software as well as demand for access devices and

establishment of research centers (BBC, 2009). Gasmi, Noumba, and Virto (2006) study authorized by the World Bank found that improving the performance of infrastructure industries in developed countries and developing countries were markedly different. While the former is focused on improvement of infrastructure, the latter has barely any infrastructure industries in the first place, not to talk about improvement. The inadequacy of technological infrastructure could potentially derail convergence of media organizations in Africa.

Media, Democracy, and Change in Africa

There is a widespread assumption that the mass media is indispensable to the success of democracy and development of any society or country (Norris, 2006; Ojo, 2007; Warren, 2007; Downie & Schudson, 2009). The perceived power of the media to mould opinions of citizens and provide them with useful information to make decisions is considered a strategic asset in democratic governance (Gans, 2003; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001, Singer, 2006; Overholser & Jamieson, 2005). The connection between the media and democracy is so inseparable that Jensen (2005) believed that most journalists are attracted to the profession because of their commitment to democracy and a sense that journalism is a source for positive social change.

In developed countries such as the United States, Overholser and Jamieson (2005) acknowledged that the media has played such a central role in the growth and sustenance of democracy that public officials take news media very seriously in the conduct of their affairs. Peck (1992) noted that the US constitution empowered the news media to hold government officials accountable to their actions and expose their failures to enable the

electorate to pass a verdict on them. The resignation of President Richard Nixon over the Watergate scandal was one of such efforts of the news media to hold public officials accountable to the people while former Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott became the first casualty of the power of the Internet (Trippi, 2004) when he was forced to resign following a comment deemed to eulogize segregation that was picked initially by bloggers and then to the mainstream media.

In Africa, many studies recognized the news media as agents of development, nation building, and democratization (Berger, 2002; Ojo, 2007; Ojo, 2003). The inseparable link between the media and democracy is highlighted and in particular the capacity of the media to create a platform for robust debate and informed citizenry. In a descriptive study, Okigbo and Hyden (2002) examined the intertwined relationship between the media and democratization in Africa from two epochs: the period of decolonization (1945-1960's) that marked the struggle for independence and the early 1990's when most African countries replaced autocratic regimes that uprooted democratically elected governments soon after independence in the 60's. They described these periods as two waves of democracy and pointed out that the first wave saw the media as agents of decolonization and nationalist struggles for self-determination while the second wave featured a changed media landscape that fought for the consolidation of democracy.

Drawing from a wealth of primary sources, historical documents, case studies, secondary materials such as newspapers Okigbo and Hyden provided evidence to demonstrate the invaluable contribution of the increasingly diversified news media

toward political transition from autocratic regimes to democratic governments. It is ironic

that the news media in most African countries were used as instruments to remove

colonial governments but the African elite who later ascended to power then used the

media to oppress its peoples. As Ladner (1993) remarked, the African elite who

succeeded the colonial administration continued the policy of excessive information

control practiced by the erstwhile colonial government. A classical example is in Nigeria

where the press is believed to have played a significant role in the removal of two

successive military juntas of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha (Odunewu,

1995; Ojo, 2007; Momoh, 1998; Ette, 2000; Ibelema, 2003; Stevenson, 2004) to install a

democratically elected President Olusegun Obasanjo (Ogbondah, 2004) who was also

chased out of office when he attempted to change the constitution to allow himself to stay

in office beyond the constitutional two terms of four years each.

The quests to consolidate power therefore explains the unquenchable appetite for

most governments in Africa to own, control, and in some cases engage in censorship of

the mass media. Melkote (2000) identified the control of public information as an

example of where authorities exercise power and control in the Third World. The control

of public information affects the ability of citizens to participate in governance,

development process, and increases the propensity for corruption, and bad leadership.

Ojo (2007) agreed with this view when he declared the Nigerian state as "politically and

economically dead" (p. 545) because transparency and accountability were non-existent

within the polity. Ojo demonstrated how the Internet and wireless communication

enabled Nigerian journalists to practice what became known as "guerrilla journalism"- a

term used to describe underground or clandestine journalism practice to circumvent arbitrary government control. He noted that the success of the underground press in Nigeria's struggle for democracy was a testimony to the role of a determined media system in the sustenance of democracy in post colonial Africa.

The emerging new media landscape exemplified in media convergence is expected to promote democratization in new and dynamic ways by overcoming the predatory inclinations of the power elite, granting unprecedented access to the media, and accommodating alternative voices in debates important to citizens. Media convergence therefore validates Overholser and Jamieson (2005) assertion that one way of assessing whether the public is informed enough for democracy depends on the capacity of the news media to provide citizens with what they need in order to intervene in ongoing political and social processes.

Political Participation and Deliberative Democracy

Literature on media and democracy are replete with intense activity in the media during elections. Cohen and Tsfati (2009) analyzed voters' perception of the influence of the media in relation to voters' behavior, while van Aelst and De Swert (2009) focused on the heightened activity of journalists during elections unlike other times and explained that the situation persisted because the public are curious about how politics is reported. They argued that during electioneering, news professionals are overwhelmed with work under an intense atmosphere for politicians and political parties. In a visual essay, Kabwato (2009) noted that the frenzy associated with elections in Africa is a strong indicator of the quest for democracy by citizens of the continent. The study demonstrated

the potency of non-traditional media of communication. In the United States, media coverage of presidential campaigns exposes the passion for democracy while also exposing the things that divide the nation such as controversies over abortion, religion, and size of government (Schusdon, 2009). So, the political temperature is high during elections in the US, Africa, and other parts of the world and this challenges the journalist to provide a platform for effective and active political participation of citizens.

The influence of the new media in election coverage is believed to be phenomenal (Schudson, 2009; Abroms & Craig Lefebvre, 2009; Lance Holbert & Geidner, 2009; Davis, 2009). The election of President Barack Obama is celebrated as the triumph of the new media over the traditional media (Schudson, 2009; Huffinton, 2009). According to Schudson (2009) New York Times understood the changing ecology of the media landscape and shifted towards the new media in election coverage of 2008 presidential election. Schudson stated that what emerged from the informal survey of New York Times coverage of the 2008 presidential campaign was that the new media can both be a disorganizing and mobilizing force. So, while the new media can be an effective tool to build support for a candidate or cause, it can also be used in an opposite effect. Moyo (2009) examined the role of journalism especially when practiced by citizens' use of mobile devices and the Internet to exchange information during elections. Specifically, the study identified the various new media of communication otherwise called "parallel market" of information and their capacity to influence mainstream media coverage of Zimbabwean elections in 2008. Moyo argued that these new delivery communication channels exposed the electoral fraud in Zimbabwe.

In Nigeria, the emergence of a true democracy has been difficult largely because of her often flawed electoral system (International Foundation for Electoral systems, [IFES], 2009). The country experienced the first transition of power from a democratically elected government to another in 2007 (Network of Mobile Election Monitors, [NMEM], 2007). After this election however, Igbokwe (2009) noted that previous elections in 1993, 1999, 2003 and 2007 were marked with gross irregularities and voter fraud. In 2007 presidential elections, the Network of Mobile Election Monitors, a coalition of civil society organizations employed the use of mobile phones to monitor and report the progress about the election at various voting centers (NMEM, 2007). Consequently, if professional news reporters and citizens cooperate and monitor elections in this fashion, it is unlikely that the government- appointed electoral commission will announce fictitious election figures remotely inconsistent with reality. This development is significant because the text messages on cellular phones used by these mobile monitors often become important news materials for the mainstream media, and thereby strengthens this study's proposition that a convergence of news delivery channels has the potential to impact democracy.

The momentum towards democracy in Africa gathered additional force soon after the collapse of Berlin Wall in the former Eastern Germany (Goldstein and Rotich, 2008). Although Africa shared a common experience in democratization, the contribution of the media may vary according to regions. For example, Berger (2002) examined the media-democracy relationship in Southern Africa and attributed the success of the democratization process to the synergy between the media and civil society. The

qualitative study however noted that the strengthening of democratic ideals in the region was because South African journalists became vanguards for constitutional reforms and rule of law. Berger acknowledged that the Internet with its anonymous characteristics constitutes an important public sphere for Africans living at home and abroad to drive political debates in a way that circumvents the arbitrary control of the traditional media by African governments. This view is consistent with democratic-participant media theory and the role of the new media in democratization and development (Leslie, 2002; Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003; de Beer, 2004; Melkote & Steeves, 2004; Eribo, 2004). The capacity of the new media to increase pluralism is part of what media convergence seeks to achieve but the extent to which it becomes successful in Africa's democratization process is uncertain.

The uncertainty of the force of the new media in the process of democratization is not just an African challenge. Using concepts such as "cyber democracy", "digital democracy", Jenkins and Thorburn (2003) documented evidence to demonstrate the challenges of American democracy vis-à-vis the Internet especially giving the number of Americans seeking governmental information on the Internet such as during the Clinton impeachment process in the wake of the former president's sex scandal. With an extensive statistical analysis, Jenkins and Thorburn noted that progress in the use of the Internet in political campaigns of 2000 presidential elections did not meet the expectations of many Americans.

However, Jenkins (2006) described the 2004 presidential elections as positively driven by the Internet. Jenkins demonstrated how Internet-driven media convergence as a

catalyst for political participation and awareness was used effectively in the 2004 United

States presidential election including the democratic primaries where Howard Dean used

the internet to mobilize support and funding. In a similar study of media coverage of

2004 political campaigns, Singer (2006) surveyed editors of websites affiliated to major

US newspapers who admitted that providing accurate and detailed information rapidly to

the audience was their major goal. According to Singer, seven of the 47 editors surveyed

mentioned multimedia elements that arose from convergence efforts in the form of

collaboration and cooperation with television news stations as an additional attraction.

What is apparent from Jenkins (2006) and Singer (2006) analysis is that the use

and efficacy of the new media is incremental and grows as the years pass by. It is

expected that a similar trend will unfold in Africa with the continent gradually becoming

an active member of the global information society. An important feature of the

contemporary information society that is politically significant is that multiple

communication channels ensure that many voices are heard in national debates without

any single person having an undue advantage of dominating national conversations.

Benkler (2006) described this trend as networked public sphere with possibilities of

"many-to-many communications" (Goldstein and Rotich, 2008, p. 3) at the cheapest rate.

With most African governments in the habit of controlling public information notably

print and broadcast media, networked computing including the use of mobile phones will

overcome this barrier because it operates differently from broadcast and print media in

terms of access, participation, and interactivity. Media convergence also captures all

these elements by striving to create a decentralized and participatory media environment that can nurse and nurture democracy.

In political communication, conceptualized as the intersection of communication and politics or how citizens use information to achieve political objectives, the introduction of deliberative democracy has situated interpersonal communication prominently among researchers (Lee, 2009; Scheufele, 2002; Hardy & Scheufele, 2005). The idea of deliberative democracy involves creating a setting whereby citizens of different persuasions, race, creed, rich, and poor hold meaningful conversations. Jenkins (2006) referred to deliberative democracy as an attempt to balance "evidence and arguments" (p. 235) in a manner that participants in a conversation talk and listen to each other. Lee (2009) studied the impact of political discussion on a democratizing society such as Hong Kong, and found a significant relationship between the level of political discussion, social connection, and general political knowledge. Lee therefore contended that the totality of individual opinions may not be as important to democracy as public deliberation that brings together common aspirations, alters preferences, and produces reliable public opinion.

In line with this perspective, Mwangi (2003) proposed a social-democratic model that recognizes the media as a modern platform for public deliberation consistent with the time-honored tradition of public deliberation in African societies. Mwangi argued that such public deliberation was capable of promoting socialization and democratic culture in the continent. Scheufele (2002) and Hardy and Scheufele (2005) also provided evidence to show that political participation and awareness arising from the activities of the media

is a direct consequence of robust political discussion. According to Scheufele, people acquire in-depth knowledge of the complex issues in the media through a process of holding discussions with other people who help to interpret media content in meaningful and understandable ways. Political discussion expressed either as political participation or deliberative democracy, reflect practices which media convergence foster within the political environment.

The internet notably the social networking websites like Face book, twitter, Y-tube and wireless devices such as cellular phones provide veritable platforms for political discussion and exchange of views in a manner typical of deliberative democracy vis-à-vis mutual respect, transparency, and inclusiveness. US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton acknowledged the role played by twitter and the Internet to engage Iranian citizens and the rest of the world during the crisis that trailed the June 2009 presidential election in the country (Cable News Network, [CNN], 2009). Kelly and Etling (2008) also analyzed the Iranian blogosphere and found that the citizens use the Internet to engage in conversations ranging from politics, human rights, religious beliefs, and pop culture. Clinton (2010) further emphasized the potential of new technologies to hold governments accountable to their citizens. According to her, activists use social networking sites to challenge governments on such issues as allocation of resources, openness, free expression of views, and human rights.

The populist appeal of the Internet age was illustrated in the US 2004 and 2008 presidential elections (Huffinton, 2009; Trippi, 2004) while Goldstein (2007) attributed the success of the 2004 Orange revolution in Ukraine to the efficacy of the Internet and

mobile phones in mobilizing citizens for political action. Similarly, Goldstein and Rotich (2008) in their descriptive study examined how Kenyan citizens used the Internet and mobile phones to challenge biased mainstream media narratives and mobilized against the fraudulent presidential election of 2007. Goldstein and Rotich emphasized that the growing popularity of digital technology in Africa is pivotal in the continent's struggle for a functional democracy.

The mass action that led to the resignation of Philippino president Joseph Estrada in 2001 was associated with the power of mobile phones to connect people in a scale never imagined (Rheingold, 2002). With the growing accessibility of cellular phones, the device can be a force for good or bad. Rheingold (2002) argued that the galvanizing potential of mobile communications can challenge dictatorship by precipitating social revolution while Goldstein and Rotich (2008) noted that it can be a tool to promote mob violence. An example is the 2004 terrorist attack in Spain which was perpetrated by cellular phones. Trippi (2004) described the massive impact of the new media in political mobilization and fundraising for the former Vermont Governor, Dr. Howard Dean during the Democratic Party primaries in 2004, and predicted that the Internet would define 2008 presidential elections, and ultimately create an unprecedented democratic movement in the country. Trippi explored the nefarious activities of politicians, lobbyists who deprive Americans affordable healthcare and balloon the nation's deficit, and concluded that the solution lay in a government that would use the Internet to mobilize the support of citizens.

Although, Trippi arrogated mythical powers to the Internet, other studies challenge such assumption because not all scholars share in the belief of Internet's overwhelming influence on political communication (Davis, 1999; Davis & Craft, 2000; Sparks, 2001; Sparks, 2001). Apart from lack of access to many people, the Internet is not the primary source of political information for a lot of people. For example, Reich's (2008) study that focused on the importance of communication channels used as news sources by journalists found the hype about the Internet to be utterly misplaced. Reich concluded that while reporters prefer human sources to technological sources such as the Web, communication technologies only help to overcome space constraints or distance. The use of social media networks such as Twitter, Face book, YouTube as sources of information exchange between media organizations and the public puts Reich's analysis in context. Other studies also questioned the influence of the Internet in political communication and conduct of journalism (Ku, Kaid, & Pfau, 2003; Gans, 2003; Latimer, 2009; Kawamoto, 2003). Regardless of what several scholars view as the weakness of communication technologies in relation to traditional communications media, it is important to underscore the grassroots potential of this new communication tool that is changing every aspect of human life from education, economy, commerce, diplomacy, entertainment, information, community, to love.

What appears to be the trend in the literature on political communication in the 21st century is a combination of old and new communication channels. Jenkins (2006) used the push and pull phenomenon to explain the trend and activities between the old and new media. While the "push media" represented the channel that disseminates

information regardless of whether the audience look out for them or not, the "pull

medium" conveys messages to targeted audience with interest in ferreting such

information. Jenkins therefore concluded that candidates for elective office may find the

Internet useful in establishing a political support with voters but will need television to

win elections. This synergy is at the heart of media convergence (Trippi, 2004; Singer

2004; Carpenter, 2008). The emerging convergence culture in the media industry is

healthy for the political process because it fosters in the citizenry the appetite to seek for

information and demand the right to participate in the democratic process. Ku, Kaid, and

Pfau (2003) examined how political campaign web sites impact the agenda of traditional

media such as radio, television, newspapers, and magazines and confirmed a sustained

convergence culture. They concluded that Internet-based communication has created an

unprecedented connection between politicians and the electorate in a way that guarantees

information flow to the traditional news media. The implication of this to this study is

that in a "world overflowing with words and images" (Jensen, 2005, p.1), the Internet

will remain at the center of media convergence because of its vital connection for media

professionals and their audiences.

The self-governing process exemplified in a democracy involves exchange of

views between the governed and the governors in a public setting. Christians (2008)

identified social values as pivotal to the evolution of an ideal democratic order and

argued that the news media owe the society the duty to propagate these values through

mass education and mobilization to advance the goals of democratic governance. The

process of moral education is analogous to civic journalism which requires reporters to

tactically blend analysis with advocacy. This uncommon approach provides both descriptive and prescriptive commentary on issues and events which potentially can effect change in society and restore a sense of common purpose and social progress (Cornog, 2005).

In contemporary democracies, the news media as purveyors of information have provided the platform for free flow of information, exchange of ideas, acting as watchdogs, and scrutinizing powerful institutions and personalities for the benefit of the masses. But Jensen (2005) warned that the availability of a mass of information is not a predictor of a healthy democracy. Jensen maintained that it is not the quantity but quality of information that matters. He identified the pervasive political disengagement of the citizenry as a symptom of the trouble with America's democracy and attributed the trend to the failures of journalism and the mass media.

The health of journalism brought about by irreversible changes in the media landscape is so troubling that Downie and Schudson (2009) advocated that practitioners should "turn the current moment of transformation into reconstruction" (p. 31). Downie and Schudson's treatise on *The reconstruction of America journalism* noted that with the increasingly dispersed nature of news gathering and dissemination, reporting itself has become more participatory and collaborative. Consequently, they suggested that in the wake of the changing landscape of the media industry, practitioners should uphold "accountability journalism" as a mantra to provide interpretation and analysis of issues and events to enable citizens to participate actively in the democratic process. While this study is not focused on failures or successes of journalism, it is safe to assume that

people's expectations of the media to nurture and grow a vibrant democracy with an active citizenry is the major challenge of the 21st century mass media practice. A converged media environment is perhaps the best prospect of integrating media, politics and the citizens.

Media Democratization, Civil Society and Transitional Democracies

The media is often considered a vehicle for democratization of societies but how democratized is the media? The role of a truly democratized media environment in empowering civil society to propel the forces of democratization has engaged the attention of many scholars (Ette, 2000; Obe, 2007; Reiner, 2009; Horwitz, 2005; Berger, 2002; Lee 2009; Langer 2001). Both Langer (2009) and Ette (2000) explored the concept of media democratization in Australia and Nigeria respectively and identified common elements required for a democratized media system: deregulation, access, diversity, empowerment, literacy, independence, and social change.

On the other hand, Dean, Mue and Banda (2002) conceptualized the media as the infrastructure of global civil society. They examined trends in the media during the last decade of the 20th century in developing countries in relation to their impact on public debate, free expression, and civil society and concluded that a robust civil society was dependent on freedom and pluralism of the media. In their report: '*The other Information revolution: Media and empowerment in developing countries,*' Dean, Mue, and Banda disputed the notion that the recent changes within the old media of communication was less than those occurring among the modern mass media. Instead, they noted that the changes taking place within the media landscape in developing countries are largely

ignored especially the ramifications of these changes for civil society. How the combination of traditional and new media will influence citizens' access to information and knowledge on important issues to them as well as their involvement in public debates is uncertain. In an era of satellite, Internet, mobile telephony, what seems certain however, is that power has shifted to the masses thereby making them more active in the production and consumption of news content.

The impact of community radio in South Africa further illustrates the influence of participatory communication in a democratized media setting in the lives of citizens vis-à-vis social and political mobilization and restoration of cultural identity (Olorunnisola, 2002; Megwa, 2007). Horwitz (2005) admitted that any communications system that is left to the machinations of a few would threaten free expression of viewpoints and will ultimately undermine democratic process. The rigid control of the media through censorship or ownership or other methods that encourages information 'authoritarianism' is an anathema to democracy. Olornnisola (2002) argued that this situation is more prevalent in most countries undergoing a fragile transition to democratic government. Ette (2000) confirmed the non-democratized nature of the Nigerian media industry and argued that contrary to its pre-colonial pedigree as vanguards of democracy, the Nigerian media has unwittingly become perpetrators of undemocratic practices in the country's transition to a stable democracy. In a content analysis of five national dailies during the transition from military to civilian rule, Ette concluded that journalists tended to glorify military intervention in politics by constant negative portrayal of politicians as incapable of keeping the flame of democracy handed to them by military rulers. Ette's criticism of

journalists for using American and western standards to assess the democratic orientation of politicians in Nigeria as the cause of the continuing unstable political environment may be outlandish.

A similar study by Loveless (2009) found that the democratic values of individuals in transitional states are not necessarily changed because of their exposure to western media and practices. In other words, the notion of international media diffusion that holds that citizens of democratizing countries are likely to assimilate foreign values is discredited by this study. In a survey of diverse citizens of Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania, Loveless concluded that political attitudes in democratizing countries were firmly rooted in their heritage with little or no influence from outside. Ette (2000) and Loveless (2009) analysis can be situated in Gilboa (2003) suggestion that global news coverage posed a quandary of political, professional, and ethical dimensions for public functionaries and journalists who are actively involved in policy analysis, adoption and implementation.

The struggle for democracy in the Central and East European countries with a history of dictatorships (Loveless, 2009) is similar with Nigeria, the focus of this study, where military rule dominated the first half of its 50 year history. In the whole of Africa, before 1989, only three countries – Botswana, Gambia and, Mauritius were deemed to be ruled by genuine democratic governments while the rest were under the clutches of dictators (Goldstein and Rotich, 2008). The fact that the military ruled Nigeria for 29 years has led to a perception among some commentators that civilian administration instead of military regimes is an aberration (Williams, 1998; Obe, 2007) thereby giving

legitimacy to bullets rather than ballots. This conclusion further echoes Ette (2000)

assumption that the media portrays the military as corrective regimes with authority to

wean politicians and teach them correct democratic behavior.

After all, Williams (1998) analysis of the role of intellectuals and the crisis of

democracy in Nigeria, suggests that military intervention in politics survived because of

the manipulation, and collusion with the intelligentsia. The media as an institution is

emblematic of this intellectual class. But, can the military known for its undemocratic

culture of command and control be able to inculcate democratic values to politicians? If

the military cannot give what it does not have, such as democracy, it therefore follows

that the media's arrogation of superior democratic knowledge on the part of the military

could potentially jeopardize democratization in Nigeria.

With the shift from the traditional media practice (and associated immutable gate

keeping power of editors) to convergence journalism with a more empowered audience

involved in news selection decision, it is expected that the path to democratization of the

polity will be a different one that views the people as the true repository of power and not

the gun-trotting military elite.

Media democratization is viewed in different ways. For example, the battle for a

New World Information and Communication Order spearheaded by UNESCO is

considered an attempt to decentralize, and democratize information and communication

resources in a balanced and equitable format between the North and South (International

Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 2004). The commission

conceptualized democratization of the media as a process that ensures greater citizen

participation in a way that the volume of information exchange among the population is noticeably high and reflective of social representation.

In this regard, the individual is not just a mere communication object but active partner in information flow. There is also a growing movement for the democratization of the news media that fight against media concentration, censorship, monopoly, and commercialization (Senecal & Dubois, 2005; Langer, 2001). The right to communicate is also part of media democratization and an essential component of democratic governance (Florini, 2007; Lasswell, 1941; Hindman, 1997; Overholser & Jamieson, 2005). All these conceptualizations of media in democracy and democratization find expression in media convergence because every interested individual is free to be an active contributor to the media content in a media landscape that is participatory, personalized, and interactive.

Citizens's activism in determining media content can have significant impact in democratic processes especially in the media industry itself. Kidd (2005) provided evidence to show that media professionals can be held accountable to their audience by activists. Kidd explained how a radio station in San Francisco was forced to change a decision on a local program following a protest by its listeners who wanted the reinstatement of a music program and a community forum designed to hold the station accountable to the citizens. As this episode demonstrated, there is a reversal of role: the news media no longer mobilize the citizenry; instead the citizens mobilize the media (Schudson & Tifft, 2005). The action of San Francisco radio listeners captured what Senecal and Dubois (2005) called "informational and communicational activism" (p.

254). Senecal and Dubois pointed out two benefits inherent in audience activism: it nurtures democratic principles in the media and also within the broader political space.

Hackett and Adam (1999) argued that the struggle for democratic media is a precursor to democratic politics. Hackett and Adam surveyed 34 activists including members of the Union for Democratic Communication and concluded that America's media system is not sufficiently democratic. Majority of respondents in the study favored reforms in the media especially in broadcasting where they wanted a regulatory body that is elected, accountable and representative. This is similar to (Traber, 2003) analysis of the confusion surrounding media's role in society. According to Traber, journalists lack legitimacy in the eyes of politicians because they are not elected as politicians who have the people's mandate.

To demonstrate the undemocratic nature of the mass media, Martin (1998) noted that by its nature the media confers enormous power on a few who have little regard for the participation of the vast majority of the population. He described the power of the media as corrupting because information power can also be as corrupting as political power. In order to gain the support of the people, a media democratization movement anchored on the heels of civil society and mass movement is recommended (Hackett & Adam, 1999; Berger, 2002; Langer, 2001). While Hackett and Adam supported media democratization efforts linked with progressive movements, Berger recommended that the media should be agents of civil society.

Chalaby (2000) also examined the prospects of the media's role in the formation of civil society and the establishment of a public sphere in the new independent states of

the Soviet Union. Chalaby argued that for the media to play this role successfully,

policies for the media industry in those states should address the needs of the mass media

separately from the needs of the civil society. Langer (2001) further demonstrated how

the media can be agents of grassroots mobilization in Australia, and catalysts for protest

and social movement. Jha (2007) described media coverage of social protests as an

important political asset to organizations oriented towards social movements. Student

unions, labor unions, civil society, and opposition political parties therefore find the news

media instrumental to the expression of their grievances. The concept of citizen

journalism and the uses and gratification theory of mass communication support the free

access of audience members to the processes of communication and information

exchange. As the communication revolution characterized by the digital integration of

text, sound, and image represented in media convergence unfolds, civil society will find

the news media an important ally in advocacy and social change.

Information overload, open society, and implications for social change

The transforming world of the media especially in the context of media

convergence, access to information, free flow of information and citizen participation in

information processing and distribution are considered important elements that strengthen

democratic culture (Jenkins & Thorburn, 2003; Langer, 2001; Jensen, 2005; Reiner,

2009). The Internet and other mass media generate a lot of information for the

consumption of citizens to enable them to participate in policy debates that affect their

lives. What is the right quantity of information in a democracy is unknown but as Jensen

(2005) pointed out the important thing is the quality of information from the media and

not the quantity. The quality of news in the context of the processing by news professionals and news consumers is related to what Reiner (2009) called media literacy. To him, democracy rests on a tripod of democratic institutions, unfettered press and a population that has the capacity to understand, evaluate, and make smart choices from the information available to it. Reiner further argued that the survival of a nascent democracy and the media depends ultimately on the degree of citizens' news, media, and information literacy. Reiner's analysis is instructive because this study is focused on a young democracy – Nigeria and the influence of unlimited but converged flow of information to citizens with limited media literacy.

Schudson and Tifft (2005) noted that despite the avalanche of information available to Americans, most of them are surprisingly ignorant about the workings of a democracy and what goes on in other parts of the world. Schudson and Tifft maintained that the quantity of information available to the audience is so overwhelming and dizzying that it could daze the audience especially in an era whereby news is filled with views largely ideologically driven. Nordenson (2008) employed a metaphor to demonstrate the ubiquity of news: "news is part of the atmosphere now, as pervasive and in some ways as invasive – as advertising" (p. 30). Everywhere—airports, cars, offices, homes, clubs, schools, roads, wireless devices and so on, information is beamed to various audiences in unprecedented levels anytime, anywhere, and on demand. While information abundance is perceived to promote transparency and good governance, there are concerns that it could result to information overload (Nordenson, 2008; Beaudoin, 2008; Pye, 2004; Jenkins, 2005).

Information overload, also called information explosion or saturation as conceptualized by Beaudoin (2008) means a situation where one is unable to process the deluge of information, and communication available to the point that it renders the communication effort irrelevant. Reiner (2009) referred to information overload metaphorically as "tsunami of information" (p. 69) confronting citizens from social networks such as Face book, twitter, websites, and too many individual reporters. Thatcher (2007) described the present information environment as chaotic and a consequence of electronic communication. Pye (2004) was convinced that the information overload is a consequence of the phenomenal growth of mass media which in turn makes it hard for audience members to decipher serious messages from the vast information the media disseminate.

Although a product of the information age, information overload makes information meaningless, confounds media audiences, and potentially dangerous for democracy (Nordenson, 2008). This underscores Reiner's (2009) emphasis on news literacy which he insisted should form the basis of literacy in the information age. To cope with information overload, Thatcher (2007) suggested that communicators should encode communication in a way that potential consumers will select beneficial information without mentally rejecting messages that leaders want them to receive. In the opinion of Jenkins (2005), the availability of too much information for the individual in a democracy puts the notion of informed citizen in serious jeopardy.

So, whereas media convergence encourages more information for citizens to participate in the democratic process, (Downie & Schudson, 2009) provided evidence to

show that too much information especially when it lacks context may constitute a threat

to democracy. Schwartz (2004) highlighted this paradox in his argument that having too

many choices can be troubling because of the difficulty in making a choice. "Freedom of

choice", he wrote "eventually becomes a tyranny of choice" (p. 235). In contrast, Pascale,

Millemann and Gioja (2000) in their book: *Surfing the edge of chaos* wrote that the world

is not chaotic but complex and that living things adjust to their environment by

developing a "mental framework for selecting order in disorder" (p. 14). So, while

Schwartz (2004) viewed abundance of choice as capable of causing decision paralysis,

Pascale, Millemann and Goija (2000) contended that such complexity should provide a

lightning rod for innovation and creativity. The assumption therefore is that citizens are

rational enough and able to select and utilize information themselves in a manner they

consider appropriate regardless of the quantity. Through a process of self organization

and self-righting process, citizens are able to select and retain information they need from

a mass of information and communication. This is the kernel of the uses and gratification

theory because through the process of perception, selection, and retention media

consumers seek and utilize information that is valuable to them.

