Media consumption amid contestation: Northern Nigerians' engagement with the BBC World Service

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MEDIA CONSUMPTION AMID CONTESTATION: NORTHERN NIGERIANS' ENGAGEMENT WITH THE BBC WORLD SERVICE

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Abstract

This study primarily examines the dynamics of the long-term relationship between the BBC World Service and its mainly Muslim Northern Nigerian audiences. It broadly explores the pattern and consequences of Northern Nigerians' interactions with international media, focusing particularly on their engagement with the BBC World Service. Employing a multidimensional qualitative research approach, the study examines the historical background of the relationship, the transformations it has undergone, and how the current dynamics of global geopolitics and advances in communications technologies are redefining it. It looks at the complex processes and procedures of both media content production and reception. On the production side, it unveils the BBC's contradictory functions of providing 'impartial' international news service and promoting British public diplomacy, the complexity of its relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the nature of its engagement with distribution technologies. On the reception side, the mainly Muslim Northern Nigerians are found to be high consumers of BBC news and current affairs programmes but with considerable level of selectivity. Although they see BBC as the most credible international broadcaster that aids their comprehension of international affairs and generally influences their everyday life, they still regard it as essentially a Western cultural and ideological instrument that portrays the West positively and depicts the Muslim world and Africa negatively. The findings point to patterns and particularities of postcolonial transnational audiences' consumption of media that suggest new conceptual and theoretical strands in reception research. They indicate audiences' tendency to exhibit a phenomenon of selective believability in their interactions with transnational media; the mediating role of religion, culture and ideology in such interactions; and the dynamics of credibility and believability. Credibility is found to be a *necessary* but *not sufficient* condition for believability in audiences' consumption of dissonant media messages.

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Declaration

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work

I

Introduction

General introduction

Advances in communications technologies and the changing dynamics of global geopolitics are transforming international broadcasting and audiences' engagement with the media. New frontiers for reaching audiences have been opened, old barriers to mediated interactions torn apart, and conventional definitions of international broadcasting have been rendered inadequate. Modern production techniques and distribution technologies have facilitated the proliferation of broadcasters, offered opportunities for wider and greater audience participation, and engendered fierce competition among both the old players and new entrants in the field. Underlining all these permutations is the quest to reach and influence the hearts and minds of transnational audiences, for all international media organisations 'are in some measure missionaries of ideological and cultural hegemony' (Price *et al*., 2008, p. 153). But as the media scene is being transformed into a landscape never seen before so also are the patterns and perhaps the consequences of their consumption. The continuous multiplication of media with their multiple platforms delivering deluge of messages to multitude of audiences with overt and covert intents has stirred up fresh patterns of interacting with them and new ways of mitigating their impact. The contemporary media-audience relationship is a new territory the nature of which the existing conceptual and theoretical postulations appear incapable of adequately explaining, and the examination of which the traditional methodological tools seem unable to sufficiently handle.

Amid this quest for rethinking media and their audiences lies the case of an 'old' medium that has constantly been reinventing itself to keep abreast of the changing times and technologies so as to maintain a hold on its audiences. Nowhere has this been so glaringly exemplified as in its relationship with transnational postcolonial audiences. The international arm of the British Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC World Service, has established and maintained an enduring and complex

relationship with audiences both in territories once controlled by Britain and in the rest of the world. Its engagement with audiences in Nigeria, a former British colony, has been undergoing tremendous transformation brought about by the combined forces of geopolitical considerations and communications technologies. It is the measure, or perhaps the marvel, of such enduring engagement that, despite the fall of BBC audience figures in many parts of the world and despite the misgivings of many Nigerians over some aspects of its coverage and despite a ban by the Nigerian government of foreign stations' news rebroadcast on the country's local radio stations, Nigeria has consistently remained the BBC World Service's largest radio market in the world (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010).

Established in December 1932 as Empire Service (Briggs, 1985), BBC World Service is arguably the best-known international broadcaster with a considerable range of cultural capital and 'a reputation exceeded by none' (Mytton, 1993; *Economist*, 2010; Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b; FACOM, 2011, p.3). Originally launched as a modest monolingual outfit targeting British 'expatriates and loyal subjects of the King' in the then British Empire (Briggs, 1985, p.138), the World Service is now a big multimedia corporation delivering programmes in 27 languages (45 during the Second World War) to an estimated 241 million international audiences through its radio, television and online offerings (Hiller, 2010a; BBC News, 2011). Once described by former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan as 'perhaps Britain's greatest gift to the world' (cited in FACOM, 2011, p. 3), it is generally recognised as a leading provider of international news service and a promoter of 'British values across the globe' (FACOM, 2011, p. 3; Sreberny *et al.*, 2010a, 2010b). It has managed to achieve these by a combination of quality journalism, relative independence (compared to its rivals) and stable funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, sometimes receiving more than a third of Britain's public diplomacy budget. It was, for instance, allocated £225 million in 2004/05 fiscal year out of the public diplomacy budget of £617 million for that year (FCO, 2005, p.6), and the allocation continued to rise in the subsequent years—£239.5 million in 2006/07 and £255 million in 2007/08 (BBC, 2008)—reaching its zenith of £272 million in 2009/10 (Hiller, 2010b).

But the World Service is not immune to difficulties. Poor finances have forced it to consider cutting its workforce (Thompson, 2011), it has cut the number of its language services (BBC News, 2011), the competition from its rivals appears to be fiercer than its managers and paymasters had envisaged, and most significantly it is now facing greater funding pitfalls as Britain struggles to survive one of its worst financial crises for decades (Robinson and Sweney, 2010). The BBC's commercially-oriented arm, BBC Worldwide, does raise funds [£1 billion in 2009 (*Economist*, 2010)] and could help the World Service, but the issue is beyond that. The real blow to the World Service was delivered by the government's Spending Review Settlement of 2010 under which it was slammed with an unprecedented 16 per cent budget cut and its funding ordered to be transferred to the BBC licence fee in 2014 (Robinson and Sweney, 2010; Foster, 2010). Although the then chairman of the corporation's governing board, the BBC Trust, Sir Michael Lyons, had said the settlement, reached on 19 October 2010, had guaranteed 'certainty and stability' (Lyons, 2010), subsequent events show that it has done anything but. In January 2011 the BBC announced the closure of five language services (Albanian, Macedonian, Serbian, Portuguese for Africa and English for the Caribbean), with an estimated 30 million fall in the audience, and said it would also slash '650 jobs from a workforce of 2,400 over the next three years' to save £46 million a year (BBC News, 2011; Thompson, 2011).

Concerns over the World Service's future provoked reactions from many quarters, prompting the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (FACOM) to launch an investigation, which found that the decisions to both cut and transfer funding were unwise (FACOM, 2011; Burrell, 2011). 'We believe that the BBC World Service is of such value to the nation that its income should be ring-fenced against spending cuts,' the parliamentarians state in their 90-page report released on 13 April 2011. 'The recent dramatic events in North Africa and the Middle East have shown that the "soft power" wielded through the World Service is likely to bring even more benefits to the UK in the future than it has in the past, and that to proceed with the planned cuts to the World Service would be a false economy' (FACOM, 2011, p. 3). They warn that the transfer of funding responsibility to the licence fee could allow BBC senior managers to 'raid' the World Service funding; and that it may also jeopardise foreign languages' news services and weaken the

'Parliament's right to oversee its work' (p.8). The new chairman of the BBC Trust Lord Patten echoes the committee's position, promising to persuade Foreign Secretary William Hague to help initiate a reversal of the government's decisions and mitigate the effects of the actions taken so far (Wynne-Jones, 2011). Whether or not the key decisions are reversed, the scenario has provided a hint of the dynamics of the BBC World Service's relationship with the government.

The nature of that relationship has obvious consequences on the structure and operations of the World Service itself, on its engagement with technologies, and ultimately on its relationship with the audiences whose hearts and minds it seeks to influence. Indications of these could be noticed from the kind of swift changes the funding decisions generated and the responses to them, and from the nature of the influence the broadcaster is perceived to have been exercising. It is the concern over the potential weakening of the World Service's influence that provoked the campaign for cuts reversal and it is for the same reason that the broadcaster itself said that it would employ strategies to mitigate the impact of the spending cuts on its core services (Thompson, 2011). This was why the language services cut and the planned posts closures were not those deemed to be at the core of its operations. Services targeting those areas considered important for the broadcaster, such as the Middle East and Nigeria and Afghanistan, were not cut, and measures were taken to ensure that they are not seriously affected by the new changes (FACOM, 2011). Geopolitical considerations and the impact the broadcaster feels it has in an area are among the factors that determine the provision of the core or peripheral services.

The World Service sees Nigeria as one of the key areas where it has outstanding impact, with the country being its largest radio market in the world (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), as noted above. Providing a weekly radio audience figure of 21.5 million, Nigeria remains a major focus for the broadcaster (BBC Global News, 2010). Significantly, Nigerians too regard BBC as the foremost foreign broadcaster that provides credible international and national news services to them (BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). The majority of the audiences are Hausa-speaking Muslims who live in Northern Nigeria, the main target of the BBC Hausa Service. Radio is perhaps the most significant mass

medium in this region (Larkin, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010) where many inhabitants have turned 'radio-listening' into 'a habit' (Abdulkadir, 2000, p.130)—a situation long facilitated by easy access to 'cheap, portable, battery-powered transistor radio' (Mytton, 2000, p.21). Television is the second most significant medium in the region and in Nigeria as a whole, with over two thirds of the population viewing it weekly, and over a quarter of them getting access to cable and satellite channels (BBC Global News, 2010). Internet usage is also growing rapidly—over 28 per cent of the population have access (Internet World Stats, 2011)—with the BBC Hausa Service online recording 1.2 million users in April 2010, a figure that was projected to double this year (Tangaza, 2010).

The background

Northern Nigerians have a long history of interactions with other peoples and cultures outside their territory both directly through trades and travels and wars, or such similar means, and indirectly through many forms of mediated communications. One of the most defining encounters they had was the one with North African traders, particularly Arabs and Berbers, that began around the tenth century and through which they came into contact with Islam (Davidson, 1969/2004; Batran, 1989) which later became not just a religious belief but a state ideology for the largest part of the region (Fisher, 1975; Stewart, 1986). The other defining encounter was the one with Europeans along which came Christianity and colonialism (Lugard, 1902; Dudley, 1968; Barnes, 2004) and later various forms of postcolonial state instrumentalism (Williams, 1984; Dorward, 1986). Added to these key encounters are several others that collectively form Northern Nigerians' complex political, socio-economic and cultural experiences.

As a geopolitical entity, Northern Nigeria was formally formed by Britain in 1900, following the transfer in 1899 of the territories located in West Africa that were under 'the exclusive trading rights' of the British Royal Niger Company (Dudley, 1968, p.12). The company was originally on a trading mission in the area, had entered into trade agreements with some of its local rulers and the Berlin Conference of 1885 had assigned the area to Britain (Lugard, 1902). France and Germany—both of whom had interests in the region—had recognised those

trading rights; but there were still competitions among them and resistance from some of the local rulers. To forestall further trouble, Britain declared Northern Nigeria as its Protectorate, with Frederick Lugard as chief commissioner (Dudley, 1968). Prior to this declaration the territories were actually made up of the Sokoto Caliphate, Bornu (Borno) Kingdom and some smaller autonomous chiefdoms and communities with their respective independent rulers (Fisher, 1975; Stewart, 1986; Last, 1989). Borno was a big Islamic kingdom in its own right (Last, 1989) and Sokoto Caliphate was a vast Islamic empire comprised of several emirates, with well-organised system of government based on Islamic law or *Sharia* (Stewart, 1986). After the conquest, Britain left the old system largely in place and operated what came to be known as 'Indirect Rule' whereby local rulers exercised power under the supervision of British colonial administrators (Dorward, 1986; Lugard, 1922). British Common Law was brought in to run alongside the Islamic and traditional legal systems; the Common Law was being applied largely in criminal cases while *Sharia* was being mainly used in civil matters (Dorward, 1986; Stewart, 1986).

The Northern Protectorate was merged with the Southern Protectorate in 1914 to form the present-day Nigeria, which was run as a single colonial entity made up of three regions marked by the division of the three major ethnic groups in the country—the Hausa-dominated Northern Region (the same Northern Nigeria), the Ibo-dominated Eastern Region and the Yoruba-dominated Western Region (Williams, 1984). This regional arrangement remained in place even after Nigeria's independence in 1960 until first the Mid-West Region was created in 1963 during the first civilian administration and later states were created during military regimes to reduce ethnic tensions and reflect the diversity of the country—though this did not stop the brutal civil war of 1967-70 and series of ethno-religious clashes in the country (Williams, 1984; Koehn, 1989; Oyovbaire, 2001; Kastfelt, 2006; Uche, 2008). The numerous changes produced the present 36-state federal structure in the country, with the central city of Abuja as the Federal Capital Territory. But even this, as Oyovbaire notes, does not fully reflect the level of Nigeria's complexity and ethnic diversity. 'The use of sociological, anthropological, cultural and linguistic classifications could assign as low as 375

minority ethnic nationalities and as high as 1,450 such groups in the country' (Oyovbaire, 2001).

Northern Nigeria is currently made up of 19 states (and Abuja) out of the 36 states of the Nigerian federation. It covers well over half of the country's territory of about 923,733 square kilometres and well over half of its current estimated population of 166 million—based on the National Census which put Nigeria's population at over 140 million in 2006 (FGN, 2007). The predominant religion remains Islam, although there are large numbers of Christian and other non-Muslim populations, particularly in the southern part of the region, often referred to as the Middle-Belt, where ethno-religious tensions appear to be more pronounced, especially in recent years. The frequent ethno-religious conflicts in the region with their deep socio-economic and political linkage (ICG, 2010) are creating what Kastfelt (2006, p.14) describes as 'enclave culture…where social pluralism is being replaced by a growing concern with defining, creating and maintaining community boundaries', a phenomenon that he appropriately links to the problem of 'postcolonial citizenship'. The region was witnessing its own internal transformation when colonialism came along with its own form of nation-state structure. In some respects it has succeeded in creating a new entity; in others it has exposed the difficulties involved in such enterprise. Northern Nigeria has an estimated 250 indigenous ethnic groups—there is no agreed definite number of ethnic groups in Nigeria (Oyovbaire, 2001; Philips, 2004)—with Hausa-Fulani as the largest group and Hausa language, which had been 'reduced to writing long before the advent of the British' in the region (Williams, 1984, p.331), serving largely as the lingua franca and English as the official language.

The Nigerians' mediated encounters with other cultures have also been long; and perhaps its defining moments too began first with the spread of Islamic education centuries before British colonisation and later with the spread of Western education following the advent of Europeans in the territory. Both have long and complex histories that are beyond the scope of this study, but they both facilitate the mediated encounters that the modern media are now much credited with engendering. The presence of media in Nigeria preceded British colonialism as the first newspaper was established in 1859, five-and-a-half decades before Britain's

proclamation of Nigeria as a country. It was a Christian evangelical Yoruba newspaper *Iwe Irohin* (The Newspaper) which came to symbolise the character of the early print media that first started as tiny outfits before moving into small private concerns and later expanded into medium and large entities with both private and government involvements (Oyovbaire, 2001). Today the Nigerian press is seen as very vibrant and one of the freest in Africa, though there have been cases of closure of media houses, harassment of journalists and corruption among the practitioners (Uche, 1989; Oyovbaire, 2001; Olutokun and Seteolu, 2001; Yusha'u, 2008; Auduson, 2010). The print media have been mainly independent while the broadcast media are largely government-controlled, though their liberalisation in the 1990s and the emergence and rise of what Larkin (2008, p.354) calls 'video culture' and its attendant 'infrastructure of piracy' have put a significant part of the broadcast media out of government's hand. The new media space too has been expanding rapidly with the Internet and mobile telephony spreading very fast across the country (BBC Global News, 2009, 2010).

Broadcasting, to put it into its historical context, was introduced to Nigeria by Britain in the form of radio networks and mobile cinemas to promote the interests of the colonial regime and to bring a Western model of modernisation to the people of the area (Ladele *et al*., 1979; Sambe, 2005; Larkin, 2004, 2008). They were the forms of media that dominated the public sphere of the colonial Northern Nigeria. 'The mobile cinemas of the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) (*majigi* in Hausa) shared with radio the aim of advancing the needs of the modernising colonial state,' notes Larkin (2004, p. 356). Commercial cinema, added to the colonial film units and radio, opened up the region to 'the global influences of foreign media, from Hollywood to Indian films, and made these media an everyday part of Nigerian life' (p. 356). Government's control of broadcasting remained tight even after independence and was only loosened in the 1990s when pressures from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the implementation of the economic Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the country forced its liberalisation (Larkin, 2004, 2008). This led to rapid changes in the country's broadcasting scene with the establishment of several private broadcast stations. According to Nigeria's broadcasting regulator, the National Broadcasting

Commission (NBC), the number of broadcasting stations in the country rose from 30 to 394 within the last 20 years (NBC, 2009).

The Nigerian film industry has seen an even more phenomenal growth, producing more than two films (in video format) every day and turning the country into the world's second biggest movie-maker, behind only India and far ahead of the United States (UNESCO, 2009; Bengali, 2009). The films are popular both within Nigeria and in many African countries. The industry is private-sector driven, relying on private financing and entrepreneurial skills of its owners and managers and the raw talents of its artists to succeed. It is virtually free from government's control, with the exception of the regulatory role of government agencies like the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) at the national level and some local censors at the state level. Although collectively known as Nollywood, often identified with its English-language films, in reality it is a multi-lingual industry, with about 56 per cent of the films being produced in the three major Nigerian languages. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) figures for 2009 show that English language films account for 44 per cent while Yoruba (31%), Hausa (24%) and Igbo (1%) make up the balance (UNESCO, 2009). The Hausa films are dominant in Northern Nigeria, and their influence extends to both Niger Republic and the huge Hausa-speaking communities in Benin Republic, Cameroon and Ghana (Larkin, 2008).

The dominance of the local films may have reduced the influence of foreign films in the country, with UNESCO confirming that 'Nigeria has virtually no formal cinemas' (UNESCO, 2009) and that many Nigerians do watch local home videos. But then, access to foreign films is also common through local television stations, video compact discs (VCDs), digital video discs (DVDs) and satellite television channels and perhaps marginally through the Internet too which, as noted above, is being accessed by more than 28 per cent of Nigerians (Internet World Stats, 2011). It is the rapid spread of the distribution technologies that makes global cultural goods more readily available to Nigerians and it is this availability that widens the scope of the mediated cultural interactions. Nigerians' consumption of global media products, for instance, appears to have increased with the rise in the number of global broadcasters (BBC Global News, 2010). Cable and satellite television

stations such as the BBC World News, the Cable News Network (CNN), France 24, Sky News, *Al-Jazeera* and even Iranian Press TV, among others, are all now competing for audiences in Nigeria.

The BBC is perhaps the first foreign broadcaster in Nigeria, having started broadcasting to the country virtually since the establishment of the Empire Service in 1932 (Briggs, 1985; Larkin, 2008). It began with wired broadcasting whereby BBC programmes were relayed to the audiences 'by means of wires connected to loudspeakers installed in the homes of subscribers' and at public places (Ladele *et al.*, 1979, p.8; Larkin, 2008). The broadcast then was only in English language and the subscribers were mostly expatriates and few influential Nigerians, and as such the majority of the audiences had to rely on the public loudspeakers to listen to it (Larkin, 2008). Later, when wireless broadcasting was introduced in Nigeria in 1951, the audiences' access to BBC's broadcasts expanded rapidly (Ladele *et al.,* 1979). But perhaps the most remarkable part of the early experience was the introduction of the BBC Hausa Service in 1957 as part of the British Colonial Office's new initiative for Africa (Briggs, 1985). The BBC was at that time committed to 'providing certain territories with programmes more closely designed to appeal to special local interests' and the Hausa language service was designed for West Africa (BBC Handbook, 1958). Since then the relationship between the broadcaster and Hausa-speaking audiences has been widening. The service has been expanding and the audiences have been steadily increasing, reaching a weekly figure of about 26 million in 2007 (BBC, 2008). The offerings are on radio, online and on mobile telephony, along the BBC's multimedia initiatives.

The BBC Hausa Service does face competition from other international radio broadcasters such as the Voice of America (VOA), Germany's Radio *Deutsche Welle* and Radio France International (RFI), all of which broadcast in Hausa language targeting the same audiences. But the BBC's historical connection to its Nigeria audiences, its perceived reputation of impartiality and its effective deployment of delivery technologies appear to have given it an edge over its rivals. Several BBC audience surveys (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010) show that its audience figures are consistently higher

than those of its major rivals in the region—with the VOA and Radio *Deutsche Welle* often coming second and third respectively [the RFI began its Hausa transmission in 2007 (Sennitt, 2007) and so far none of the surveys has included its audience figures]. Historically, there were other Hausa service competitors such as the then Radio Moscow and very marginally Radio China International, but apparently the ending of the Cold War ended the competition—particularly with Radio Moscow (Jaggar, 2001), which is now known as Voice of Russia. The BBC's services on radio (World Service English, Focus on Africa and Network Africa) and on television (BBC World News and BBC Arabic Television) and their online services, all of which have audiences in Northern Nigeria (BBC Global News, 2010), combined with the head start it had with massive Hausa Service audiences, clearly give it an unparalleled advantage in Northern Nigeria.

Whether it is seen as a provider of global news and current affairs programmes or as an instrument of British public diplomacy or both, the BBC World Service has maintained a remarkable relationship with its Northern Nigerian audiences. This engagement has been long and complex; and the dynamics of global geopolitics— from colonialism and Cold War era to post-September 11 period—and changes in delivery technologies (from wired broadcasting to multimedia broadcasting) have ensured the sustenance of this complexity. This is further guaranteed by the 'complex, contested and competitive setting of international broadcasting and public diplomacy' (Price *et al.*, 2008, p.150). The paradox of Northern Nigerians' high consumption of BBC products and their apparent negative perceptions of the West widened the complexity. Although (as stated above) a series of BBC surveys did show evidence of high consumption of BBC products and favourable credibility rating of the station in Northern Nigeria (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), the region appears to be experiencing what Huntington (1996) calls 'Islamic resurgence', which is also projected to rise in the region in the coming years with accompanied anti-Western sentiment (US NIC, 2008; ICG, 2010). Previous studies elsewhere do suggest that the West, particularly the United States, has negative image in the Muslim world (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004; Pew Center, 2004, 2006; Pintak, 2006), and that the use of what Nye (2004a) calls 'soft power' could be helpful in changing such image.

There is, however, a dearth of empirical evidence to show how successful this effort has been.

This study attempts to examine both the nature and the impact of BBC's long-term engagement with its Northern Nigerian audiences. It explores the general nature of Northern Nigerians' consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global broadcasters and its apparent impact on their everyday life. It attempts to assess the BBC's influence in shaping the Northern Nigerians' perceptions of global events as well as its impact in moulding their conceptions of the West in general and Britain in particular. It also examines the nature of the cumulative consumption of the BBC broadcasts by its Northern Nigerian audiences and how this enhanced (or failed to enhance) favourable perceptions of Britain by these audiences—and why. It is a study that investigates both the production and reception aspects of media, the dynamics within them and the complexities of the relationship between them as well as the nature of their relationship with other affiliated forces.

It is a study done with the full consideration of the existing fluidity of the media landscape. In the current 'hypermedia space' where the new and old media are 'locked in an inter-dependent, mutually re-enforcing, complementary relationship' (Kraidy and Mourad, 2010, p.11) and where audiences simultaneously act as producers and consumers of media texts, little can be left to chances. 'And in a more vicious world, as the Cold War's geopolitically distinct fields of contestation fade in favour of the porous borders and group networks of a newly conceptualized "long war on terror", other defining features of international broadcasting blur as well' (Price *et al*, 2008, p.153). These realities present formidable challenges that call for the use of comprehensive theoretical and methodological frameworks that could integrate all the major aspects of the subject and their complexities for thorough examination. The problem, though, is that audience research is still battling with a dearth of standardised conceptual research schema (Barker, 2006; Michelle, 2006); and this gets even worse when the research involves transnational audiences that Ang (1996) says 'would be ludicrous' to find a definitive framework of researching 'precisely because there is no way to know in advance which strategies and tactics different peoples in the

world will invent to negotiate with the intrusions of global forces in their lives' (p.143).

Still, this study has made effort to find what Thussu (2006) calls an innovative and inclusive multidisciplinary framework that could address the various dimensions of a research of this nature. It reviews various conceptual and theoretical postulations related to different aspects of the subject, draws useful insights from them and come up with an interdisciplinary multidimensional framework that guides the research. Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model, Joseph Klapper's (1960) limited effects theory and Joseph Nye's (2004a) concept of soft power have all proved useful in providing the theoretical framework, and so have David Morley's (2006) advice on the need for multidimensional methodology and Carolyn Michelle's (2007) consolidated model in furnishing the methodological approach. The multi-method approach employed for the study combined in-depth individual interview method with focus group, content analysis and documentary research techniques to thoroughly examine the production, the content and the reception aspects of the media. The primary data drawn through these qualitative methods was supplemented with statistical data obtained from the BBC's large-scale surveys to help provide both general and specific insights into the Northern Nigerians' engagement with global broadcasters.

Scope of the study

This study broadly investigates the pattern and consequences of Northern Nigerians' consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global broadcasters. It focuses primarily on examining the mainly Muslim Northern Nigerians' engagement with the BBC World Service, particularly the BBC Hausa Service, the production processes and the nature of the products produced for them, the distribution and consumption of the products and the overall consequences of the engagement. It looks at the historical backgrounds of both the BBC World Service and Northern Nigeria, the pattern of their relationship, the forces that shape it and the trajectory of the relationship. The World Service's relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its engagement with distribution technologies are also briefly examined in the process. This study

limits itself to the investigation of the mainly Muslim Northern Nigerians' long-term engagement with the BBC within the realm of production and consumption of news and current affairs programmes; it does not go into the entire relationship between the BBC and Nigeria as a whole. It does not, for instance, touch on the work of the BBC World Service's charity arm, the BBC World Service Trust, which offers technical and material aids to local broadcasters and runs health and other developmental media campaigns in Nigeria. Similarly, this study neither assesses the BBC World Service's influence in English language education in Nigeria nor does it examine the BBC Hausa Service's contributions to the standardisation of Hausa language, even though both are important components of the dynamic relationship between the broadcaster and Northern Nigerians. Focusing on the specific areas stated, and excluding others, form part of this study's strategy to have proper direction and produce clear and unambiguous results. In any case, the truth is that it is simply not feasible for a single study to exhaust all aspects of audiences' relationship with the media (Hoijer, 1990). This is even more so when dealing with vast and complicated subjects, such as the ones this study handles. 'The BBC is a highly complex cultural institution and a daunting subject even for the serious scholar' (Chignell, 2008). Northern Nigeria presents an even stronger challenge. But neither is beyond human comprehension and both, particularly the former, have indeed been the subject of intense scrutiny. Combining them together and interrogating both their internal dynamics and the dynamics of their relationship are the novel and daunting tasks that this study has undertaken.

Research questions

To unveil the pattern and particularities and impact of Northern Nigerians' interactions with the BBC in particular and other global broadcasters in general, answers to series of relevant and interrelated questions need to be found. The most significant of these questions are as follows:

a) How have international broadcasters, especially the BBC World Service, delivered international affairs for specific audiences?

b) How does the BBC produce content that is relevant to Northern Nigerians?

c) How has the regular consumption of BBC World Service radio in troubled Northern Nigeria influenced audiences' attitudes to international affairs?

d) To what extent has the regular consumption of BBC World Service's products influenced Muslim Northern Nigerians' perceptions of events in Nigeria, Africa and Islamic world as well as in Britain and its Western allies?

e) What are the implications of the study's findings for audience research and public diplomacy supported by broadcasting?

Rationale for the study

This study investigates the pattern and consequences of the consumption of global media goods by the mainly Muslim Northern Nigerians at the time when both the media landscape and the audiences' consumption patterns are undergoing radical transformations. First, it is a pioneering attempt under this situation to assess the impact of Western cultural goods on non-Western society, with specific reference to BBC and Northern Nigerians, and to offer insights into this particular cultural encounter—revealing the audiences' mode of resistance and rejection, as well as that of assimilation and adaptation, of Western media texts. It holds out potentials for epistemological and theoretical development in media and cultural studies. Previous studies of non-Westerners' encounter with the Western media, such as Daniel Lerner's (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society* and Tarik Sabry's (2010) *Cultural Encounters in the Arab World* (despite their wide temporal and theoretical disparities), have provided useful accounts on the dynamics of such interactions and strengthened its intellectual base. Additional endeavour is both imperative and desirable.

What is more, a study of Northern Nigerians' interactions with global broadcasters is effectively a reception research—an area that is vital to communications studies but which has been in decline, and is in dire need of revival (Michelle, 2007; Morley, 2006; Barker, 2006). 'Audience research, after a promising period during which some crucial advances were made, seems to be in decline in several ways,' Barker (2006, p.123) laments, 'yet its tasks remain as important as ever'. Its

heydays when important works such as media effects theories (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944/1979; Gerbner and Gross, 1976), uses and gratifications (Herzog, 1941; Katz *et al.*, 1973) and limited effects models (Klapper, 1960; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955/2006) emerged were long gone; and even later works such as Morley's (1980) application of Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model and Liebes and Katz's (1993) *Export of Meaning* are not really being matched by new and significant audience studies. Barker's argument—reinforced by Michelle's (2007)—is that, although there have been series of reception studies in the last two to three decades, they are not enough, and that they generally lack proper conceptual and theoretical focus. What is required, they insist, are studies guided by 'elaborated conceptual framework' (Barker, 2006, p.128) or 'conceptual schema' (Michelle, 20007, p.183) that would enhance clear understanding of 'audience reception in its full complexity' (p.193). An attempt on this is a worthwhile venture.