From an organizational management perspective, the key to the success of media

convergence lies in striking the appropriate balance between complexity and innovation

(Gottfredson & Aspinall (2005) and coping with what Adner (2006) called "innovation

ecosystem" (p. 98) a term used to describe how organizations grow through collaborative

efforts to solve the needs of customers. As many scholars (Dailey et al., Silcock & Keith,

Singer, 2004, Quinn, 2004 and others) have noted media convergence is both complex

and innovative. Boczkowski (2004) further argued that media innovation develops through a connected process of change in technology, communication and in organization. Boczkowski's analysis of the interrelationship of studies in science and technology, communication and organizational studies captures Adner's (2006) conception of innovation ecosystem because the ecology of media convergence can be found in the proper mix of those disciplines.

Notwithstanding the divergence of viewpoints, the abundance of media channels and the convergence of various information channels could present a challenge to media consumers in terms of deciding which channel interprets available information in ways that it makes meaning to them.

However, Nordenson (2008) maintained that citizens' access to information remains the greatest guarantee for journalism to attain its democratic aspirations while Florini (1998) contended that the notion that democracy involves the consent of the governed can only be meaningful if the people are informed.

It is widely believed that the Internet has the potential to connect people geographically dispersed to communicate and share common experiences. DiRienzo, Das, Cort, and Burbridge (2007) argued that access to digital information increases information flow in such a way that creates a more open and free society. The era of the Internet has made it possible for ordinary citizens to have access to unfettered information regarding public and private business transactions to the extent that instances of graft among public functionaries can be exposed immediately (Berger, 2002; Ku, Kaid & Pfau, 2003; Piotrowski & Ryzin, 2007). According to Yin (2008), the Internet's

potential to generate discussions on issues overlooked by the traditional media, is

producing a better informed, more vocal public and a more open society. In an analytical

study of proposed reforms in the communist Chinese press, Yin noted that the acceptance

of the Internet in China itself meant the collapse of the rigid communist media system in

China, because the unique characteristic of the Internet makes it impossible for the

regime to have absolute control on content and dissemination.

But, as de Beer (2004) pointed out some countries especially in Africa have

adopted state censorship of the Internet like they did with the traditional mass media such

as radio, and television. de Beer noted that the two principal methods of censorship

include regulating the Internet Service Providers and providing access. Where there is no

direct censorship, the state employs other indirect methods such as reluctance to improve

relevant infrastructure (Melkote & Steeves, 2004; Leslie, 2002; Eribo, 2004; Leslie,

2002; Boateng, 2006). The Internet censorship system in some parts of Africa can be

compared with the rigid and restrictive regulations that govern the use of the Internet in

Peoples Republic of China otherwise called The Great Firewall of China (Clayton,

Murdoch, & Watson (2006). The diffusion of electronic communication and rapid spread

of wireless communication devices are challenging notorious censorship regimes around

the world.

A converged media environment that combines the resources of the old and new

media can overcome secrecy in public administration, circumvent restrictions to

information sharing, and usher in an open society. Florini (1998) conceptualized the end

of secrecy, and argued that nation-states are shifting from reclusive and opaque behavior

to practices that require them to explain their actions to the rest of the international community. Florini stressed the importance of transparency in the evolution of a true democratic culture. Florini (2007) also argued that the controversy over transparency and access to information transcended mere struggle for power but a battle for ideas about the utility of openness or secrecy.

The increasing rejection of secrecy in decision making around the world, Florini noted, accounted for the adoption of freedom of information legislation by various governments. The quest for transparency is captured most succinctly in the immortal words of the late Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis in which he stated that, "sunlight is the best disinfectant," (Berger, 2009, para. 2). This sentiment is the bedrock of freedom of information legislation around the world and the assumption that openness is quarantine for corruption in public life. Sifry (2009) echoed this view and pointed out that because of the increasing appetite of citizens for information about how they are being governed; even repressive leaders have discovered that the new media has become an effective antidote to information suppression. Freedom of information or access to information is supposed to encourage reporters to seek, investigate and disseminate information which otherwise would have been hidden from the public (Vladeck, 2008). The news media can become vehicles to institute transparency and democracy especially when organized as networks such as telephones, social media, computers, and wireless devices in a typically converged media environment.

The debate about the proper role of the news media also touches on semantics. Martin (1998) distinguished between mass media, and media, and advocated the

replacement of mass media with participatory media that are networked with other communication channels that can encourage a drastic change in media consumption patterns of audiences. Martin criticized the mass media for promoting other agendas that are inconsistent with the interest of the masses and recommended that having alternative sources of information beyond the traditional radio, television and newspapers will be healthy for democratic progress. This is an endorsement for horizontal and networked information flow supported by the convergence of various news media as opposed to the hierarchical and vertical information flow typical of the traditional media of communication.

The availability of multiple sources of information and multiple delivery systems as experienced in convergence journalism can help to reduce corruption and promote good governance (Bailard, 2009; Weare, 2002). DiRienzo,Das, Cort, and Burbridge (2007) demonstrated that greater access to information propelled by digital technology has the potential to reduce corruption at both national and international levels of public administration. Bailard (2009) found a strong correlation between a country's mobile phone penetration and reduction in corrupt practices because of the potential effect of cellular phones in the decentralization of information and communication. Bailard's study that focused on diffusion of cellular phones in Africa is significant because the device is an important component of media convergence as it enables users to send text messages and oral messages, voice data, capture images with phone cameras, and navigate the Internet.

These various uses of the mobile phone can empower the user to report cases of corruption to the mainstream media where appropriate authorities can take notice and act on it, thereby justifying Bailard's assertion that mobile phones can minimize the chances of corruption as well as increase the possibilities of deterrence, detection, and punishment. Obe (2007) outlined a number of factors that have obscured transparency and free access to information in Nigeria. They include long years of military dictatorship, inherited culture of civil service secrecy, ethnic loyalty, and the scramble for the revenue accruing from the country's vast oil resources. These circumstances, therefore, formed the basis for the struggle to enact a freedom of information legislation (Obe, 2007; Vladeck, 2008).

As intrusive or invasive as the media might be, it is hard to imagine the complete eradication of corruption under a converged media setting. But, Bailard (2009) maintained that the propensity for corruption exist when the elites and powerful citizens enjoy monopoly of information and communication. The pervasive corruption in Africa is attributable in part to the unique opportunities and privileges the ruling class enjoys such as dealings with donor agencies as well as the rabid and unbridled control of information flow (Leslie, 2000; Bailard, 2009). However, the prospects of greater openness and accountability can be guaranteed more under media convergence than traditional media practice. At least, citizens, through participation in information sharing and distribution can question authorities regarding governance practices, and procedures.

Forms and Techniques of Media Convergence

Scholars have conceptualized convergence from different perspectives. Menon (2006) defined media convergence in the context of integration and digitalization while Baldwin, McVoy and Steinfield (1996) described convergence of communication and media as the integration of interactive voice, video, audio-visual and data into a single network often manipulated by the computer. To Erdal (2007) the concept is the fusion of or 'melting together' of information systems, telecommunications and media technologies while Hills and Michalis (2000) understood convergence to be the overlapping of telecommunication and broadcasting technology made possible by digital television.

Huang et al (2006) analyzed media convergence into four categories – content convergence, form convergence or technological convergence, corporate convergence and role convergence. By content convergence, Huang et al refers to the sharing of news content or advertisements by rival media organizations while role convergence involves integration of different functions performed by media professionals in such a way to maximize employee potentials. Grant and Wilkinson (2009), Brooks, Kennedy, Moen and Ranly (2004) described this trend as collaboration while Quinn and Filak (2005) called it tactical convergence. Grant and Wilkinson (2009) cited an example of newsroom collaboration: a newspaper staff is featured on television to highlight next day's top stories and thereby providing the television an additional news content that casts the medium as harbinger of instantaneous news.

Cross media partnership and collaboration dominate the literature of media convergence. Gordon (2003) described sharing of content such as promoting newspaper headlines and weather reports between television stations and newspaper organizations as instances of cross-promotional partnership. In this way both the newspaper and television station benefit from each other, thereby fulfilling Grant and Wilkinson's (2009) contention that collaborative relationships must benefit all parties involved if it will stand. Huang et al (2006) cited the roles of photo editors, web designers, and darkroom technicians as converging in the evolving media landscape. This variant of convergence emphasizes multi-tasking and multiple skills. For example, one reporter writes a story for newspaper, scripts for radio and television and converts it into a version suitable for online media.

In packaging the media content for the different channels, the reporter is conscious of maximizing the advantage of their various strengths (Kennedy, Moen & Ranly, 2004), such as depth and context for newspaper; speed and immediacy for television and ubiquity and interactivity for the Internet. This jack-of-all-trade concept of convergence has been variously described as backpack journalism or Inspector Gadget model (Quinn & Filak, 2005; Dailey, Demo & Spillman, 2005; Gordon, 2003). The model encourages a journalist to wear multiple hats and at the same time remain attractive and alluring to the audience.

On the other hand, corporate convergence, according to Huang et al (2006) is the practice whereby some media organizations merge to form one organization. It could also take the form of acquisition, a situation whereby a media establishment acquires other

organizations. Media mergers and acquisitions, according to Huang et al (2006) could potentially muscle public opinion and diversity of viewpoints and thereby threaten democratic growth. Technological convergence in the opinion of Huang et al is driven by the Internet through the integration of video, data, audio, and graphics for immediate access to information seekers anytime, anywhere and on demand. Grant and Wilkinson (2009) pointed out that since almost every media organization has a website through which content is disseminated, it follows that all news organizations that have websites are practicing convergence journalism. Menon (2006) also evaluated the makeup of media convergence namely the technical, organizational, market and regulatory aspects.

But, Deuze (2004) conceptualized convergence in terms of widespread partnership between hitherto different news media organizations especially through newsroom collaboration. Such partnerships evolve due to a number of reasons including ownership, resources, desire for profit, and a determination to improve news coverage (Lowrey, 2005; Dailey et al., Quinn, 2005; Silcock & Keith, 2006). The literature reveals different stages of partnership such as the one reflected on Dailey et al.'s 'convergence continuum' characterized by five overlapping stages of convergence with each representing a higher level of partnership. The five stages of the convergence continuum paradigm otherwise called the 5c's of convergence are "cross promotion, cloning, coopetition (cooperate and compete), content-sharing and full convergence" (p. 37). Taking a cue from this model, Lowrey (2005) reported that of the 226 news organizations in the US with a partnership, cross-promotion of stories was most dominant followed by

content sharing. Lowrey also found that procedural and structural partnering which resembled the highest levels of 'convergence continuum' were almost absent.

Although, Huang et al (2006) distinguished between media convergence and media merger Deuze (2004) demonstrated that convergence and merger are not mutually exclusive concepts. Deuze argued that media convergence also called multimedia journalism takes the shape of joint ownership of websites, information-sharing, cross-media sales/advertisement and promotional events and projects, and newsroom affiliation.

The Tampa Tribune- WFLA-TBO.com operation is the best example of media convergence in the US (Kennedy, Moen & Ranly, 2004; Quinn & Filak, 2005; Gordon, 2003) while Aviles, Meier, Kaltenbrunner, Carvajal and Kraus (2009) analyzed different models of newsroom integration in Austria, Spain, and Germany from the prism of convergence strategy, newsroom management, journalistic practices, and work conditions in organizations. They discovered that the production of news in multiple media is transforming the way newsrooms are organized and the way news professionals do their job. Quinn (2005) examined convergence from both professional and business perspectives. The business model, Quinn observed, focuses on convergence or multiple-platform publishing as a vehicle for employers to make employees do more with less pay thereby saving costs while the professional view looks at how convergence can help journalists do their job better. This conflict between professionalism and business imperatives is central to Quinn's analysis and has wide implications for this study

because journalists especially in Nigeria are likely to reject any system that gives them much work with less pay.

Huang and Heider (2007) applied value chain analysis to examine media convergence and concluded that the concept involves an integration of traditional and modern media in terms of news selection, production, distribution, advertising, and face-to-face interaction. Lawson-Borders (2006) outlined seven principles otherwise called the 7 C's that should guide media convergence: communication, commitment, cooperation, compensation, culture, competition, and customer. According to Lawson-Borders reporters, editors and all those involved in convergence must be in constant touch, while they demonstrate a certain degree of dedication to the organization's convergence philosophy. All actors in a converged media environment must prize collaboration and working together while managers must reward additional skills and hard work of news professionals required in convergence journalism.

Convergence journalism is a major shift from old practices and requires adaptation to a new work ethic, new ethic of knowledge sharing, and, new organizational culture (Jenkins, 2005; Lawson-Borders, 2006). The degree of adaptation will determine the success of convergence because as Silcock and Keith (2006) observed, there is the likelihood of a clash of culture arising from bringing journalists with different mindsets and work orientation together to work with a common purpose. Davis and Craft (2000) examined new media synergy and concluded that it is fraught with potential institutional and personal conflicts of interest. They argued that conflict of interest occurs when an organizations' interest and individuals working there run at cross purposes. In the context

of media convergence, therefore, the challenge of pursuing journalists' interest and that of the news organizations may produce undesired effect.

The competitive nature of the news business especially with various media including the Internet that competes globally is critical to the survival of convergence just like satisfying media audiences by ceding sufficient power to them. The shift in the culture of journalism business (Carr, 2002) justifies Jenkins' (2005) conclusion that convergence culture is the meeting place of old and new media, grassroots and corporate media, media professionals and media audiences as well as Nilsson, Nulden, and Olsson's (2001) perspective of convergence as the fusion of personal and mass communications especially when cellular phones are used as tools in the news gathering and processing. The interaction of these disparate entities or "strange bedfellows" (Singer, 2004) and fusion of different cultures can lead to what Silcock and Keith (2006) called "virtual Tower of Babel" (p. 611) —a reference to ancient Babylonian mythology about confusion of tongues and languages.

Being an innovative process, the challenge to keep with industry trend in relation to convergence is to manage the array of diversity and divergence by discovering what Gottfredson and Aspinall (2005) called "innovation fulcrum"— the point at which innovation synchronizes revenue and profit in proper balance. Because convergence is driven by profit motive and better news coverage (Lowrey, 2005), it is important to seek a balance of the two. How the news media in Nigeria may handle a balance between profit and professionalism in an era of convergence is uncertain.

Nevertheless, Jenkins (2005) predicted that the influence of audience members in a convergence culture will be felt more if they become aware of their potentials as key participants in the new mediascape. Ignorance of the potential power of the audience and also the opportunities available in a converged media environment may become an important determinant of how the new media impacts democratic governance especially in Africa, the primary focus of this study.

Of all the various forms of media convergence such as ownership, technological, tactical, merger, and others, this study is not focused on the dichotomy of forms but on prospects of collaboration that can produce positive change in both news producers and news consumers. Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005) conceptualization of "convergence continuum" (p. 37) provided insight into how newsroom collaboration can advance media convergence that potentially supports democracy and full participation of citizens. According to Dailey, Demo, and Spillman, convergence continuum envisages five stages or processes of media convergence: "cross promotion, cloning, coopetition, content sharing, and full convergence" (p. 37). This framework illustrates media convergence as a series of activities involving employees of traditional media organizations and online media organizations engaged in new partnerships as they interact and cooperate to produce news stories for their various audiences. At the lower level of the continuum, every news organization in the partnership generates, assembles, and disseminates its own news while cross-promoting them in other platforms. At the apex of the continuum, one newsroom produces news stories that are shared among other platforms.

Other examples of multimedia journalism include highlights of news stories scripted by newspaper, radio, television or online reporters that are used as news alerts sent as text messages to cellular phones (SMS) or emails (Deuz, 2004). This pattern supports the finding of Jha (2007) that suggests that in the new media environment journalists are increasingly using the Internet for research, interviewing sources and above all maintaining dialogue with audiences.

Yet other scholars like Murdock (2000) identified other forms of convergence such as cultural convergence involving integration of work routines and practices of different organizations, convergence of communications systems and convergence of corporate ownership. According to Murdock the convergence of communications systems includes the integration of computer, mobile phones, the Internet, traditional mass media of communications and other delivery vehicles.

In spite of the buzz about media convergence, emerging research in the field does not paint a rosy picture of the new media practice. Thornton and Keith (2009) introduced a concept of "webvergence" to explain the fading away of convergence practices in the media industry. Applying change theory to guide their study, Thornton and Keith found that in 2008 most newspapers and television stations merely fed their websites independently without necessarily collaborating with another news organization. So, some news organizations engage in multimedia journalism without being in partnership with another. Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005) surveyed 372 editors in newspapers and television stations and discovered that majority of newspaper editors are reluctant to be in partnership with television stations because they consider the quality of television

journalism to be shallow and that partnerships often benefit the television station.

Thornton and Keith (2009) also echoed similar sentiments as they argued that some

editors prefer to put stories including breaking news on the web rather than putting it on

television. The literature suggests that while some organizations might be avoiding

partnerships others may be seeking them (Dailey, et al.). What this means is that the new

convergence culture is still evolving with a lot of challenges and opportunities that will

be worked out in the days and years ahead. This study is a further exploration of the

opportunities and obstacles in media convergence.

Overall, the dominance of literature on convergence journalism is mostly in the

United States, Europe, and Asia (Quinn, 2005; Erdal, 2009; Aviles et al.). Much of the

literature focuses on how journalists do their work in relation to their sources, audiences,

and political environments (Boczkowski and Ferris, 2005; Singer, 2004; Lawson-

Borders, 2006; Trippi, 2004; Jenkins, 2006). However, literature on the practice of media

convergence in Africa is scanty. Perhaps, what resembles media convergence is akin to

Thornton and Keith (2009) idea of "webvergence" whereby news organizations such as

newspapers operate their own websites and publish online editions. Silcock and Keith

(2006) further supported the trend towards "webvergence". They reported that when the

convergence efforts between KPNX (television station) and Arizona Republic

(newspaper) both in Phoenix collapsed, the news organizations resorted to a convergence

model in which both news entities supplied content to www.azcentral.com. Silcock and

Keith noted that while the three-way relationship may not represent all the characteristics

of media convergence, it enriches the quality of news content provided online since it is a

collaborative effort. However, this convergence experience in Phoenix reveals the challenges inherent in putting in place a truly convergence media operation.

Another variant of ownership convergence is common in Africa whereby organizations mostly government owned organizations merge to form one entity (Ume-Nwagbo, 1990). This is the predominant form of media convergence found in Africa where financial constraints and government insistence on controlling the media necessitate the merger of hitherto different news organizations under one management. In the view of Quinn (2005) some managers embrace convergence because of its potential to save money and yet achieving more. So in most cases where media organizations experience merger or acquisition, it is often accompanied by layoffs, downsizing and restructuring whereby fewer staff do more journalism (Dailey, et al.; Quinn, 2005) thereby helping the bottom line for media proprietors.

Obstacles to Media Convergence

Behind the various forms of media convergence are hidden obstacles that confront convergence operation such as potential conflict of newsroom culture (Silcock & Keith, 2006), business and professional rivalry (Dailey, et al.) and legal challenges rooted in contracts with labor unions (Maye, 2005; Boateng, 2006). Since convergence journalism involves partnerships, mergers, cross-promotional activities, technological convergence, and re-alignment of work routines in media organizations (Quinn, 2005; Erdal, 2007; Baldwin, McVoy & Steinfield, 1996; Deuz, 2004; Singer, 2006, Singer, 2004; Hills & Michalis, 2000, Dailey et al.), it is expected that the practice will precipitate legal and ethical dilemma for practitioners.

For example, Maye (2005) gave an account of how laws of contract related to labor unions could throw spanner in the works of convergence process. Maye noted that the requirement of journalists to engage in multi-tasking under a convergence setting could be inconsistent with existing contract with unions and therefore subject to legal loopholes. Maye cited the labor contract between the Baltimore Sun and Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild that mandated that no employee will be asked to engage in assignments outside the range of what it called "family of skills". In other words, under the legal framework, the multi-skilled journalist (Erdal, 2007) or the one-size fits all approach to journalism (Silcock and Keith, 2006) or what has been termed "back pack journalism"(Quinn & Filak, 2005) cannot be allowed in the Baltimore newspaper organization. Therefore it is not conceivable that a news reporter can be asked to engage in advertising either as copywriter or marketing staff soliciting ads for a news organization. The news reporter is restricted to performing only functions related to his or her calling.

In the light of the legal obstacle to convergence arising from union activity, it may also be a major challenge in Nigeria where almost all working journalists belong to Nigeria Union of Journalists -NUJ (Odunewu, 1999). If convergence as envisaged in this study affects the working condition of journalists in adverse ways, NUJ, which is both a trade union and professional body (Momoh, 2003; Obe, 2007), will certainly fight with all weapons in its arsenal including courts and work stoppages (Anim, 1997). Glaser (2003) noted that unions can frustrate the prospects of media convergence because of uncertainties associated with change that members are likely to face in a converged

media environment. It will therefore not be surprising if a change in work routines and the subjection of media professionals to extra labor without reward is seen as both illegal and unethical.

This unethical dimension also featured in studies by Davis and Craft (2000); Silcock and Keith (2006), and Dailey et al., (2005). They reported instances of conflict of interest and how newspaper journalists who work in partnership with broadcast journalists complain of being exploited in a converged newsroom operation to the advantage of their television counterparts. According to Silcock and Keith, newspaper reporters believe that they work harder than television reporters and provide the bulk of media content and therefore question the value of convergence.

Erdal (2009) also noted that the anxiety and internal rivalry generated by cross-media cooperation led to polarization of reporters in the course of performing their duties. In a qualitative study of convergence practices in Norwegian public service broadcaster, NRK, Erdal found that cross-media collaboration fostered "cut-and-paste journalism"(p. 228) thereby making the Internet a dumping area for content already produced and broadcast on radio and television. However, Erdal could not establish whether media convergence undermined the quality of journalism, thereby igniting the debate over the value of media convergence to good journalism or profit-making for the media industry.

Hills and Michalis (2000) argued that some regulatory policies may constitute a barrier to the introduction of new technology, which provides the opportunity for convergence of different mass communication channels. Horwitz (2005) analyzed the regulatory roles of Federal Communications Commission – FCC and argued that the

body's mandate to ensure diversity in the media industry, review ownership rules every

two years (see also Telecommunications Act of 1996) have wide implications for

prospects of media concentration especially considering the political swings that

characterize FCC's operation. Horwitz's point reflects Hills and Michalis' (2000)

contention that an examination of actions of regulatory agencies should be viewed from

the prism of politics and beneficiaries of their policies. Horwitz (2005) cited the FCC

removal of ownership limitations in 2003 by the Bush administration as a triumph for

conservative media moguls who asked their employees to seek for profits at all costs and

with little regard to professionalism. Therefore, pursuit of profit and not protection of

public interest could propel media owners to either move towards convergence or not.

This development supports Skinner, Compton and Gasher (2005) contention that

convergence is an economic strategy adopted by communication companies to maximize

revenue by making various branches of their media organizations to work together.

Onyisi (1996) compared the regulatory bodies that govern Nigeria's broadcasting

system and America's broadcasting system – the National Broadcasting Commission

(NBC) in Nigeria and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States

and noted that while multiple ownership, cross media ownership and conglomerates are

encouraged in America, Nigeria is yet to take serious steps in the convergence of

different media organizations. Although significant changes may have occurred in the

Nigerian broadcasting sector, Onyisi was convinced that democracy and human freedom

could only be attained when the broadcast media is unchained from excessive

regulations.

Similarly, the presence of criminal defamation laws such as libel and sedition as well as the absence of freedom of information legislation in Nigeria and other African countries (Fogam, 1996; Berger, 2007; Obe, 2007) can jeopardize the successful implementation of media convergence. Berger (2007) analyzed the legal framework in which the media operated in 10 African countries between 2000 and 2007 and concluded that substantial reforms were necessary especially laws on media organization owned and operated by government. While emphasizing the impact of political control of broadcasting on pluralism, Berger noted the possibility of legal landmines that could undermine effective performance of the media in the task of creating a platform for freedom of expression and information sharing in a global information society.

On the other hand, the legal framework for business operations in Nigeria can discourage efforts by media owners to explore prospects of convergence. Ezeoha and Anyigor (2009) examined the legal instruments governing bankruptcy practices in Nigeria and concluded that lack of enduring investment capital was due to perceived inadequacies in the nation's financial system. Since the media business is largely capital intensive, it is unlikely that convergence can thrive in an economic environment with loopholes in the financial regulatory mechanism.

Other obstacles to convergence include inherent hierarchical orientation of broadcast journalism (Erdal, 2009), cultural factors (Quinn, 2005), resistance to change (Deuze, 2004; Ford, Ford & D'Amelio, 2008; Dym, 1999; Rogers, 1986), and high cost of transmitter rental fees in the case of smaller radio stations (Megwa, 2007). For instance, media convergence being a new concept is likely to be met with some fears

about what it means to media producers and consumers. Resistance to change is therefore

a normal human inclination and therefore should be seen as part of an activity that

supports change (Dym, 1999). But as Ford, Ford, and D'Amelio pointed out change

agents and change recipients have equal responsibility to ensure that change succeeds or

fails. How this change phenomenon occurs in Africa is uncertain. Kwami (2008) viewed

the refusal to adapt to change inherent in media convergence as conservatism. In a survey

of convergence practices in seven West African countries including Nigeria, Kwami

argued that shortage of financial and human resources, lack of leadership and

understanding were factors that militate against the growth of media convergence which

he admitted was in its infancy in the region. Other challenges, according to Kwami

include the epileptic GSM network and Internet facility with limited services to urban

centers, and the inability to develop team spirit among different media organizations due

to competitive factors.

In South Africa, Megwa (2007) documented evidence to show that lack of

technological education and digital divide between poor and rich citizens of the rainbow

nation exemplified in the prohibitive cost of computers, and poor access to telephone

remained barriers to the news media's full exploitation of the potentials of Information

and Communication Technology (ICT) notably the Internet. While stressing that this

trend dims the prospect of technological growth and democratization, Megwa's study of

10 community radio stations found that community radio actively supported by owner

communities could be effective in social mobilization through information sharing. This

kind of situation is emblematic of media operations in Africa; therefore, the success of

media convergence as practiced in the United States may be difficult to achieve in Nigeria and other African countries.

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature on convergence journalism and related literature. By focusing the analysis on the intersection of Information and Communication Technologies, media studies, democratic governance and organizational studies, the review established the connection of media convergence to multidisciplinary endeavors. It was evident in the review that although scholars in the technologically advanced countries in Europe, Asia and United States have developed theories on how convergence is shaping contemporary media practice in profound ways, they have grossly excluded or ignored the experience or impact of this growing trend in Sub-Saharan Africa where meaningful access to digital technology is beginning to take root. What is more, the potential of media convergence to contribute to the growth of democracy in a region with poor record of democratic governance were virtually absent. The limited research on media convergence in Africa is so obvious.

In the next chapter, I will examine the methods to be used in conducting this study. The variables of interest will be the perception of Nigerian journalists in relation to the extent of implementation of media convergence, its impact on democratic governance, and use of multimedia in journalism practice. These variables will be measured using qualitative methods.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This chapter includes a description of this qualitative study, an exploratory inquiry into the potential impact of media convergence on democracy in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country. In the chapter, I described the research design— theoretical tradition of inquiry, research sample and population, method of data collection and procedures, data interpretation and analysis as well as ethical issues in research. A purposive sample of journalists in Nigeria was chosen because news media professionals are often regarded as defenders and midwives of democracy (Gregorian, 2010; Okigbo & Hyden, 2004; Okonkwo, 1990) and may therefore be a critical group to analyze political trends. The questions that guided the study are as follows:

1. What is the perception of Nigerian journalists in relation to the potential effects of media convergence on democracy in terms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation?

2. How do journalists consider media convergence as effective in supporting free, fair, and frequent elections in Nigeria?

3. What is the perception of Nigerian journalists regarding the current extent of media convergence in Nigeria?

4. How can media convergence be achieved in Nigeria given the state of technology and media infrastructure?

Research led to the understanding of media convergence and how it could impact democratic governance in Nigeria. Media convergence in the context of this study refers to a situation whereby the broadcast, print, and online media organizations in Nigeria engage in newsroom collaboration, content-sharing, and cooperation at different levels to stimulate political participation, freedom of expression and unfettered information flow and access to the news media. Newsroom convergence is different from other forms of media convergence. For example, Gordon (2002) distinguished newsroom convergence from other types of media convergence namely ownership, tactical, structural, information gathering and storytelling.

Design of Study

This section described the research design adopted for the study. In this regard, the section included a justification for chosen research methods; the rationale and criteria for selection of study participants; the sample and population; methods of data collection; data analysis, and interpretation, as well as ethical issues that affected this researcher in the course of the study.

Justification of Research Methodology

Researchers have presented different perspectives concerning appropriate approaches to media and communication research. In this study, I will consider different models of qualitative research with the intention of choosing the most appropriate for the study. Jensen (2002) noted that because the field of media and communication derives from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and other social sciences, it is a

subject of controversy as to the best method of inquiry that can help to illuminate the role and influence of the media in society.

However, this study employed a qualitative approach to generate information regarding the understanding of media convergence and its likely consequences on democratic governance. Babbie (2007) recommended the use of more than one research method because the researcher stands to exploit the advantages of each method.   The relevance of mixed methods in social science research is also acknowledged by Hanson, Creswell, Creswell, Clark, and Petska (2005), and Creswell (2007) maintained that mixed-methods are valuable because they could assist the researcher to triangulate or vary data sources thereby eliminating possible bias that any single research method might produce

Moreover, Jensen (2002) reviewed the complementarities of qualitative and quantitative methods and argued that a combination of both methods is appropriate for communication research. He stated that while quantitative research methods is ideal for understanding repetitive events and objects such as expression of opinion, qualitative is suitable to explore a one-time occurrence of a significant phenomenon. Jensen's analysis is therefore apposite since this study is about the opinion of journalists on the impact of changing media practices on democracy. . Although mixed methods could be used for this study, a qualitative inquiry is going to be used for purposes of expediency and effectiveness.

Other methods of qualitative inquiry were examined. They included ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, action research, content analysis, focus group, and interviews. The examination of these various approaches helped to understand what they stand for and especially the appropriateness of the methods in relation to this study. The rationale for the choice of methods was explained while reasons were adduced for those methods not chosen.

McNabb (2008) described ethnographic research as a method for understanding different cultures and how members of different societies cope in their natural setting. A major technique used to collect data in this research method is participant observation whereby the researcher seeks to become a member of the group either in an open way or in clandestine manner. This study is interested in the perception and perspectives of professional journalists, and not about the culture of journalists as a group or professional organization. Consequently, ethnographic research method could not support this study.