This is even more significant in view of the kind of transformation being witnessed in the media scene, as stated above. With the changing media landscape and an equally changing mode of consumption, comprehensive theoretical and methodological frameworks that could integrate these changes and the various dimensions of the study are required. This is what informs the choice of a unique methodological approach that combines different qualitative techniques to simultaneously study both the production and consumption aspects of media for a comprehensive examination of the subject. The study, as stated earlier, attempts to combine individual interviews (Priest, 1996; Berger, 1998) with focus groups (Morrison, 1998; Morley, 1980) and content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) techniques to thoroughly investigate the production side of the media, the content itself and the reception side (the audiences) to get comprehensive results. They are, as noted above, complemented with ample statistical data generated from large-scale BBC surveys to provide both general and specific insights into the audiences' engagement with the media. The ability to combine different qualitative research tools and complement the data they generated with the one obtained through surveys confirmed the complementary roles the two methodological traditions play (Morrison, 1998). Similarly, putting focus group technique in operation tests its viability in unveiling group dynamism and in

generating rich material (Morrison, 1998; Greenbaum, 2000). Overall, it is a novel methodological endeavour the application of which signifies potentially important improvement in reception research and can possibly transform the shape and form of transnational audience study.

Since this study focuses on examining BBC's long-term relationship with its audiences in Northern Nigeria, it in essence assesses the World Service's performance in the region both in the provision of news service and in promoting British public diplomacy—issues that are of significance not only to BBC personnel and public diplomacy operators but also to media scholars and international relations academics. The BBC's roles as provider of global news service and promoter of British public diplomacy have long been noted by many scholars (Rampal and Adams, 1990; Nye, 2004a, 2004b; Sreberny *et al.*, 2010a, 2010b) but it would be interesting to test the veracity of the claim with empirical evidence from its engagement with Northern Nigerians. This is particularly essential in view of the complex nature of the relationship. It is indicated above that, although series of BBC's audience surveys do show high consumption of the station's products and high rating of its credibility (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), the Muslim Northern Nigerians' perceptions of the West do not appear to be favourable. It is an intriguing situation that could only be unravelled by a carefully planned and well-focused research of this nature.

Furthermore, the insights this study provides could serve as vital tools for assessing the role of media in public diplomacy and for formulating effective programmes within that remit. This is significant too, given the amount of resources Britain devotes to public diplomacy works and the high expectation it has on the BBC World Service to contribute towards such efforts. The government, as stated above, devotes over a third of its public diplomacy budget to the World Service as a public diplomacy partner that brings benefits to Britain (FCO, 2005, p.6). The funding had even been increasing rapidly (Hiller, 2010b) until Britain's rising debts and deficits forced a climb down (Robinson and Sweney, 2010; Foster, 2010; Thompson, 2011). But even with the economic crisis, as noted earlier, there are considerable efforts to spare the World Service of further

funding cuts (FACOM, 2011; Wynne-Jones, 2011). All these underline the significance attached to media's role in public diplomacy and what a study towards understanding it entails. This may equally have special resonance with the West's battle for the hearts and minds of the Muslims (Thussu, 2005, 2006; Price *et al.*, 2008), for such understanding can provide clues on the prospects of its success or the pitfalls of its failure. The strength of this study, however, lies on its potentials for wider applicability in media diplomacy and related disciplines, for as Sreberny (2010b, p. 280) argues, 'even bad public diplomacy is better than war, so we might do well as scholars of transnational media, communications, and politics to understand it better'.

Another significant area that this study investigates is the pivotal role of communications technologies in relation to both the BBC's and the audiences' engagement with them. The convergence of the old and new media, and the way they are being leveraged for content distribution represent some of the most radical transformations taking place in the media industry today. The BBC's record of effective deployment of delivery technologies—right from its early days when much of the current technologies were non-existent and those available were in rudimentary stages (though they were considered marvel then) to these days when their advancement appears to have surpassed expectations—is one of the key factors that puts it ahead of its rivals (Briggs, 1985; Price *et al.*, 2008). The corporation's current use of 'multimedia strategy', delivering its contents through multiple platforms, has enabled it to survive tough competitions and retain huge audiences (Hiller, 2010a, p. 2). For the audiences the technologies are their main link to the world, providing the infrastructure that brings cultural goods to them (Larkin, 2008). 'Media technologies are more than transmitters of content, they represent cultural ambitions, political machineries, modes of leisure, relations between technology and the body, and, in certain ways, the economy and spirit of an age' (Larkin, 2008, p. 2). Examining their roles does not only unfold the nature of the broadcaster's strategies of delivering its contents and the audiences' relationship with them, but it also unpacks the historical and cultural dynamics of their influence in the everyday lives of Northern Nigerians. The BBC's engagement with the new technologies is both part of its survival strategy and part of maintaining its competitive edge. It is, for instance, the new delivery

technologies that help drive its interactive programming which many Northern Nigerian audiences seem to enjoy. The findings reveal that the new technologies do not only enhance engagement with the audiences (both in delivering the products to them and in receiving feedback from them), but they also bring corporate efficiency and efficiencies among media personnel.

Another strategy that this study has found to be working for the BBC (which others too could benefit from) is its employment of diasporic personnel with their 'transnational cultural capital' (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b, p. 282) to work in its language services. Sreberny *et al.* (2010b) note that the ability of the diasporic figures to represent the targeted region and 'to portray British cultural activities and social life (usually in a positive light)' and the leveraging of the online services could serve as key to World Service's survival (p.282). This study reveals that the strategy serves another purpose too: it enhances BBC's credibility. Some of the Hausa language audiences, for instance, feel that the diasporic personnel, with whom they share common cultural and religious values, are unlikely to put out contents that would be harmful to them. Incidentally, this strategy could also help to mitigate the problem of delivering dissonant messages to more discerning audiences. Although the findings have not shown any evidence of this happening, they do suggest that combining this with careful selection of content might deliver good results. The practical application of this strategy could indeed go down to the level of guiding broadcasting executives and producers in content selection in their specific programme-making endeavours and general journalism practice. All these would have greater chance of working, though, when given a holistic treatment based on the conceptual and theoretical thrusts brought out by this research.

An overview of the chapters

This work is organised into ten broad chapters with multiple subheadings for easy access, referencing and comprehension. This first chapter is an introductory note that sets out the study, stating its nature, its scope, its focus and its limits. It outlines the historical and contextual backgrounds of the key elements of the study, their internal dynamics and the dynamics of their relationships. The major research questions the study strives to answer and the rationale of the research

itself are also laid out here. Chapter II, Literature Review, provides a critical assessment of previous audience studies, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underline them and the ones produced by them as well as the past and present trajectories of the field. It specifically reviews in detail different theories on media-audience relationship, paying particular attention to media effects and dominant ideology theories, uses and gratifications, active audience and selectivity models and related concepts. It also looks at the radio and African audiences, international radio broadcasting and public diplomacy, international communications and transnational audiences before it draws up a dynamic multidimensional theoretical framework that guides this study.

Chapter III, Historical Context, unpacks the Northern Nigeria's past detailing its long engagement with Islam, its pre-colonial political and socio-economic structure, its colonial and postcolonial restructuring and its status in present-day Nigeria. The British historical ties with the region—ranging from the proclamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, through to their amalgamation as one entity, to the final granting of independence to Nigeria—and the forces that shaped the developments all form the first part of the chapter. The second part examines the historical development of media in Nigeria—the print media and the broadcast and film industries—their structures, the role they played at different stages of Nigeria's evolution and their transformations to their present state. Chapter IV, The BBC and Northern Nigerians, deals with both the historical and current dynamics of BBC's relationship with its audiences in Northern Nigeria. It traces the BBC's development from its early days as Empire Service to its present position as the leading international broadcaster with the contradictory roles of providing impartial news service and promoting British public diplomacy. Its complex relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the difficult balancing act of attending to their demand and that of the audiences are also highlighted here. The chapter equally examines the BBC's interests in Nigeria—first as a British colonial outpost and now as its largest radio market—highlighting its different roles in the changing times.

Chapter V, Methodology, reveals all aspects of the methodological tools employed for this research along with the justification for doing so. It highlights the

qualitative methods used in drawing the primary data for the research—individual in-depth interviews and focus groups—the qualitative content analysis technique used to study a selection of transmitted programmes and the documentary research that enhances the study. It also explains how the statistical data drawn from BBC's large audience surveys complements the primary data drawn from the field and helps in enriching this research. The chapter goes on to unveil the sampling procedure employed in selecting the participants, their regional locations and backgrounds, the nature and quality of the data generated from them, the ethical issues concerned with the research as well as the general problems encountered and how they were addressed. Chapter VI, Contents and Quantification, contains an overview of the editorial policy and guidelines that inform content selection and programme-making in the BBC World Service. It also analyses a selection of BBC Hausa Service programmes transmitted to its audiences as well as BBC's quantitative surveys in Nigeria, with specific emphasis on the results obtained in the last four consecutive years, unveiling its audience figures and its performance in the country, the audiences' demographics and their assessments of local and international broadcasters.

Chapter VII, Results and Analysis I, deals with the empirical data obtained from audiences in Nigeria through in-depth individual interviews. It reveals the individuals' pattern of consumption of international media products and the apparent consequences of such consumption. It shows that there is a high consumption of global media products by Northern Nigerian audiences and that they have positive perception of the BBC, although they hold strong reservations about its coverage of the Muslim world and Africa. It reveals that the audiences have ambivalent perceptions of the West—slightly deferential but overwhelmingly negative—and are highly critical of what they perceive to be the West's unfairness to the Muslim world. Chapter VIII, Results and Analysis II, presents the findings of the investigation of the production side revealed by the data obtained through in-depth interviews with the BBC executives, producers and reporters. It outlines the rigorous and systematic procedures and processes of the selection and production of BBC Hausa Service's contents, and the nature of the relationship between the managerial and operational staff. The chapter also unveils the nature of BBC's engagement with new communications technologies, its focus on

interactive programming and its treatment of audiences' complaints. It reveals the BBC personnel's perspectives on the broadcaster's relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, its public diplomacy role and its influence in Northern Nigeria.

Chapter IX, Results and Analysis III, teases out the study's most comprehensive findings on the audiences' interactions with global broadcasters. It shows the pattern, particularities and apparent consequences of their consumption of news and current affairs programmes of the global broadcasters. The audiences, the findings indicate, are highly selective in their dealing with unpleasant messages but less so when consuming congenial content; and that the mediating variables of religion, ideology, culture, other social forces and personal predispositions do play roles in audiences' selectivity. Chapter X, Discussion, Implications and Conclusions, examines the most significant findings of the research and highlights the conceptual and theoretical strands they reveal. The findings suggest that the changing media landscape is transforming audiences' pattern of consumption giving rise to a more complex form of selectivity—selective believability—and that extra-communication factors exert influence in media consumption, with the strongest among them serving as the primary mediator. For the mainly Muslim Northern Nigerians, the findings reveal, Islam—which serves as a religious, ideological and cultural force—appears to play the primary mediating role in their consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global media. They suggest that in audiences' consumption of unpleasant messages credibility is a *necessary* but *not sufficient* condition for believability. The chapter also outlines the implications of the study and the areas that require further interrogations.

II

Literature Review

Introduction

Researching media-audience relationship has always been an integral part of communications studies, notwithstanding the contention that it still contends with the question of standardised research schema (Barker, 2006; Morley, 2006; Michelle, 2007). This study focuses on examining the long-term relationship between transnational audiences and international media, using a comprehensive conceptual framework to look at not only the reception but also the production side of the media and relevant aspects of international communications and public diplomacy. And since the study is focusing primarily on the BBC World Service and its audiences in Northern Nigeria, it devotes two separate sections—the 'Historical Context' and 'The BBC and Northern Nigerians' chapters that follow this one—for the provision of their historical backgrounds. This particular chapter is, however, devoted to the review of related literature concerning the conceptual and theoretical postulations in the field. Paucity of qualitative audience studies in Northern Nigeria—though Brian Larkin's (2004, 2008) works in the area are of great significance—might have been one of the factors that prompted this study, but it has also necessitated the review of related literature from other regions. This chapter reviews previous studies and theories on media-audience relationship (ranging from media effects theories to audience selectivity and active audience models), radio and African audiences, international radio broadcasting and public diplomacy, international communications and transnational audiences—and draws up the theoretical framework that guides the study.

The effects theories

From the moment the production and distribution of cultural goods reached industrial scale, the quest for unravelling their influence on their consumers began. Early attempts yielded what came to be known as media effects theory or hypodermic needle model which could be traced back to the period of the First

World War—and which held sway in the inter-war years (during the rise of Fascism in Western Europe and consolidation of Communism in Soviet Union) up to the end of the Second World War. The idea of using media for propaganda was effectively recognised in the early periods of film and radio, and those in control of power embraced it with enthusiasm, as one of the leading American communications theorists, Harold Lasswell, notes in his book *Propaganda Techniques in the World War* (1927). 'During the war period it came to be recognized that the mobilisation of men and means was not sufficient; there must be mobilisation of opinion,' he writes. 'Power over opinion, as over life and property, passed into official hands' (pp.14-15). McQuail (2005) concurs, explaining that the contending nations in the First World War mobilised the press and film for their war aims. 'The results seemed to leave little doubt of the potency of media influence on the "masses", when effectively managed and directed' (McQuail, 2005, p.51). There was the feeling then that effective Allied forces' propaganda had helped shorten the length of the First World War by a year (Seaton, 1997b). '*The Times* in 1918 had argued that effective propaganda had hastened victory by a year, and consequently saved a million lives' (p.129).

The debut of cinema at the close of the nineteenth century and the commencement of radio transmissions in the West at the beginning of twentieth century provided the impetus for broadcasting. The Russian communists, at the peak of their revolutionary triumph over the ruling Tsars in 1917, 'were one of the earliest political groups to realize the ideological and strategic importance of broadcasting' (Thussu, 2006, p.15), and the message of their leader, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, was the first public broadcast to be recorded in the history of wireless propaganda. The Soviet Union was in 1925 the first country to use short-wave radio in Moscow from where they began to broadcast communist propaganda to international audiences (Browne, 1982; Thussu, 2006). When the Nazis assumed power in Germany in 1933, they put much energy on using media to disseminate 'racist and anti-Semitic ideology of the Third Reich' (Thussu, 2006, p.15). Paul Josef Goebbels, the head of the country's propaganda ministry, was reported to have said: 'Propaganda means fighting on all battlefields of the spirit, generating, multiplying, destroying, exterminating, building and undoing' (cited in Thussu, 2006, p.15). Similarly, when the National Fascist Party came to power in Italy, its

leader, Benito Mussolini, adopted similar techniques 'to promote Fascist ideals' (Thussu, 2006, p.15). The Second World War saw rapid increase in deploying media for mass mobilization, with Britain using the BBC Empire Service (Briggs, 1985; Seaton, 1997b)—and later the United States too using Voice of America (VOA)—to counter the German, Japanese and Italian propaganda machines (Browne, 1982; Thussu, 2006).