Similarly, grounded theory was considered. Grounded theory is a qualitative method of inquiry that emphasizes observations rather than hypothesis and explores patterns and develops theories from the bottom up (Babbie, 2007). It adopts an inductive rather than deductive approach in the examination of data for the sole purpose of generating theory. This study is not about theory building, hence its unsuitability in studying the influence of media convergence on democracy. The uncertainty as to the impact of media convergence on democracy in Africa defies the inductive approach favored by grounded theory.

On the other hand, I evaluated the appropriateness of the phenomenological method of inquiry. The focus of phenomenological approach to qualitative research is on making use of a person's real life experiences or activities to explain a phenomenon. According to Willig (2008) phenomenology focuses on what human beings see and experience at a particular time in real world. Researchers undertake this kind of study by using data generated from personal stories, experiences, and in-depth interviews (McNabb, 2008). In this study the experiences of journalists were vital to the understanding of the potential impact of media convergence on democracy. Interviews of experienced journalists yielded abundant information on the subject of inquiry. Phenomenological method of inquiry is usually most appropriate when few participants are involved in a study (Creswell, 2007; F. Goldman, personal communication, April 1, 2010). . Phenomenological method is therefore suitable for this study because I interviewed a few number of journalists and media proprietors.

Action research is yet another method of inquiry that I considered. Action research is a process of inquiry that puts both the researcher and the subjects on the same pedestal and equal value. It is particularly amenable to new media and communication studies often associated with constant change, creativity, interactivity, and unpredictability (Hearn & Foth, 2005). Action research acknowledges the supremacy of the respondents' phenomenology and focuses deeply on real change processes. Although, this study is interested in some aspects of the new media, it also analyzed old or traditional media practices in combination with the new. Therefore, this study did not apply action research strictly as envisaged by its advocates in the study of media studies.

Moreover, I looked at the merits or demerits of content analysis technique in conducting research. Berelson (1952) described content analysis as research method for the "objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communication" (p. 82). Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, and Newbold (1998) also examined the importance of content analysis in the study of media content. Notwithstanding the validity of content analysis technique in communication research, this method was unsuitable for this study because the current research is not interested in looking for published information on newspapers, radio or television news. Put simply, this study is not an analysis of media content.

This study also considered focus group approach as a method of generating data. Focus group is one of the qualitative methods of inquiry. According to Brotherson and Goldstein (1992) focus group research is basically an opportunity for people to convey their interpretation or knowledge acquired from personal experiences. Often viewed as a suitable synergy of qualitative and quantitative methods, Morrison (1998) maintained that focus group trumps survey research because of the liberty of participants to construct meanings of concepts. Morrison further recommended focus group for mass media research. Amoakohene (2005) argued that among the various qualitative research methodologies, focus group is most ideal for conducting research in Africa because of its group centeredness and the oral culture of the continent. This approach seemed useful in this study not just because it is being conducted in Africa but because of the expected lively conversation that will occur with journalists while discussing their trade in a natural setting. Babbie (2007) also supported the use of focus group for exploratory

studies of relatively new phenomenon like media convergence. In the context of Nigeria, this study investigated the possibilities and perils of media convergence amidst innovations in information technology and the ever changing media landscape. In spite of the appeal of focus group to this study, I did not conduct a focus group due to constraints of cost, time, and effectiveness.

Finally, I considered interviews which are an important and commonly used qualitative method of generating data (Frechtling & Sharp; 1997; Silcock & Keith, 2006, Singer, 2004). To employ interviews as a method of data collection, in the opinion of Frechtling and Sharp (1997), presupposes that participants in a study have credible views that are deemed to be consequential and illuminating to the topic under investigation. In this study, journalists were interviewed and the assumption was that they are informed enough to discuss issues related to media convergence, a relatively new trend in journalism profession.

I therefore made use of semi-structured interviews in which I asked open-ended questions to journalists in Nigeria regarding media convergence and its potential impact on democracy. It provided respondents the opportunity to express their views more openly. In other words, I interviewed journalists to explore more comprehensively both their verbal and nonverbal attitudes towards media convergence. According to Willig (2008) a qualitative data collection technique need to be open-ended so as to give room for innovative ideas to flourish.

Participant Selection and Rationale

In September 2008, William Taft, the 93-year-old alumnus of the first journalism

school in the United States — Missouri University School of Journalism told his guests

who gathered for the school's centenary celebration how indispensable communication is

to human beings (University of Missouri, 2008). In a metaphorical sense, Taft speculated

that in Heaven, no one will need doctors and lawyers, because no one will be sick and

there will be no dispute; no military or police because there will be order and no war; no

need for architects or civil engineers because everyone will be accommodated in God's

mansion; indeed no other profession is needed. But journalists, he said, will be in high

demand, because the people on the east and the north sides of Heaven will want to know

what the people on the west and the south sides are doing (University of Missouri, 2008;

para.4).

As naïve as Taft's view may be, it nevertheless underscores the importance of

journalists in every society. In their analysis of the indispensability of journalists,

Nwankwo (2010) and Olukoyun (2004) argued that Nigerian journalists are the mirrors of

the Nigerian society. Consequently, they expressed the view that journalists are

professionally and constitutionally competent to represent, reflect, and defend the attitude

of the Nigerian population on matters related to democratic governance, freedom of

expression, transparency, accountability, and political participation.

Consequently, in this study I specifically interviewed journalists in six news

media organizations in Nigeria — two radio stations, two television stations, and two

newspaper organizations. The media in Nigeria are privately and publicly owned and the

selection of the news organizations reflected this dichotomy. Furthermore, one of the

criteria for the selection of the sample was the rating given to the organizations by

industry watchdogs: Nigerian Broadcasting Commission for broadcast organizations,

Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria for newspapers, and Nigeria Media

Review for both electronic and print media. In addition, the news organizations that were

chosen are those ranked within the top 10 in the latest annual Nigerian Media Merit

Award. The researcher visited the media houses to assess their various approaches to

media convergence and what it means to them. This approach was designed to capture in

words and actions the attitude of journalists towards convergence. Willig (2008)

suggested that qualitative data collection methods should aim to minimize incidences of

losing data whether in tangible or intangible forms. In other words, I was able to reflect

or mirror the processes or events that occurred within the news organizations in the

course of data collection. These reflections formed part of my field notes.

The researcher sought the permission of appropriate authorities to spend 1 week

with each of the six news organizations to observe the way their newsrooms functioned,

participated in editorial conferences, interviewed journalists especially political editors

and correspondents about media convergence and politics. The purposive sample for this

exploratory study aligned with Trochim's (2001) suggestion that purposive sample can be

used when a researcher targets a specific group quickly, in this case, journalists. Wimmer

and Dominick (2002) also argued that in exploratory studies such as this, the researcher

could bring together elements of convenience sample and a purposive sample of

participants chosen because of some predetermined attributes. As such, journalists were selected on the basis of their perceived knowledge of public affairs and political developments in Nigeria accumulated in course of their news coverage of issues and events.

A hermeneutic approach to research demands that participants in a study have a good knowledge of the subject or phenomenon under investigation (Bibby, 1997; Creswell, 1998), in this case media convergence. The decision to interview journalists was because of their perceived knowledge of media convergence and potential relationship with democracy. Moreover, the choice of journalists and interview method arose out of a concern for issues related to validity, reliability, credibility, and affordability. I therefore selected experienced and credible journalists and interviewed them one-on-one. Osborne (1993) argued that the readiness of participants to exchange ideas on the subject of inquiry helps to develop a close affinity with the researcher. Moreover, the interview method gave the participants freedom to question my assumptions about convergence and also provided instant feedback as to whether the study made meaning to them or not. This approach mirrors Willig's (2008) conceptualization of validity in qualitative research. The issue of validity is further enhanced by the fact that the interviews of journalists took place in their work settings thereby fulfilling what Willig (2008) phrased as "ecological validity" (p.16).

I interviewed 15 journalists from the six news organizations including reporters, editors, anchor persons, directors, and chief executives/owners of media organizations, photographers, camera persons, radio producers, web producers, and newspaper

columnists. I had proposed to interview as many as 25 journalists but when the themes

that emerged from the initial set of interviews reflect a common pattern, I decided to end

the interviews.

The selection of the interviewees spread across the six news organizations was

determined by the existing hierarchy of news editors, reporters, producers, and online

editors who have worked in the chosen organizations for at least 10 years. From each of

the six news organizations, I selected two news editors, two reporters, one online editor,

one producer and any two other journalists, three of whom were female.

Based upon the operationalization of key concepts and variables, the researcher

also requested the journalists to comment on convergence and its potential impact on

democratic governance in relation to journalism profession, transparency, accountability,

political participation, public life, and governance.

In addition to providing for demographic information and open ended comments,

I guaranteed confidentiality to respondents to enable them to volunteer information

honestly.

Using the convergence continuum (Dailey et al., 2005), the interview sought to

determine the understanding of media convergence among journalists as well as the

potentials and prospects of media convergence in the 21st century Nigeria. Special

interviews with media proprietors and executive directors of major news organizations

including government owned and operated organizations were conducted to ascertain the

status of convergence currently in Nigeria as well as to gauge their acceptance and readiness to engage in media convergence.

Questions addressed such issues as developing and sustaining partnerships among media organizations and citizens along the lines of collaboration in news gathering and dissemination. The difference between the traditional and new media in terms of agenda setting, fostering political participation, and promotion of pluralism featured in the questions asked to respondents.

The interview also featured questions that were designed to ascertain respondents' attitudes toward different stages of media convergence as contained in the convergence continuum model.

Ethical Issues:

Like all social research, ethical issues surfaced in the course of this study. McNabb (2008) defined research ethics as a conscious effort to respect morally acceptable regulations in "planning, conducting, and reporting" (p. 32) research findings. Bibby (1997) noted that researchers often face ethical dilemmas in the choice they make while conducting research and advised that the solution lay in the proper understanding of research methodology and moral theory. Bibby stressed the need for researchers to evaluate constantly different moral arguments and determine acceptable behavior in a given society prior to engaging in research activities.

Among the ethical issues listed by Babbie (2007), voluntary participation, no harm to participants, confidentiality, and bias are most likely to impact this research. The

complete voluntary participation of journalists in this study may have been difficult to attain because of two reasons. First, as a person who practiced journalism in Nigeria many years ago, I know that the potential participants may not honestly wish to spare their time in the research process but because they knew me or have information about my past activities as a journalist. Willig (2008) warned researchers to be mindful of the likely impact of their own personality make up such as gender, status in society, age, and national origin.

Secondly, some of them may have participated in anticipation of some kind of reward such as money, gifts or even assistance in migrating to the United States.

Participation in the study may potentially have inflicted some psychological harm to some journalists who become emotionally disturbed after learning how media convergence is propelled by technology which they may not have or even hope to have in the future. The realization of how journalism could be practiced in a better environment may result in envy, frustration, and misery.

Another ethical issue of concern to the researcher is the possibility of disclosing the researcher's expectations to those being interviewed. Katzer, Cook, and Crouch (1998) warned that revealing the expectations or wishes of the researcher to interviewees could introduce bias in the study and subsequently distort the researcher's judgment. Considering that the research focused on issues central to contemporary journalism, the researcher endeavored to avoid communicating his expectation either directly or indirectly to participants in the study.

Related to the challenge posed by unmasking a researcher's hope of a certain outcome in a study is the problem of bias. It is difficult to be wholly objective in the conduct of a research which selection of topic and subject was a product of bias in the first place. However, the effort to bring up the problem to light shows that the researcher took all necessary steps to control the inherent subjective inclination of human beings throughout the research process.

Sample and Population

The researcher used a purposive sample. The approach is the most commonly used form of non-probability sample often recommended when a study focuses on a specific group (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; McNabb, 2008) and when the investigator considers the unique background of participants as consistent with goals of the study (Patton, 2002). In other words, the researcher used his discretion to choose the sample considered to be meaningful in conducting the research. In this regard therefore, the researcher developed the list of participants by consulting with Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), and Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE). From 394 radio, television and satellite stations in Nigeria (The National Broadcasting Commission [NBC], 2009), 334 editors enrolled with Nigerian Guild of Editors (Nigerian Guild of Editors [NGE], 2009), and 70 newspapers in Nigeria that have online editions (Nigeria Newspapers, 2009; World Newspapers, 2009), the researcher selected participants in the study. The participants belonged to the Nigerian Press Organization

made up of the three most prominent professional bodies of journalists in Nigeria: NUJ, NGE, and NPAN.

Following Schonlau, Fricker, and Elliott (2002), the researcher compiled a list of editors, reporters, anchors, columnists, radio producers, web producers, photographers, news directors, and chief executive officers or owners of the six news organizations selected for the study. From the list, the researcher selected potential participants who have worked for at least 10 years in the news organization. The interviews were limited to journalists who have practiced for 10 years or more, a duration that qualified journalists in Nigerian to be called veteran journalists (Nigeria Union of Journalists [NUJ], Constitution, 1991). Specifically, I interviewed the chief executives of the various media organizations from where the sample will be drawn. The six media organizations selected for this study were chosen on the basis of their recognition and ranking by The Nigerian Media Merit Award and Nigerian Media Review, two independent media watchdogs in Nigeria. The six media organizations include two groups each from television, radio, and print media as follows: Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), which is owned by government, and Africa Independent Television (AIT), privately owned and operated by Daar Communications Plc.; Radio Nigeria, owned by the government, and Rhythm FM which is privately owned by Silverbird Communications Ltd; and *Thisday* newspapers owned by Leaders & Company and *The Guardian* owned by Guardian Press Limited.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher collected data after the approval of the dissertation proposal and of the university IRB application. Interview and observational field notes are preferred data collection procedure for this exploratory study.

Interview

The qualitative data collection methods that were used are semi-structured interview and observational field notes. Cresswell (1998) identified interview and observational field notes as important sources of data. Cresswell (2003; 2007) suggested ways to prepare for interviews, frame good questions, and how to utilize the interview outcome. For example, he discussed the flexibility of questions, selection of appropriate interviewee, and being focused on the topic of investigation. Interviews were used to get information from journalists on the potential impact of media convergence on democracy in terms of political participation, freedom of expression, and openness. Babbie (2007) conceptualized qualitative interview as a conversation in which the interviewer moderates the session in such a way to cover the topic of investigation including specific issues raised by the interviewee. As part of the preparation for qualitative interview, McNamara (2009) recommended that the interview takes place in a quiet environment to avoid interruption while the interviewer must guarantee confidentiality to respondents. McNamara

also counseled researchers to explain the purpose, format, and duration of the interview to participants and not to rely on their memory in recalling answers to questions. Following this advice, I made use of a tape recorder after obtaining the consent of the respondent to record all questions and responses. Even with a recording device, it is advisable to check the device occasionally to make sure it is working (McNamara, 2009).

The compatibility of semi-structured interview with several methods of data analysis accounts for its popularity in qualitative research (Wilig, 2008). Another advantage of the interview technique is that it gave me the opportunity to dig deep in discussing the phenomenon under investigation and also focused the respondents in such a way that their responses accurately reflected the questions asked. Babbie (2007) and Singleton and Straits (2005) noted that this kind of flexibility is one of the strengths of interview method because it offers researchers the chance to query and eliminate any form of vagueness in responses. The interviewer can ask follow- up or probing questions based on the responses of the respondent to pre-constructed questions.

The interviewer in the words of Babbie (2007, p. 306) needs to "be able to listen, think, and talk" simultaneously. Due to the novelty of convergence journalism, the interview process involved a lot of explanations and exchange of opinion between the researcher and respondents on different concepts associated with the phenomenon of study. This kind of interactions including body language potentially yielded extra data. Qualitative interview is an interaction between a researcher and a study participant whereby the interviewer could have an outline but may not necessary follow it in the order originally conceived (Babbie, 2007). The nature of the interaction was mainly

conversational to attain a measure of what has been termed 'naturalism' (Babbie, 2007, p. 293)—an attempt to approximate real life situation in qualitative research.

Interview questions were semi-structured with carefully selected words that reflected the goals of the study and served as guide to the interviewer. After all, the objective of interviews is to showcase participants' experience and in-depth knowledge of the subject of investigation (Turner, 2010). In this case, the interview of Nigerian journalists expectedly demonstrated their experience and knowledge of convergence journalism and its potentials. All the questions were open-ended to create the opportunity for details and meaningful conversation with the respondents. The success of semi structured interviews depends on effective rapport that exists between the researcher and the respondent (Willig, 2008).

Notwithstanding the numerous advantages of the interview method, it nevertheless has its drawbacks. For example, Cresswell (2007) pointed out that a timid and less affable interviewee could pose a challenge to the researcher just like the elements of time, cost, and a reluctant respondent. However, the advantages are more than the disadvantages, hence its choice in this study.

Observational field notes

Besides the interview protocol, I kept field notes or memos and specifically field observations during the data collection process. Apart from serving the purpose of focusing the researcher's attention to relevant issues emerging from the data, field notes and observation became useful in the data analysis and interpretation of findings (Babbie,

2007; Tere, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Media convergence is a process and has

different but overlapping stages (Dailey et al.), therefore, observing convergence

practices in newsrooms supported information generated from interview of journalists.

Willig (2008) argued that data collection process in qualitative research strives to capture

the words and actions of participants in their entirety. Therefore, the working

environment, newsroom culture, and personal demeanor of the journalists became a part

of the field notes. Observational field notes have the potential to lend credibility to

qualitative research by providing collaborative evidence from multiple sources

(Cresswell, 1998) or strong resource for triangulation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Study participants were contacted through telephone, face book, email, SMS text

messages, and personal letters to introduce the nature and purpose of the study. Those

who participated in the interviews were selected on the basis of the researcher's

determination of the experience and professional knowledge of the individuals

concerned. News editors, reporters, news producers, and online editors who have worked

for at least 10 years were deemed to have enough professional experience and knowledge

to participate in the interview(NUJ, 1991 Constitution). They were also be selected on the

basis of seniority. After consulting the NUJ's and NGE's records of most practicing

journalists in Nigeria, the researcher sent letters to selected journalists to alert them of an

incoming survey through email, Face book, and SMS text messages. Using information

available on the Internet, and other sources the researcher collected the list of email

addresses and Face book contacts of reporters, editors, and other participants. Due to the

poor Internet use and infrequent access to emails by prospective respondents, I made use

of alternative methods such as hand delivery and postal delivery to seek the consent of respondents to participate in the study.

Data Interpretation and Analysis

Qualitative data analysis and interpretation take different forms and depend on the subject of investigation, researcher's preference, time, and resources at the disposal of the researcher (Tere, 2006). A number of researchers (Cresswell, 2007; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Patton, 2002; Ratcliff, 2009; Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003; Tere, 2006) have compiled numerous methods of analyzing qualitative data. They include typology, taxonomy, constant comparison/grounded theory, analytic induction, hermeneutical analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis, and thematic analysis. Other methods include phenomenology/heuristic analysis, narrative analysis, semiotics, domain analysis, event analysis/microanalysis, quasi-statistics, logical analysis/matrix analysis, and analytic induction. Of all these methods, I focused on thematic and comparative analysis because of the seemingly inherent inductive slant of the methods. This type of analysis is helpful because the themes emerge from the data with little or no interference by the researcher. Similarly, the dual purpose of data collection and analysis consistent with comparative and thematic analysis trumps this method just as the methods enable the researcher to routinely scan transcripts, notes and research literature (Tere, 2006).

The process of data analysis and interpretation in most qualitative studies occur simultaneously with the data collection process (Tere, 2006; Willig, 2008). Consequently, while the interview of respondents took place, I continuously evaluated the emerging themes and reviewed my approach as was necessary. For example, I planned to conduct

15 to 25 interviews with journalists on potential impact of media convergence on democracy. However, during the first set of interviews I discovered that the participants are raising important issues that I did not consider while preparing for the interview, then I adjusted to include those issues in subsequent interviews.

Because I made use of comparative and thematic analysis, I was be able to compare and contrast views of participants throughout the interview process until I noticed a redundancy of opinion. That was also an indication that no new issues were likely to arise and possibly a cul-de-sac for the data collection process. The point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data is what Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) called saturation point. They reported in a study conducted in West Africa involving sixty in-depth interviews that saturation occurred within the first twelve interviews. Guest et al.'s study was instructive.

The analysis phase began with a fresh look at the notes, memos and transcripts taken during data collection. Qualitative data analysis is considered a personal process, with minimal rules and regulations (Tere, 2006). However, Creswell (2007) and McNabb (2008) provided comprehensive approaches to analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. Creswell (2007) stated that data analysis in qualitative research requires the researcher to package, organize, and decode the data in meaningful and understandable form. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) outlined the following steps involved in data analysis: get familiar with your data; focus the analysis; sort out information by looking out for patterns and connections; and giving meaning to aggregate data. McNabb (2008) maintained that the first step in the interpretation and analysis of qualitative data is to

bring the raw data into some kind of harmony. For example, the interview with respondents in this study was transcribed and given some thematic significance through the use of tables, graphs or figures. I also tried to describe my personal experiences with interviewing study participants especially some of the nonverbal communication that occurred during the interview. Throughout the interview, I looked out for connections and patterns relevant to the goals of the study.

Researcher's Role

In the course of this study, I performed the function of interviewer, and handled the task of collecting and analyzing data. I also identified research participants, developed research instruments, and assumed the role of what Jensen (2002) called an interpretive subject.

Summary

This chapter examined the research methodology used for the study. It employed a qualitative method. The sample frame was analyzed and the justification for the sample size. The procedure for data collection and analysis featured in the section. The next chapter will provide the result generated from the data and also attempt to explain the implications of the results in relation to the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential impact of the integration of different communication platforms on democratic governance in terms of how it influences freedom of expression, openness, accountability, and political participation. The convergence of different channels of communication notably the traditional media (radio, television, newspapers, and magazines) and the new media such as the Internet, hand— held wireless devices (mobile phones, PDA's, etc.), and social media (Face book, Twitter, You Tube, RSS feeds, etc.) has broad implications for governance, media freedom, citizens' access to the media, freedom of expression, transparency, accountability, and political participation. The study model proposes that there is a strong connection between unfettered information flow and effective democratic governance. The study model also proposes that democratization of information and communication in the forms of citizen participation and access to the news media was central to the growth of democracy in emerging countries of Africa.

This study examined the perceptions of Nigerian journalists in relation to the status of media convergence in the West African country and how it is influencing democracy in terms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation. Journalists as purveyors of information and midwives of democracy (Gregorian, 2010; Okonkwo, 1990) have enriched this study's outcome by sharing perspectives that illuminate information processing, packaging, access, delivery, and dissemination in an era of information fragmentation. The vast majority of studies on media convergence

focused on the influence of technology on the media industry (Carr, 2009; Lowrey, 2005), the changing landscape of journalism practice, and citizen empowerment in terms of information sharing in mostly advanced democracies (Bunch, 2008; Silcock & Keith, 2006) with little or no evaluation of how these changes are affecting emerging democracies and countries in democratic transitions in Africa. The purpose of this study was specifically to explore the potential impact of media convergence on Nigeria's nascent democracy. This study investigated whether information sharing on various communication platforms such as radio, television, newspapers, mobile phones, face book, the Internet, and especially mobile phones, will produce fundamental changes in democratic governance, increase level of transparency, ensure the conduct of free and fair elections, enthrone pluralism, and achieve freedom of expression.

In this chapter, I present the results of the research component of the study. Data analysis procedures and study findings are described. The chapter offers insight into the context of the study, description of the study participants, the coding process, demographic summary of the sample, analysis of the research questions, and the results.

Context of the Study

Following the approval of this study by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB # 06-10-10-0343248), I made contacts with potential participants for the study through emails and phone calls. In the emails, I attached a letter of invitation to participate in the study and the approved consent form. The reason for sending these documents was to prepare potential participants mentally for an impending interview and secure a firm date for the interview. I reasoned that because journalists are busy people

who travel often, it would save time to schedule a date for an interview, especially

considering that I would be flying from the United States to Nigeria to conduct interviews

in person during the limited time of my visit. None of the potential interviewees,

however, agreed to a firm date. All of them asked me to call them when I arrived in

Nigeria to schedule a suitable date for the interview.

I subsequently traveled to Nigeria. Participants were recruited from Lagos and

Abuja — Nigeria's commercial city and federal capital respectively. The two cities are

strategic because the bulk of the country's media establishments are located there, where

the strongest Nigerian journalists practice. Consequently, I did not consider

representativeness as a selection criterion because a purposive sample for

phenomenological study is interested in deliberate selection of participants with rich

experience and knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation (Mcnabb, 2008;

Polkinghorne, 2005). There is no agreement among qualitative researchers as to the

adequacy of sample size for a study of this nature. Bertaux (1981) insisted that 15 is the

minimum sample size accepted in qualitative research, while Morse (1994) suggested no

fewer than 6 participants for phenomenological studies. Cresswell (1998) stipulated

between 5 and 25 interviews for a phenomenological study.

Participants in the study were Nigerian journalists employed by media

organizations in Nigeria. Fifteen journalists purposively selected from government owned

and privately owned media establishments participated in the study. In other words, I

conducted interviews with 15 people. The initial sample size was 25, but after

15interviews, I noticed series of redundancy and repetition, an indication of data

saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). I discovered that no more new information was forthcoming.

Participants interviewed included reporters, editors, political correspondents, editorial page editors, online editors, news managers, media owners, columnists, and anchor persons who work in radio, television, and newspaper organizations.

A detailed description including official designations of participants are not provided in this study as a deliberate step to protect the identity of participants. Suffice it to point out however, that of the 15 participants, three are female journalists, and majority of the participants occupy top positions in their respective organizations. The emphasis on selecting senior journalists at the level of policy making was because journalists in such positions are better placed to discuss serious policy issues such as convergence practices in the media industry (Keith & Silcock, 2006).

During the first interview with participant #1 (P-01), a message came to the participant in the form of SMS to the effect that four journalists had been kidnapped in Abia, one of the 36 states of Nigeria. As significant as the receipt of that message was to my study, it ended our conversation abruptly for what later became a major national story for the rest of my stay in Nigeria. The role of media convergence in the coverage of the kidnapping of four journalists from Lagos who had traveled to the south eastern state of Abia provided an important resource for the study. The challenge such an unprecedented development posed to the Nigerian police viewed as corrupt in addition to constant news reports of the demands of kidnappers who communicated with wireless devices from their hideout crystallized the essence of my study.

Interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. Ready-made questions guided the interviews, but some questions were adjusted to conform to the responses of interviewees. All the interviews were conducted in English language and, tape-recorded and verbatim responses to each question were transcribed using a standardized transcription protocol (McLellan, MacQueen, & Niedig, 2003). During the interviews, I had the opportunity to observe participants' demeanor and kept a reflective journal throughout the study to keep track of meanings as they emerged. Majority of the participants held strong views on freedom of information and were passionate about transparency in government and what one participant called the "Nigerian condition".

I took field notes based on observations made throughout the study. For example I noted the slow speed of Internet connectivity in one of the news organizations when the editor took me round the various desks in the newsroom.

Coding of Data

Data were analyzed through an extensive description, categorization, comparison, and explanation of emerging themes and patterns. The goal of qualitative research is to advance understanding by identifying and organizing common themes or ideas and unique characteristics in a study (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Stake, 1995). Using the first and second cycle coding methods outlined by Saldana (2009), I coded the interview transcripts and distilled some meaning from the opinions and ideas expressed by study participants in addition to observational notes. The researcher employed the constant comparative approach in coding themes that emerged from the interview transcripts. Participants were coded from P-01 through P15. This method was designed to hide the

identity of participants. Tables 1 and 2 provide an insight into the first and second cycle coding respectively. Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) argued that qualitative researchers should demonstrate transparency in data analysis to provide legitimacy to their studies and rebuff criticisms of non disclosure of their methods.

Table 1

Excerpts of interview transcript and first cycle coding

P01 Response	coded ideas squeezed from the views of a respondent
The Guardian like in many other Nigerian newspapers, the new media is a recent development to which many media houses are trying to adjust but one thing that has happened in the last ten years is that many of our newspaper houses including The Guardian has moved from manual production to embrace the use of the Internet and computer technology. If you came to my office ten years ago, you probably find me with a laptop because I have gone to the US and I know that there were such resources but it was only about ten years ago that newspapers began to provide computers and ready Internet access on every desktop because the system realized that the technology of production was changing and has changed and needed to move with the times; so that the reality today in these newspapers is that every reporter has access to computer, the Internet, and indeed the company has also provided the editors with internet access at home because we have seen that we really cannot function without the Internet. Again, provision has also been made for mobile phones. The mobile phone phenomenon is also fairly recent in Nigeria. So what has happened is that access to new media technology has changed the way we operate. With computer technology and networking the production process is a lot faster. We have also had to change our entire press. The new press that we have now is a fully digitized computerized press; whereas at about six years ago we didn't have such a heavily sophisticated and computerized press. The immediate implication was that the press corps has to be	Transition from manual to Internet technology Indispensability of the Internet Computer technology enables faster production process Media convergence enriches operational capability Application of convergence is worldwide trend Convergence increases audience base

reorganized. Most of the people who were there were

not…

Table 2

Coded ideas from interview transcript and emerging patterns in second cycle coding

Coded ideas	Emerging patterns
	Internet utility
Transition from manual to Internet technology	
Indispensability of the Internet	
	Dawn of convergence
Computer technology enables faster production process	
Media convergence enriches operational capability	
	Changing media landscape
Application of convergence is worldwide trend	
Convergence increases audience base	

Through the development of themes and comparison of themes, I was able to

categorize the data in a way that provided additional meaning to the study. Saldana

(2009) noted that while the meaning and function of a 'theme' varies among qualitative

researchers, what is important is that a theme is a phrase or sentence that provides insight

into the meaning of a unit of data. Researchers (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Boyatzis,

1998; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 1995) agreed that themeing the data

amounts to categorization of sets of data. The comparison of ideas or themes expressed

by participants in addition to the frequency of expression of such themes or ideas are presented in table 3.

As stated earlier, the researcher asked respondents identical questions in the same sequence, but probed inductively on key responses. The interview questions were framed to address the research questions recognizing the value of such plan in the analysis of data (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). The questions were therefore designed to address the following domains of inquiry:

- Perceptions of Nigerian journalists in relation to the potential effects of media convergence on democracy in terms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation;

- Perceptions of Nigerian journalists on the effectiveness of media convergence in supporting free, fair, and frequent elections in Nigeria;

- Journalists' perception of the current extent of media convergence in Nigeria; and

- Perceptions of Nigerian journalists on the state of technology and media infrastructure as drivers of media convergence.

Salient themes that emerged from the information gleaned from the interview of participants, and field notes addressed the study's research questions.   In this chapter findings are considered as recurring themes about the impact of media convergence on democratic governance within the African continent.

In the rest of the chapter, the researcher discusses the meaning and implications of the evidence provided in the study. The discussion examines in-depth the themes and

patterns that emerged in the data coding and analysis and explains what was learned

about the influence of media convergence on Nigeria's nascent democracy. The

implications of these themes in terms of positive social change and their enduring

ramifications for democratic reforms in Africa are further explored in the final chapter.

The chapter also includes recommendations for further research on convergence

journalism and its impact on the growth and sustenance of democracy in both advanced

democracies and emerging countries of the Third World.

Recurring Themes

Seven salient but inter-related themes were identified as having significant impact in this

study. The recurring themes discovered in the data analysis showed how media

convergence is influencing democratic governance in Nigeria. The themes also pointed

out the challenges that impede convergence journalism in Nigeria and how such

challenges can derail democracy. Four overarching themes have significant effect on the

potential of media convergence in transforming democratic governance in Nigeria. These

themes are:

- Transparency, accountability, and corruption;

- Freedom of expression, Freedom of Information Bill;

- Political participation, free elections; and

- Internet, social media, and citizen journalism.

 The remaining three themes identified posed serious challenges to the successful

 implementation of media convergence and, hence, the inability of media convergence to

influence positively the growth and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. The themes

include the following:

- Collaboration, partnership;
- Censorship, government ownership, and control of media; and
- Media infrastructure, state of technology.

Collaboration and partnership among media organizations which are considered

strategic in convergence journalism are virtually nonexistent in Nigeria. In the midst of

the absence of collaboration, censorship, especially self-censorship among journalists

and the government control of the news media as well as poor media infrastructure, and

outdated technology are perceived by journalists to conspire to dim the prospect of

effective media convergence that could potentially shape the democratic future of

Nigeria.

Table 3

A code frequency report showing respondents' level of support

Themes	Number of Participants
	15
Transparency	14
Freedom of expression	15
Political participation	11
Free and fair elections	12

Status of media convergence	3
State of technology	1
Media infrastructure availability	1

As Table 3 and Figure 1 show, there is overwhelming evidence that media convergence has the potential to support transparency, freedom of expression, political participation including voting and credible elections. The data reflected the status of media convergence in Nigeria and identified major constraints against effective convergence such as poor media infrastructure and current state of technology.
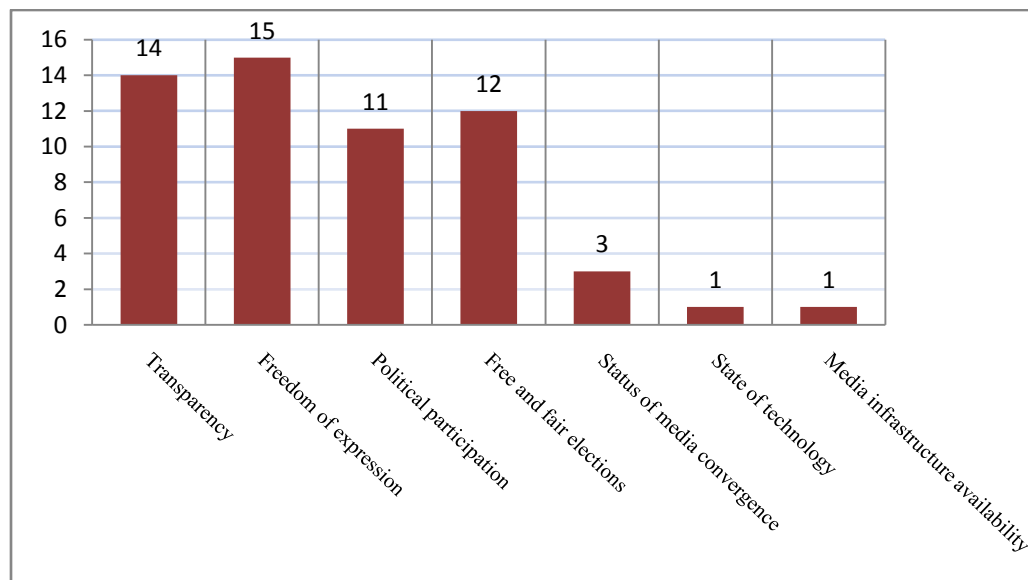
Figure1. Participants' level of support for key variables

Figure1 shows at a glance the level of support by all 15 participants for transparency, freedom of expression, political participation, free and fair elections, status of media convergence, state of technology, and availability of media infrastructure.

Transparency, Accountability, and Corruption

Lack of transparency and accountability in public administration was identified by all the study participants as the bane of Nigerian democracy. The participants believed that media convergence, also called convergence journalism, has the potential to establish transparency in the public life of Nigerians. During the interviews all the participants spoke of the central role of a vibrant and incorruptible media system in the evolution of a new democratic order in Nigeria.

According to participant #2, the traditional role of the news media is to monitor governance and hold public officials accountable to the people. The participants noted that while the total elimination of corruption in the body politic of Nigeria was impossible, the new media could help in exposing corruption. They also viewed the convergence of media platforms especially the explosion of mobile phone use in the country as veritable tool to fight corruption. Participant #3 (P03) put it more succinctly:

> The new media has made it possible that there is no hiding place for the corrupt
>
> person. Even people in government who have access to information including
>
> security agents, who because of their position in government cannot invite you as
>
> a reporter for instance to say things; they send those information out. Some of
>
> them buy new SIM cards put it in their GSM phones reveal some official secrets;
>
> after sending the information they destroy it so that no one traces the leak to them.

Nothing is hidden, nothing, everyone knows who is corrupt and all that. The issue

of corruption is a problem in Nigeria but also the information about who is

corrupt is out there.

The use of SMS messages and camera phones as tools for an open society

featured in conversations with study participants. They acknowledged that the potential

of mobile phones is now real in Nigeria because it has become in the words of participant

#1 (P-01) "instrument of power and transparency." Cell phones' ability to integrate data,

video, and voice has made it a useful platform for the public to form opinions about

issues and, transform lives but also can be used as a tool for mischief making and for

disseminating disinformation, and misinformation. The study data pointed to an

unstoppable demand for accountability in both the new and old media. The comments

posted on the Internet, shared by Nigerians and reported in the Nigerian media indicate

that there is a relentless agitation for transparency and good governance among Nigerians

including those in the diaspora. Nigerians want to have more information about their

leaders and their activities. The agitation for transparency is fuelled by a pool of educated

class and young people who are more inclined to the use of the Internet and social media

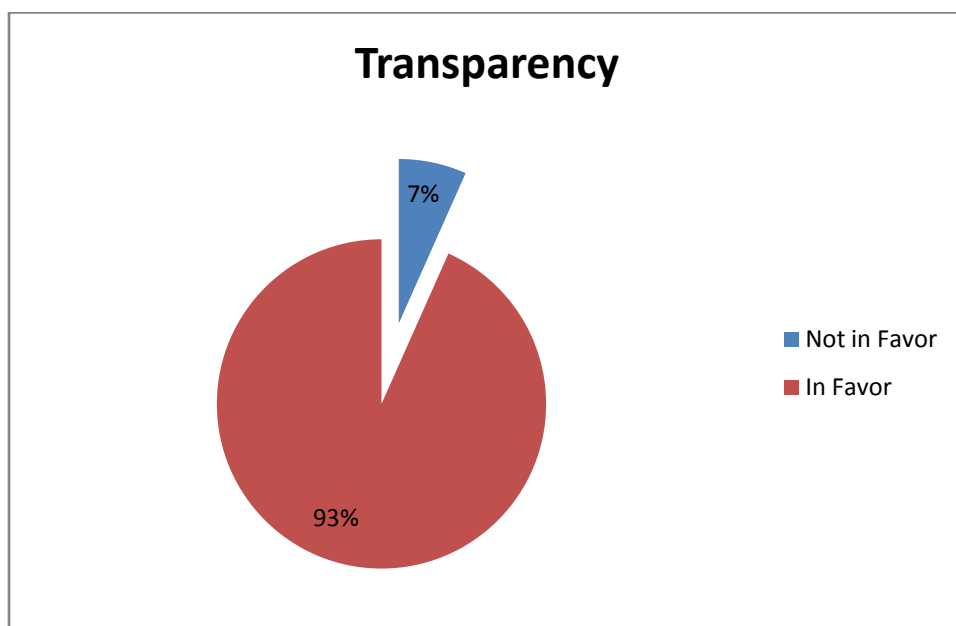to demand openness, accountability, and reclaim their basic rights of good governance.

Figure 2. The perception of participants in terms of how convergence propels transparency

Figure 2 shows level of support for transparency; those who are not in favor believed that poor access to the Internet and other limitations undermine the capacity of media convergence to engender transparency.

Nevertheless, the looming prospect of media convergence to bring about an era of incorruptibility in Nigeria remains a mirage because the data reveal that most Nigerian journalists do not expose corruption but cover up corruption. The media coverage of corruption requires integrity and integrity is what most journalists in Nigeria lack. Many of them work under harsh economic conditions with unpaid salaries for months thereby making them vulnerable to tempting offers from corrupt public officials. For example, the monumental corruption understood by most Nigerians to be rampant in the National Assembly is covered up by journalists who are bribed by legislators. In one of the interviews, a participant (P12) lamented:

What we do here now is not covering corruption but what most organs do is to cover up corruption; mark my words. It is not covering corruption but is to cover up corruption. Instead of exposing corruption we cover it up. There are lots of people that are in trouble all they do is reach out to some media barons, they confuse opinion, distort the facts… covering corruption is a serious matter. You need integrity. What is integrity where you cannot pay the people who are covering corruption; corrupt people will just buy them.

The participant further explained the challenges of media coverage of corruption and the quest for transparency in public office.

Our National Assembly is part of our problem here. They work out jumbo salaries and allowances for themselves which takes a large percentage of the national income – 109 senators, 360 members of the House of Representatives. This is an institution where journalists should have good stories of how not to run a country, of how not to make laws but the people who are covering there (I just told you that 30% of journalists working there are not paid; then who pays them?). They live in a very expensive city like Abuja and they ride cars and maintain their families, send their children to school and are complaining but have not resigned. So who pays them? It is the legislators. So how would they report the truth? That is why I told you that instead of covering corruption we cover up corruption.

Although the era of media convergence is celebrated as a period when the media are viewed as ultra powerful and citizen-friendly, there is a growing fear among Nigerians that the political class is tapping into the gains of media convergence to turn it to their own selfish motive of manipulating the unsuspecting members of the public. At least four former state governors have set up multi-million dollar media companies comprising radio, television, newspaper, online, and telephone providers. According to participant # 1 (P-01), some of these governors were able to set up such organizations from the money they looted from the public treasury. The study data reveal that while the fragmentation of media platform has the potential to usher accountability and an end to secrecy, convergence journalism practice among media organizations owned by suspicious and desperate politicians could unwittingly become a platform to control and manipulate the citizenry. The media organizations are expected to protect their owners from intense public scrutiny even after leaving office by publishing distorted information, confusing public opinion, and boosting the ego of their patrons.

One ominous sign about the unpreparedness of the Nigerian journalists to exploit convergence practices to shed light in the dark corners of the polity is the revelation in the study data by Participants #5 and #12 that some unscrupulous media proprietors influence editorial decisions and also use their positions to extort money from government officials or public officials who fear the exposure of their corrupt practices. Another ludicrous dimension of media convergence is a practice whereby a select group of journalists converge and target a known corrupt official and organize a phony news conference to interview the corrupt official (Participant#13). This strategy results in a

propaganda platform created for the official to tell his or her story without tough scrutiny but with so much money to reward the participating journalists.

According to the study data, many of Nigeria's social problems emanate from corruption and looting of public treasury. But the challenge of accountability as identified in the study is that it is not people-led, rather it is championed by government agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and Code of Conducts Bureau. Due to the lack of public confidence on government, it is expected that the citizens will continue to have a cynical and jaded view of government- orchestrated accountability mechanism. Consequently, convergence of media platform with the potential to give voice to ordinary people will precipitate massive people-led demand for accountability and subsequently good governance.

The media sector was identified as an integral part of the civil society. The convergence of different information delivery channels should therefore serve as a platform to mobilize the civil society to demand accountability and transparency in the formulation and execution of public policy. Accountability means telling truth to power.

Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Information Bill

Another theme that emerged from the data set is that media convergence unleashes unprecedented freedom of expression and freedom of the press. It was evident that information dissemination through multiple platforms increased the prospects of free speech among citizens of a democratic society such as Nigeria. As found in the study data, the process of media convergence "gives masses voice and expands space for

expression" (Participant #1- P01) and curbs arbitrary control and closure of independent media. In addition, the trend towards convergence journalism ensures better environment for press freedom to thrive because the Internet technology that drives convergence also enables "journalism practice without borders or physical location" (Participant #3 –P03).

In the last decade of the 20th century, the Nigerian media experienced extreme arbitrariness during the erstwhile military regime in the country but with the dawn of the 21st century, the introduction of constitutional government, and the implosion of information technology, the media is enjoying a breadth of fresh air. Evidently, the convergence of media platforms has encouraged pluralism, citizen engagement, and participation in the democratic process. Compared to the past decades, participants were quick to admit that democracy is better than dictatorship regardless of the imperfections that currently exist within the present government.

Media convergence is a vehicle to nurture a virile and truly democratic culture where citizens are able to express themselves without hindrance. After all, as participant # 5 put it the "growth of democracy requires the opinions of Nigerians on policies and alternatives". The survival of democracy was noted as a collective project of all Nigerians. But because Nigerian journalists paid a huge price for the enthronement of democracy, they should deploy all communication platforms to sustain and strengthen democracy. There was almost a consensus that multiple channels of communication will help to deepen Nigerian democracy. Newspapers, radio and television programs in both public and independent organizations reflect the views of their audiences expressed through mobile phones, SMS, Face book, the Internet, and email messages. This trend

prompted participant #11 (P011) to conclude that "the fusion of social media and traditional media makes information dissemination vibrant and uncontrollable".

Freedom of Expression
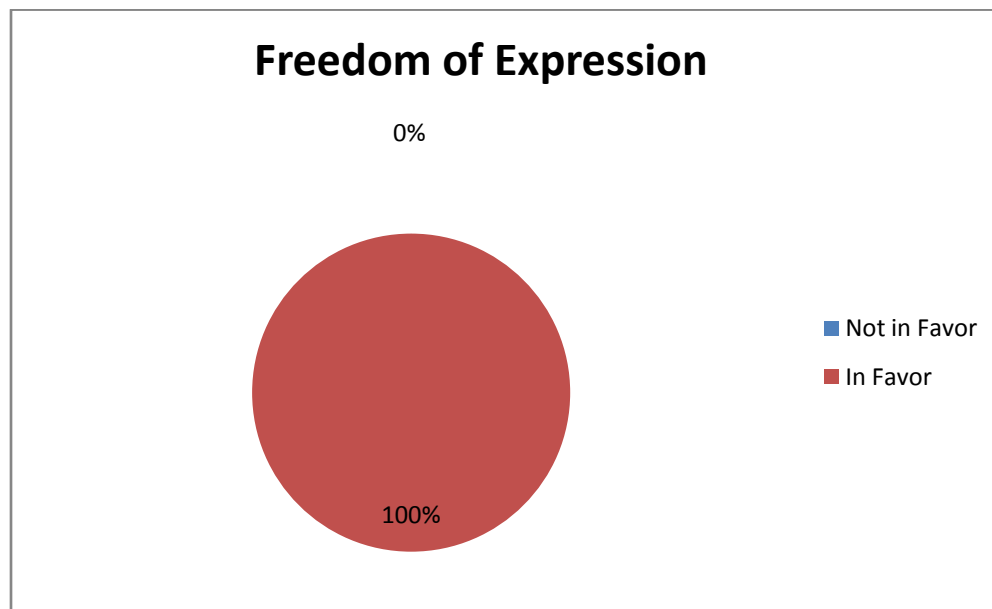
0%

- Not in Favor
- In Favor

100%

Figure 3. Participants' perception of media convergence as catalyst for freedom of expression

Figure 3 shows that overwhelmingly all the 15 participants are confident that media convergence was an effective vehicle to bring about freedom of expression in the Nigerian society.

Perhaps, the most fundamental and challenging task in the quest for freedom of expression in Nigeria is the often confused interpretation given to the concept by different people within the elite class. Whereas the political class views freedom of expression as an exclusive privilege to journalists, all the participants insisted that freedom of expression engendered by media convergence is fundamental human right of all Nigerians regardless of their profession, creed, race, or educational status. Freedom of expression is often misconstrued as freedom of the press. At the center of the debate is

the agitation for the passage of Freedom of Information legislation in Nigeria labeled by one respondent (P01) as the "oldest and most controversial bill in the National Assembly of Nigeria's young democracy".

According to the study findings, access to public information is a recipe for public accountability. It makes it possible for citizens to get involved in the political process and decision making. The public needs information about their leaders for basic knowledge, research or critical analysis. Access to public information potentially reduces suspicion between media and public functionaries; enhances accuracy of media reports and reduces incidence of fabrication of stories. The Freedom of Information Bill stalled in the National Assembly for years merely seeks to grant Nigerian citizens including journalists in the country free access to public information.

> It should be possible for example for any citizen to say I want to know how much President Goodluck Jonathan earns. I want to know how much he takes as security vote; I want to have an idea about how much he spends in a month to maintain his office. That information must be available somewhere… the Nigerian government is run as a secret society. And that limits the ability of the media to access critical information for holding public officers accountable. (Participant #1 -P01)

The data confirmed that SMS, the Internet, mobile phones, social media, and other wireless devices have transformed communication patterns and freedom of expression. These modern communication channels have become veritable tools for self expression, openness, conversation, and catalyst for social mobilization. To this end,

media convergence is perceived to be breaking barriers and indeed marks the beginning of an end to secrecy.

However, the passage of Freedom of Information law by Nigeria's lower and upper legislature is crucial for real media convergence to occur. Although the absence of Freedom of Information (FOI) in the Nigerian political space cannot stop the wave of free information flow facilitated by the overlap of various information channels, fighting corruption cannot succeed in the absence of FOI Act.

The House of Representatives and the Senate refused to pass FOI bill. They want to fight corruption but they know this is one sure way of fighting corruption but they don't want to do it; really they are afraid. They think it is about journalism or for journalists enjoying special privileges; no they don't understand because they have something to hide… their refusal to pass the law is not even helping them because they are other sources of getting information; a multiplicity of sources dishing out authentic information, of course, sometimes malicious but all the same it is information. So I believe that the new media and media convergence are changing the way government does business in this part of the world. It is an era in human civilization that will ensure that people just don't do what they like". (Participant #3- P03)

Although all the study participants believed that media convergence is capable of promoting free speech and access to the news media, it was noted that due to the high cost of accessing modern communication equipment including the mobile phones, the

users of these new communication platforms are still very few to be able to effect

dramatic change in society.

Moreover, the unlimited freedom of expression typical of information gathering

and dissemination in the Internet and other information platforms has led to a call for

"freedom with responsibility" (P-01). There is a genuine fear that the abuse of freedom of

expression through multiple media platforms could jeopardize the fragile peace in a

country replete with religious and ethnic intolerance. Participants #1 and #5 described the

information glut in the Internet as "reckless, libelous, unverified, unverifiable, anarchic",

and, therefore, raises the problem of trust or believability among the masses. It is ironic

that while the study data emphasized the role of freedom of expression in supporting

democratic governance, it also stressed the need for a legal framework to regulate

cyberspace and the Internet to avoid abuse.

Political Participation and Free Elections

Political participation in terms of robust debate of public policies, voting during

elections, and a guarantee for the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections within the

Nigerian political environment were dominant themes found across the study data. The

June 12 1993 presidential election was considered to be the freest election ever conducted

in Nigeria but it was annulled by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. It

was widely believed that mobile telephones influenced the 1993 elections because the

presumed winner of that election, the Late Chief M.K.O Abiola, a billionaire provided his

agents with mobile phones to track results in all polling centers. The Social Democratic

Party (SDP) candidate was able to authenticate election results through messages from

the cell phones held by party agents. The use of mobile phones was at that time a status symbol in Nigeria unlike now when the use of wireless devices has become common.

With the phenomenal increase in the use of mobile telephones across the various social strata in Nigeria including students, market women, and less privileged members of society, majority of study participants agreed that if cellular phones are used in conjunction with traditional news media and open ballot system of voting, it could lead to a drastic reduction in the rigging of elections. The special gubernatorial election in Anambra State held earlier in the year provided a litmus test to the efficacy of information sharing under a converged media environment utilizing the resources of mobile phones, the Internet, social media, and the traditional media. During that election, SMS was useful sources of information for journalists such as information about snatching of ballot boxes, collapse of polling booths, and nonexistence of polling stations in some communities.
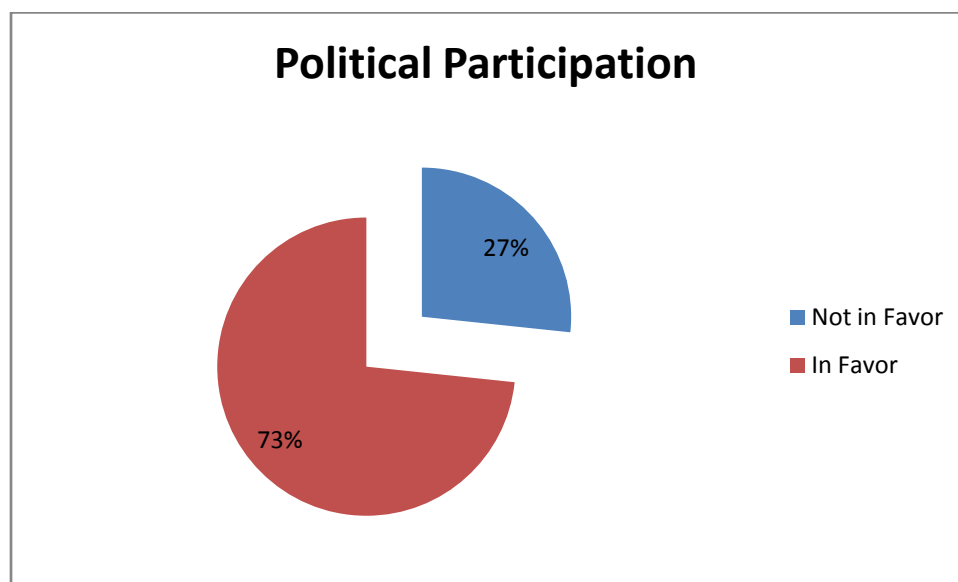
Political Participation

27%

73%

Not in Favor

In Favor

Figure 4. The opinion of participants regarding how media convergence can support citizen participation in the political process

Figure 4 shows support for political participation in terms of citizen engagement, voting in elections, and involvement in decision making process. 73 per cent of participants believed that media convergence has the potential to precipitate active participation in the political process while 27 percent held the view that media convergence could not impact citizen activism in the political process due to a variety of reasons ranging from digital divide, political violence to illiteracy.

The data also suggested that the convergence of multiple communication platforms notably the use of wireless devices by citizens to contribute to media content energizes the political environment. Wireless devices such as cell phones have empowered citizens to participate in governance and engage in vigorous debates about issues that affect their lives. Media convergence has helped to widen the space for political expression of citizens as much as increased access to mobile phones has raised

the level of citizen contribution to media content. In fact, Nigerian citizens have also used cell phones to challenge official media narratives that are incorrect such as false publication of election results.

> If you carry a report that does not agree with what has happened, you are exposing yourself to a lot of attacks. I remember it happened to us in Aba in 2003 election when we announced a result that tended to disagree with happenings in the field. In fact, the next morning the people barricaded NTA's (Nigerian Television Authority) office in Aba because they said we announced the wrong information… we announced the results as given by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) over there and they (the people) felt it was wrong … but on investigation we discovered the citizens were right. So you cannot take the citizens for granted anymore. (Participant #6 - P06)

In addition to the use of mobile telephones and other wireless communication devices by ordinary citizens to share information and engage in political debates, the Independent National Electoral Commission also makes use of GSM phones integrated with both old and new media to facilitate its work. The commission shares information with members of staff scattered in the remotest parts of the country as well as with journalists who monitor the conduct of elections.

According to the views expressed by the study participants, Nigeria's democracy will benefit from a converged media environment. One of the positive attributes of media convergence identified in the data is the possibility of instantaneous

communication which could help in prompt announcement of election results via SMS with the potential to curb election violence and fraud. The 24/7 news cycle over multiple media platforms brought about by media convergence has raised the stakes for Nigerians towards the evolution of a credible electoral system.

Through convergence journalism, the reform of Nigerian electoral system may come to fruition especially in the light of prevailing bottlenecks in reporting election results. But, in the view of participant #12, the legal frameworks that exist in Nigeria's electoral system can undercut the efficacy of media convergence. For example, the Evident Act does not recognize video recordings of phone camera in the court of law while the Nigerian electoral law and National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) codes forbid the broadcast or publication of exit polls (Participant #12).
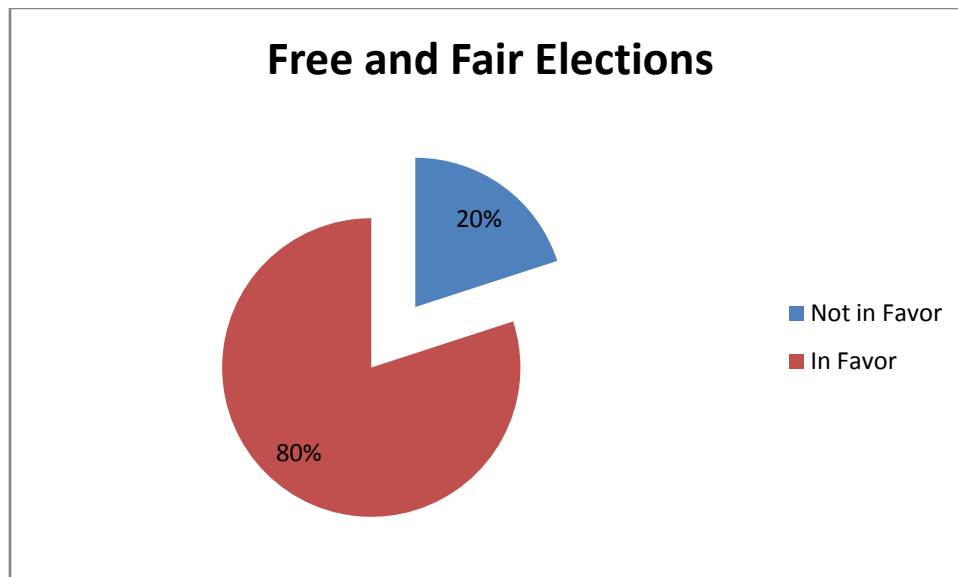

Figure 5. How participants view media convergence ability to support free elections

Figure 5 shows that all 15 participants in the study are divided on their opinion
regarding the capacity of media convergence to support free, fair, and credible elections
in Nigeria. Of the 15 participants, 12 (or 80 % of participants) are confident that media
convergence could create the enabling environment that will lead to free, fair, and
credible elections acceptable to both Nigerians and the international community while
three participants (or 20 %) believed that media convergence cannot make any difference
because Nigerian politicians will always rig elections regardless of new innovations. The
pessimistic minority also argued that poverty, illiteracy, and poor Internet access and
inadequate technology will bring to naught any possible effect of media convergence on
electoral outcomes.

Although information sharing and communication in multiple platforms
especially those fuelled by the explosion of mobile phones in Nigeria has increased the
level of political consciousness in the country, the study data nevertheless identified high
level of illiteracy and apathy towards politics and disdain for politicians as minimizing
the potential impact of media convergence on citizen engagement and participation in the
political process. For example, the use of the cellular phones to communicate via SMS
requires a certain level of education. Consequently, the low level of literacy affects the
use of these electronic devices to effect social change. Moreover, the few literate citizens
are apathetic to politics and elections because of a growing perception that their views
can't change anything. "Many Nigerians have reached a level whereby they think that
many politicians are bad any way, that they rig elections. So when they rig elections it is
as if it is what people are expecting" (Participant #1 –P01).

Perhaps another significant way the convergence of the multiple communication platform is impacting political participation is in the area of political campaigns. Politicians have employed mobile phones and the social media to interact with the electorate. They make use of SMS, ring tones, and Face book to convey customized songs that highlight their party manifestoes and proposed policies and programs if elected into office. Members of the public and journalists have also found those channels as important platforms to provide feedback to the politicians. This method of communication and campaigning is cost effective, personalized, and strategic compared to the sole use of the traditional media – radio, television, and newspapers. The huge size of Nigeria makes the use of mobile phones and social media to personalize campaigns and narrow distance a smart thing to do in a society being overwhelmed by the power of the Internet and wireless communication technology. In all, the new media and in particular Face book are believed to be veritable platforms for political participation. It has become fashionable for politicians especially legislators to open websites where citizens visit and make inputs on pending bills and other policies of government.

The role of the new media as catalyst for change and political mobilization is also fraught with challenges. Unlike the recent Iranian experience where the social media mobilized the country to demand change in that country's political landscape, the study data found no parallel in Nigeria because young people who access the Internet are not interested in politics while the older generation are mostly computer illiterate and probably unable to use the Internet to share information. In addition, Nigeria is a heterogeneous society; access to the Internet is very low, slow, frustrating, and expensive

while the cost of maintaining a cell phone is still very expensive for ordinary citizens.

The conspiratorial effect of cost, discomfort, and fragmented society is that users of new

communication platforms are few compared to the vast population of the country. It is

therefore difficult to use these electronic facilities to mobilize citizens to be able to effect

change in a complex and diverse country like Nigeria.

Internet, Social Media, Citizen Journalism, and Empowerment

The Internet was identified in the study data to be a strategic resource for effective

media convergence. One hundred per cent of respondents acknowledged that while the

Internet, social media, GSM mobile phones, SMS, facilitate the work of traditional

media, they have also transformed the communication patterns of Nigerians with

irreversible consequences for democratic governance. Indeed the traditional media are no

longer driving the political process as much as the new media. The consensus is that

whereas the traditional media have directly or indirectly shut off the public from public

debates, the new media such as Face book, SMS and others have provided veritable

platforms for free expression of political and social views among the citizenry. The

popularity of the new media has also led to the recruitment of "army of reporters in the

community" (participant #2 –P02) otherwise called citizen journalists. The traditional

media is highly restricted in terms of what it reports unlike the freedom that flourishes in

the Internet and social media. For example, citizens and in particular, whistle blowers can

make use of the Internet to expose corruption without bounds unlike the traditional media

that are constrained by libel laws and other encumbrances.