These were the backgrounds upon which early studies on media influence were conducted, and the emerging trend at that time produced the hypodermic needle model. This theory is essentially based on the proposition that the media are powerful organs of public communications, capable of injecting into the minds of the passive mass audiences the dominant view of the ruling elites. It was largely conceived from the works of the Marxist-dominated Frankfurt School's critical theorists who had noted both the use of media for propaganda by Nazi Germany and the advent of consumerism in the United States (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944/1979; Marcuse, 1964). And indeed from the works of others before them— such as Lasswell's (1927), noted earlier, who believes that the media had been effectively used for propaganda to weld 'thousands and even millions of human beings into one amalgamated mass of hate and will and hope' (p.220). In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944/1979), Adorno and Horkheimer identified and analysed what they saw as the process of commodification of culture and stultification of the masses. 'The flood of detailed information and candy-floss entertainment simultaneously instructs and stultifies mankind,' they argue (p. xv).

This view was informed by their perceptions of how malleable masses were being subjected to Nazi propaganda in their experience in Germany, and of the massive entertainment and advertising messages corporate America was bombarding people with in their American experience. 'Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art,' they argue. 'The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce. They call themselves industries; and when their directors' incomes are published, any doubt about the social utility of the finished products is removed' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944/1979, p.121). The media have been turned into commercial enterprises to reinforce consumption capitalism, and be reinforced by them.

> The might of industrial society is lodged in men's minds. The entertainment manufacturers know that their products will be consumed with alertness even when the customer is distraught, for each of them is a model of the huge economic machinery which has always sustained the masses, whether at work or at leisure…
>
> (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944/1979, p.127)

Adorno in particular has a deep dismal view of cinema which he sees as having spectacularly negative effects on people's consciousness. In his *Minima Moralia* (1951/1978), he says: 'Every visit to the cinema leaves me, against all my vigilance, stupider and worse' (p.25). It is a view he ironically shares with a French right-wing author Georges Duhamel (1931) who dismisses cinema as 'a past time for the slaves, an amusement for the illiterate, for poor creatures stupefied by work and anxiety' (cited in Stam, 2000, p.67). Adorno's aversion to any control of people's consciousness was hardly in doubt. 'To adapt to the weakness of the oppressed is to affirm in it the pre-condition of power, and to develop in oneself the coarseness, insensibility and violence needed to exert domination' (Adorno, 1951/1978, p.26). It is worth noting, however, that the Frankfurt School's perspective on film theory—though often presented as a unified coherent view represented in Adorno and Horkheimer's (1944/1979) concept of culture industry—is not free of dissenting views (Stam, 2000), at least as reflected by the opinion of a member of the school, Walter Benjamin (1968), incidentally Adorno's close friend, who argues that the film spectator is not 'spellbound in darkness' (cited in Stam, 2000, p.67). Predictably, Adorno in turn criticises what Stam calls Benjamin's 'technological utopianism' for 'ignoring the alienating social functioning of (cinema) in reality' (Stam, 2000, p.67).

Significantly, as noted earlier, it is not only the Frankfurt School theorists that identified the powerful—and often negative—nature of the media at that time, but that even prior to the publication of their famous works, Gunter (2000) observes, the consensus among researchers in the 1920s and 1930s was that 'the media exercised a powerful and persuasive influence' because the period 'witnessed the emergence of mass audiences on an unprecedented scale as a function of the growth and establishment of the press, film and radio' (p.10). It is also important to note that even at the later age the hypodermic model did get an extended boost from the findings of behavioural studies, such as the 'Bobo doll experiment' (Bandura and Walters, 1963), which concluded, among others, that children do

copy violent behaviour from violent media content. The Bobo doll experiment, though, has been roundly criticised on the premise that 'a simple, controlled laboratory experiment has very limited application to the complicated conditions under which we interact with the various media in our social lives' (Branston and Stafford, 2003, p.150).

Another variant of the media effects tradition that receives attention from many researchers is the cultivation theory, conceived and developed by media theorists George Gerbner and Larry Gross (1976). It emanated from many studies conducted in the United States in the late 1960s at the period of great concern about violence in the country following the assassinations of the black civil right activist Martin Luther King (1929-1968) and Senator Robert "Bobby" Kennedy (1925-1968). The studies, commissioned by the US National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, focused on the influence of television on the prevalence of violence in the society. Gerbner and Gross (1976) argue that television viewing has a significant effect in moulding people's minds, stressing that television is 'a medium of the socialization of most people into standardized roles and behaviours' (p.175). Cultivation analysis, Morgan and Signorielli (1990) later write, 'represents a particular set of theoretical and methodological assumptions and procedures designed to assess the contributions of television viewing to people's conceptions of social reality' (p.15). It was, they note, a departure from the more traditional media research which focuses on individual messages or programmes and their ability to produce immediate change in audience behaviours. 'Cultivation analysis is concerned with the more general and pervasive consequences of cumulative exposure to cultural media' (p.16).

Cultivation theory upholds some of the basic premises of dominant ideology thesis. 'Mass-produced messages bear and help perpetuate the assumptions and cultural ideologies of the organisations that produce them' (Morgan and Signorielli, 1990, p.226). It, however, does not see media effect as 'a unidirectional flow of influence…to audiences, but rather (as) part of a continual, dynamic, ongoing process of interaction among messages and contexts' (Morgan and Signorielli, 1990, p.19). Further studies in the US local media based on this theory widen the issue to link television viewing practice with the question of

personal safety. In her research *Cultivation and Involvement with Local Television News*, Elizabeth Perse (1990) examined the relationship between television exposure and perceptions of personal risk and found that 'perceptions of personal safety were linked to an entertainment orientation to local news', and that 'cultivation is an incidental learning process' (p.64).

In international media studies, Morgan (1990) argues, cultivation theory tends to be linked to cultural imperialism thesis, though with some cautions. Weimann (1984), for instance, studied Israeli college students' heavy consumption of US media and found that they idealized 'rosier' image of life in the United States. Kang and Morgan (1988) did a similar study on Korean college students of both sexes and found that while among the female students exposure to US television was associated with more 'liberal' perspectives, such exposure generated hostility towards US among the male students, producing what Morgan (1990, p.232) later calls a 'backlash effect'. This prompted Morgan himself to warn that the 'hypodermic models of cultural imperialism are not overwhelmingly supported by international studies of cultivation' (p.232).

In his own comparative study of the 'sex-role stereotypes among adolescents' in the US, Argentina, South Korea and China, Morgan (1990) found that 'the U.S. and Chinese adolescents tend to be relatively less likely to endorse "traditional" sex-typed perspectives, and the Argentine and Korean students tend to support more stereotyped views of sex-roles' (p.236). However, he argues, this variation tends to decline with more exposure to television products. 'In countries as different as Argentina, Korea, and China, adolescents who watch more television generally tend to believe that women are happiest at home raising children, (and) that household chores should be done by women,' he notes. 'The size and baselines vary greatly, but television viewing is also associated with an erosion of the impact of background factors on these attitudes' (Morgan, 1990, p.244). Findings like these show the extent to which cultivation theory reinforces, though with moderation, the early media effects theories.

However, despite its resilience and the frequent metamorphosis of its variants, the hypodermic model has not been able to withstand serious scrutiny. It has

consistently and severally been dismissed as simplistic and inadequate (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955/2006; Ang, 1996; Gunter, 2000; Gauntlett, 2005; Morley, 2006), and as such incapable of explaining the complexity of media-audience relationship. Claiming the demise of the model, David Gauntlett (2005) asserts that 'the effects paradigm should be laid to rest, of interest only as part of the natural history of mass communications research' (p.5). But it is also important to quickly note that, each time it is assumed that the hypodermic model days of relevance are over, something would come up to indicate a sign of its revival.

Two relatively recent studies on youths' consumption of media, carried out by healthcare and behavioural scientists in the United States, point to that direction. The first study (Ybarra *et al*., 2008) examined the link between exposure to violence in the Internet and violent behaviours among youths, and concluded that the media influenced such behaviours. 'Compared with otherwise similar youths', those exposed to violent content in the Internet 'were significantly more likely to report seriously violent behaviour' (p.929). The second research (Chandra *et al*., 2008) focused on youths' exposure to sexual content on television and found that television played a significant role in the high rates of teenage pregnancies in the United States. Predictably, fundamental questions were raised about these findings—similar to the ones raised about similar previous findings. The first is that 'correlation is not causation', as Pratter (2008) rightly points out. The second, and even more significantly, is the issue of whether the youths' exposures to the violent and sexual media contents were originally informed by their prior tendencies towards such behaviours, rather than the media being responsible for prompting such behaviours.

The latest and perhaps the most remarkable indication of effects tradition's revival, however, appears to have been sparked off by the phenomenal rise of the new media and the perceived powerful influence they seem to have in people's lives. The Internet and mobile telephony—and the accompanied social networking media such as the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube—have, either independently or while synchronised with the old media of television, radio and newspaper, transformed the global media landscape into what Kraidy and Mourad (2010, p.1) call 'transnational hypermedia space…the social and political implications of

which we are only beginning to discern'. The way they are being deployed for social and political activities around the world, the events they are being associated with (revolutions, uprisings, transformations and so on) and the phrases they help produce all give a hallmark of a phenomenon that has profound impact on the lives of the people. As with the case of the advent of the printing press, film, radio and television before them, it is the political and social roles of the new media that capture the attention of the public.

Their convergence with the old media, their simultaneous utility as personal and social devices and the ease of their applicability to multiple functions allow them to be used as effective tools for public mobilisation and political activism. Instances such as the April 2009 anti-election fraud protests in the East European nation of Moldova, organised by activists using Twitter (Stack, 2009), and similar ones in Iran over the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in June 2009 (Muir, 2009) showed their potentials. And by time the Arab uprisings began in Tunisia around December 2010/January 2011 and spread to the rest of North Africa and the Middle East (Pintak, 2011), leaving in its wake regime changes in Tunisia and Egypt (Beaumont, 2011) and threatening to topple others in Libya (Tisdall, 2011), Syria (Abouzeid, 2011), Yemen and even Bahrain, talks of Twitter revolutions and tsunami (Basu *et al.,* 2011) filled the global public sphere. Pintak (2011) argues that this is a continuation of the Arab media revolution that began with the spread of satellite televisions in the region 15 years ago, and that authoritarian regimes could no longer roll it back. 'The electronic dam has burst and with it, their ability to control the flow of information' along with the 'crusading journalists and digitally armed activists' (Pintak, 2011). The media are once again being credited with powerful influence and the effects tradition may appear to have received a new lease of life.

However, it is worth noting that it was an even bigger euphoria about the supposed power of the media that marked the introduction of the then new media of radio and television in the twentieth century. The media do indeed play a role in the changes taking place around the world today, but it may take a while to make accurate assessments of this role. Even in the particular case of the role the media are playing in the ongoing uprisings in the Arab world, MacKinnon (2011)

cautions against reaching hasty conclusions. 'The Internet, mobile phones and social networking platforms were the tools of a smaller, tech-savvy vanguard…(who) used these tools skilfully—as successful revolutionaries always manage to do with the most disruptive technologies of their day,' she notes. 'Now as then, the people (not the technologies) are the heroes'. Closer examination seems to reveal that the media are playing a complementary role to the major driving forces at play in the ongoing changes.

Active audience debate

The inadequacy of the hypodermic model was exposed by series of studies that questioned the power of the media and rejected the claimed passivity of its audiences. One of such studies was conducted by Austrian-born American sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, which was published in their book *The People's Choice* (1948). It was a study of political communications and voting behaviours in the 1940 US presidential election campaigns during which they found that the flow of mass communications was less direct than had commonly been assumed. Personal influence, they note, plays a much stronger role in making people make choices than do the media. 'In the last analysis, more than anything else people can move other people' (Lazarsfeld *et al*., 1948, p.158). This work was later complemented by further research on media influence in America, conducted by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2006). It validates the earlier findings that the media had no direct effects on people's voting decisions. The two works, which gave birth to the two-step flow model of communication, rejected the idea of atomised passive audience subjected to omnipotent media. 'Communications studies have greatly underestimated the extent to which an individual's social attachments to other people, and the character of the opinions and activities which he shares with them, will influence his response to the mass media,' write Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2006, p.25) stressing the mediating role of personal influence in media-audience relationship. Katz (1957) went further to write a journal article in which he clearly highlights the importance of such social attachments. 'The image of the audience as a mass of disconnected individuals hooked up to the media but not to each other could not be reconciled with the idea of a two-step flow of

communication' (Katz, 1957, p.61). Furthermore, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2006) note, 'personal influence seems to be singularly effective' when it performs what they call *reinforcement function*. 'When a mass media influence-attempt coincides with an interpersonal communication, it appears to have much greater chances of success' (pp.82-83). It is a view reinforced by Dawson and Prewitt's (1969) research on media use in political socialisation which found, among others, that 'the media tend to reinforce existing political orientations rather than create new ones' (cited in Kraus and Davis, 1976, p. 24).

However, the two-step flow model of communication is not devoid of major defects, particularly because of its 'implicit denial or subordination of the original "one-step" process of influence direct from media to individuals, especially in the age of television' (McQuail and Windall, 1993, p.64)—and now of the Internet. The advent of the new media has not only debunked the concept of two-step flow, but it has also shown that there is a multi-step flow of information in a reversed form: from the new media directly to the consumer who now seeks more information from the traditional media and experts for reinforcement (Case *et al.*, 2004). Donald Case and his colleagues (2004) conducted a research on information sources about genetic testing and the influence of the Internet on information seeking behaviours of the public. Their findings show that, although people now go directly to the Internet to seek information, they still go for further inquiries in public libraries and then to doctors. 'The diffusion of the Internet has radically expanded the readily available sources for information of all types,' they write. 'Information that was once obtained second-hand from friends and acquaintances—the traditional "two-step flow"—is now found easily through the Internet' (Case *et al.*, 2004, p.660). They note that people 'were most likely to first turn to the Internet for information about cancer genetics, second to public libraries, and third to medical doctors' (p.660). Littlejohn and Foss (2008) also stress the idea of 'multiple-step' flow approach (though not in the reversed form noted above), particularly in those cases where media are being used for diffusion of new ideas and innovations. 'Recent research on two-step flow has shown that the dissemination of ideas is not a simple two-step process. A *multiple-step-model* is generally accepted now as more accurate in terms of the actual process' (Littlejohn and Foss, 2008, p.321, emphasis original). Not only that but Gunter

(2000) also argues that the 'role played by interpersonal relations is simply not reducible to mechanistic solutions such as the two-step flow' (p.17).