The application of media convergence was recognized as a worldwide trend and the Internet is indispensable in the entire process. Through the use of the Internet journalists are able to source stories with speed and accuracy; widen their audience base by interacting with them to monitor their changing preferences, and discharge their duties at anytime and anywhere. Participant #1 (P-01) described the Internet as making it possible for media organizations to have virtual newsrooms and practice "journalism without borders" (P-01) especially in an environment where government is in the habit of harassing and intimidating investigative reporters. He stated:

> I used to come to work every Saturday and every Sunday because for you to be able to do anything you have to come to this office, you have to practically be chasing copies up and down. But with my laptop and 24 hours Internet access, I can work from anywhere. All I need to do is get in touch with the newsroom; I send materials online; I will get a text message telling me 'all materials seen'. If there is any problem, I get a text message, I take care of the problem so , I don't have to drive long distances to come here… at the individual level, you exert less energy…journalism in this environment used to be like a laborer's job. We do as much mental work as the physical but that has reduced. I find it a bit more relaxing. Thanks to the Internet.

The Internet has also changed the operational capacity of journalists and their relationship with their audience. The Internet changed a lot of procedures in journalism work such as increase in the sources of information, and propelling internal convergence

within news organizations as well as among different news organizations and the general

public. It also poses a challenge to radio, television, and newspapers to change old

practices. The data showed that even though the Internet, SMS, and news agencies are

sources of news for journalists, it is evident that the content is enriched by the active

participation of media consumers. They have acquired greater power in both the gate

keeping and agenda setting function previously and exclusively in the domain of

professional journalists. Therefore, the fusion of the Internet, social media and traditional

media makes information dissemination vibrant and uncontrollable.

> the system realized that the technology of production was changing
>
> and has changed and needed to move with the times; so the reality is that
>
> every reporter has access to computer, and Internet access, because we
>
> have seen that we really cannot function without the Internet. It is
>
> compulsory for every reporter to submit his/her story through Internet
>
> technology. I mean stories can be filed through blackberry, SMS, and e-
>
> mail. Reporters also depend heavily on Internet resources for research. So
>
> I think that media convergence is a development that has enriched the
>
> mode of our operation. (Participant #1- P01)

It is clear from the study data however, that the majority of Nigerian media

organizations are currently undergoing a transition to internet – driven practice. I

observed that most of the websites owned by news organizations particularly the

newspapers are merely electronic versions of their publications. A visit to some of the

newsrooms indicates that the Internet culture is just beginning to take hold. There is

virtually no interactivity on the websites and only one newspaper *Next* is doing

webcasting at an experimental stage. All the sites visited showed a very slow and

sluggish speed of Internet access. It takes a lot of time to access websites, open a page or

even to stream video online. It is a frustrating experience compared with the fast Internet

connection in the United States.

Besides, the integration of the Internet, social media such as Face book and

YouTube, and SMS with the traditional media was identified in the data to have

empowered ordinary citizens and given them voice on a wide range of issues that affect

their lives. The new media platform is seen as a good platform for political participation.

The public response (including Nigerian journalists) to the novel idea of a Nigerian

leader opening an account with Face book indicated the determination of Nigerians to

engage with their leaders via a converged media environment. According to study

participants, no policy maker can ignore the impact of what one respondent (participant

#5 –P05) called the "informal" media, a reference to social networking sites and SMS.

Even President Jonathan was said to have acknowledged the influence of Face book in

decision making and admitted that he reversed two key policy issues because of emails,

comments on Face book and news reports from the traditional media about the massive

opposition of Nigerians to the president's proposals. The two issues were the planned

hosting of Under 17 World Cup and dissolution of Super Eagles team after a disastrous

outing in the 2010 World Cup held in South Africa.

To underscore the impact of media convergence on the people, press, policies,

and politics of Nigeria, many of the traditional news organizations gave credit to

Facebook as their source in reporting the news about President Jonathan's declaration to contest the 2011 presidential election. President Jonathan who until early 2010 was the Vice President succeeded the late President Musa Yaradua and speculations were rife about the possibility of Jonathan contesting the scheduled 2011 presidential polls. President Jonathan's choice of the social networking site – Facebook as a prime platform to break the news about his candidacy in next year's election is symbolic, historic, and confirms his description as an internet-savvy politician and "Africa's most popular politician on the internet with a fan base of over 200,000 friends – almost 10 times more than President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya who rates next to him" (Thisday, 2010, para. 3).

Again, politicians, political groups, ethnic nationalities, and civil society organizations have set up websites with which to express their separate viewpoints. Some of the websites set up by lawmakers have become effective platforms for meaningful or vitriolic exchanges between politicians and citizens. Some legislators seek public input to bills by sending SMS to thier constituents asking them to visit a given website and make comments. Such websites are sources of news and information for journalists as fostering a sense of community among citizens. As useful as the Internet has been in the democratization process, so has it been a source of irresponsibility and recklessness. It has become a gossip platform for ethnic hate and dubious practices by some people.

Another salient point that emerged from the data is the concept of citizen journalism, redefinition of journalism, and who is a journalist. Evidently, the Internet,

social media, and mobile phones notably SMS facilitate the work of editors and reporters through information exchange. Similarly, non professional journalists use the Internet, social media, and cell phones to contribute to media content. Through the convergence of old and new media, citizens are able to function as journalists at anytime, anywhere, and anyhow. Two major national incidents stand out in the data to be emblematic of the potential influence of citizen journalism in relation to media convergence.

Some junior officers of the Nigerian Navy beat up a woman (Mrs. Uzoma Okeke) in Lagos for allegedly blocking the traffic to the convoy of a senior naval officer with sirens. While the beating occurred an ordinary citizen captured the scene with cell phone camera and posted it on You Tube. It generated a lot of buzz on Face book and traditional media that government was forced to order an investigation that ended in court. The court awarded about two thousand dollars in damages to the lady (Participant #5 – P05).

The second incident occurred during the religious riot in some states in the northern parts of Nigeria. Boko Haram, an Islamic religious sect started a wave of disturbances in Borno and Gombe States that resulted in the arrest and subsequent death of one of the alleged leaders of the sect. When the leader was arrested someone took a picture of the man in handcuffs with a phone camera and without the knowledge of the police. Eventually, the suspected sect leader was shot and killed by the police under the false narrative that he resisted arrest. The official lies manifested when a newspaper published a picture of the man in handcuffs obtained from a member of the public

thereby contradicting the police story. It was a case of extra judicial killing that spurred

widespread condemnation and subsequent investigation. It marked a triumph for citizen

journalism and media convergence (Participant #3 – P03).

The era of media convergence also made it possible for ordinary citizens to

provide tips or leads to the professional journalists through SMS, the Internet, and social

media. The world got to know the magnitude and real death toll from the recent religious

violence in the northern part of the country through postings from citizen journalists.

Through such stories it was clear that the official casualty figures did not match the

pictures circulated by citizen journalists. A television station specifically recruited

market women and traders to make use of their mobile phones to gather information

about events in the market such as price fluctuation of some products, monetary

exchange rates, and harassment by local government officials. The same television

station also makes use of students to get news about happenings in university campuses.

Similarly, citizen journalism has been very helpful in the gathering and dissemination of

traffic information in big cities in Nigeria.

But, the traditional media can also get into trouble due to leads provided by a

citizen even though it is the truth. An example was the plane crash that killed 117 people

in 2007 and government and its agencies were unable to locate the site of the crash for

days. A citizen who witnessed the crash sent a message via a mobile phone to a

television station which instantly broadcast footage of the crash. The television station

was promptly shut down by the regulatory body – National Broadcasting Commission

(Participant #12 – P12).

In all, the data noted that citizen journalism could be a force for good or evil depending on how it is utilized. The transmission of information on multiple communication channels by citizens raises concerns about ethics, balance, fairness, and accuracy. The freedom of expression inherent in the convergence of communication devices is susceptible to abuse. The possibilities of defamatory statements or reports in these channels by citizen journalists abound. There is also the concern about the invasion of people's privacy by untrained citizen journalists.

It is clear from the data that the convergence of the old and new media has broad implications for citizen empowerment, journalism practice, openness, free speech, and democratic governance. Above all, these new communication platforms have altered fundamentally interpersonal relationships and how we share common experiences, interests, and problems.

Collaboration, Cooperation, and Partnership

Collaboration or partnership in terms of content sharing, swapping of staff, advertising revenue, and cross promotion was found in the data to be lacking and in some cases nonexistent. There is no culture of collaboration essentially because most of the media organizations in Nigeria are run as family businesses and that makes partnership difficult if not impossible. Scramble for domination, unhealthy competition, suspicion, and jealousy in the business environment undercut any prospect of collaboration among media organizations in Nigeria. One participant described the idea of partnership in the media industry as merely utopian.
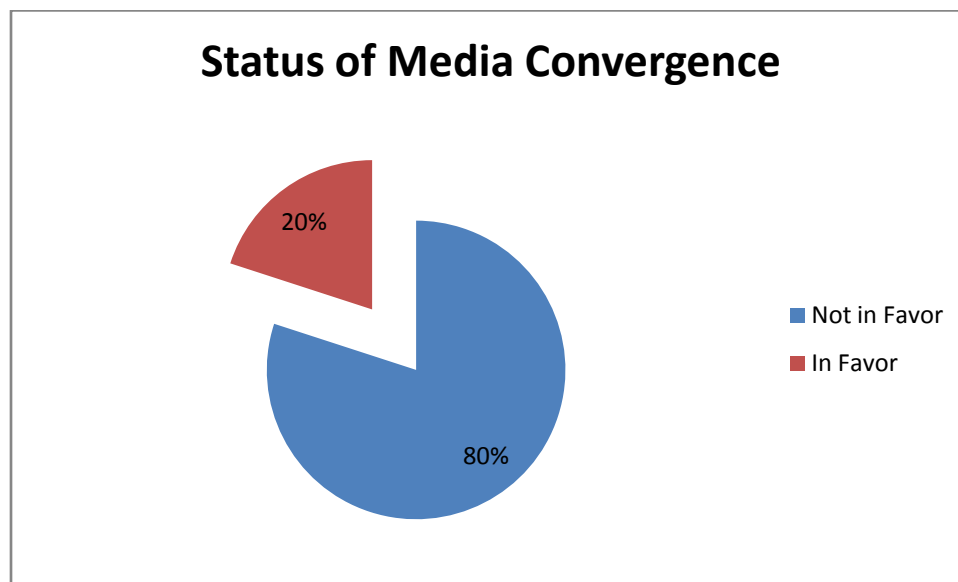
Figure 6. Participants' rating of current status of media convergence in Nigeria

Figure 6 shows that 15 participants in the study perceive the occurrence of media convergence in Nigeria differently. Whereas a majority 80 per cent or 12 of the participants believed that media convergence in relation to collaboration, cross-promotion, cooperation, content sharing, partnership, and swapping of staff is grossly underdeveloped in the Nigerian media industry, only three respondents or 20 percent of all respondents thought media convergence occur in Nigeria. Although the minority viewpoints emphasized the early developments of convergence, they were keen to recognize several instances of collaboration and partnerships that exist among media organizations in Nigeria.

Indeed, the study data showed that a certain level of collaboration occurs among some media organizations. In particular collaboration occurs between one publicly owned television station and a private radio station. The two organizations engage in content

sharing, program exchange, cross-promotion, and swapping of staff. In his own words, participant #2 said:

> Three years ago, we took the first step towards that greater convergence and collaboration with a radio station called *Cool* FM. The whole idea behind this was that *Cool* FM does not have a television station of its own and NTA does not have a radio station of its own and because we realize the importance of each other and understood the need of cooperation to maximize the effect in terms of information delivery and revenue generation…we started sharing presenters on air… we coined a slogan "*NTA is a television of Cool FM; Cool FM is the radio station of NTA*.

The collaboration between the television and the radio station notwithstanding I observed the partnership was showing signs of schism as members of staff of the two organizations seem not to have overcome the peculiar cultural differences between a government-owned organization and privately owned independent radio station. And some of these differences are noticeable in the treatment of news stories from government officials and use of news stories and advertorials from opposition parties. Journalists in privately owned organs have wider platforms to operate because their performances are tied to their paychecks unlike their counterparts in the government-owned media whose paychecks come from government subsidy or subvention. There is little or no tolerance for sloppiness in the private media outfits and therefore requires a culture of hard work and determination.

Collaboration also occurs in different dimensions notably in the news coverage of elections and sports and cooperation fostered by regulatory and professional bodies such as Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), Broadcasting Organizations of Nigeria (BON), and Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE). The inevitability of media convergence has "fostered inter-dependence among media organizations through alliances and cooperation within media membership organizations" (Participant #2). This level of cooperation mainly addresses industry practices and protection from political and economic pressures on the media sector. The partnership and collaboration among Nigerian media is described as informal and not institutional. A number of media organizations engage in periodic joint projects such as presidential debates during elections. The Nigerian Election Debate Group is one platform for collaboration among media organizations in Nigeria while sports coverage is another. The popularity of politics and soccer in Nigeria makes collaboration and partnership in the media coverage strategic to expanding audience and revenue base.

> …there is collaboration for now in sports where all radio and television stations pull resources together to take live football matches (you know Nigeria is a football loving nation). What I am saying in essence is that for now there is nothing like partnership or collaboration in the strict sense of convergence that embodies institutional partnership. (Participant #5 –P05)

Another aspect of collaboration evident in the data is the cooperation that exists between media organizations in Nigeria and their foreign counterparts. It occurs between newspapers in Nigeria and outside the country as well as broadcast organizations such as

radio and television stations that exchange programs. The review of newspaper content

on radio and television programs is also a form of cooperation and partnership identified

in the data. However, this type of collaboration suffered a setback when newspaper

proprietors protested against the broadcast of newspaper content on radio and particularly

television that provided more detailed review with pictures. The contention was that after

listening or watching the newspaper review in radio or television, there is little or no

incentive for readers to buy newspapers thereby leading to reduced circulation and loss of

revenue.

  Although partnership and collaboration dimension of media convergence is

dismal, the data noted that in an era of media convergence, collaboration and partnership

are critically needed within the Nigerian media industry because it will reduce the high

cost of running media organizations in the country and strengthen the shaky media

sector. In fact, a participant specifically suggested a consolidation of the media industry

to eliminate some of them that have become breeding grounds for charlatans in the

profession of journalism.

> Every newspaper is now struggling to set up more than one press in
>
> different parts of the country. In some other countries you wouldn't have
>
> to duplicate all over the place. This has implications for cost of production
>
> which is why perhaps one of the new directions in which the media has to
>
> go should be one of consolidation. (Participant # 1 – P01)

> There are many media establishments in Nigeria set up as a response to satisfy

immediate political goals of the proprietor. Many of them described as "media

mercenaries" (P01) can hardly stand firmly for long. With time some of them are unable to meet their financial obligations such as prompt payment of workers' salaries and subsequently they wither away so quickly that they throw many people into the unemployment market. Media organizations like these need to merge or collaborate with stronger ones to remain in business.

Other forms of cooperation or collaboration among professional journalists found in the study data are rather symptomatic of the sloppiness and professional malaise that afflict journalism practice in Nigeria. A ludicrous form of convergence and collaboration occur among correspondents of different media organizations. Often facilitated by the Correspondents Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists found in major cities of the country, reporters engage in outright plagiarism. Said Participant #12:

> Let me give you a terrible variant of convergence here. You know some
> journalists cannot reach the beat because of the presence of electronic
> devices …three journalists can go and cover a function and they will share
> the story with others. They will not go to the venue of the assignment but
> they share the story with other colleagues with the result that you see same
> stories appearing on various newspapers with little or no changes.

Content sharing as part of collaboration and partnership in media convergence was found to be informal and unofficial. In other words, it occurs sometimes but privately among reporters who are friends. However, some newspapers have occasionally published stories monitored from an interview or audience participation program on television and attributing the source to the television station in question. For

example, a program called *Democratic License* broadcast on Africa Independent

Television (AIT) is a regular source of political news for newspapers because the daily

program features prominent political figures in Nigeria's democracy.

Censorship, Government Ownership and Control of Media

Information was identified as a strategic asset that no government— democratic

or otherwise could afford to ignore. All governments are interested in using the news

media to spin and control the public mind. The data therefore noted that government

ownership of the media cannot go away but what is of concern is the arbitrary control of

media content by government or its agencies. There was a total rejection of any method

of control of the editorial process. Apparently there was a consensus that media

convergence will make any attempt by government to control the media "irrelevant" ,

"unnecessary and waste of time", "unreasonable and unsustainable"(P01-P15) because

of the availability of multiple sources of information. Convergence journalism creates an

enabling environment for press freedom. Today, the independent media flourishes better

than government owned media because the public confidence on government owned

media is at the lowest ebb. It is "…very unreasonable in the near future for government to

continue to say it will control the media… when the citizens stand up to say that what

you have reported is wrong the government will think twice" (Participant #5). The energy

and power to communicate that previously resided in the domain of journalists have

shifted and ordinary people are empowered under a changed media landscape to the

extent that the information flow is unstoppable and uncontrollable.

There is a dichotomy of viewpoints on government ownership of the media in relation to media convergence. Ownership and control are the two key concepts found in the data. One point of view holds that government involvement in the media industry is necessary to enable it to provide social services to the rest of the population. The public service and social mobilization imperative of the media especially the broadcast media makes government involvement inevitable. For example, the multi ethnic configuration of Nigeria is such that more than 350 languages are spoken by different ethnic nationalities (Momoh, 1999). The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria otherwise called Radio Nigeria is a federal government owned radio station that makes a deliberate attempt to broadcast in major languages of the people. The privately owned organs driven by profit motive cannot afford the luxury of communicating in native languages because of the cost and manpower implications. This view in essence contended that in a free market, government has the liberty to engage in any business it considers beneficial to the tax payers and that includes ownership of media organizations.

Another perspective focused on control of the media by government. Media convergence helps to check excessive government control of the media because it gives greater room for self expression in independent media. The era of media convergence signals a requiem for government media. The data noted that the tendency for government to control the media is not limited to government owned organizations. In other words, even if government owned media organs were to disappear from the scene, the vexed issue of control still exists within the independent media. This probably explains why government control of the media has not reduced even with numerous

private media organs in Nigeria. For example, a private television station called Africa Independent Television (AIT) was closed down by government on two occasions for reporting what was considered distasteful to the authorities. First, it carried a live broadcast of the National Assembly debate that foreclosed the ambition of former President Olusegun Obasanjo to change the constitution to allow him a third term in office. Second, it aired footage of a plane crash that occurred in a remote region of the country after the government was unable to locate the site of the crash after days of the accident. These instances prompted Paarticipant #11 to conclude that "television and radio in Nigeria are under a very strenuous burden – a burden of the regulatory body – the NBC. They come hard on you even when you report the truth". The resentment towards editorial control by government or the ruling political party cuts across both journalists and the masses, hence the popularity of Face book, You Tube, Twitter, and SMS in information sharing and connecting with people.

Self censorship was identified to be a major problem among media professionals that may potentially undercut the effectiveness of a media convergence regime. Self censorship and sycophancy exist in both government and privately owned media organizations. Self censorship is a practice whereby some journalists impose some kinds of restrictions on themselves and thereby not report accurately and honestly. Some of them hoard information or present a biased and incomplete analysis under the fear that government or some institution will frown at a report if presented honestly and accurately.

Self-censorship has been the greatest undoing of public service media

workers otherwise called government owned media practitioners. Most

times we tend to think for government in other words, we tend to say

government may not like this when in actual fact government has not told

you that they don't like this…nobody will come and say don't use this;

don't cover this; you have that in-built self-censorship. (Participant #6 -

P06)

This practice is not limited to media organizations owned and controlled by the

government. Journalists working in privately owned media establishments also face the

challenge of self censorship. In addition to possible pressures from government, the

proprietors of such organizations impose some kind of restrictions on their employees

and prevent them from using stories that are of public interest but probably inimical to

individual or corporate interests. Therefore, self censorship occurs in the private media

when journalists working there give consideration to the political and economic interests

of their proprietors.

Whereas self censorship and insatiable appetite for government control of

information dissemination through the traditional radio, television, and newspapers could

potentially impede successful media convergence in Nigeria, the potency of the new

media to challenge arbitrariness holds immense promise and opportunities for the demise

of government control and eradication of secrecy.

Media Infrastructure, State of Technology

The state of media infrastructure and technology was identified in the study data to be related to the status of media convergence and prospect of media convergence in Nigeria. Digitization, technical capability, broadband technology, and updated broadcasting equipment help convergence process. But, the state of infrastructural preparedness that propels convergence is inadequate and poses a threat to effective media convergence in Nigeria. Convergence journalism is dependent on efficient Internet access which in turn depends on factors such as availability of computer, computer literacy, and constant electricity.
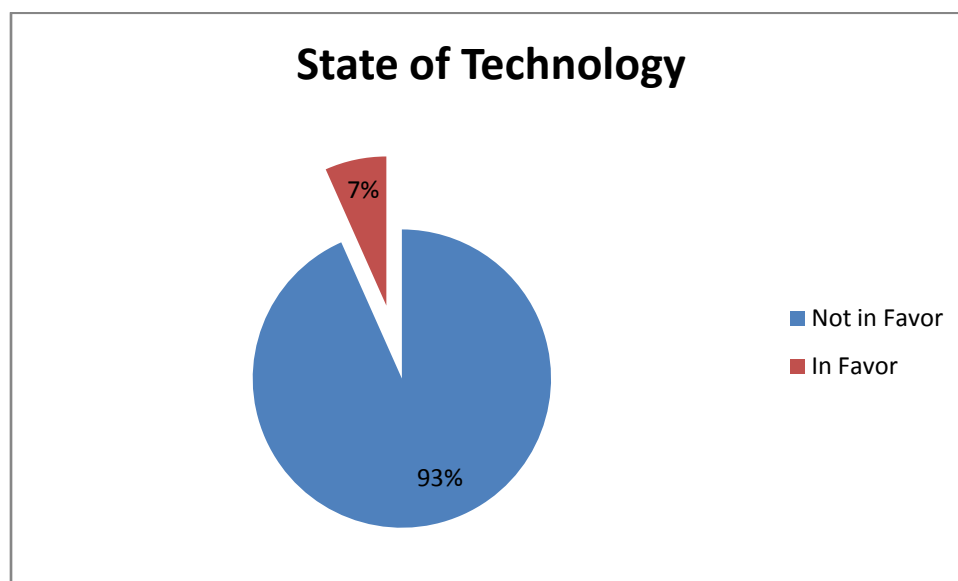

Figure 7. The opinion of participants on how technology affects media convergence

Figure 7 shows participants' perception of state of technology in relation to how it can propel media convergence in Nigeria. Fourteen (or 93 per cent) out of the 15 participants in the study agreed that the level of technology in Nigeria would militate

against a successful media convergence in the country while only one participant (or seven per cent) believed that the state of technology was not a barrier to meaningful media convergence in Nigeria.

The media in Nigeria operates under excruciating circumstances. The sector is heavily undercapitalized and therefore unable to provide cutting edge technology needed for effective media convergence. A lot of the media organizations in the country operate with obsolete equipment and therefore unable to cope with the ever changing technological environment. The shortage of sophisticated equipment is made worse because most equipment necessary for effective functioning of modern media organizations are import-dependent. It therefore requires a lot of capital to import the equipment in the midst of heavy tariff structure.

The face of Nigerian media is that with insufficient personnel and equipment one that relies heavily on government for help. A study participant put it this way: "I am not satisfied with the state of media infrastructure in Nigeria. It is capital intensive…our colleagues… are not being paid because it is hard to break even... I hope government can take a look at these problems" (Participant #7-P07). The result is that the Nigerian media lack the resources to cover issues and events happening in the country adequately. News coverage is largely limited to the cities, government activities, and few elite. In most cases, city people dominate media coverage to the neglect of the estimated 70 per cent of the population that reside in the rural areas. The marginalization of the vast population from active participation in the communication and governance processes is unhealthy for the growth of democracy (Participant #11 –P11).

I observed an interruption of newsroom operations during a power outage that lasted for a few minutes. The trend is common and that is why many businesses including media organizations in Nigeria have standby electric generators to substitute for the public power supply that has ever become epileptic. It adds to the cost of doing business "…the amount of money that is spent on diesel alone is unbelievable because you cannot produce the newspaper with public electricity which is like a standby facility" (Participant #1- P01). The disruptive effect of irregular electricity supply on media operations is serious and derails any prospect of effective media convergence. The Internet access in newsrooms across the media organizations in Nigeria is of no value if there is no regular supply of electricity to power the server, charge laptop batteries, and power desktop computers.
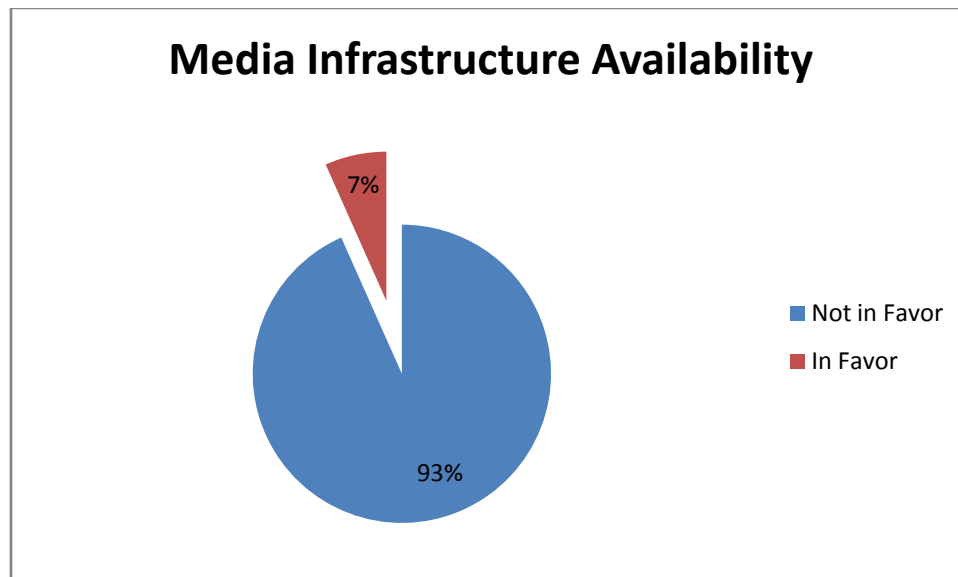

Media Infrastructure Availability

- 7%
- 93%
- Not in Favor
- In Favor

Figure 8. The opinion of participants regarding the availability of media infrastructure that support convergence.

Figure 8 shows participants' perspective on availability of media infrastructure that can support effective media convergence. Fourteen respondents are of the view that media infrastructure that can enable media convergence are grossly inadequate while only one participant thought the existing infrastructure could support media convergence.

The poor electricity supply is an addition to the existing problem of the slow Internet connection experienced across the country. The poor Internet connection is mostly noticeable during peak working hours when according to one online editor "many people are surfing the web… our web developer told us to reduce the size of our picture because of the slow Internet speed that affects his work and accessibility"(Participant #4-P04). The ugly experience of Internet use encountered by journalists is emblematic of what the rest of the people face in their homes, offices, and commercial cyber cafes that exist at different spots in major cities of the country. The implication is that media convergence fuelled by citizen journalists notably young Nigerians who are habitual Internet users is effectively curtailed.

According to the study data, poor education, poverty, inadequate human resource training, and poor transportation system affect the successful implementation of media convergence. The level of computer literacy is abysmally low and consequently, many Nigerians are not familiar with the computer not to mention the Internet. The few who are interested in the new media are restricted because of poverty. The cost of acquiring a computer or getting access to the Internet is expensive for ordinary citizens and also for some journalists who are paid very little and sometimes owed arrears of salaries.

The educational curriculum of most of the journalism schools in Nigeria is not tailored to meet the needs of convergence journalism. Participant #1 lamented:

Students that are coming out of the schools are not really prepared. There is that disconnect between the workplace and the school. I think the review of the school curriculum will be important particularly the journalism and mass communication departments… every media house will have to practically train its staff, or the staff will learn on the job. You don't have ready made people coming from the universities that can just come in and add value.

The poor transportation facility is another infrastructural problem besetting the media with far reaching consequences on the implementation of media convergence. The transportation system in Nigeria is described as a "nightmare". Obviously, there is a connection between communication and transportation. Although information and communication technologies could substitute transportation both are generally complementary. In the case of the media industry for instance, the inefficient transportation system affects the circulation of newspapers. The collapse of railway transportation means that to transport newspapers or other media equipment, vehicles are put on the road with attendant high cost in money, manpower, energy, and time.

Summary

In this chapter I provided a brief description of how the research was conducted and presented the findings as distilled from the data analysis. The first research question sought to know the perception of Nigerian journalists in relation to the potential impacts

of media convergence on democracy in terms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation? Based on the analysis of interview transcripts and observational field notes, it was found that majority of the respondents believe that media convergence has the potential to accelerate freedom of expression, openness, and citizen participation in the political process. The unprecedented patronage of the social networking site, Facebook by Nigeria's president raised the stakes and signaled a significant and irreversible change in political communication in Nigeria now and in the future.

The second research question wanted to know if Nigerian journalists consider media convergence as effective in supporting free, fair, and frequent elections in Nigeria. Again, virtually all the respondents believed that media convergence could help in the conduct of credible elections in the country. However, the illiteracy level among the vast population and some legal bottlenecks were identified as possible challenges that could undermine the prospect of media convergence providing effective support for free, fair, and frequent elections in Nigeria.

The journalists' perception of the current extent of media convergence in Nigeria was the third research question. On the basis of key indices to measure media convergence as found in the literature, journalists in Nigeria believe that true convergence is yet to take shape. For example, the trend towards collaboration, partnership, and cross promotion was virtually nonexistent. Although informal cooperation among media organizations occur such as in sports coverage and minimal

content sharing, media convergence in terms of swapping of staff and joint drive for advertising revenue are lacking seriously.

Finally, the question on how media convergence can be achieved in Nigeria given the state of technology and media infrastructure elicited sharp responses. By overwhelming margin, respondents acknowledged that the level of technology and necessary infrastructure to facilitate media convergence in Nigeria are still very low. Internet access is limited due to poor broadband technology, poverty, and ignorance. The media organizations in the country are undercapitalized and lack the necessary state-of-the art equipment to cope with the ever changing communications system.

The analysis and findings on the impact of media convergence on Nigerian democracy brought to focus such issues as freedom of expression as distinguished from freedom of the press. What is the relationship between freedom of expression and democratic governance? Is it possible to establish a direct link between media convergence and democracy?
Media convergence can both be constructive and destructive to an emerging country like Nigeria. How does convergence fit into the future of the news business in Africa and perhaps around the world?

What is the status of convergence in Nigerian newsrooms and how it can be mapped onto a convergence continuum; to what extent Nigerian citizens can be seen as contributing and what all of this means to journalists currently in the midst of this process? Answers to these and other relevant questions derived from emerging themes

shall form the plank of discussions in the next chapter. The overarching themes will be discussed in chapter 5 in the context of the literature on media convergence as well as media and democracy. I will make specific recommendations in line with the study's implications for social change and at the same time raise important issues required for further research.
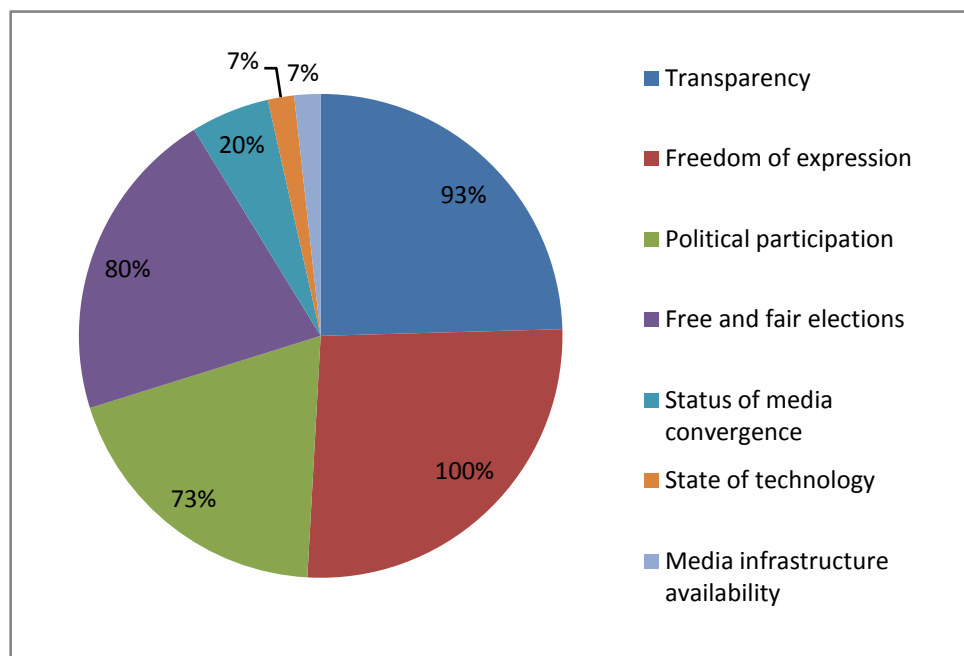

Figure 9. Visual presentation/summary of participants' perception in relation to key variables in percentage terms.

Figure 9 shows summary of participants support for key variables: 100 per cent of participants said media convergence has the potential to precipitate freedom of expression; 93 per cent held the same view about media convergence and transparency; and 73 per cent believed that media convergence was a catalyst for political participation in terms of citizen engagement, involvement in decision making process, and electoral

participation. Eighty per cent of participants held the view that the prospect of free and fair elections was possible in Nigeria under a converged media environment.

Only 20 per cent of participants contended that media convergence occur in Nigeria while seven percent of participants maintained that available media infrastructure and state of technology in Nigeria were adequate to have effective media convergence in the country.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study was undertaken to explore the potential impact on democratic governance of integrating different communication platforms, particularly in terms of how this integration influences freedom of expression, openness, accountability, and political participation. The convergence of different channels of communication notably the traditional media (radio, television, newspapers, and magazines), new media (the Internet, and hand— held wireless devices such as mobile phones, PDA's, etc., and social media (Face book, Twitter, You Tube, and RSS feeds etc.) has broad implications for governance, media freedom, citizens' access to the media, freedom of expression, transparency, accountability, and political participation. The intent of this study was to examine the connection between unfettered information flow and effective democratic governance as expressed in the form of citizen engagement and empowerment in a converged media environment.

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the perception of Nigerian journalists in relation to the potential impacts of media convergence on democracy in terms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation?

2. How do Nigerian journalists consider media convergence as effective in supporting free, fair, and frequent elections in Nigeria?

3. What is the perception of Nigerian journalists' regarding the current extent of media convergence in Nigeria?

4. How can media convergence be achieved in Nigeria given the state of technology and media infrastructure?

Context of Study: An Overview

The phenomenological approach adopted in this qualitative study is considered appropriate (Lester, 1999; Mcnabb, 2008; Polkinghorne, 2005) to investigate a new phenomenon such as media convergence. Such an approach helps to illuminate the phenomenon under investigation through mapping a mass of information and perceptions gathered from interviews, discussions and participant observation, and reflecting and presenting a report based on the expressed views of the research participant(s) (Lester, 1999).Two data sets were used for the study:— (a) interviews and (b) my observational field notes. Fifteen participants who are working journalists took part in the study. These journalists included editors, reporters, online editors, news producers, columnists, media proprietors, and political correspondents. Their selection was based on their presumed experience in their job and knowledge of media convergence. I engaged each participant in an interview of an hour or more to discuss his or her experiences with media convergence as it occurs in Nigeria and how this convergence affects citizen engagement in the political process. My observational field notes formed part of the analysis which was conducted by coding for themes and constant comparison. The process of themeing the data was carried out on the

basis of patterns that emerged and interpretation of those patterns. I was able to validate the findings by employing multiple sources of data and reviews by professional colleagues and classmates.

This chapter is made up of three sections. The first section presents the findings of the study. The study's implications for social change are featured in the second section along with specific recommendations for government, civil society, and policy makers within the African continent. Finally, the recommendations for future research and an articulation of the study's limitations are contained in the last section. This research was anchored in the theoretical framework of democratic-participant media theory and uses and gratification model. The concept of media and democracy provided a panoramic view in my examination of the impact of media convergence on Africa's democracy. There was no intention to test any particular theory or sets of theories.

The research questions are open-ended and therefore do not yield to direct answers of yes or no. The interview questions were specifically designed to address the research questions. The findings from this study are derived from the personal knowledge and experiences of the participants, and represent a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on media convergence, democracy, and political communication. The results also inform theory in several interesting ways and have significant implications for future research.

Discussion of Findings for Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: What is the perception of Nigerian journalists in relation to the potential impacts of media convergence on democracy in terms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation? Media convergence was found to be a catalyst for democratic tenets such as transparency, freedom of expression, and citizen participation in the political process. Accountability journalism is a natural outgrowth of media convergence or convergence journalism.

Accountability Journalism, Freedom, and Citizen Engagement

Answers to Question 1 revealed passion for an open society as a precursor to the evolution of stable democracy in Nigeria. The participants believed the media can help to usher an open society that in turn supports an open government. By an overwhelming margin, study participants denounced the secrecy that often shrouds official business within the Nigerian polity. Findings suggest that it is impossible to have informed debate on public policies if the public is ignorant of what is going on because government has chosen to cloak its activities in darkness. This finding is in consonance with Ekpu (2001) who observed that in Nigeria; almost everything is secret within government circles because of the Official Secrets Act of 1962 which is still in force. The Official Secrets Act is an obnoxious law inherited from the British Colonial government that arrogates to government officials some measure of infallibility and forbids disclosure of any unauthorized information (Dabiri, 2009).

Transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation are interrelated. An open society allows free speech and citizens participating in the political process if

there is a guarantee that they will not be prosecuted or persecuted for freely expressing their political views. The agitation for transparency and freedom of expression is symptomatic of the fundamental change that has occurred within Nigeria's socio-political milieu. Considered a worldwide trend, the convergence of media platforms is accelerating the demand for accountability and incorruptibility—two vital assets in short supply in the Nigerian polity. The news media in Nigeria has undergone a fundamental transformation in the past few years mostly because of new technology and changes in the society. The mass media is a full participant in Nigeria's cultures notably its democratic political system.

In his book *The Facebook Effect*, Kirkpatrick (2010) noted the impact of the new media notably Facebook on political activism and how political processes in some countries are shifting due to changes in mode of communication between the citizens and government. Nigeria is one of those countries where the use of SMS, email, Facebook, and the Internet in gathering and dissemination of information along with the traditional media such as radio, television, and newspapers is common among journalists and ordinary citizens. With the increased use of mobile phones among the Nigerian population and comparatively greater use of the Internet, and indeed the expanding universe of media choices available to citizens, media convergence has indeed altered the information universe of citizens remarkably. The increase in the choice of media platforms available to citizens and the use of those platforms to express their views has broad implications for political participation. Jefferson and Madison, both patrons of America's democracy recognized the indispensable role of information sharing in a

democracy when they stated that "unless all citizens have easy access to the same caliber of information as society's wealthy and privileged, self-government cannot succeed" (McChesney, 2007, para. 3). What the convergence of hitherto separate communication channels has attempted to do within the Nigerian society has been to narrow the yawning gap that existed between the political elite and ordinary citizens. Extraordinary interaction and vigorous debates usually occur between media audiences and guests on television or radio programs. For example, a respondent narrated how a caller on a television program questioned a popular politician why he married a fourth wife in the midst of the country's economic malaise. The politician was angry at the question but could not do anything to the questioner who was enjoying the freedom of expression enabled by mobile devices, and smart phones that has become popular in recent times. In the past, the audacity to ask such a question publicly was rare for fear of persecution or death. Today, the reality is that citizens including journalists are able to question their leaders in Nigeria with little or no fear of losing one's life.

The results reported in this study, however, did not indicate a strong relationship between increased access to the media and deep political knowledge within the society. The findings are largely in consonant with previous research by media scholars who are yet to understand the connection between media, political learning, and political knowledge (Barabas & Jerit, 2009; Shaker, 2009). Therefore, if media convergence creates an enabling environment for democratic norms of transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation to flourish, it may not guarantee intense political

activism or informed political knowledge among the vast Nigerian populace that are largely docile and apathetic about politics and politicians.

With increased media choices available to media audiences comes a different dimension of use as evident in the use of the new media notably the Internet, Face book, and SMS by mostly the young population. What is surprising in the Nigerian situation is that journalists have not figured out how to use the convergence environment to connect with audiences in a way that can stimulate political participation. Many young Nigerians access the Internet not for the purpose of stimulating political discussions but to engage in scams and cyber crimes such as fraudulent financial dealings. These young people are mostly occupied for days and weeks posting trash and trite on Face book and Yahoo that do not elevate development or advance human progress in anyway (Participant # 15). The postings and chats are mainly gossips of personal, tribal, and sexual conversations that border on the fringes of the mundane and inanities. These trends are consistent with uses and gratification theory of the media (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Vishwanath, 2008) that assumes that media users have unique needs and purposes for use. It also confirms to Schmidt's (2010) fear about the consequences of the amount of personal data people publish on the Internet. Schmidt, the chief executive officer of Google stated that many people may be forced to change their identity in the future because of the amount of personal data they dump on the Internet today. This is instructive for users of new media platforms that dominate an era of media convergence. Therefore, the freedom of expression and transparency enabled by the new media has some unintended consequences now and in the future. While it potentially can advance democracy, it could

also affect human lives adversely due to self-inflicted harm. How the Nigerian media is able to build, cultivate, and grow a community of people who are interested in what they are reporting and engaging citizens on social media platforms can bring about a huge change in mindset.

Question 1 also established that excessive information, unlimited freedom, and unfettered access to the media can also threaten democracy that it is meant to preserve. Nigeria's democracy is fragile because of the multi ethnic composition of the country. The country consists of about 350 ethnic nationalities with different languages and cultures (Momoh, 1999). Allegiance to ethnic loyalty is palpable with little regard for the central government. Therefore the potential to abuse the freedom fostered by media convergence is real. Freedom with responsibility is desirable because reckless use of information may lead to misinformation, disinformation, and anarchy. The finding also raises the question as to what is the right dose of information necessary for the growth and sustenance of Nigeria's democracy. This brings to the vortex the century-old philosophical debate between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey both interested in the survival of democracy. After analyzing their viewpoints especially as examined by other scholars, Jones (2010) concluded that Lippmann would have viewed convergence journalism propelled by the Internet and democratization of information with skepticism while Dewey would have welcomed it because of his support for quality news with potential to educate the masses. The activism of some citizens and especially civil society organizations in insulting and ridiculing corrupt public officials is testimony to the utility of media convergence in providing education and information about corruption and its

perpetrators. Whereas media convergence may not eliminate shady deals in public administration in Nigeria, it has the potential to shine light on dark corners.

This study also uncovered a misunderstanding of key tenets of democracy: freedom of expression and freedom of the press. In the United States the first amendment speaks of both "freedom of speech" and "of the press." This means that citizens have the ability and liberty to speak their minds in different forms including verbalizing or expressing them through interpersonal or mass mediated communication. Nigerian democracy at the moment does not have the luxury of the First Amendment as obtained in the United States. Criminal defamation laws including libel and sedition are still in the statute books and undermine prospects of complete freedom of expression in the Nigerian polity.

The confusion as to who is entitled to enjoy the right of freedom of expression is the main reason why the country does not have a Freedom of Information law. The concept of freedom of expression is mistaken to mean freedom of the press that is often construed to mean special privilege for journalism practitioners. The political class believes that any legislation that guarantees freedom of information is a license to journalists to haunt and hound them by exposing their ignoble activities. The agitation for freedom of information law rages on between government and civil society especially members of the fourth estate of the realm. Recently, three non-governmental organisations: Africa Freedom of Information Centre, Kampala Uganda, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, and Coalition on the Right to Information, Ghana urged the leadership of Nigeria's upper and lower legislative chambers to pass the freedom of

information bill (The Guardian, 2010). The delay in the passage of the bill is based on the argument by lawmakers that if Nigerians especially journalists will enjoy the right of freedom of information they must be willing to accept clauses that will punish abuse of the freedom.

It is important to point out however, that the struggle for freedom of information and freedom of expression is not peculiar to African countries. Kemper's (2010) study on freedoms of expression and information among indigenous tribes in the United States provides a clue that is instructive for Nigeria. Kemper maintained that those who want freedom of expression and information "must argue even fight for it, appealing from their hearts to the people, and then proving with their actions that their hearts and words are true"(p. 36). It is hoped that the greater involvement of citizens in creating media content through media convergence will guarantee a measure of success in the fight for freedom of information law in Nigeria. If it took the United States 190 years to win the struggle for Freedom of Information Act, a similar struggle for Nigeria in her 50th year of nationhood can be said to have just begun.

Although, convergence journalism potentially represents a sea change on how citizens participate in governance and communicate with leaders, transparency in public life will continue to suffer some setbacks in the absence of freedom of information law. Findings of this study emphasize the role of journalism in a democracy and that journalists believe that their work of monitoring government and official behaviour is essential to democracy. This actually echoes the thinking of French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville who visited the United States more than 200 years ago and noted the

indispensability of the news media in a democracy. Gregorian (2010) also described

journalism and journalists as harbingers of democracy. It is in this context that it becomes

a sacred obligation on the part of news professionals to inform Nigerians about the truth

even when it is not palatable. The common belief is that journalism's contribution to

democracy must be judged in the context of how it is able to scrutinize government and

influential members of society. To this extent therefore a law that makes it possible for

Nigerians to access government information, activities of political office holders, and

other leaders is a desideratum for democracy. By force of law, Nigerians would like a

situation where they can demand to inspect government records different from the ones

government chooses to make public. Records such as Nigeria National Petroleum

Corporation (NNPC) receipts showing how much money the country makes from daily

oil sales, the annual salary of the president, minutes of Federal Executive Council

meetings, and award of contracts to foreign and local firms are important public

information that citizens are entitled to know. Consistent with international obligations

for the enforcement and protection of basic freedoms, a freedom of information

legislation in Nigeria is expected to produce committed whistle blowers who will

champion incorruptibility in a country that needs a clean break from its past notorious for

graft and unwholesome practices.

Freedom of the press as a core principle in a democracy resonated in the study

findings. The perception is that government control of the news media must stop.

Although, government ownership of media organizations was acknowledged as vital in

providing essential public service and social mobilization roles to the entire population,

its interference with editorial decisions remains unacceptable. The news media and journalists in Nigeria have experienced a tough history of regulation especially during military dictatorships of General Ibrahim Babangida and the late General Sani Abacha. Many independent news organizations experienced sporadic closures and interruptions for challenging the authorities while some journalists were jailed and killed under mysterious circumstances. BBC World Service Trust's (2006) Africa Media Development Initiative chronicled series of regulatory obstacles faced by the Nigerian media to demonstrate symptoms of a media system in chains. Consistent with results of the study, accountability journalism cannot thrive in the absence of press freedom. According to Jones (2010) democratic accountability has expanded in scope to include monitoring government, making sure elected officials truly serve the people, and keeping a watch on powerful institutions and individuals including business and media organizations and journalists. These are challenges before journalists and journalism in Nigeria in the new media convergence environment.

The dilemma often associated with the love for press freedom also echoed in the study results. As indicated earlier, the convergence of media platforms potentially increases prospects of a free press. It is ironic that journalists agitate for press freedom but when they leave journalism and get appointed into government or get elected into political offices they turn against press freedom. For example, the former Senate Committee Chairman on Information, a prominent journalist before getting into the senate is believed to be the greatest opponent of the Freedom of Information Bill currently in the National Assembly. This situation echoes Thomas Jefferson's support for

press freedom in which he preferred newspapers without government but when he became president and faced relentless attack from the media, he changed his opinion of the press as reflected in his famous statement that "the man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers" (Jones, 2010, p. 52). Such is the contradictions in the demand for press freedom around the world and the result of this study is not different.

In terms of freedom of expression under a converged media environment in Nigeria, the absence of a common language of communication widely spoken and understood by the entire population poses a serious challenge. Although English language is the official language in the country, there are hundreds of local languages spoken by different ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. Only media organizations especially electronic media establishments run by tax payers attempt to broadcast in native languages while majority of the independent privately- owned media organizations communicate in English language that is only understood and spoken by the elite and other literate citizens. The implication is that the media with the widest reach are controlled by government while the fairly independent media with limited reach relative to the vast population of illiterate rural dwellers can hardly claim to be reporting Nigeria in the real sense of journalism. A government-owned media organization which was part of this study's sample has as its motto: "you can't beat the reach" to demonstrate its ability to penetrate all corners of a country of 150 million people that covers an area of 356,669 square miles or 923768 square kilometres – the size of California, Nevada, and Arizona combined [Encyclopedia of the Nations (2010)]. The stunning reality is that

most of the Nigerian media "cannot reach the beat" (Participant #12) and consequently concentrate on reporting only the activities of urban dwellers, government, politicians, business leaders, and powerful individuals to the utter neglect of the majority of rural people. A lot of things are happening in different communities that deserve media attention; in a world awash with information glut, citizens of all persuasion need help to cut through the clutter. How the rural- urban dichotomy in media reach pans out in the era of media convergence especially in terms of stimulating political participation is uncertain and exposes the contradictions in the Nigerian condition.

In conclusion, findings to Question 1 suggest that media convergence facilitates transparency, freedom of expression, and political participation under certain conditions. Principal among the conditions is the enactment of a freedom of information law that will support citizens, civil society, and journalists to commit to the end of secrecy in the Nigerian political sphere. Government interference with editorial decisions in the media and other forms of arbitrariness must stop while the generation Xer's should devote the long hours surfing the web to positive use by supporting the cause of good governance and democratic aspirations of the most populous country in Africa.

Discussion of Findings for Question 2

Question 2 asked: How do Nigerian journalists consider media convergence as effective in supporting free, fair, and frequent elections in Nigeria? Responses from participants indicate that media convergence could help in minimizing the incidence of electoral fraud through the use of smart phones and collaboration with vigilant citizens and journalists. Electoral reform was identified as a necessity in the quest for a new

democratic order in Nigeria. The consensus is that media convergence being a new

phenomenon should accelerate the needed reform in the country's electoral system.

Media Convergence and Electoral Reform

The study participants without exception made reference to the annulled 1993

presidential election considered the freest election ever conducted in the country to

validate their claims that media convergence has the potential to enthrone order and

rectitude in Nigeria's elections. At the time cell phone use was very rare and considered a

status symbol, the presumed winner of that election, the Chief M.K.O Abiola, a

billionaire distributed hand held mobile devices to the agents of the defunct Social

Democratic Party in all polling centers across the country. The method used in that

election was called Option A4 otherwise known as open ballot system that required

voters to queue behind posters of their preferred candidates. The electoral commission

would then count the voters accordingly and promptly announce the result to the hearing

of everyone at the polling center. With this announcement, party agents would record the

votes of their candidates in addition to monitoring and reporting activities that took place

at the polling center. In the case of SDP polling agents armed with cell phones, they sent

the results to their party headquarters and this meant that the electoral commission would

find it difficult to tamper with the results in their collation centers. Rigging of elections

usually occur between polling centers and collation centers of the electoral commission.

Although this method was criticized for the violation of the privacy of the

electorate, it nevertheless produced an impressive outcome. It is because of the success of

open ballot system of voting that has led to calls for electoral reforms that will include

aspects of Option A4 with modifications. It is called Modified Open Ballot System [MOBS] (Participant #5). Unlike the method used in the 1993 election, MOBS will provide for privacy of voters along with other changes.

It is against this background that results of this study in terms of the efficacy of media convergence in supporting free and fair elections can be situated. With the rapid spread of cell phone use in Nigeria, many citizens have come to recognize both mobile devices and social networks such as Face book as instruments of power and transparency. Therefore, the integration of the old and new media under a converged environment has given voters additional voice and access to multiple communication platform. With that they can bring to the attention of the public important information about electoral violence, snatching of ballot boxes, absence of voting materials, state of preparedness or unpreparedness of electoral officials, and other irregularities that occur in the voting process.

The results revealed that although media convergence has the potential to support transparency and honest electoral process, the electoral law as it exists currently does not encourage openness. In a world where instant communication is the order of the day, interested citizens and journalists covering elections and campaigns can report activities at polling centers as they take place. In a converged media environment, citizen journalists could capture news worthy scenes and events at polling stations with their phone cameras or SMS and journalists may also file exit polls which could provide a clue to the direction of the election outcome.

Regrettably, this finding demonstrates that Nigeria's legal system does not accept pictures of election malpractice that may have been taken by a citizen. In other words, if one presents a photograph to show how certain acts were committed in violation of the law at election petition tribunals, such evidence will be inadmissible on the basis of the Evidence Act. Worst still is the fact that announcing exit polls is forbidden by the various media regulatory agencies such as National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and Nigerian Press Council (NPC). The electoral law stipulates that all election results are to be announced only by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This finding is similar to what obtains in Canada where entrance and exit polls are banned while broadcasters are regulated strictly as to how election coverage is conducted (Nesbitt-Larking, 2009).

It is therefore clear from the findings that with existing legal bottlenecks, the impact of media convergence on election outcomes may not be decisive after all. Instead, it serves the purpose of deterrence from sharp practices, makes it a little harder for politicians to engage in rigging of elections, and facilitates the work of election officials and journalists. The effect of media convergence in creating general political awareness among the citizenry scares the politicians to the point that many of them recognize that they cannot do business as they did in the past. The polity is tensed and it appears the masses are eager to resist rigging of elections to ensure their votes count, elect credible individuals, and ultimately raise the specter of public office as well as the country's credibility in the comity of nations.

To further demonstrate the potency of media convergence in supporting free and fair elections; one participant narrated how citizens drew the attention of journalists to the absence of voting materials in a certain voting center. Through the reporting of journalists who provided live coverage of the elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission took immediate action to redress the situation and the affected electorate was able to cast their votes before end of voting. A similar situation occurred in another place where citizen journalists through SMS provided information to journalists in a certain media organization about snatching of ballot boxes by desperate politicians and political thugs. A realization that election results and violent acts at voting centers could be transmitted instantly via SMS, other mobile devices, Face book, and the Internet will reduce the appetite to engage in election fraud. The ubiquity of phone cameras and other hand held recording devices and the pervasive Internet—supported instant communication of sight and sounds effectively restrains politicians and their cohorts from perpetrating their nefarious activities during elections. In a sense therefore, media convergence has contributed significantly in the sensitization of Nigerians regarding social structures, political communication, and practices in a democratic culture in addition to an awakening of how media technologies are affecting their lives including political behavior.

Answers to Question 2 also suggest remarkable success in organizing debates among political candidates during election campaigns. What started as a solo effort by an independent television station has now grown to be a collaborative effort among different media organizations. Organized under the aegis of the Nigerian Election Debate Group,

now a formally registered body, almost all the radio, television, newspaper, and magazines in Nigeria are members. In the era of media convergence, journalists in the country have seized on the opportunity of debates among candidates especially presidential candidates to form new alliances and new synergies in the production and distribution of media content. It is in this context that the changing role of the media in elections and campaigns is defined. In Nigeria, the dissemination of news generated from political debates assumes viral proportions with the ubiquity of mobile communication devices and migration of audiences from one media platform to another including the old and new media. Through this process, voters and non voters alike are informed and better educated on key issues about election campaigns so that they can make informed decisions on candidates of their choice when they cast their votes. Responses from participants reveal that the presidential election debates fashioned along the United States Presidential Election Debates is already receiving praise from around the world notably the United States for exemplary skills in pairing multiple candidates that range in tens and twenties.

Question 2 also raises the issue of the credibility of the electoral body – the Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC), voter education, voting processes, and the importance of electoral participation in Nigeria's future polls. For media convergence to support free and fair elections, the vigilance of citizens and propriety of electoral officials are critical. Respondents noted that the country's history in terms of election has been miserable. The Independent National Electoral Commission is only independent in name and not in reality. The Chairman of the body is often appointed by

the President who makes sure the electoral body is anything but independent. The elections conducted in 2003 and 2007 were examples of how not to conduct elections. To define their frustration Nigerians pejoratively regard the election as selection by the powers-that-be. A former national chairman of the electoral body acknowledged before a public enquiry about the impropriety that pervaded the conduct of the election he supervised in the past and infamously admitted that "my hands were tied" (Participant #15). During data collection for this study, a new chairman of INEC was announced by the president and the choice of Professor Attahiru Jega, according to media reports was widely welcomed. The former university professor is popular as an activist who fought the former military regime when he was president of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The celebration of the appointment of Jega was partly because of his pedigree as an independent-minded radical who can tell truth to power and stand for the independence of the electoral body. How civil society including the media, the political class, and INEC utilize this immense goodwill and momentum is germane to the electoral future of Nigeria.

As it appears now, the chief electoral officer of the federation is a good brand, a situation that can be exploited by adopting a uniquely strategic communication initiative to foster a better civic engagement, enhance the credibility of the electoral body, and rescue the country from its electoral nightmare. With increasing apathy in politics, the electoral body can improve voter turnout through effective communication targeted at the youths and other citizens who patronize both the old and new media. Traditionally, the Independent National Electoral Commission makes use of radio, television and print

media to disseminate information to citizens and inform them of their rights and the means through which they could exercise their franchise. The use of the internet as a part of INEC's overall communication strategy is important and with the increase in cell phone usage among ordinary citizens, INEC can design an information alert system that can constantly educate the electorate in not just English but in local languages. Already, candidates in elections are using the new media in addition to the old media to sell their manifestos and canvass for supporters. The use of ringtones in cell phones creates awareness among voters. If it is good for candidates, it is also good for the electoral body to use similar strategy to instill in their target audience the issues at stake in participating in elections. Voter education often occurs every election cycle and fizzles out after elections. The sustenance of voter education through the use of new technologies and multiple communication vehicles beyond mere election cycles is desirable.

Everything considered, the convergence of media platforms is helpful in boosting electoral participation because audiences of every ilk can be targeted in the traditional media, the Internet, social networking media, and mobile phones. Citizens are empowered in a converged media environment to agitate for transparency in the voting process and in the collation of results. Cell phones and Facebook are primary weapons available to citizens to communicate with politicians and professional journalists in the traditional media. Barring the limitations imposed by the country's legal system, media convergence can sensitize voters, politicians, and most importantly journalists in such a way that reduces the occurrence of electoral malpractice.

Discussion of Findings for Question 3

Question 3 asks: What is the perception of Nigerian journalists regarding the current extent of media convergence in Nigeria? Responses from participants demonstrated their understanding of media convergence and the slow pace at which it is occurring in Nigeria. The perception is that media convergence occurs in terms of gathering and dissemination of information through the use of the traditional media (radio, television, newspapers, and magazines) and the new media notably the Internet, social media, SMS, and hand held mobile devices. But from the perspective of collaboration, partnership, swapping of staff, content sharing, joint advertising budget, and technology media convergence is dismal. In essence media convergence is a novel concept in Nigeria because the drivers of convergence are inactive and moribund. Although in its infancy, media convergence is perceived to be a panacea to the dwindling fortunes of the Nigerian media long in need of revitalization and consolidation.

Convergences, Conglomerations, and Consolidations

This study found that the media industry in Nigeria is dominated by government and few families of the bourgeoisie. Most of the independent media are family businesses grounded in business models that are indifferent to anything but profit and power. The ownership pattern has a direct bearing in the understanding of the status of media convergence in the country.

In the case of government owned media organizations, the bureaucracy and hierarchical nature of their operations put real media convergence at odds with the status quo. At the federal level for instance, government runs a behemoth of an organization

that can be regarded as a conglomerate. It runs the publicly-funded Nigerian Television

Authority with nearly 200 different stations including the apex national station located in

Abuja, the federal capital, zonal stations located in the six geo-political zones of the

country, stations located in each of the 36 states of the federation and 103 community

stations scattered in remote villages across the country (Participant #7). Also at the

federal level, the federal government operates the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria

which has stations in all the 36 states and Abuja. The different state governments have

their own separate radio, television, and newspaper organizations. Whereas convergence

journalism may occur in these organizations internally, this study discovered that

bureaucratic red tape makes it difficult if not impossible for these organizations to

collaborate with other organizations especially the privately owned organizations.

Government media and private media in Nigeria are completely strange bedfellows

primarily because of differences in newsroom culture and business orientation.

Journalists who work with government media often remembers government as their

'masters' and therefore engage in self-censorship most of the time unlike their

counterparts in the privately owned media who are more independent in their reporting.

This finding is consistent with previous studies (Dailey et al., Lowrey, 2004; Silcock &

Keith, 2006) that found differences in organizational culture notably newsroom culture to

be a barrier towards effective media convergence.

On the other hand, answers to Question 3 indicate that business jealousy, rivalry,

ego, suspicion, and protectionism militate against effective media convergence. Formal

or institutionalized collaboration, cross-promotion, cooperation, and partnership are

presently under developed within the media industry essentially because media owners want to protect their business in the unfounded belief that engaging with others could jeopardize their business. There are few instances of informal collaboration such as two or three newspaper organizations making use of one printing machine for production efficiency and cost effectiveness. Other areas of informal cooperation are in the coverage of major sporting events, informal sharing of content among reporters, cross promotion otherwise called barter arrangements that occur infrequently.