Similarly, Gauntlett (2005) raises concern over the inadequate coverage of all social factors by the two-step flow thesis, arguing that while the 'model went some way to breaking apart the notions of the audience as unconnected individuals, and media messages as guided information-missiles with an objective consistency of meaning and power, it still left other social factors out of the picture' (pp.82-83). Robinson (1976) equally questions the efficacy of the model on the issue of interpersonal influence, even though he stresses that it 'did correctly emphasize that *when* interpersonal sources and mass media sources are compared or are in conflict, interpersonal sources wield greater influence. However, that condition of "when" needs to be stressed' (p.315). Furthermore, even the key assumptions of the two-step flow model with regard to less direct flow of information and diminished influence of media, endorsed by many US researchers at that time, were challenged by the findings of audience research elsewhere. Iliya Harik (1971) conducted a survey in an Egyptian village, *Shubra el-Gadida*, based on the people's use of radio, and found 'that mass media messages reach the majority of the public directly and effectively' (p.740). He argues that, although opinion leaders do serve as mediators of information, they do so to only a small group of people who have less access to media. 'The findings from the *Shubra* study obviously do not confirm the role attributed to oral dissemination of information by the authors of the two-step flow of communication hypothesis' (Harik, 1971, p.740). Crucially, Harik's work also indicates that a finding of audience study in the United States may be at variance with what is obtainable in the Middle East or Africa.

Still, this does not diminish the role played by the founders of the two-step model in pioneering a new line of research in mass communications. As McQuail and Windall (1993) rightly put it, the two-step model does show that 'mass media do not operate in a social vacuum but have an input into a very complex web of social relationships and compete with other sources of ideas, knowledge and power' (p.63). Littlejohn and Foss (2000) also maintain that the model 'had a major impact in our understanding of the role of mass media', pointing out that it 'was

the beginning of a line of research on how information and influence are distributed in society' (p.321). But perhaps one of the most outstanding contributions of the model to audience research—and it is the one that really withstands criticism—is its reaffirmation of the activeness of the audiences and dismissal of the earlier conception of their passivity. This adds significantly to the then emerging concept of active audience and strengthens the evolving uses and gratifications research (Herzog, 1941/2004; Halloran, 1970; Katz *et al.*, 1973; Blumler and Katz, 1974).

The uses and gratifications model, as it comes to be known, is a remarkable research tradition that sees an audience member as an active user of media—not its victim. Austrian-American communications theorist Herta Herzog, whose seminal work on women's listening of radio was among the earliest that laid the foundation for the model [Liebes (2005) actually calls her the founding mother of gratifications research], attempted to unveil audiences' motives of interactions with the media. Her key work, *On Borrowed Experience* (1941/2004), offers insights into housewives' engagement with the radio, revealing their selectivity and the joy they drive from 'satisfactory consumption of radio stories' (p.141). The audiences were the ones using the radio—not the other way round. 'The radio people give advice and never ask for it, they provide help without the listeners having to reveal their need for it,' she writes. 'The listener enjoys their company because it raises her own social level' (p.151). Crucially, the radio listeners feel that 'they have been helped by being told how to get along with other people, how to handle their boyfriends or bring up their children' (Herzog, 1941/2004, p.153). Despite its tendency to ignore what effects tradition regards as the harmful effects of media, Herzog's effort is generally seen as a pioneering work in audience research, contributing not only to the development of the uses and gratifications model but also to that of qualitative research approach (Liebes, 2005).

Further works on the gratifications approach (Halloran, 1970; Katz *et al.*, 1973; Blumler and Katz, 1974) equally stress the shift away from the emphasis on the power of the media to the power of the audiences. Katz *et al.* (1973) note that earlier gratifications research focused on audiences' needs and the way they were gratified by the media. The audience member needs the media 'to match one's

wits against others, to get information or advice for daily living, to provide a framework for one's day, to prepare oneself culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or to be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role' (Katz *et al.*, 1973, p.509). The early studies revealed all these but failed to conceptualise the approach because they did not explore the links between the detected gratifications and 'the psychological or sociological origins of the needs that were so satisfied' and the interrelationships among the functions of the media, they note (p.509). It was after establishing those links and interrelationships, they argue, that the approach was transformed into a model. Its key elements include its conception of audiences as being 'active' and selective and that 'the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction' (Katz *et al.*, 1973, p.511). Again, despite its tendency to exaggerate the power of the audiences (more on this later), the gratifications model provided a significant paradigm shift that gave rise to the transformation of reception research.

The limited effects theories—usually identified with the works of Joseph Klapper (1960) but also linked to those of Lazarsfeld *et al.* (1948), Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2006) and others—tend to avoid the mistakes of stripping the media of their major influence but instead point to the mediating roles of other forces that limit the influence. Klapper's main work was based on massive research conducted in different spheres by many authors to assess the effectiveness and limitations of media in influencing their audiences. Like the case of others before it, it was the unresolved contention over the influence of media that provided the impetus. 'As the more fearful have pointed to the impressive successes of various propaganda campaigns, the more phlegmatic have pointed to the impressive failures of other campaigns,' Klapper (1960, p.12) notes. 'Neither group has been hard put to it to find evidence to support its position.' After going through the bulk of the research, however, he came to the conclusion that the media are most effective in performing 'reinforcement' function—the same conclusion reached by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2006) whose work was among those compiled.

> Within a given audience exposed to particular communications, reinforcement, or at least constancy of opinion, is typically found to be the dominant effect; minor change, as in intensity of opinion, is found to be the next most common; and conversion is typically found to be the most rare.
>
> (Klapper, 1960, p.15)

He argues that factors such as 'predispositions and related processes of selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention' as well as group norms and interpersonal influence, though external to communication, do play mediating roles to limit the influence of the media (pp.18-19).

Subsequent studies reaffirm this position and highlight the mediating roles of psychological, sociological and cultural factors in audiences' interactions with the media, revealing clear cases of selectivity particularly in their consumption of dissonant media products (Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974; Piepe *et al.*, 1978; Morley, 1980; Mutz, 1998; Liu and Johnson, 2011). In their study of a popular US television show *All in the Family* in the early 1970s, which dealt with racial prejudice, Vidmar and Rokeach (1974) found how the phenomena of selective exposure and selective perception influenced audiences' consumption of the programme, and concluded that the show reinforced, rather than reduced, racial and ethnic bigotry. Piepe *et al.* (1978) also noted the phenomenon of selective perception among audiences and even gave it a class perspective. First, they found the working class to be 'heavy' consumers of television products, with 'relatively high involvement in (the) medium', and the middle class to have 'light viewing (and) relatively low involvement in (the) medium' (p.46). More significantly, they argue that the middle class viewing practices appear to be marked by 'selective perception' while those of the working class seem to be characterised by 'blanket perception' (p.46). Morley (1980, p.29) dismisses the class distinction, though, noting that his own research 'shows plenty of examples of selective perception, rejection of dissonant messages and a distinctively cognitive orientation to the medium on the part of working class groups, with an equally complex set of responses and interpretations on the part of the middle class groups' (more on Morley later). A recent study (Liu and Johnson, 2011) noted a growing evidence of audiences becoming more selective in media consumption. With the multiplicity of media and communication networks, they argue, 'selective perception of news media messages as a mechanism of processing information plays a critical role in the survival of preference diversity' (Liu and Johnson, 2011, p.26). Once again, the concepts of selectivity and interpretative power of the audiences are taking centre stage.

Sonia Livingstone (2007) has taken a broader view of the issue and argued that the concept of 'active and interpretative audiences, plural, counter-posed the creativity of a locally-resistant viewer against the hitherto-confident claims of media imperialism' (p.1). This is not just to challenge the claims of supreme power of the media and audience passivity but to also underline the inherent creativity in audiencing and assert audiences' plurality. 'It undermined forever the unimpeachable authority of the analyst's identification of the singular, underlying meaning of any media text by demonstrating that polysemy operated not only in principle but also in practice' (p.1). Her argument has a wider perspective than the one offered by the uses and gratifications model; but it is largely informed by the concept of audiences' interpretive power in their engagement with the media.

In his *Radio, Television & Modern Life*, Paddy Scannell (1996) has advanced the audience power argument, stressing the listeners and viewers' ability to select which media to engage with and what content to consume. He notes that the 'power in this relationship (in the first and last instance) rests more with those on the receiving end rather than with those who produce what is on offer... If listeners and viewers don't like what they find they can simply switch over or switch off' (p.12). The changing technology empowers the audiences even the more. Tamar Liebes (2005) observes that 'the ever-expanding multiplication of technologies, feeding on one another, acting as unstoppable golem, results in endowing (television) users with maximal control, but at the same time undermining the pleasure of viewing' (p.372). Perhaps even more importantly, it is the audience member that decides what to do with the media product. 'People, it was argued, manipulated—rather than were manipulated by—the mass media' (Gunter, 2000, p.13).

This celebration of the power of active audience, however, does not sit well with the works of many media theorists, including those who had faulted the media effects thesis (Morley, 1980, 2006; Fiske, 1987; Ang, 1996). David Morley (2006) questions audience works that 'exaggerated, and wrongly romanticized the supposed power and freedoms of media consumers', stressing that it is wrong to assume that audiences are in constant struggle with the media, 'in which they constantly produce oppositional readings of its products' (p.102). Ang (1996)

argues that 'audiences may be active in myriad ways in using and interpreting media, but it would be utterly out of perspective to cheerfully equate "active" with "powerful", in the sense of "taking control" at an enduring structural or institutional level' (p.139). She admits that audiences do have the power to appropriate media products to suit their practices, but it is, as Fiske (1987) equally notes, a weak power. It 'is the power not to change or overturn imposed structures, but to negotiate the potentially oppressive effects of those structures where they cannot be overthrown, where they have to be lived with' (Ang, 1996, p.8). Morley (1991) too maintains that audiences' power to reinterpret meaning is not equivalent to the discursive power of the media institutions to produce the products which the audiences then interpret.

Both Morley and Ang—though hers with some qualifications—are more at home with Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model which identifies three forms of audience readings of media text (preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings) that shows an audience member's ability to accept, negotiate or reject the producer's intended meanings of texts. Hall's (1980) work in cultural studies goes far beyond the gratificationists' concept of active audience or their selectivity, but speaks of them in social context and their ability to decode meanings of media texts. Furthermore, in his introduction to Morley's (1986) *Family Television,* Hall says: 'People don't passively absorb subliminal "inputs" from the screen. They discursively "make sense" of or produce "readings" of what they see' (cited in Morley, 1986, p.8). Television viewing, he notes, is both an active and social process, and changes with differing circumstances. 'We are all, in our heads, several different audiences at once, and can be constituted as such by different programmes' (p.10).

It was based on the Hall's original encoding/decoding theoretical framework that Morley carried out his pioneering work, *The 'Nationwide' Audience* (1980), which contains the study of audiences' consumption of a television programme *Nationwide* in Britain (London and Midlands). He used 27 different groups, drawn from different levels of educational system, social and cultural backgrounds and political affiliations—all of whom were shown the programme, prior to conducting focus group interviews. His findings reveal diversity in the audiences' readings of

the same programme, influenced by factors such as ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds (Morley, 1980). The work was, however, criticised by Jordin and Brunt (1988) who argue that there was no direct connection between social position and the way audiences interpret mediated text. They also fault the way they say he used focus group technique like a survey method, treating respondents as individual representatives of social groups (Jordin and Brunt, 1988)—a rather unfair criticism, given the fact that Morley has clearly explained that he used the approach in such a way that it 'treats the audience as a set of cultural groupings rather than as a mass of individuals or as a set of rigid socio-demographic categories' (Morley, 1980, p.163). Of course, the encoding/decoding model does have its own limitations as Morley himself later admits, accepting Walkerdine and Blackman's (2001) argument that it would be a mistake 'to continue to prioritize the cognitive and rational dimension of media consumption over the emotional and affective' (Morley, 2006, p.109); but its viability in audience research has been clearly established. Ellen Seiter (1999) suggests that the 'model seems to work better for news and non-fiction programming than it does for entertainment programming where it is much more difficult to identify a single message or even a set of propositions with which audience members could agree or disagree' (pp. 20-21).

Essentially, the formulation of the encoding/decoding model can be seen as one of the cultural studies' major contributions to audience research, and has in a way maintained a balance between the two extremes of the media effects and gratifications debates—though there seem to be a struggle within the cultural studies itself between those, who, like the critical theorists, emphasise the dominant ideology thesis, and the so-called populists, who stress the sovereignty of media consumers. However, as Golding and Murdock (1991) argue, the 'romantic celebration of subversive consumption is clearly at odds with cultural studies' long-standing concern with the way the mass media operate ideologically, to sustain and support prevailing relations of domination' (p.17) as has been expounded in the concept of hegemony (which will be discussed later in this review). It is a division that extends to the fields of international communications and transnational audience studies.

Radio and African audiences

Amid the media effects and active audience debates comes the issue of radio audiences in Africa. Since its advent in the West, radio has always been seen as an important medium of communication for various purposes. As noted above, it was effectively used by the major powers, especially during the Second World War and in the Cold War period, for propaganda purposes. 'Radio, used by Hitler and Stalin to mobilize the support of the masses, had demonstrated it was all-powerful' (Liebes, 2005, p.369)—a realisation that, as stated earlier, facilitated the emergence of the hypodermic model. Similarly, some of the pioneering works on audience studies, such as Herzog's (1941) gratifications research cited earlier, were conducted on radio listeners. Radio, American anthropologist Brian Larkin (2008, p.50) argues, is a unique medium that, 'through the sublime nature of its technology and the authoritative nature of its content', aids the mobility and circulation of ideas beyond the realm of the source. 'The peculiarity of radio as a medium was the separation of sound from source, of voice from body' (Larkin, 2008, p.50). David Hendy (2000) argues that radio has other particularities that set it apart from other media. 'While being a local medium par excellence, radio is able to reach across large spaces, *potentially* threatening place-specific cultures with its homogenized content, *potentially* forging new delocalized communities of interest… It betrays a commercial imperative to reach large, high-spending audiences, but it also has a cost structure, which creates at least the *possibility* of a community station surviving on the tiniest of audiences,' he notes. 'It is, in short, the most adaptable of media in "finding" its audience' (p.215, emphasis original). The key questions here are on the role of this medium at different times and in different environments. Its role in the West—in war and peace times—takes different dimensions, just as that also differs with the role it plays in the lives of Africans (Spitulnik, 2000). The surprising thing, though, is that its role in Africa is grossly under researched, although it has been identified as an area with great academic potentials. 'Radio impinges so widely on African public life, and is doing so in such rapidly changing ways, that it does seem safe to predict that research on virtually any aspect of contemporary Africa that neglects radio will be missing a large part of the big sound stage' (Fardon and Furniss, 2000, p.19). The studies that have so far been done have produced remarkable results.

In her work, *Documenting Radio Culture as Lived Experience*, anthropologist Debra Spitulnik (2000) used ethnographic approach to study radio audiences in Zambia, and found that radio consumption and use were far beyond the audiences' interactions with its content. 'In Zambia, the consumption of radio includes the culturally-specific ways that people attune themselves to (or attenuate themselves from) the radio machine, its technology, its portability, its commodity status and the fact that it produces unique sounds which can travel through communities' (p.160). She notes that more than in the West where radio technology has 'relative invisibility in use', in Zambia this technology is not invisible. 'The impact and meaning of radio in Zambia is strongly linked to its portable physical form, which equally permits relocation around the home and theft from the home,' she observes. 'Radios are carried to the office when presidential press conferences or football matches are to be broadcast, and they are sometimes brought in the field to listen to while farming' (p.155). For Zambians, Spitulnik (2000) further argues, radio is 'more important than the sound emanating from it' because people are not only mindful of its 'physicality and commodity status', they are also conscious of its 'potential display in a social situation' (p.160). This feeling is not far different from what obtains in neighbouring Zimbabwe.

In his study of the 'dynamic relationship between Radio Zimbabwe' and its audiences, Winston Mano (2004, p.iii) came to the conclusion that radio has 'a significant impact on Zimbabwean everyday life' (p.258). Using a multi-method approach, Mano examined the audiences' consumption of Radio Zimbabwe's music and talks programmes, and got significant insights into the role the national public radio plays in the lives of Zimbabweans. Among other things, he found that 'Radio Zimbabwe reflects and affects the emergence of a commonly shared Zimbabwean public daily life' (p.246). Of course, other media forms too might have been playing their roles in this respect, but the study reveals that in Zimbabwe 'radio appears to have an unrivalled status as the country's "true" mass medium' (p.2). The 'national radio is at the centre of national tensions and struggles involving languages, dialects and music tastes, in the face of a rapidly changing national and global society' (p.258). But the study has also shown radio's compatibility with local content, its affordability and its ability to accommodate local languages.

It is a view shared by Larkin (2008) in his groundbreaking ethnographic study of media in Nigeria, focusing particularly on the role of media and technology on the lives of people in one of Nigeria's biggest cities, Kano. He argues that when radio was first introduced in the predominantly Islamic Northern Nigeria by the then British colonial administration, it 'entered into a highly contested social field' associated with colonial authority and Christianity (p.11). Later, however, radio and cinema 'began to generate new forms of leisure in urban Nigeria, creating cultural possibilities' (p.11). He maintains that radio was a political instrument that first began as a public technology before it became a domestic one, as permitted by its technological transformation from an expensive wired receiver to a cheap portable transistor set. Reinforcing Spitulnik's (2000) earlier observation, Larkin insists that radio's functions in the lives of Africans extend far beyond the spheres of politics and leisure. 'The role of the radio in African domestic life was not simply as a conduit for news and music but as a prestigious object of consumption that represented the transformation of a whole way of life' (Larkin, 2008, p.68).

It is the realisation of the importance of radio in the lives of the people that prompts governments in many African countries to always insist on controlling the broadcast media, even in the face of growing agitation for its liberalization. At the early part of the postcolonial era, the control might have been prompted by the need among the emerging nationalist leaders to use the media to reorient their emergent nations towards a new path of development, Katz and Wedell (1977) argue. The broadcast media, they note, could even be more crucial in African leaders' efforts to unite different ethnic nationalities in countries created by the departing colonial powers, in some cases for the colonialists' economic benefits and administrative convenience. This was still in the 1960s when media were being seen as crucial organs of forging national unity and development since they could 'plant the seed of change' in the people (Schramm, 1964, p.42). Even a few decades later, the broadcast media were still regarded in many parts of Africa as being capable of effecting such changes, though there was no empirical evidence to prove such effectiveness (Okigbo, 1995).

There are, of course, cases of using radio for negative purposes in Africa too, the classic example of which was that of utilising it to encourage the infamous 1994

genocide in Rwanda (Prunier, 1995; Thompson, 2007; Straus, 2007; Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). There, conflict between the majority Hutu ethnic group and the minority Tutsis prompted the use of radio to encourage one group to slaughter thousands of people in the rival group. 'The ensuing genocide was later to encapsulate no fewer than 800,000 lives and the International Criminal Tribunal in Arusha (Tanzania) indicted broadcasters associated with *Radio Television Libres des Mille Collines* for their role in transmitting "hate propaganda"' (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009, p.13). Even at that, though, Scott Straus (2007) argues that the Rwandan hate radio, sometimes called 'Radio Machete', was not the primary determinant of the genocide in the central African nation. It did play contributory role in the genocide, he admits, 'which take on significance only when situated in a broader context of violence', but it was not the primary cause of the unfortunate event (p.609). And, ironically, it was radio that was later mobilised to play a role in the healing process.

This was, of course, not the first time in Africa that the broadcast media played both negative and positive roles in the life of a nation. In Nigeria, for instance, despite the negative role radio (and media as a whole) played during the country's civil war from 1967 to 1970 (Uche, 1989), the positive role it later played in encouraging national unity made many people to have positive attitude towards it. Osabuohien Amienyi (1993), in a study conducted in north central Nigeria, found that many people have developed positive attitude towards the media, and that they believe that the media, particularly radio, do play important role in uniting people of diverse ethnic nationalities. 'This is not surprising in the light of the numerous positive contributions that the Nigerian mass media have made to communication, cultural exchange and national integration,' he notes. 'Through the mass media, Nigerians, regardless of patterns of social differentiation, have gained access to instantaneous, uniform and consistent information, both at the national and state levels' (Amienyi, 1993).

Radio's place in the lives of Africans has its global dimension among the communities exposed to international broadcasters as has been the case in many parts of Africa. Mytton and Forrester (1988) reveal that international radio broadcasters have huge audiences in Africa arising from easy access to 'cheap,

portable, battery-powered transistor radio' (Mytton, 2000, p.21) and the broadcasters' quest to extend their sphere of influence. 'As proportions of the general population,' Mytton and Forrester (1988) observe, 'the audiences to the BBC in English in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zambia are higher than anywhere else in the world' (p.469). Fardon and Furniss (2000) maintain that the exposure to international broadcasters may make some Africans more informed about global scene than some of their Western counterparts; and that such exposure does not entail cultural homogenization. 'The Swahili, Hausa or Somali services of the *Deutsche Welle*, the Voice of America or the BBC's World Service may allow supposedly local, isolated, rural people of "under-developed" parts of Africa to be better informed about international scene than some of their counterparts in the supposedly information-rich US or EU (European Union)… Yet to characterize the situation in Africa, on these grounds, as being one of straightforward media imperialism and homogenization would be to misrepresent the effects of the many changes underway' (pp.2-3). These changes, they note, include the diversification of radio stations that engage in local rather than global discourses, the expansion of satellite televisions and the spread of computer and telephony technologies that have profound influence in both local and international communications.

International radio broadcasting and public diplomacy

Although radio broadcasting began at the opening of the twentieth century, as stated earlier, international broadcasting did not get significant attention until well over 20 years later, with the communist Russia's pioneering broadcasts on short-wave radio in 1925 (Thussu, 2006; Browne, 1982). Afterwards the train moved very fast. Browne (1982, p.1) observes that the progress was such that by early 1930s Germany's Josef Goebbels was speaking of 'international broadcasting…as a powerful instrument of international diplomacy, persuasion, and even coercion'. It was a belief held by many governmental and non-governmental organisations. 'The growth of international radio was as diverse as it was rapid, and by the late 1930s international broadcasting was being employed by national governments, religious organisations, commercial advertisers, domestic broadcasters and even educators to bring their various messages to listeners abroad' (Browne, 1982, p.2).

It enjoyed significant rises during the Second World War, at the heat of the Cold War and in the post-September 11 period. 'The Second World War saw an explosion in international broadcasting as a propaganda tool on both sides,' writes Thussu (2006, p.16) explaining how the Axis and the Allied powers engaged each other in 'the battle of the airwaves'. The subsequent Cold War arising from the fall out of the victorious Allies—the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist West—gave rise to 'communist propaganda' and 'capitalist persuasion' (pp.16-17). Although the 1947 United Nations' General Assembly Resolution 110 (II) condemned 'all forms of propaganda' that could threaten peace, Thussu (2006) observes, 'both camps indulged in regular propaganda as the battle lines of the cold war were being drawn' (p.17).

The Soviet Union directed its communist propaganda primarily at the Eastern bloc and the Third World, with Moscow Radio becoming 'the world's largest single international broadcaster' by the late 1960s, broadcasting in 84 languages and putting out 1,950 hours of external programmes per week in 1973 (Thussu, 2006, p.17). Browne (1982) notes that the 'sheer physical power and linguistic scopes of Radio Moscow are awesome to behold' (p.224). 'Soviet broadcast policies were aimed at countering Western propaganda and promoting Moscow's line on international affairs among the world's communist parties' (Thussu, 2006, pp.17-18). However, the Soviet broadcasts 'had little impact in the West' compared with the popularity of those of the West in the Eastern bloc, Thussu further notes. Similarly, he continues, Radio Moscow could not match Western broadcasters' transmission powers and broadcasting outlets. The United States alone used both 'the official Voice of America (VOA) and the clandestine Radio Liberty (RL) and Radio Free Europe (RFE)' to advance its foreign policy objectives (p.18). The VOA, established in 1942 to help advance the cause of the Allies during the Second Wold War, has always been an organ of American public diplomacy (Browne, 1982; Rampal and Adams, 1990; Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). As an external broadcasting arm of the US government, the VOA 'operated a global network of relay stations to propagate the ideal of "the American way of life" to international listeners' while the US-funded 'Munich-based RFE and RL (before they were moved to Prague in 1995 after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe) were covert organizations carrying out a propaganda war against

communism in Europe' and beyond (Thussu, 2006, p.19). America also supported other clandestine radio stations and religious radio stations to help fight 'Godless communism' around the world (pp.22-23).

Perhaps in a more subtle and sophisticated way than both the US and defunct Soviet Union, Britain too was executing its own side of the campaign. The BBC's External Services [as the World Service was then known (Browne, 1982)] 'played a key part in the cold war through its strategically located global network of relay stations' (Thussu, 2006, p.24). More significantly, its policy of presenting balanced view 'gave it more international credibility than any other broadcasting organization in the world' (p.23), enabling it to gain audiences' trust by argument rather than losing it by using overt propaganda. 'Other Western stations, such as *Deutsche Welle* and Radio France International (RFI), also contributed to the war of words,' notes Thussu (2006, p.23), stressing, however, that France did not play a very significant role in the Cold War's media battle, concentrating instead on promoting its cultural and commercial interests in its former colonies.

During the Cold War the general feeling was that the West generally used less overt propaganda than the Soviet Union in the struggle to expand their spheres of influence. 'In the post-World War II period, Western nations have generally de-emphasized the overt use of international radio for propaganda purposes and put a greater emphasis instead on using this medium as one of the legitimate means of carrying out their foreign policy objectives' (Adams and Rampal, 1990, p.94). Such claim, though, might have ignored the fact that the United States used clandestine radio stations for overt propaganda against communist regimes around the world, as noted earlier. The collapse of the communist bloc and the disintegration of Soviet Union in the 1990s ended the Cold War, and funding for propaganda outfits began to decline (Thussu, 2006). 'Despite the growing importance of television in implementing foreign-policy agenda, the US Congress had reduced the budget for international broadcasting—from $844 million in 1993 to $560 million for 2004' (p.23). However, Thussu (2005, 2006, p.23) notes, the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States 'revived the need for public diplomacy' and led to a resurgence of Western-funded international broadcasting as part of efforts to win the hearts and minds of the Muslims (more on this later).

Although religious bodies, commercial concerns and other non-state operators do engage in global broadcasting—as distinct from international broadcasting which in classic terms is usually associated with state-sponsored external service broadcasting (Price *et al.*, 2008), though political and technological changes have since altered this conception—to achieve their set objectives, international radio broadcasting has always been linked to the foreign policy objectives of the broadcasting nations or the ideology of the broadcasting groups. 'In terms of the global media industry, all media organizations from Doordarshan (the Indian national broadcaster) to the BBC, Al-Manar (of the Lebanese group Hezbollah), Al-Jazeera, and CNN are in some measure missionaries of ideological and cultural hegemony' (Price *et al.*, 2008, p.153). But then, all media-audience issues could in some ways be linked to ideology. 'No analysis of the audience, its position in the social formation, its relationship to the texts and technologies of the media, can ignore the ways in which ideologies are formed and in turn claim subject positions for those who receive a constant diet of public communications' (Silverstone, 1994, p.138).

It is also significant to note that it is not only big countries with known global ambitions that engage in international broadcasting, many 'small' nations are also involved in it. As far back as 1988 Mytton and Forrester (1988) reported that 'over 80 countries support broadcasting services addressed to listeners outside their countries' (pp.458-459). This did not include commercial, religious and other kinds of global broadcasters. Mytton and Forrester (1988) actually placed international broadcasters into five categories: state-funded broadcasters, commercial international stations like *Radio Monte Carlo*, religious broadcasters like Radio Vatican, domestic stations targeting neighbouring countries, and clandestine radio stations. This was done before the explosion of communications technologies and the state-funded ones were based on the narrow definition of international broadcasting to state sponsorship of transmission of programmes to external audiences. With the advancement of communications technologies and their spread across the globe, governmental and non-governmental groups engaging in global broadcasting are on the increase. However, while some traditional international broadcasters like former Radio Moscow (now Voice of Russia) had, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, been in decline, others like the

Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) which runs radio, television and online services, appears to be rising now to pursue Iran's foreign policy objectives (Dehshiri and Majidi, 2009; Press TV, 2011; Wikia, 2011).