The partnership or collaboration among media organizations in Nigeria is so awkward that a respondent merely described such vision as utopian and unworkable. Dailey et al.'s (2005) convergence continuum that outlined the five stages of media convergence "cross promotion, cloning, coopetition (cooperate and compete), content-sharing and full convergence" was observed to be haphazard within convergence practices among media organizations in Nigeria. But for cross promotion and informal content sharing other stages are virtually absent. This is in consonant with Lowrey (2005) study that found evidence to show that media organizations in the United States were also not compatible with the convergence continuum.

Question 3 also raised the issue of consolidation in the media industry. This is one of the new directions the media in Nigeria should embrace in order to salvage the industry that is bleeding seriously. The study found that that the health of the Nigerian media is epileptic and sickly. Many of them are undercapitalized and therefore lack necessary equipment and owe their workers arrears of salaries. A lot of the media organizations will do better if they merge with one another and establish a formidable

organization that can do the serious business of reporting Nigeria. The pattern now is for any entrepreneur to set up a news organization and function for a brief period and collapse because of the high cost of running news organizations efficiently in terms of human and material resources. News organizations that do not genuinely fit the status of a news organ have become breeding grounds for charlatans who bring journalists and journalism to disrepute among Nigerian citizens. Respondents expressed the hope that the consolidation of Nigerian banks that reduced the number of banks to a more efficient banking system could occur within the Nigeria media industry. The era of media convergence opens the prospect of mergers and/or partnership among media organizations that could help to revamp the industry through cost saving and team work.

Another issue uncovered in this study is that it is not fashionable to find news organizations that are quoted in the stock market. Mostly run as family businesses or government agencies, media organizations are tied to the apron strings of business, family, and political interests. The consolidation of the news business will bring about efficient financial management which has been lacking in most of the organizations. One respondent revealed how the fiscal health of most media organizations is heavily dependent on political institutions that provide life lines to the business. Some media proprietors even engage in blackmail and other sharp practices to extort money from corrupt political and business leaders. I observed a prominent news organization that named different office blocks in its premises after important political and business leaders. Upon enquiry, I was told the office blocks were dedicated to those who supported the organization financially irrespective of the credibility of the names. The

finding in this study also suggests that most media businesses in Nigeria collapse because of ad hoc sources of revenue. The dependence on money that some media proprietors could extort from politicians does not help in planning for the future. Some of the proprietors are not thinking strategically to re-position their business. The era of media convergence is therefore an opportunity to forge alliances, partnership that will lead to better planning and prudence. The technological component of convergence regime can help media proprietors to developed software to even track revenues and to prevent fraud in their organizations.

Findings in Question 3 also confirmed that new tools of trade are now available to the modern journalist. Unlike any imagined by previous generations of journalists in the traditional journalism practice, practitioners in the digital age of media convergence have discovered that they have new tools to investigate stories, cross check facts, and send stories to their editors at the speed of light. Beyond the traditional pen, paper, and typewriters of the past, journalists under a convergence period now have laptops, mobile phones, and the Internet to source, process, and deliver information. They are totally liberated from the constraints of traditional journalism practice. Above all, these new tools of trade are also useful in providing a check on the excesses of some lazy professional journalists. For example, citizens can through the Internet do a fact check and discover yellow journalism, arm-chair journalism, and plagiarism on the part of professional journalists employed by a news media organization. This finding confirms Murray's (2010) assumption that the "metabolism of the newsroom is changing dramatically" (p. 8) due the disruptive changes wrecked on newsrooms by new tools of

trade that make it possible for reporters to file stories more frequently and instantaneously than in the past.

The changing method of journalism operations highlighted in the findings also support the insights of other researchers who suggest that journalists resist to give up control of their occupational territory to non journalists outside of the newsroom (Singer, 2009; Deuz, Bruns, & Neuberger, 2007). The agenda setting and gate keeping roles of the media professionals have changed as more and more citizens define the news of the day through contributions to media content. Many journalists are yet to understand the extent to which their previously held power to determine media content has eroded. It is a cultural shock that is yet to sink in the psyche of many professional journalists.

In the final analysis, Question 3 confirmed that it is still sunrise for convergence journalism in Nigeria. It is still evolving especially with the increased use of cell phones, email, the Internet, and social media. But the aspect of convergence that deals with collaboration, partnership, cross promotion, and content sharing are yet to be explored due to intense rivalry among media establishments, differences in newsroom culture, and undercapitalization of the media sector.

Discussion of Findings for Question 4

Question 4 asked: How can media convergence be achieved in Nigeria given the state of technology and media infrastructure? Answers to Question 4 indicate that the low technological advancement and non availability of media infrastructure are responsible for the poor level of convergence journalism and a dimmed prospect of full convergence practices. The achievement of full media

convergence requires efficient functioning of the public electricity supply, the cooperation of all stake holders in the media industry in Nigeria, and a change in government policies towards communication and information. In particular, there is a need for a review of the expensive tariff structure that affects the importation of needed equipment for the operations of electronic and print media. A solid investment in telecommunications and broadband technology is important to have complete media convergence practices in Nigeria.

Media Technologies, Infrastructure, and Convergence

Question 4 raised the issue of journalism practice in a digital age along with the myriad of challenges posed to emerging countries of the Third world. In the context of the study findings, proper convergence cannot occur in the midst of insufficient and inadequate media technologies and basic infrastructure. Some of the respondents argued that media technologies transcend mere transmitters of media content. It encompasses the willingness among society to adapt to technological changes, the capacity for the population to support their desire to catch up with technology, and supportive political culture. Put differently, in addition to technologies such as technical equipment that enables the dissemination of information, media technologies in a convergence era also includes the ability of citizens to afford hardware components of media infrastructure. For example, the study found that even though the use of cell phones has increased, the difficulty in purchasing recharge cards to keep the phones active still persists among many Nigerians. Therefore, it is unlikely that most citizens would utilize their hard

earned minutes in their cell phones to call traditional media organizations to complain about political malfeasance or any other issue bothering on governance. Instead, they save their minutes to share information that are personal and useful to them.

The state of infrastructural unpreparedness for media convergence is symptomatic of infrastructural decay in Nigeria. This study found an interrelationship between communication technologies and media infrastructure. Respondents outlined infrastructure that can facilitate media convergence to include telecommunications, transport systems, energy, technical equipment, capitalization of media organizations, fiscal discipline, and urban –rural development. This finding supports Larkin's (2008) analysis that viewed infrastructure as a taxonomy of technical and cultural systems that bring about institutionalized patterns of delivery, dissemination, and community.

Energy supply was identified as the most important infrastructure needed for both media convergence to thrive and the larger society's social and economic transformation. The public electric supply is under a monopoly called National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and because of this status of being a monopoly among other factors; the body has proved effectively incapable of providing steady electricity supply. The performance of this behemoth of an agency is so frustrating that Nigerians used the organization's acronym – NEPA in a disparaging manner: Never Expect Power Always. I discovered that all the media organizations have a standby generator which they use each time there is power outage. The blackout is so constant that some of them make use of the generators more often while the public power supply from NEPA is put on standby instead.

This has implications on the cost of running media business and the efficiency of journalists and other media workers.

In addition to problems of energy supply is the vexed issue of public transportation systems. There is no public transportation system available for media organizations to move their equipment or circulate their newspapers or magazines. The railway system constructed by the erstwhile colonial government mainly for the movement of goods from the hinterland to coastal cities is all but a shadow of itself. Consequently, all the newspapers have their own vans and trucks with which they circulate their publications across a vast country like Nigeria. Similarly, all the broadcast media make use of their trucks to move equipment from one point to another. This means that many drivers are on the road doing deliveries at different locations, cities, and states spanning hundreds of miles every day. An attempt made by different media organizations to have a common pool whereby they engaged in circulation jointly collapsed after an initial experimentation.

The inability of media owners to cooperate with one another to mitigate the effects of infrastructural inadequacy is another issue raised by answers to Question 4. It is believed that collaboration in certain areas such as in transportation, maintenance of existing facilities, and staff training could reduce the challenges posed by insufficiency of technology and infrastructure. The slow speed of the Internet and weak broadband technology may become a thing of the past if media owners work together to reverse the current trend.

Another issue raised by Question 4 is the need to act and think both locally and globally. Responses suggest that a global force is needed to solve local problems. In other words, global partnership could be one of the options to solve the infrastructural problems besetting the Nigerian media. The logic is that thinking locally and acting globally is an effective method of bringing desirable change in a system. So, problems associated with technological inferiority and infrastructural inadequacy in Nigeria could be minimized with the active support of other more advanced countries of the west. Although this suggestion seems paternalistic, the truth is that all the hardware components of the media are imported into Nigeria. None is manufactured in the country. Therefore, the prospect of overcoming technological and infrastructural disadvantage is still a distant future.

Finally, the study found that proper convergence will take root as soon as Internet access improves both in terms of technical access and affordability by a majority of the population. The restoration of the public power supply and availability of cutting edge technology are critical components for effective media convergence. Until the problems linked with the provision of key media technologies and basic infrastructure are put in place, any talk of full media convergence amounts to playing to the gallery.

Conclusion and Recommendation for Action

From the overall results of this study, it can be concluded that access to information is indispensable for the success of any democratic society. Information

sharing and absence of restriction to information promote pluralism and healthy debates needed for a vibrant democracy. In addition, the study found that citizen participation is crucial for the sustenance of democracy. The participation of citizens in the political process is facilitated by the mass media. The era of media convergence creates possibilities for citizens to demand accountability from those they elected to represent them in government. Democratic governance and media convergence are therefore comfortable bedfellows because freedom of expression, political participation, and transparency thrive under a converged media environment.   Ahead of the introduction of media convergence, Marshal McLuhan (1966) understood the potential impact of media technologies when he predicted a global village fostered by the media and theorized the 'medium is the message' mantra to underscore the importance of channels of communication. Similarly, Lasswell (1941) expressed the view that no man is wise enough to decide for the people what the people shall discuss and suggested that channels of public discussion must be left open to opinions for and against democracy because "free speech is thwarted unless there is access to the means of public communication" (p. 96). The right to know has become a key ingredient of democracy and the ability of media convergence to gather and disseminate information on multiple media platforms anytime, anywhere, and on demand is critical in the knowledge age.

The study also confirmed that government control of information and siege on the news media is anachronistic, unsustainable, and unreasonable. There are too many sources of information gathering and dissemination today that ultimately citizens in

undemocratic societies or nascent democracies like in Nigeria now have the power to participate in governance and challenge the authorities if necessary.

However, the study established the absence of much needed freedom of information legislation in Nigeria. Freedom of Information Act, also described as open records are laws which set rules on access to information or records held by different organs of government. Freedom of information is supposed to encourage reporters to seek, investigate and disseminate information which otherwise would have been hidden from the public as well as grant citizens access to critical information needed to fight corruption. The study therefore found a strong connection between freedom of information and transparency in public life.

Furthermore, findings indicate that Nigerian media organizations can benefit from trimming their operations and collaborating with one another instead of doing things in isolation and separately and not doing it well. The system can hardly sustain sole proprietorship because it is costly and counterproductive. Even governments around the world are building coalitions, banks and multi –national organizations are merging to become more formidable. So, the Nigerian Media should encourage practices that will maximize the gains of pooling resources together, integrating news and marketing operations. After all, media convergence practices are meant to facilitate new synergies in the production and distribution of media content across multiple and overlapping media platforms. From a business perspective, it emphasizes partnership, collaboration, cooperation, sharing, and cost – saving methods.

Finally, the study confirmed the infrastructural unpreparedness of the Nigerian media to tap into full convergence journalism. While the task of redressing the infrastructural deficiencies are beyond media organizations and their proprietors, the study nevertheless found that key stake holders in the media industry could play leading roles to ameliorate the dismal state of media technology and infrastructure. Besides, government – the giant in the room in most emerging countries is required to create an enabling environment for full media convergence to flourish because Nigeria's young democracy stands to gain from it and so do other African countries.

Against the backdrop of the conclusions above, the study makes the following recommendations:

First, there is need to set up a Nigerian Media Foundation (NMF) with the primary objective of empowering the news media, the practitioners, and citizens to be able to promote democratic governance where freedom of expression and rule of law prevail. The Nigerian Media Foundation which shall operate as a non-profit organization shall seek to use the media to strengthen democratic institutions and hold politicians accountable and usher an era of transparency in governance.

The objectives of the foundation shall be as follows:

- to develop principles and practices of good government for the achievement of a functional democratic society with rule of law, freedom of expression and freedom of the press
- promote an independent media system that would increase the flow of objective, balanced information to the public

- act as ombudsman

- improve the capacity of civil society organizations to influence policy on behalf of the less privileged members of society.

- increase the efficiency, responsiveness and accountability of the three branches of government towards the electorate.

- conduct regular research on the changing landscape of the mass media communication

- engage in fundraising activities to support its activities

The Nigeria Media Foundation should also explore the possibility of nonprofit journalism whereby existing media companies are converted into nonprofit organizations as a deliberate step to save money, build credibility, win patronage of the people and enhance professionalism. Lewis (2007) demonstrated the enormous success of nonprofit ownership of major news organizations in the world notably Associated Press (AP), The Christian Science Monitor and National Public Radio (NPR). Poniewozik (2009) also argued that while nonprofit road may ease some kind of financial pressures on media companies, it also required journalists to change in many respects. For effective media convergence to take root, organizations that embrace it must demonstrate a commitment to sound management practices and a new business model that emphasizes fiscal discipline, social responsibility, professionalism, and honesty.

Nonprofit journalism does not exist in Nigeria at the moment just like there are no public service broadcasters (PSBs) in radio and television (BBC world Service Trust, 2006). What may pass as public service broadcast organizations – the Federal Radio

Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) are not

accountable to the public but only to the government. This study recommends that

government should divest itself from total ownership and control of both the electronic

and print media and allow private sector dominance. It makes economic and political

sense for media organizations in Nigeria to venture into the nonprofit route because it

will make them closer to the people. If the media is supported by the people financially

they consider themselves as having a stake in the survival of the organization. Citizens

are more likely participate in content creation if they consider the media organization as

their own. And news professionals in these organizations are more likely to provide

content that are meaningful to the audience thereby connecting with citizens on the issues

that affect their lives. It is clear that in the fragmented media landscape of today every

news organizations is making efforts to connect with its audience, stick to existing

audience while striving to expand their audience base.

<div align="center">**Implications for Social Change**</div>

This study sought to promote a deeper understanding of media convergence and its

impact on Nigeria's democracy. The results of this study are instructive to democratic

societies especially those in emerging countries of the Third world with weak democratic

structures. The seven key themes that emerged in this research suggest that advocates of

positive social change through freedom of information flow and policy reforms that

enhance the effectiveness of the news media in nursing and nurturing democracy have

many hurdles to jump.

Constitutional Amendment

The findings from this study provide a useful insight into the inherent contradictions about Nigeria's democracy. Media convergence is impacting democratic governance in Nigeria and other parts of the world. In order to cope with fundamental changes that accompany the transformation taking place in the media industry, the country also needs to review its principal legal document to be in sync with the realities of the times. The agitation for openness and freedom of expression will likely necessitate a major constitutional amendment that will address issues that seem to hoodwink the citizens.

Nigeria often prides herself as the country with the freest press in Africa. What appears to be the only provision that addresses media freedom in the Nigerian constitution is contained in Chapter IV Section 39. It stipulates that:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference". In sub section 3 of the same Section 39, the constitution contradicts itself: "Nothing in this section shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society: (a) for the purpose of preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, maintaining the authority and independence of courts or regulating telephony, wireless broadcasting, television or the exhibition of cinematographic films; or (b) imposing restrictions upon persons holding office under the government of the federation or of a state, members of the

armed forces of the federation of the Nigerian Police force or other

government security services or agencies established by law. (Republic of

Nigeria, 1999)

The constitution further stipulates the right for the news media to monitor

governance and force public office holders to be accountable to the people. In Chapter II,

Section 22 the constitution says: "The press, radio, television, and other agencies of the

mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in

this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the

people" (Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

What is clear from the cited constitutional provisions is that the current law in

Nigeria recognizes access to information and media freedom and yet the constitution also

provides for instances whereby freedom of expression and of the media could be

abridged. What a contradiction! Perhaps such a contradiction is fueling the refusal of the

legislature to pass a Freedom of Information Bill that has passed the second reading since

the past 10 years.

End of Military Coup d'états

In the past, the takeover of government by military juntas was announced in

Radio Nigeria which was the only national radio that had signals to reach every part of

the country. So the method is that a bunch of army officers who decide to execute a coup

can just walk into the network studios of Radio Nigeria with guns and armored tanks and

seize the station and broadcast to the entire nation. The multiple media platforms

available to Nigerians today provide a disincentive to military officers who found it

easier in the past to communicate to the entire nation through one channel. The findings of this study suggest that with all the fits and starts of Nigeria's fragile democracy, self rule will endure because media convergence have empowered citizens to demand good governance and defend democracy. There is an ever increasing public sphere for national conversation due to possibilities of migrating from one communication platform to another. The expanded universe of media choices to citizens makes it extremely hard for a military junta to return to power within the Nigerian political space. The cold reaction towards the presidential ambition of former military heads of states is testimony to the distaste of majority of the citizens to all those who participated in truncating democratic rule in the country in the past. With such opprobrium, it is unlikely that current and serving military officers will attempt to capture power through the barrel of the gun instead of through ballot boxes.

Future of Journalism

The impact of media convergence on democracy has far reaching implications on the future of journalism in Nigeria and elsewhere. The arrival of the digital age has brought about a revolution in journalism practice with ramifications on the media business, media education, journalists, and citizens' media use. The blurring definition of who is a journalists and what is journalism emerged as critical questions to be answered.

Traditionally, a journalist is one who is paid to gather and disseminate information to the public. They pass on knowledge to the public and in some instances the voice of a journalist was like the voice of God – authentic, credible, and unquestionable. The journalist was the gatekeeper who set the agenda for public

discourse. The era of media convergence has changed all that. Millions of citizens are now part of the conversation; they even provide facts and fresh ideas to the traditional journalist and what is more, any citizen can become a journalist. All that is needed is to have the necessary tools such as cell phones, access to the Internet, computer, and video camera. While additional voices are welcome in national conversation about the democratic future of different countries, the challenge of course is that not all citizen journalists engage in journalism that serves the public interest. Many of their un-journalistic activities serve other interests that border on the fringes of manipulation. Concerned by journalism practiced by all comers, Carroll (2008, para. 69) asked: "Will journalism – real journalism – triumph over propaganda? Over marketing? Over disinformation"? These questions are germane because there is no code of conduct for citizen journalists unlike the professional journalist who is guided by certain ethical codes.

The evolving media landscape will require fundamental changes in journalism education in universities that offer journalism or mass communication training. The current corps of reporters and editors was figuratively speaking invaded by convergence practices and many are yet to understand what it all means and how to maximize the potential. The next generation of journalists must be prepared to cope with the challenges of journalism practice in a fragmented media landscape.

Media convergence is believed to be a killer of the printed word. In other words, newspapers and magazines attribute their dwindling fortunes to the Internet that provides free information to audiences and thereby shrinking circulation of newspapers and

advertising revenue. This trend is happening in the United States and Europe where convergence has gained momentum (Singer, 2005; Aviles, et al.2006). In Nigeria and other emerging countries, newspaper organizations have not started to feel the pinch because of low internet penetration in those countries. It is advisable to learn from what is happening in more advanced countries and prepare to handle the challenge whenever it occurs. The fast rate at which technology moves should inform emerging countries that now is the time to develop long term perspective plan to handle potential threats to business that media convergence may inflict on them.

Open Society

The study findings highlighted the importance of transparency in public administration. There appears to be a determination by Nigerians to agitate for more information on how their government is run. There is the likelihood that there will be more whistleblowers that can expose corruption. Whether journalists expose or cover up corruption, what is clear is that citizens empowered with new tools of communication and information sharing can contribute to government's avowed commitment to fight corruption and indiscipline within the country. A sustained war against corruption is vital in Nigeria because of the international disgrace corruption has inflicted on the country.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has a number of limitations that future research should avoid. For example, cost, time, and other practical reasons dictated that my sample of journalists be limited to six news organizations in Nigeria. A longitudinal study of a larger sample of journalists from Nigeria and other African countries would probably produce more

meaningful results. Future studies may benefit from the inclusion of retired or non-practicing journalists to ascertain any differences or similarities. In addition, the use of electronic survey methods instead of the semi-structured interview, and wider participation will likely produce different results. One of the disadvantages of purposive sampling used in this study is the difficulty in making strong quantitative inferences from such a sample (Trochim, 2001). For example the analysis and extrapolation of the results is restricted because participants were selected out of my personal biases. Therefore, future studies with a random sampling of journalists may yield better generalization of results.

Available research on media and democracy often focus on prescriptions of what the media should do to strengthen democracy. Most of these studies also take a cue from practices in the United States and Europe with little effort to put into context the socio-cultural milieu of the different countries. Obviously, the mass media in Africa do not have the same influence as their counterparts in the United States and therefore most likely to produce a different impact on democracy.

Consequently, there should be more studies on media convergence to determine how this new phenomenon is shaping the formulation and implementation of public policies and more importantly the lives of ordinary citizens. The sample for this study is journalists only. More studies that would focus on the diverse population will perhaps expose the understanding of the concept among the citizens to be able to measure how they can avail themselves of the promise and peril of such practice. The literature on media convergence suggests that the audience have been empowered through greater

access to multiple channels of public information. It is important to conduct a research to ascertain whether ordinary citizens understand what media convergence means and how they fit into the new media environment.

Another study can also measure how the availability and use of the different media platforms can stimulate political participation among rural dwellers and Nigerians in diaspora. For example, a comparative research on the influence of media convergence on the forthcoming 2011 presidential and gubernatorial elections will be a good test of the impact of convergence on a specific political event.

Another potentially fruitful area of future research is an investigation into the struggle for freedom of information law in Nigeria. The scope of this current research does not inform how or to what extent policies toward freedom of information have been adopted and implemented within Nigeria or other African countries. To have a national or regional perspective of policies related to freedom of information would be useful for policy makers and journalism practitioners, and educators seeking to improve free flow of information in a democracy.

As the study findings show, media convergence would have limited impact on democracy and basic freedoms if there is no law that grants access to public records and other vital information in the hands of government. So, it may be interesting to find out why politicians and journalists disagree on the importance of such a law.

One of the significant findings in this study was how journalism practice has shifted from traditional practices in terms of newsroom ecology, audience preferences, technology, and budget. The future of the news frontier is a mixed bag of hope and

uncertainty. Further research to investigate into the challenges of journalism practice in Africa in the digital age is needed to understand the prospects of mass media influence in the midst of the digital divide.

Personal Reflections and Research Experience

This study was based on the assumption that media convergence was a catalyst to freedom of expression and political participation among citizens because convergence journalism supports unfettered information flow. I also assumed that the Nigerian public sphere was conducive for media convergence to thrive in addition to the possibility of all the media organizations acting as a monolithic entity to deliver democratic dividends by embracing convergence journalism.

Another assumption was that media convergence will herald the end of government ownership and control of the mass media in Nigeria. The whole idea of government involvement in the media business was to control the public mind and with a fragmented media landscape it has become almost impossible for any government, institution or individual to control the market place of ideas. The flow of information occurs in multiple platforms with such rapidity that only citizens themselves can control it.

In many ways, the research findings confirmed some of the assumptions while exposing the naivety of others such as depicting media convergence as *deus ex machina* of democracy. It turns out that there are other intervening factors that can make media convergence to actually accelerate growth of democracy in Nigeria.

One striking experience was to discover how some journalists can be shy to be interviewed. I encountered a popular female television journalist who told me she was shy to be interviewed. I found it surprising that journalists who earn a living by interviewing news sources cannot stand to be interviewed by others.

I experienced series of power outages during my data collection to the extent that I wondered how journalists work under such frustrating circumstances. The public electricity supply has become so epileptic that computers crash very often thereby impeding the smooth operations of media organizations.

Summary

This exploratory study on the impact of media convergence on Africa's democracy has provoked a vortex of issues most of which are documented in the literature on media convergence. As found in the study, media convergence supports freedom of expression, transparency, and political participation. In this connection the media landscape has shifted fundamentally that both journalists and citizens are caught up in a tsunami of information exchange that is pivotal to democratic governance.

Results reported also reaffirmed the challenges inherent in convergence journalism especially in emerging countries like Nigeria where technology and basic infrastructure are in short supply. The prospects of full media convergence in Nigeria are bleak due to unhealthy rivalry among different media organizations, poor financial resources, and epileptic electricity supply by National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), the monopoly responsible for generation and distribution of energy in the country.

Nevertheless, this study offered useful insight into the indispensable role of the news media in the growth and sustenance of Nigeria's nascent democracy in addition to citizens' civic engagement in governance and political communication in the digital age. It crystallizes the view of the journalist as the messenger, defender, and midwife of democracy. The changes in the media environment have increased journalism's role in supporting and strengthening the capacity of citizens to play critical roles in protecting self –government.

References

Abroms, L., & Craig Lefebvre, R. (2009). Obama's Wired Campaign: Lessons for Public Health Communication. *Journal of Health Communication*, *14*(5), 415-423.

Adner, R. (2006). Match your innovation strategy to your innovation ecosystem. *Harvard Business Review*. 84 (4), 98-107

Akinfeleye, R. (1995). Democracy, society and the mass media. In Nigerian mass media and national crises. Akinfeleye, R.,Omole, G., and Omang, O. (eds). Lagos; Nigerian Press Council.

Alzouma, G. (2005). *Myths of digital technology in Africa*. Global Media & Communication, 1(3), 228-256.

Amoakohene, M. (2005). Focus group research: Towards an applicable model for Africa. In K. Kwansah-Aidoo, *Topical issues in communications and media research*, pp: 179-187; New York, Nova Science Publishers.

Anfara, V. A., Brown, K. M., & Mangione, T. L. (2002). Qualitative analysis on stage: Making research process more public. Educational Researcher, 31(7), 28-38.

Anim, E. (1997). NUJ code of conduct and news judgment and management. In G. Omole & O. Omang, *Issues in news judgment and management* (pp.56-64). Lagos: Nigerian Press Council

Article 19 (organization). (2000). Article 19: Review. London: Article 19.

Auerbach, C. F., & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis. New York: New York University Press.

Babbie, E. (2007). *The practice of social research*. 11th ed. CA. Thomson Wadsworth.

Bailard, C. (2009). Mobile Phone Diffusion and Corruption in Africa. *Political Communication*, *26*(3), 333-353.

Baldwin, T., McVoy, D. & Steinfield, C. (1996). Convergence: Integrating media, information, and communication. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Beaudoin, C. (2008). Explaining the Relationship between Internet Use and Interpersonal Trust: Taking into Account Motivation and Information Overload. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *13*(3), 550-568.

Benkler, Y. (2006). Wealth of Networks: *How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom;* New Haven: Yale.

Berelson, B. (1952). Content analysis in communication research. New York, Free Press

Berger, A. (2009). Brandeis-and-the-history-of-transparency. Sunlight Foundation, http://blog.sunlightfoundation.com

Berger, G. (2002). Theorizing the media-democracy relationship in Southern Africa. The International Journal of Communication Studies. 64(1), 21-45

Berger, G. (2007). Media legislation in Africa: A comparative legal survey. UNESCO/School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa

Berman, A. (April 28, 2005). Al Gore gets down. The nation. http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050516/berman/2

Bertaux, D. (1981). From the life-history approach to the transformation of sociological practice. In Biography and society: The life history approach in the social sciences, ed. by D.   Bertaux, 29–45. London: Sage.

Bibby, M. (1997). Introduction: Education research and morality. Review of Australian Research in education, no 4, 1-12.

Blumler J.G. & Katz, E. (1974). The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Boateng, K. (2006). Bringing new media to Ghanaians: The political economy of Internet deployment. Thesis (PhD) – Ohio University, March, 2006.

Boczkowski, P. & Ferris, J. (2005). Multiple media, convergent processes, and divergent products: Organizational innovation in digital media production at a European firm. *The Annals of the American Academy of political and Social Science.*597, pp. 32-47.

Boczkowski, P. J. (2005). *Digitizing the news: Innovation in online newspapers*. Inside technology. Cambridge, Mass: MIT.

Bowman, S. & Willis, C. (2005). We Media: How audiences are shaping the future of news and information. Available at http://hypergene.net/wemedia/weblog.php.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. London: Sage.

British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], (2009). Internet brings events in Iran to life. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8099579.stm

British Broadcasting Corporation, [BBC], (2009). New Africa broadband 'ready'. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology)

British Broadcasting Service [BBC] (2006). African Media Development Initiative. BBC World Service Trust, Bush House, London.

Brooks, B.S., Kennedy, G,. Moen, D.R. & Ranly, D. (2004). Telling the story: The convergence of print, broadcast and online media. New York; Bedford/St. Martin's.

Brotherson, M. & Goldstein, B. (1992). Quality design of focus groups in early childhood special education research. *Journal of Early Intervention*. 16(4), 334-42.

Bunch, W. (2008). Disconnected: As embattled news organizations try to safeguard their futures with intensely local coverage, there's often a wide gulf between journalists and the communities they cover. American Journalism Review: Ajr, 30, 4, 38-45.

Cable News Network, [CNN], 2009). Clinton, Gates: U.S. in Afghanistan for long haul(http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/10/05/clinton.gates/index.html)

Carr, F. (2002). The truth about convergence. http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=9677

Carroll, J. S. (2008). The Future (We Hope) of Journalism. Notes from the annual Creason Lecture at the University of Kentucky. http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=142379

Chalaby, J. (2000). Political communication in presidential regimes in non-consolidated democracies. *Communication Abstracts.* 23(2).

Christians, C. (2008). Media ethics in education. *Journalism & Communication Monographs.* 9(4), n.p.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clayton, R., Murdoch, S. J., & Watson, R. N. M. (2006). Ignoring the Great Firewall of China. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science.* (4258), 20-35.

Clinton, H. (2010). *Development in the 21ˢᵗ century*. Speech at the Center for Global Development in Washington, *D.C.* January 6, 2010

Cohen, J., & Tsfati, Y. (2009). The Influence of Presumed Media Influence on Strategic Voting. *Communication Research*, *36*(3), 359-378

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). Federal Republic of Nigeria official gazette. 86(27).

Cornog, E. (2005). Let's blame the readers: Is it possible to do great journalism if the public does not care? *Columbia Journalism Review*. (Jan/Feb), 43-49.