In international relations the attention international broadcasting receives emanates from the role it is perceived to be playing in public diplomacy (Cohen, 1986; Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). The term 'public diplomacy' itself was coined by law academic Edmund Gullion of Tufts University (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b); and according to Browne (1982), it was in 1967 during a conference on international public diplomacy at that university that international broadcasting was described as an 'instrument of public diplomacy' (p.30). Harvard academic Joseph Nye (2004a) developed this further in his 'soft power' concept in which he argues that nations can use their persuasive skills and cultural wherewithal, rather than their hard military or coercive power, to achieve their foreign policy objectives. Soft power, he says, refers 'to the power of attraction that often grows out of culture and values' (p.5). It 'rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others', and to make them do for you what you want without coercion (Jisi and Nye, 2009). 'The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when the country lives up to these values at home and abroad), and its foreign policies' (Jisi and Nye, 2009). The media are integral part of this, and 'that information technology was making soft power more relevant than ever' (Nye, 2004a, p.5). The term public diplomacy has no universally accepted meaning but at the core of it is the issue of enhancing a country's ability to influence others based on its positive reputation. One of the clearest definitions of the term was given by Lord Carter's UK Public Diplomacy Review Team in 2005 in reference to Britain's case. They define public diplomacy as the 'work aiming to inform and engage individuals and organisations overseas, in order to improve understanding of and influence for the United Kingdom in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long term goals' (FCO, 2005, p.4). Their definition was encompassing enough to include not only the activities involved, but also the objectives and justifications for seeking to achieve them.

National governments do recognise the potentials of their international media in public diplomacy and devise strategies of employing them to help achieve their

foreign policy objectives. Whether they are easily identified as the mouthpiece of their governments (as in the case of Voice of Russia and Voice of America) or they have built a more credible reputation (as in the case of the BBC World Service) or they want to be called agencies for cultural exchange (as in the case of *Deutsche Welle*), they all serve as instruments of their nations' public diplomacy. Writing about the post-Nazi Germany's international broadcaster *Deutsche Welle*, founded in 1953 'to inform audiences abroad about the new Germany', Zollner (2006) notes that it has since been effectively transformed into 'a significant instrument of (Germany's) public diplomacy' and officially recognised as such (p.171). Since the September 11 attacks, Zollner further observes, the German broadcaster 'has been trying to engage in some form of "dialogue" with the Arab/Muslim world' (p.161). They are not alone. The United States, the direct victim of the September 11 attacks, and being the arrow head of Western hegemony, has been doing much more than any other nation in that regard. Its Department of State is funding 'a plethora of new radio stations and local language broadcasting in the hope that America's "soft power" will be able to persuade millions in the Global South not to support violence directed against American personnel and material interests' (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009, p.12).

The BBC World Service, despite its global reputation as an 'impartial' broadcaster, has long been identified as a soft power resource for the United Kingdom (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b; Nye, 2004a). And in one of the most significant government's confirmation of assigning such a role to the BBC, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has classified the World Service as a public diplomacy partner alongside the British Council (FCO, 2005, p.4). Both Lord Carter's UK Public Diplomacy Review Team and the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (FACOM) have affirmed that Britain benefits greatly from the BBC's public diplomacy role (FCO, 2005; FACOM, 2011). Lord Carter's team went to the extent of suggesting that the World Service and British Council, as public diplomacy partners, 'must prove themselves able and willing to work collaboratively within an agreed strategic framework' (FCO, 2005, p.4). This, Sreberny *et al.* (2010b) note, is a significant change in the relationship between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and BBC World Service. But then, the post-September 11 global scene is a radically different environment that brings with it a

new international broadcasting landscape. As earlier cited, Price *et al.* (2008) has argued that 'in a more vicious world, as the cold war's geopolitically distinct fields of contestation fade in favour of the porous borders and group networks of a newly conceptualized "long war on terror," other defining features of international broadcasting blur as well' (p.153). This in turn adds to the complexity of international communications.

International communications

Despite its dismissal as being inadequate and simplistic, the hypodermic model exerts significant influence in the emergence of many theories of international communications, especially those that broadly fall within the cultural homogenization thesis. Herbert Schiller's (1969) cultural imperialism theory, Boyd-Barrett's (1977) media imperialism, Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony and Herman and Chomsky's (1994) propaganda model do all have substantial elements of hypodermic model. And, to some extent, the same could also be said of some aspects of Daniel Lerner's (1958) modernization model and Wilbur Schramm's (1964) development theory, even though these two do integrate Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) two-step flow model of communication which, as noted earlier, stresses the mediating role of personal influence in audiences' engagement with the media.

Lerner's (1963) tendency to emphasise the power of the media is evident in his argument that the diffusion of information 'stimulates the peasant to want to be a free holding farmer, the farmer's son to want to learn reading… the farmer's wife to want to stop bearing children, the farmer's daughter to wear a dress and to do her hair' (p.348). He argues that the media bring 'psychic mobility' (or empathy) to people by 'depicting for them new and strange situations' and familiarising them with a range of options. 'Empathy,' he writes, 'endows a person with the capacity to imagine himself as proprietor of a bigger grocery store in a city… to be interested in "what is going on in the world" and to "get out of his hole"' (p.342). Essentially, Lerner's main work was laid out in his major book, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958), which was a product of the research done in the Islamic nations of Middle East on their exposure to media. His focus was on using

mass media which he describes as 'mobility multipliers' (p.52) to transform the traditional societies of these developing nations into modern societies based on Western model. 'What America is,' he says, 'the modernizing Middle East seeks to become' (p.79). Blaming what he calls the 'majestic past' as being the impediment to modernisation, Lerner argues that the people of the region would have to choose either 'Mecca or mechanisation'—of which he shows his preference for the latter. 'The crux of the matter has been not whether, but *how* one should move from traditional ways toward modern life-styles. The symbols of race and ritual fade into irrelevance when they impede living desires for bread and enlightenment' (Lerner, 1958, p.405, emphasis original).

However, Lerner's modernization model was criticised, among others, for its simplistic top-bottom approach (Sparks, 2007a) and for failing to understand that 'the dichotomy of modern versus traditional was not inevitable' (Thussu, 2006, p.45). After all, Thussu notes, despite the persistent media-modernisation efforts by the West, 'Islamic traditions continue to define the Muslim world, and indeed have become stronger in parts of the Middle East' (p.45). Furthermore, many Muslims decided to choose both Mecca and mechanisation since, as Samuel Huntington (1997) argues, modernisation is not synonymous with Westernisation—which Lerner did actually admit, only that he seemed to believe that the Western model was superior. And, in a clear case of backlash effect (Morgan, 1990) or 'boomerang effects' (Klapper, 1960, p13), Islamists in the region and elsewhere use modern media to promote anti-Western ideology (Mohammadi and Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1994; Thussu, 2006). This was seen as a failure to promote Western ideology, which was believed to be the main motive of Lerner's work, as he had been linked to American clandestine audience research (Larkin, 2008, p.116) and 'the Psychological Warfare Division of the US Army during the Second World War' (Thussu, 2006, p.45).

The failure might have resulted from Lerner's disregard (or unawareness) of the warnings contained in the works of one of his contemporaries, German critical theorist and Frankfurt School scholar Siegfried Kracauer, who was also linked to the American clandestine audience studies (Larkin, 2008). The studies in question, as Larkin's archival research shows, were the ones sponsored by the US State

Department and conducted by Lazarsfeld-led Bureau for Applied Social Research (BASR) at Columbia University on the penetration and effectiveness of US media in the Middle East as well as the influence of communism in the region. According to Larkin, the reports 'represent some of the most ambitious and in-depth studies on the influence of media in non-Western societies' (p.112). The reports were 'summarized and condensed in a secret report written for the State Department by…Siegfried Kracauer' in 1952 (Larkin, 2008, p.112). It 'outlines many standard ideas about the inertia and fatalism of the Arab mind and the barrier Islam presents to modernization,' Larkin notes (p.266). For instance, Kracauer says in the report that 'cultural and religious prejudices' hamper Arab man's use of media, and that 'spiritual preoccupations may overshadow his concerns with poverty and injustice' (cited in Larkin, 2008, p.266).

These aspects were equally acknowledged in Lerner's work; but what was ignored or perhaps wished away was Kracauer's key warning of the Muslims' rejection of Western culture. Kracauer argues that in the Middle East the Western media messages were ignored because there was 'an ingrained aversion, strongest in rural areas, to let the doubtful blessings of civilization interfere with age-old traditions. The Bedouins reject whole-sale the infidels and their devilish inventions' (cited in Larkin, 2008, p.114). Incidentally, Larkin believes, it was from the same Middle East reports for the State Department that Lerner produced *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958). 'Lerner had been one of the original country researchers on the project, but he stripped his book of all its political origins and focused instead on the intellectual question of media's role in social change,' Larkin (2008, p.116) insists. The political origin of the book might have been hidden, but, as noted above, the ideological motive of the work was hardly invisible.

Generally, the modernisation model (or even the whole dominant paradigm under which it falls) has been dismissed as a top-down unworkable approach (Sparks, 2007a) that has failed to achieve the goals it was intended for. The efforts of two other advocates of the model, Wilbur Schramm (1964) and Everett Rogers (1962, 1976), might have added to its intellectual appeal, but neither has guaranteed its workability. In his book, *Mass Media and National Development* (1964), adopted

by development workers and many governments (Sparks, 2007a), Schramm asserts that the role of the media is to 'speed and smooth the task of modernising human resources behind the national effort' (p.27). His assumption was that communications would 'plant the seed of change' among the people in the developing world that would make them 'accept new goals, new customs and new responsibilities' (p.42). The media, he argues, 'need to encourage both personal and national aspirations' (p.130). In a similar fashion, Rogers (1962) stresses media's role in international communications and development, and reiterates Lerner's idea of using media to transform traditional lifestyle into a modern one. However, in 1976 Rogers published a critical account of the model, *The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm*, admitting its weaknesses.

More evidence of its failure was identified by other academics. 'The first and most withering criticism of the dominant paradigm was that it did not work,' Sparks (2007a, p.39) writes, citing, among others, the example of the 1975-76 Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) in India, which produced a less successful attempt to use modern media to engineer socio-economic change in rural India. A similar disappointment was also noted in Africa, Okigbo (1995) observes. 'After many decades of employing the modern mass media as tools for development, the records in many African countries show that very little has been achieved in such critical areas as political mobilization, national unity, civic education, and the diffusion of new agricultural techniques' (p.4). Other key reasons why the paradigm failed to work were that its advocates did not clearly take into account the cultural differences between the developed and under-developed societies (Gunder-Frank, 1969), and that the ideological intention of some of its scholars was to shape the economic and political direction of the Third World in line with the Western capitalist ideology (Gendzier, 1985).

Herbert Schiller's cultural imperialism theory and its narrower variant, Oliver Boyd-Barrett's media imperialism model, offer an alternative approach to understanding international communications. As a broader concept, cultural imperialism, Schiller (1976) says, 'describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions

to correspond to, or even to promote, the values and structures of the dominant centre of the system' (p.9). Media imperialism, as the narrower version, is the 'process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media in any one country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected' (Boyd-Barrett, 1977, p.117).

Formulated and developed in the 1960s and 1970s, the imperialism paradigm got wide acclaim at that period on the back of anti-imperialism climate amid growing dominance of US military-industrial complex with its linkage to international communications. Schiller's series of work (1969, 1976, 1996, 1998) highlights the links between global power structures and communications industries, particularly in the United States, and their overriding influence on the cultural autonomy of the developing world. The US, which was then replacing the old British and French colonial empires, was also using its dominance of communications in the ideological fight against the then Soviet Union. American imperial power was being helped by what Schiller calls the marriage between economics and electronics. Cultural and media imperialism theories became appealing in international communications and attracted the attention of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) where they 'were operationalized into political programme…that came to be known as the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) and was designed to complement, at least terminologically, the New World Economic Order, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on May 1 1974' (Sparks, 2007a, pp.107-108).

They also complement the media hegemony thesis which stemmed from Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony that was further developed by Louis Althusser (1971), a French Marxist philosopher, who regards the media to be part of the 'ideological state apparatuses' (p.143). The thesis is broadly based on the Marxist proposition that the dominant class which controls the economic base of the society is also the custodian of its superstructure—the political and ideological instruments—which it uses to advance its own interests. It echoes Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' famous declaration in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848/1967)

that the 'ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class' (p.102). The main focus of the media hegemony thesis is to unveil how the control of the mass media by the dominant elites facilitates their exercise of hegemony. The key assumptions are that the organisation of media establishments, the orientation of the media professionals and the media content they produce are all shaped and moulded by the prevailing dominant ideology. Such assumptions were, however, faulted by those who point to the diversity of media establishments, the independence of journalists and the plurality of media content (Altheide, 1984).

But further work by US economist Edward Herman and linguist Noam Chomsky (1994) on what is known as propaganda model tends to support the media hegemony thesis. Their examination of the US mass media shows 'a systematic and highly political dichotomisation in news coverage based on serviceability to important domestic power interests' (Herman and Chomsky, 1994, p.35). Chomsky had earlier put it even more succinctly in his *Necessary Illusions* (1989) where he illustrated how the dominant class ensured conformity to its ideology. 'Case by case we find that conformity is the easy way, and the path to privilege and prestige; dissidence carries personal costs that may be severe, even in a society that lacks such means of control as death squads, psychiatric prisons, or extermination camps,' he argues. 'The very structure of the media is designed to induce conformity to established doctrine. In a three-minute stretch between commercials, or in seven hundred words, it is impossible to present unfamiliar thoughts or surprising conclusions with the argument and evidence required to afford them some credibility' (Chomsky, 1989, p.10). Later, in another book, *Hegemony or Survival* (2004), Chomsky notes that because coercion was a tool of diminishing utility, huge industries were developed to control public opinion and attitude.

However, the propaganda model, as advanced in Herman and Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* (1994) was criticised for its 'polemical style' (Thussu, 2006, p.52). Sparks (2007b), in highlighting the weakness of the model, notes that 'it is insufficiently sensitive to the nature of the pressures and constraints on news production arising from the economic and political realities of capitalist democracy' p.68). Attempting to refine the model, Sparks suggests an inclusion

into it of a range of opinions to reflect the 'divided nature of the capitalist class, the presence of powerful critical currents which find legitimate public expression in a capitalist democracy, the need to address the concerns of a mass audience, (and) political differentiation as a marketing strategy' (p.81). In essence, for the model to be a useful tool of explaining the current situation, it needs to be more in tune with the dynamics of the contemporary capitalist economy, with its contradictions of preaching plurality and suppressing dissent in subtle ways.

The same charge of inadequacy slammed on propaganda model equally applies to the media and cultural imperialism theories discussed earlier. They were rejected for regarding global media flow as a one-way flow of influence, instead of seeing it as heterogeneous and multidimensional in nature (Barker, 1997; Waters, 2001; Chadha and Kavoori, 2005). Furthermore, says Morley (2006), these theories 'are inadequate—not least because they were premised on an inadequate hypodermic model of media effects on their audiences' (pp.104-105). But an even 'more fundamental problem' of the cultural imperialism model, Ang (1996, p.152) adds, 'is its implicit assumption of "culture" as an organic, self-contained entity with fixed boundaries, whose traditional wholesaleness is presumed to be crushed by the superimposition of another, equally self-contained, "dominant culture"'.