Creswell, J. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dabiri (2009). FOI Bill would have alerted Nigerians on corruption in the power sector. Nigerian Federal House of Representatives. Ikorodu Federal Constituency . Abikedabiri.com http://www.abikedabiri.com/36-NewsAtricle.html?PHPSESSID=e824a4963daf99ce2a32505e73406437

Dahlgren, P. & Sparks, C. (Eds.). (1991). *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere in the New Media Age*. London: Rutledge

Dailey, L., Demo, L. & Spillman, M. (2005). The convergence continuum: A model for studying collaboration between media newsrooms. *Atlantic journal of communication,* 13(3), pp. 150-68.

Davis, B. (2009). The future of media and Obama. *Quill*, *97*(1), 26.

Davis, C. and Craft, S. (2000). New media synergy: Emergence of institutional conflicts of interest. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics,* 15(4)219-231.

Davis, R. (1999). The web of politics. New York: Oxford University Press.

De Beer, A. (2004). The Internet in Africa: Leapfrogging to a global future. In C. Okigbo & F. Eribo, *Development and communication in Africa* (pp. 157-164). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Deane, J., Mue, N., & Banda, F. (2002). The other Information revolution: Media and empowerment in developing countries. In M. Glasius, M. Kaldor & H. Anheier, *Global civil society yearbook 2002* (pp. 171-190). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

DeSantis, L., & Ugarriza, D.N. (2000). The concept of theme as used in qualitative research (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Deuze, M. (2004). What is multimedia journalism. *Journalism studies*, (5)2,139-152

Deuze, M., Bruns, A., & Neuberger, C. (2007). Preparing for an age of participatory news. *Journalism Practice*, (1) 3; 322-338.

DiRienzo, C., Das, J., Cort, K., & Burbridge, J. (2007). Corruption and the role of information. *Journal of International Business Studies.* 38(2), 320-332.

Dokpesi, A. (2004). Deregulated broadcast media environment and challenges reporting elections- IBAN perspectives. Unpublished paper.

Downie, L. and Schudson, M. (2009). The reconstruction of American journalism. *Columbia Journalism Review*; Nov/Dec. 2009

Dym, B. (1999). Resistance in organizations: How to recognize, understand and respond to it. *Journal of Organizational Development* (31)1.

Ekpu, R. (2001). The state of media laws and regulatory institutions. Lagos, Nigeria; unpublished paper.

Encyclopedia of the Nations (2010). www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Africa/Nigeria.html

Erdal, I. J. (2007). Researching media convergence and cross media news production: mapping the field. *Nordicom Review*. 28(2), 51-61.

Erdal, I. J. (2009). Cross-Media (Re)Production Cultures. *Convergence : the Journal of Research into New Media Technologies.* 15 (2), 215

Eribo, F. (2004). African development and innovation of communication technologies. In C. Okigbo & F. Eribo, *Development and communication in Africa* (pp. 175-183). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Ette, M. (2000). Agent of Change or Stability? The Nigerian Press Undermines Democracy. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 5(3), 67.

Ezeoha, A. and Anyigor, C.(2009). Bankruptcy practice in the absence of long-term corporate financing: The Nigerian case. Journal of Banking Regulation; (10) 3, p249-264, 16p

Florini, A. (1998). The end of secrecy. *Foreign Policy*. (111), 50.

Florini, A. (2007). *The right to know: Transparency for an open world*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fogam, P. (1996). Media and the law: Statutes both help and hinder. *Handbook for African journalists;* World Press Freedom Committee.

Ford, J., Ford, L., & D'Amelio, A. (2008). Resistance to change: The rest of the story. *Academy of Management Review*. 33(2).

Fork-Kintz, L. (2007). An overview of current media practices and trends in West Africa: A case study analysis of the media of Ghana and Nigeria. Conference paper, National Communication Association, 1-19.

Franda, M. (2002). China and India online: Information technology politics and diplomacy in the world's two largest nations. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Frechtling, J. A., & Sharp, L. M. (1997). *User-friendly handbook for mixed method evaluations*. Arlington, VA: NSF, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Research, Evaluation, and Communication

Gans, H. (2003). Democracy and the news. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Garcia Aviles, J.,Meier, K.,Kaltenbrunner, A., Carvajal, M.,and Kraus, D. (2009). Newsroom integration in Austria, Spain, and Germany. *Journalism Practice*. (3)3, 285-303.

Garnham, N. (1992). The media and the public sphere. In Calhoun, C.J. Habermas and the public sphere. Studies in contemporary German social thought. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Garson, G. (2007). Modern public information technology systems: Issues and challenges. Hershey, PA: IGI Pub.

Gasmi, F., Noumba, P., and Virto, L. (2006). Political accountability and regulatory performance in Infrastructure Industries: An empirical analysis. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (4101); http://econ.worldbank.org

Gilboa, E. (2003). Effects of global television news on us policymaking. Conference Papers - International Communication Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, p1-36, 36.

Gilmour, D. (2007). The hegemonic influence of corporate media on universities' convergence journalism instructional programs. (Doctoral dissertation, North Dakota State University, 2005).

Glaser, M. (2003). Journalist's trade – The infectious desire to be linked in the blogosphere. *Nieman Reports*. 57 (3), 86

Goldstein, J. (2007). The role of digital networked technology in the Ukranian Orange Revolution. Berkman Center Research Publication; The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

Goldstein, J. and Rotich, J. (2008). Digitally networked technology in Kenya's 2007-2008 post-election crisis. Berkman Center Research Publication; The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

Gordon, R. (2002). The meanings of convergence. *Medill,* (12) 13

Gottfredson, M. & Aspinall, K (2005). Innovation versus complexity: What is too much of a good thing? *Harvard Business Review*. 83(11), 62-71

Grant, A. & Wilkinson, J. (2009). Understanding media convergence: The state of the field. New York; Oxford University Press Inc.

Gregorian, V. (2010). Introduction. In C. Connell, *A way forward: Solving the challenges of the news frontier*, (pp. 7-13), New York: Carnegie Corporation.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., and Johnson, L. (2006). How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability. *Field Methods*. 18 (1), 59-82.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Studies in contemporary German social thought. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Hackett, R. & Adam, M. (1999). Is media democratization a social movement? *Peace Review*, *11*(1), 125.

Hamdy, N. (2009). Arab citizen journalism in action: Challenging mainstream media, authorities and media laws. *Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture*; (6) 1, 92-112.

Hansen, A., Cottle, S., Negrine, R. & Newbold, C. (1998). Mass communication research methods. New York, NY; New York University Press.

Hanson, W.E., Creswell, J.W. Creswell, J.D., Clark, V., & Petska, K. (2005). Mixed methods research designs in counseling psychology. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52, 224- 235.

Hardy, B. and Scheufele, D. (2005). Examining differential gains from Internet use: Comparing the moderating role of talk and online interactions. *Journal of Communication.* 55(1), 71-84

Hawkins, E. T., & Hawkins, K. A. (2003). Internet Issues - Bridging Latin America's Digital Divide: Government Policies and Internet Access. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly.* 80 (3), 646

Hearn, G. & Foth, M. (2005). Action research in the design of new media and ICT systems. In K. kwansah- Aidoo, *Topical issues in communications and media research,*pp: 79-94, New York, Nova Science Publishers Inc.

Hilliard, V. G., & Kemp, N. D. (1999). Citizen Participation Indispensable to Sustainable Democratic Governance and Administration in South Africa. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 65,* 3, 353-370.

Hills, J. & Michalis, M. (2000). Restructuring regulation: technological convergence and European telecommunications and broadcasting markets. *Review of International Political Economy.* 7(3), 434-464.

Hindman, E. B. (1997). *Rights vs. Responsibilities: The Supreme Court and the Media*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Horwitz , R. B. (2005). US media policy then and now. in Converging media, diverging politics: A poltical economy of news media in the United States and Canada (ed) Skinner, D. Compton, J.R. & Gasher, M., NY; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

http://e-articles.info/e/a/title/QUALITATIVE-DATA-ANALYSIS/

Huang, E., Davison, K., Shreve, S., Davis, T., Bettendorf, E. & Nair, A. (2006). Bridging newsrooms and classrooms: Preparing the next generation of journalists for converged media. *Journalism and Communication Monographs* 8 (3), n.p.

Huang, J. & Heider, D. (2007). Media convergence: A case study of a cable news station. *The International Journal on Media Management,* 9(3), 105-115.

Huffington, A. (2009). Media and governance: Myths and realities of a fourth estate. Paper presented at Africa Media Leaders Forum, Lagos-Nigeria, November 5, 2009.

Hyden, G., Leslie, M. and Ogundimu, F. (2002). Media and democracy in Africa. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.

Ibelema, M. (2003). The Nigerian Press and June 12: Pressure and Performance During a Political Crisis. *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, *4*(4), 161-209.

Igbokwe, J. (2009). June 12 elections in Iran and the Nigerian connection. *The Nation* (http://thenationonlineng.net).

International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems. (2004). Many voices, one world: Towards a new, more just, and more efficient world information and communication order. *Critical media studies*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield

International Foundation for Electoral Systems, [IFES], (2009).Spotlight on Nigeria's electoral reform process. (www.ifes.org/features)

IWS (2009). Internet usage statistics for Africa. http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm.

Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence culture: where old and new collide. NY, New York University Press.

Jenkins, H. and Thorburn, D. (2003). Introduction to democracy and new media. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Jensen, K. B. (2002). A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies. London: Routledge.

Jensen, R. (2005). *Has a free press helped to kill democracy? in Converging media, diverging politics: A poltical economy of news media in the United States and Canada* (ed) Skinner, D. Compton, J.R. & Gasher, M., NY; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Jha, S. (2007). Exploring Internet influence on the coverage of social protest: Content analysis comparing protest coverage in 1967 and 1999. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 84 (1), 40-57.

Johnson, K. and Wiedenbeck, S. (2009). Enhancing perceived credibility of citizen journalism web sites. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly.* 86 (2), 332-348.

Jones, A. S. (2009). *Losing the news: The future of the news that feeds democracy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kabwato, C. (2009). Picturing Zimbabwe's 2008 elections. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 1(2), 263-277.

Kagame (2009). Access – Africa's Key to an Inclusive Information Society. Speech by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of The Republic of Rwanda, (http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/speeches/2009)

Katz, E. (1974). The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research. Sage annual reviews of communication research, 3. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Katzer, J., Cook, K. H., & Crouch, W. W. (1998). *Evaluating information: A guide for users of social science research.* Boston, Mass: McGraw-Hill.

Kawamoto, K. (2003). Digital journalism: Emerging media and the changing horizons of journalism. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Kelly, J. and Etling, B. (2008). Mapping Iran's online public: Politics and culture in the Persian blogosphere. Berkman Center Research Publication; The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

Kemper, K. R. (2010). *Who speaks for indigenous peoples? Tribal journalists, rhetorical sovereignty, and freedom of expression.* Columbia, SC: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Kidd, D. (2005). The US media reform in Converging media, diverging politics: A poltical economy of news media in the United States and Canada (ed) Skinner, D. Compton, J.R. & Gasher, M., NY; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Kirkpatrick, D. (2010). *The Facebook effect: The inside story of the company that is connecting the world.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kohlmann, E. (2006). Essays – The real online terrorist threat. *Foreign Affairs.* 85(5), 115.

Kovach, B. and Rosenstiel, T. (2001). The elements of journalism: What news people should know and the public should expect. New York: Crown.

Kowalczykowski, M. (2002). Disconnected continent: The difficulties of the Internet in Africa. Harvard International Review. 24(2), 40-43

Ku, G., Kaid, L., and Pfau, M. (2003). The impact of web site campaigning on traditional news media and public information processing. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly,* 80(3), 528-547.

Kwami, A. (2008). Converged newsrooms: A case study from West Africa. Accra, Ghana: International Institute of ICT Journalism.

Lance Holbert, R., & Geidner, N. (2009). The 2008 Election: Highlighting the Need to Explore Additional Communication Subfields to Advance Political Communication. *Communication Studies*, *60*(4), 344-358

Langer, J. (2001). Media democratization in Australia. *Australian Screen Education*, (25), 18.

Lardner, T. (1993). Democratization and forces in the African media. *Journal of International Affairs*, *47*(1), 89.

Larkin, B. (2008). Signal and noise: media, infrastructure, and urban culture in Nigeria. United Kingdom, Duke University Press.

Lasswell, H. D. (1941). *Democracy through Public Opinion*. Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Company.

Lasswell, H. D. (1941). *Democracy through Public Opinion*. Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Company.

Latimer, C. (2009). Understanding the complexity of the digital divide in relation to the quality of house campaign websites in the United States. *New Media & Society*, 11(6).

Laudon, K.and Laudon, J. (2007). Essentials of business information systems (7th ed.). New York: Prentice Hall.

Lawson-Borders, G. (2006). Media Organizations and convergence. Case studies of media convergence pioneers, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lee, F. (2009). The impact of political discussion in a democratizing society: the moderating role of disagreement and support for democracy. Communication Research. 36(3), 379-399.

Lenihan, D. (2002). Realigning governance: From e-government to e-democracy. Ottawa: Center for Collaborative Government. http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca

Leslie, M. (2002). The Internet and democratization. In G. Hyden, M. Leslie, & F. Ogundimu, *Media and democracy in Africa* (pp. 107-128). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Lester, S. (1999). An introduction to phenomenological research. Stan Lester Developments, Taunton, UK (http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf)

Lewin, K. (1951). Field theory in social science; selected theoretical papers. New York: Harper.

Lewis, C. (2007). The nonprofit road: It's paved not with gold, but with good journalism. Columbia journalism review. 46 (3), 32.

Lofland, J. & Lofland, L.(1995)). Analyzing social settings, 3rd ed.Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth.

Loveless, M. (2009). The theory of international media diffusion: Political socialization and international media in transitional democracies. *Studies in Comparative International Development*. 44: 118-136.

Lowrey, W. (2005). Commitment to newspaper-TV partnering: A test of the impact of institutional isomorphism. *Journalism &Mass Communication Quarterly.* 82(3), 495-515.

Lowrey, W. (2008). Network TV news framing of good vs. bad economic news under Democrat and Republican presidents: A lexical analyisis of political bias. *Journalism &Mass Communication Quarterly.* 85(3), 483-498.

Manning White, D. (1950). The gatekeeper: A case study in the selection of news , Journalism Quarterly. 57:383-90,390

Martin, B. (1998). Information liberation. London: Freedom Press.

Maye, C. (2005). Unions and convergence. *Newsplex: The Convergence Newsletter*. College of Mass Communications and Information Studies, University of South Carolina.

McChesney, R.W. (2007). Media blitzed: Are the U.S. news media getting better or worse? CA, LA Times. http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-op-dustup7may07,0,6735373.story

McLellan, E., MacQueen, K., & Neidig, J. (2003). Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription. *Field Methods, 15,* 1, 63-84.

McLuhan, E. (2008). Marshal McLuhan's theory of communication. *Global Media Journal – Canada Edition*; (1)1, 25-43.

McLuhan, Marshall. (1966). Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York: McGraw-Hill.

McNabb, D. E. (2008). *Research methods in public administration and non-profit management: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe.

McNamara, C. (2009). *General guidelines for conducting interviews*. Retrieved January 11, 2010, from http://managementhelp.org/evaluatn/intrview.htm

McQuail, D (1987). *Mass Communication Theory*: An introduction. Beverly Hills, Ca. Sage Publications Inc.

Megwa, E. R. (2005). Bridging the digital divide: Community radio's potential for extending information and communication technology benefits to rural communities in South Africa. *The Howard Journal of Communications,* 18:335-352

Melkote, S. (2000). Reinventing development support communication to account for power and control in development. In K. Wilkins, *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, Power,*(pp. 147-160). Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.

Melkote, S. and Steeves, H. (2004). Information and communication technologies for rural development. In C. Okigbo & F. Eribo, *Development and communication in Africa* (pp. 165-173). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield

Menon, S. (2006). Policy initiative dilemma surrounding media convergence: A cross national perspective. *Prometheus*. 24(1), 59-80.

Mollgaard, M. (2007). Reflecting the new realities of the digital age. Pacific Journalism Review, 13(1), 8-18.

Momoh, T. (1998). Issues and perspectives in government-media relations. Ikeja-Lagos, Jeromelaiho & Associates ltd.

Momoh, T. (2003). Social responsibility, news judgment, and management. Abuja, Nigeria: Unpublished paper.

Morrison, D. (1998). The search for a method: Focus group and the development of mass communication research. Luton, UK; University of Luton Press

Morse, J. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research. In Handbook for qualitative research, ed.N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 220–35. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Moyo, D. (2009). Citizen journalism and the parallel market of information in Zimbabwe's 2008 election. *Journalism Studies*, *10*(4), 551-567.

Muhammad, Y. (2007). Press coverage of political corruption in Nigeria: Framework for International comparative research. International Communication Association.

Mureithi, M. (2002). Africa Strives to be an Equal Player in the Information Society. IEEE Communications Magazine*, 40 (10), 3.*

Murray, A. (2010). The hunt for the newsroom of tomorrow. In C. Connell, *A way forward: Solving the challenges of the news frontier*, (pp. 7-13), New York: Carnegie Corporation.

Mwangi, S. (2003). Media, democracy and development: Toward a social-democratic communications model. (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, 2003).

Nesbitt-Larking, P. W.(2009). Reframing Campaigning: Communications, The *Media* and *Elections* in Canada. *Canadian Political Science Review*, 3 (2), p5-22, 19p

Nigeria Newspapers (2009). http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/nigeria.htm

Nigerian Communications Commission, [NCC], (2009). Industry statistics. http://www.ncc.gov.ng

Nigerian Guild of Editors [NGE], (2009). (nigerianguildofeditors.com),

Nilsson, A., Nulden, U. & Olsson, D. (2001). Mobile media: The convergence media and mobile communications. Convergence: *The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*: 7(1), pp. 34-38.

Nordenson, B. (2008). Overload! Journalism's battle for relevance in an age of too much information. *Columbia Journalism Review*. 47(4), 30.

Norris, P. (2006). The role of the free press in promoting democratization, good governance, and human development. Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting, 20 - 22, April.

Nwankwo, B. (2010). Akunyili commends NUJ for defending democracy. Leadership Nigeria, http://www.leadershipnigeria.com/news/headlines/1

Nwuneli, O. (1986). Communication and social development in Africa. In O. Nwuneli, *Mass communication in Nigeria: A book of reading* (pp. 172-180). Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Nyamnjoh, F. B. (1996). Africa and the information superhighway: Silent majorities in search of a footpath. *Africa Media Review*, 10(2), 1-21.

Obe, A. (2007). The challenging case of Nigeria: In A. Florini, *The right to know: Transparency for an open world* (pp. 143- 175). New York: Columbia University Press.

Odunewu, A. (1995). Government-media relationship. In R. Akinfeleye, G. Omole, &O. Omang, *Nigerian mass media and national crises* (pp. 84-97), Nigerian Press Council.

Odunewu, A. (1999). The Nigerian press council: Power to the press. Lagos, Nigeria: Unpublished paper.

Ogbondah, C. (2004). Legal and Moral Problems of the Nigerian Press in the Post-Military Autocracy Era. *Journal of African Communications*, *6* (1), 27-60.

Ojo, E. O. (2003). The Mass Media and the Challenges of Sustainable Democratic Values in Nigeria: Possibilities and Limitations. *Media, Culture & Society*. 25 (6), 821-840.

Ojo, T. (2005). Launching into cyberspace: Internet development and politics in five world regions. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 30(2), 301-302.

Ojo, T. (2007). The Nigerian media and the process of democratization. *Journalism*, *8* (5), 545-550.

Okigbo, C. (1996). Development communication principles. Nairobi: ICIPE Science Press.

Okigbo, C. and Eribo, F (2004). Development and communication in Africa. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Okigbo, C. and Hyden, G. (2002). The media and the two waves of democracy. In G. Hyden, M. Leslie, & F. Ogundimu, *Media and democracy in Africa* (pp. 29-53). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Okonkwo (1990). Reporting electioneering campaigns. In S. Chijioke, U. Ekwo &G. Agbakoba, *Role of journalists in modern Nigeria* (pp. 1-6). Enugu: Geomedia Associates.

Olorunnisola, A. (2002). Community Radio: Participatory Communication in Post apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Radio Studies*, *9*(1), 126-145.

Olson, E. and Eoyang, G. (2001). Facilitating organization change: Lesson from complexity science. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffe.

Olsson, E.-K. (2009). Media Crisis Management in Traditional and Digital Newsrooms. *Convergence.* 15 (4), 446-461.

Olukoyun, A. (2004). Media Accountability and Democracy in Nigeria, 1999-2003. *African Studies Review*. 47 (3), pp. 69-90.

Onyisi, T. (1996). Managing Nigeria's electronic media in a deregulated economy. In I. Nwosu & U. Ekwo, *Mass media & marketing communications: principles, perspectives, and practices* (pp.47-60), Enugu: Thought Communication Publishers.

Opubor, A. (1986). Public communication policies and the mass media in the new Nigeria. In O. Nwuneli, *Mass communication in Nigeria: A book of reading*, pp. (192-217). Enugu; Fourth Dimension Publishers

Osborne, J. W. (1993). Some similarities and differences among phenomenological and other methods of psychological qualitative research. Canadian Psychology, 35(2), 167-189.

Overholser, G. and Jamieson, K. (2005). Institutions of American democracy: The Press. New York, Oxford University Press Inc.

Oyebode, A (2008). Low patronage of development radio programs in rural Nigeria: How to get beyond the rhetoric of participation. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses;* (3) 2, p135-145, 11p.

Pascale, R.,Millemann, M. and Goija, L. (2000). Surfing the edge of chaos: The laws of nature and the new laws of business. New York; Three Rivers Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research & evaluation methods. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Peck, R. S. (1994). The American press: Constitutional protection. In H. Burrell & H. Hug. *An unfettered press* (pp. 2-16). United States Information Agency.

Piotrowski, S. and Van Ryzin, G. (2007). Citizen attitudes toward transparency in local government. *The American Review of Public Administration* 37(3), 307-323.

Polkinghorne, D.E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52(2), 137-145. Preparation and transcription. Field Methods 15 (1): 63–84.

Poniewozik, J. (2009). Mediapocalypse Now. Time Magazine, January 12, 2009 edition

Potter, W. J. and Riddle, K. (2007). A content analysis of media effects literature. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly. 84 (1) 90.*

Pye, L. (2004). Communication and political development. In C. Okigbo & F. Eribo, *Development and communication in Africa* (pp. 47-55). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Qualtrics (2009). (www.qualtrics.com/The_Use_and_Interpretation_of_Cross_Analysis)

Quinn, S. and Filak V. (2005). Convergent journalism: An introduction- writing and producing across media. New York, Focal Press.

Quinn,S. (2005). Convergence's fundamental question. *Journalism Studies; (6)*1, p29-38, 10p

Ratcliff, D. (2009). Key resources for qualitative congregational research. *Religious Education.* 104 (3), 333-341. See also 15 methods of data analysis in qualitative research. http://qualitativeresearch.ratcliffs.net/15methods.pdf

Reich, Z. (2008). The role of communication technology in obtaining news: Staying close to distant sources. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly,* 85(3), 625-646.

Reiner, S. (2009). News literacy worldwide: Teaching citizens across the globe to evaluate the media they consume. *Global Journalist* (digital edition), Summer 2009, 68-73.

Republic of Nigeria (1999). Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Rheingold, H. (2003). *Smart mobs: The next social revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Pub

Rodríguez, C. (2000) "Civil Society and Citizens' Media: Peace Architects for the New Millennium." In Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, Power, (ed.) Karin Wilkins, 147-160. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.

Rogers, E. (1986). Diffusion of innovation. London: The Free Press.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: Sage.

Schein, E. (1995). Kurt Lewin in the classroom, in the field, and in change theory: Notes toward a model of managed learning. Cambridge, Mass: Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Scheufele, D. (2002). Examining differential gains from mass media and their implications for participatory behavior. *Communication Research.* 29(1), 46-65.

Schmidt, E. (2010). Gadgets and Tech. In J. Taylor, Google chief: My fears for generation Facebook, The Independent, United Kingdom. http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech

Schonlau, M. Fricker, R. and Elliott, M.(2002). Conducting Research Surveys Via E-Mail and the Web. Santa Monica, CA. Rand.

Schudson, M. & Tifft, S. (2005). American journalism in historical perspective. In G. Overholser & K. Jamieson, *The Press: American Institutions of democracy,*(pp.17-47). New York: Oxford University Press.

Schudson, M. (2009). The new media in the 2008 U.S. Presidential campaign: The New York Times watches its back. *Javnost-The Public*, *16*(1), 73-86.

Schwartz, B. (2004). The paradox of choice: why more is less. New York: Ecco.

Senecal, M. & Dubois, F. (2005). The alternative communication movement. In D. Skinner, J. Compton, & M. Gasher *Converging media, diverging politics: A*

poltical economy of news media in the United States and Canada (pp. 249-266). NY; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Sifry, M. L. (2009). A see-through society - How the Web will open up our democracy. *Columbia Journalism Review.* 47 (5), 43.

Silcock, B., & Keith, S. (2006). Translating the tower of Babel?. *Journalism Studies*, *7*(4)

Singer, J. (2004). Strange Bedfellows? The diffusion of convergence in four news organizations. *Journalism Studies*, *5*(1), 3-18.

Singer, J. (2006). Stepping back from the gate: Online newspaper editors and the co-production of content in campaign 2004. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 83(2), 265-280.

Singer, J. B. (2006). Theorizing the Internet - Stepping Back from the Gate: Online Newspaper Editors and the Co-Production of Content in Campaign 2004. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 83,* 2, 265.

Singer, J. B. (2009). Role Call: 2008 Campaign and Election Coverage on the Web Sites of Leading U.S. Newspapers. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 86,* 4, 827.

Singleton, R.A. & Straits, B.C. (2005). Approaches to social research (4th ed). New York: Oxford University Press.

Skinner, D., Compton, J.R. & Gasher, M. (2005*). Converging media, diverging politics: A political economy of news media in the United States and Canada. NY; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.*.

Snider, P. (1962). *Information control for top-level decision making. Hamilton, NY: Presidents' Professional Association.*

Sparks, C. (2001). Democratization and the media: A preliminary discussion of experiences in Europe and Asia. *The Public,* 8(4), 7-30.

Sparks, C. (2001). The Internet and the global public sphere. In W. Bennett & R. Entman, *mediated politics: Communication in the future of democracy* (pp.75-98). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stake, R. (1995).The art of case studies research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Standage, T. (2009). Mobile marvels: a special report on telecoms in emerging markets. The Economist, September 26, 2009; New York, The Economist Newspaper Limited.

Stevenson, R. (2004). Press freedom and national development in Africa after the cold war. In C. Okigbo & F. Eribo, *Development and communication in Africa* (pp. 89-104). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Storm, J. (2005). *Commenting on convergence*. The convergence newsletter; Newsplex at the University of South Carolina (2) 11.

Taylor-Powell, E., & Renner, M. (2003). *Analyzing qualitative data*. Program development and evaluation. Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin--Extension, Cooperative Extension.

Tere, R. (2006). Qualitative data analysis

Thatcher, M. (2007). Dealing with information overload - what is the communicator's role? *Strategic Communication Management, 11*(6).

The Economist (2009). The power of mobile money: A special report on telecoms in emerging markets. September 26th – October 2nd 2009

The Guardian (2010).Foreign bodies task N'Assembly on FoI bill . Lagos, September 2, 2010 edition; Rutam House

The National Broadcasting Commission, [NBC], (2009). (http://nbc.gov.ng/)

The Network of Mobile Election Monitors (2007).Election monitoring report of the 2007 Nigerian presidential election, http://www.mobilemonitors.org.

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (1991). The Constitution of Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ; Lagos,

Thisday (2010).Presidency 2011: Breaking from the Past... Jonathan Declares Intent on Facebook. Lagos, September 15, Edition; Leaders & Company.

Thornton, L. and Keith, S. (2009). From convergence to webvergence: Tracking the evolution of broadcast-print partnerships through the lens of change theory; Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 86 (6), pp. 257-276.

Tower, D. (2002). Creating the complex adaptive organization: A primer on complex adaptive systems. *OD practitioner*: *Journal of the Organization Development Network* (34)3

Traber, M. (2003). Globalization, mass media, and Indian cultural values. Delhi: ISPCK.

Trippi, J. (2004). *The revolution will not be televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the overthrow of everything*. New York, Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

Trochim, W. M. K. (2001). *Research methods knowledge base*. Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Pub.

Turner, D. W., III (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Weekly Qualitative Report*, 3(2), 7-13.

Udogu E.I. (2008). The issue of political leadership in the Third World: What is to be done? *Journal of Third World Studies.* 25 (1), 13-23.

Ume-Nwagbo, E. (1990). Effective media management: Case for unified radio/television management. *Nigerian Journal of Mass Communication,* 1(1)

UNDP (2009). Sustainable development networking program. (http://www.sdnp.undp.org/about/)

UNDP (2009). Sustainable development networking program. http://www.sndp.undp.org/docs/reports/maputo/rba.html

University of Missouri (2008). MU Journalism School Centennial**;** Centennial wrap-up. http://livewire.missouri.edu/mu-journalism-school-centennial

van Aelst, P., & De Swert, K. (2009). Politics in the news: Do campaigns matter? A comparison of political news during election periods and routine periods in Flanders (Belgium). *Communications: The European Journal of Communication Research*, *34*(2), 149-168.

Vishwanath, A. (2008). The 360^0 news experience: Audience connections with the ubiquitous news organization. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly.* 85 (1), 7-22.

Vladeck, D. C. (2008). Access and dissemination of Information - Information Access - Surveying the Current Legal Landscape of Federal Right-to-Know Laws. *Texas Law Review.* 86 (7), 1787.

Warren, C. (2007). Defending journalism and the foundations of democracy. *Pacific Journalism Review 1*3 (2).

Weare, C. (2002). The Internet and democracy: The causal links between technology and politics. International Journal of Public Administration. 25 (5), 659-692.

Willetts, P. (2001). Transnational actors and International organizations in global politics. In J. B. Baylis and S. Smith (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, (pp. 356-383).

Williams, A. (1998). Intellectuals and the crisis of democratization in Nigeria: Towards a theory of postcolonial anomie. Theory & Society; (27) 2, p287-307, 21p.

Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Maidenhead: Open university press

Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2005). *Mass media research: An introduction*. Wadsworth series in mass communication and journalism. Belmont, Calif: Thomson/Wadsworth.

World Bank, (2009). Sustaining momentum for growth. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA

World Newspapers (2009). http://www.world-newspapers.com