However, to narrow down Schiller's thesis strictly to cultural homogenization issue or to overstress its link with hypodermic model is to ignore the main focus of his works. For, as Sparks (2007a) rightly points out, the central concern of Schiller's works was directed on 'the realities of corporate capitalism inside the USA, and their effects upon the life of the American media and American people, rather upon the imperialist depredations it was wreaking abroad' (pp. 90-91). Furthermore, Sparks (2007a) argues, 'Schiller was attempting to develop a much more subtle and complex account of the nature of contemporary US imperialist control of the world through the power of its mass media than was necessary for analysing the old colonial empires' (p.87). It is as a result of such effort that he (Schiller) noted the US cultural imperialism, just as Boyd-Barrett (1977) too came up with the concept of media imperialism after identifying the hegemonic tendency of the US-dominated international media, though two decades later

Boyd-Barrett (1998) modified his original version to incorporate issues of intra-national media and ethnic complexity.

Obviously, the one-way cultural flow thesis or homogenization model does not adequately explain the relationship between global media and transnational audiences. There is the undeniable fact of contra-flow (Thussu, 2006), hybridization of culture (Ang, 1996) and glocalisation (Robertson, 1992). But it would also be wrong to underestimate the extent of Anglo-American domination of global media (Herman and McChesney, 1997; Tunstall and Machin, 1999; Thussu, 2006). There is, as Ang (1996) admits, 'unequal power relations that continue to characterize the relentlessly globalizing tendencies of modern capitalism' and the 'cultural consequences of these power relations as they intervene in shaping particular local contexts, particularly those positioned at a relatively powerless receiving end of transnational cultural and media flows' (p.158). Despite this, she notes, 'we have to recognize the hybrid, syncretic and creolized, always-ready "contaminated" nature of diversity in today's global cultural order, a fluid diversity emanating from constant cultural traffic and interaction rather than from the persistence of original, rooted and traditional "identities"' (p.155).

Globalisation may be an important guide to our understanding of the mankind's transition into the third millennium (Waters, 2001), but it would be wrong to equate globalisation of communication with homogenization of culture. Global interaction of cultures, as anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1990) argues, produces 'heterogeneous dialogues', rather than monolithic cultural dominance. Similarly, Appadurai (1996) further notes, 'electronic mediation transforms pre-existing worlds of communication and conduct' (p.3); and with the global movement of cultural texts, 'more persons in more parts of the world consider a wider set of possible lives than they ever did before' (p.53). In any case, Tomlinson (1991) contends, globalisation weakens 'cultural coherence' even in the 'imperial powers of the previous era' (p.175). Dramatic increase in transnational flow of information, facilitated by rapid development of communications technologies, widens such possibility. 'With the expansion of Internet access, more and more people are entering into the global computer networks that instantaneously

circulate ideas, information and images throughout the world, overcoming boundaries of space and time' (Thussu, 2006, p.63). All these tend to strengthen the claims of globalisation theorists about the centrality of media and communications, the erosion of powers of the nation-states, 'the "deterritorialization" of audiovisual production and the elaboration of transnational systems of delivery' (Morley and Robins, 1995, pp.1-2).

But Sparks (2007a) has strongly challenged globalisation thesis, questioning its viability as a social science theory. 'We can say with some confidence that the evidence of global interconnectedness is not necessarily only to be explained by the globalization paradigm. It might fit better into another theoretical framework which does not depend upon the claim that we are living in a new epoch with different social laws to those that prevailed over most of the last two centuries' (p.152). He argues that globalisation model's rejection of 'economic reductivism' was disproved by the subordination of cultural and media realms to the whims of economics, exemplified by 'the fact that the main site of international discussion about culture and the media today has shifted from the culturally-oriented UNESCO to the unequivocally economic WTO (World Trade Organisation)' (p.185). Similarly, he continues, 'the development of new technologies, notably satellite television, does not abolish national boundaries, since states, business and audiences remain firmly rooted in terrestrial realities' (p.185). Globalization fails to provide sufficient explanations to the issues it raises, he contends. 'The master category that explains them all is not globalization but capitalism, in its most recent and expansive phase' (p.188). Still, Sparks (2007a) admits, globalisation theorists have played valuable role in directing our 'attention towards international displacement and transnational exchange', though they did so 'at the expense of considerations of power and of inequality, which are traditional themes of social sciences' (p.186).

Cottle and Rai (2008), however, argue that the complexity of global communications could hardly be explained by sticking to a single rigid model. 'Enough has been documented nonetheless to demonstrate that there is indeed a communicative complexity both within and across global news channels, a complexity that should no longer be simply ignored or collapsed in reductionist

fashion under theoretical positions of "global dominance" or "global public sphere"—though both can summon empirical findings in partial support of their respective claims.' (p.175). All these point to the peril of sticking to a single model to explain the dynamics and complexity of international communications; they do essentially suggest the need for evolving a more comprehensive approach in addressing the issue. Studying the complexity of global interactions in digital age, as Thussu (2006) observes, requires an innovative and more inclusive multidisciplinary research agenda that can address the emerging pattern of global communications.

Transnational audiences and theoretical perspective

This need for innovative inclusive research agenda brings with it the issue of finding appropriate theoretical perspective in dealing with transnational audiences. However, as Ang (1996) argues, 'it would be ludicrous…to try to find a definitive and unambiguous, general theoretical answer to this question…precisely because there is no way to know in advance which strategies and tactics different peoples in the world will invent to negotiate with the intrusions of global forces in their lives' (p.143). Still, an attempt would be made here to explore the possibility of employing what Morley (2006, p.111) calls 'multi-dimensional model' that incorporates the insights of different models to capture the various dimensions of media-audience engagement. Carolyn Michelle (2007) too highlights the need of adopting a conceptual schema she describes as 'consolidated model' that could facilitate a systematic investigation of how audiences' interpretations of media texts are 'shaped by social group memberships, cultural competencies, and discursive affiliations' (p.181). This is because, as Burton (2005) notes, there is hardly a single model that provides sufficient explanation of media-audience relationship. What should be noted, he says, is that the relationship between media and their audiences 'is dynamic and that it is evolving and changing' (p.1). It is based on this assumption that he speaks of dynamic model which recognises the changing nature of such relationship. 'Rather than choose between critical positions summarized in terms of "the media do things to people" or "people do things with the media", I want to propose that both views are true,' he states (p.82).

Examining a number of transnational audience studies, one can easily notice such complexity. For instance, while Rungsrisawat's (2006) study concludes that Thai youths' consumption of global media does not seem to have effects on their Thai identity, that of Yang *et al*. (2008) on South Koreans and Indians' exposure to US television suggests that it has a significant influence on their feelings of relative deprivations. Similar inconsistencies have already been noted in a number of studies reviewed above. There is little doubt, as Raymond Williams (1974/2003, p.5) observes, that 'television has altered our world'; but it does not do so in a uniform way. Indeed, all transnational media have their peculiar way of affecting the global public sphere as the audiences too respond to messages based on their cultural constraints and possibilities as well as their creative and interpretive abilities. Sreberny (2000) argues that exposure to transnational media tends to affect leisure patterns, but it does not lead to change of beliefs among audiences. And, as Liebes and Katz (1993) discovered in their transnational audience research, a media message may be understood differently by those with different sets of values and beliefs. In their study of consumption of the vastly popular American programme *Dallas* by Israelis, Japanese and Americans, Liebes and Katz found diversities of responses between these nationals and among sub-cultures. Even within a single country the tendency for diverse readings is significant. 'The ethnic and cultural communities that make up most societies, not to speak of the aggregates of age, education, gender, and class, are all different enough to raise the possibility that decodings and effects vary widely within any given society' (Liebes and Katz, 1993, p.8). The complexity widens even more significantly in the case of transnational audiences. This view was stressed by Burton (2005) in his assertion that 'there is nothing meaningfully coherent about those watching CNN news in Washington and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) at the same time. Indeed, it is the differences in reception that are most significant' (p.344).

The sharp contrast in culture and value systems between the West and the Islamic world, for instance, can indeed be a key factor in identifying differences in their reception and interpretation of media messages (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004; Pintak, 2006), despite the apparent resurgence of McLuhan's (1964) 'medium theory' and the sophistication of 'the information age' (Castells, 2004). This is a crucial issue in this research. The level of consumption of BBC products by

Northern Nigerian Muslims, for example, is very high and the credibility rating of the station among these audiences is also very high (BBC World Service 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), yet the perception of the West in the region appears to be negative. Many studies elsewhere have indeed suggested that the West, particularly the United States, has negative image in the Muslim world, and that the unfavourable perception between the two sides (the US and Muslim world) is mutual (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004; Pew Center, 2004, 2006; Pintak, 2006). 'There exists today a fundamental disconnect in communications between the USA and Muslims around the world,' Lawrence Pintak (2006) writes. 'At its root lies an essential truth: each side sees the world through a very different prism' (p.188). Similarly, in their study (based on data from a survey of over 10,000 respondents in nine predominantly Muslim countries on their perceptions of the United States), Gentzkow and Shapiro (2004) did find that the perceptions were indeed negative. 'Responses to similar questions by Americans reveal that the feeling is mutual,' they observe. 'Moreover, this antagonism is not only driven by opposed interests or disagreement about the moral or ethical meaning of the events that have transpired. It also reflects radically different, and often distorted, perceptions of the facts themselves' (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004, p.117). This, they note, is a worrying reality between the two sides.

The question of antagonism was taken to an even stronger level in Huntington's (1996) concept of 'clash of civilizations', which he postulates in the field of international relations to explain the uneasy relationship between the West and the Muslim world. In *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington (1996) asserts that cultural identities play a major role in relations between states, and that competition and conflict between the West and Islam are inevitable. His central arguments are that cultural identities 'are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world'; that 'global politics is multipolar and multicivilizational'; and that the 'West's universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China' (p.20). He says this arises partly because of the West's refusal to accept its declining influence in the world and partly because of the assertiveness of the once-dominated but now resurging non-Western societies. 'As their power

and self-confidence increase, non-Western societies increasingly assert their own cultural values and reject those "imposed" on them by the West,' he states (p.28). Their conviction on the efficacy of their ideas and righteousness of their beliefs further embolden them to take such path, he notes. 'The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact; non-Westerners never do' (Huntington, 1996, p.51). Taking all these into consideration, he concludes that the 'dangerous clashes of the future are likely to arise from the interactions of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness' (p.183).

His thesis generates severe criticisms, not least for its sweeping generalisations and cultural reductionism. His assertion that religion or cultural identity, rather than other forms of ideology or economics, was the primary source of competition and conflict was rejected by many scholars as untenable. Palestinian-American literary theorist Edward Said (2001) dismisses the entire thesis as 'the clash of ignorance', saying it fails to comprehend 'the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization', and the exchange and cross-fertilization among them. '"The Clash of Civilizations" thesis is a gimmick like "The War of the Worlds", better for reinforcing defensive self-pride than for critical understanding of the bewildering interdependence of our time' (Said, 2001). Kai Hafez (2008) takes a similar line, arguing that 'Huntington was wrong because there is no such thing as an unavoidable "clash of Islam and the West". But the media sometimes prove him right because in certain situations of international conflict they clearly give way to hegemony' (p.42). Even with that, he says, there is 'no evidence that the negative image Western media creates of Islam has substantially influenced European or Western political relations towards Islamic governments or even towards Islamist movements' (Hafez, 2008, p.43). Western policy towards Islamic governments and movements, he argues, is driven by '*Realpolitik*' (p.43).

Huntington thesis is certainly full of sweeping generalisations, as is usually the case with theories that make ambitious attempt of taking such wide and complex issues as global politics, cultures and identities; but it is equally simplistic to completely dismiss it as 'entirely wrong' or to equate it with ignorance. Hafez had

a valid argument in stressing that there was no such thing as an unavoidable West-Islam clash, but a caveat was required to qualify it—of course, no clash is unavoidable if precautionary measures are taken to avoid it. Huntington has over generalised and exaggerated the West-Islam's dichotomy, but his thesis has apparently got sympathetic listening ears among some American neoconservative and intelligence circles. The US National Intelligence Council's report on *Global Trends* (US NIC, 2008), for instance, appears to reinforce some key aspects of the thesis. Although it stops short of endorsing Huntington's claim of primacy of cultural identity in global conflicts, it does support his assertions on multipolarity of the world, resurgence of Islam and decline of the West. 'The **international system**—as constructed following the Second World War—will be almost unrecognizable by 2025 owing to the rise of emerging powers, a globalizing economy, an historic transfer of relative wealth and economic power from West to East, and the growing influence of non-state actors (including tribes and religious organisations),' the report says. 'By 2025, the international system will be a **global multi-polar one** with gaps in national power continuing to narrow between developed and developing countries' (US NIC, 2008, p.vi, emphasis original). Even before this report was compiled, many events happening around the world seem to highlight the West-Islam divide. The September 11 terrorists' attacks in the United States, the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the current 'war on terror' have all sharpened the West-Islam's tense relations, which have been getting prominence in the global media but which have also become a major worry on both sides. And this takes us back to the issue of public diplomacy and the use of soft power, rather than hard power, to achieve results.

Ending antagonism or reversing negative perceptions among nations is a key focus of public diplomacy; and media diplomacy often gets significant place for such tasks (Cohen, 1986). International broadcasting is certainly not the only instrument of promoting public diplomacy [there are several other tools too, such as public engagements, cultivation of political groups, diplomatic trips and so on (Cohen, 1986)], but many nations tend not to ignore its significance (Browne, 1982; Cohen, 1986; Adams and Rampal, 1990; Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b). British author Simon Anholt (2008) has argued that national reputation does shape a country's global image, and that the use of 'soft power' (Nye, 2004a) could be helpful in

changing such image. The main thrust of the concept of soft power, as noted earlier, is for a nation to avoid using its hard military and economic powers that rest on 'inducements and threats' to achieve its objectives; but to concentrate instead on using its other resources—'attractive culture, political values and institutions'—to get 'others to want the outcomes' it wants (Nye, 2004a, p.5). This involves using media for public diplomacy; and it is not really a new strategy (Browne, 1982; Cohen, 1986; Nye, 2004a). 'The BBC, for example, was an important soft power resource for the UK in Eastern Europe during the Cold War,' Nye explains (p.90).

However, although he praised Britain for using its soft power resource wisely, Nye (2004b) criticised George W Bush administration in the United States for misusing theirs due to what he sees as that administration's adherence to hawkish policies. 'During the Cold War, radio broadcasts funded by Washington reached half the Soviet population and 70 to 80% of the population in Eastern Europe every week; on the eve of the September 11th attacks, a mere 2% of Arabs listened to the Voice of America' (p.18). The September 11 attacks and the US decision to launch 'war on terror', however, forced the Bush administration to equally resort to using the US soft power resources to advance its foreign policy agenda (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). 'The mass media form a very significant part of this "soft power" which the US government has skilfully used as part of its public diplomacy to legitimize imperial adventures' (Thussu, 2005, p.273). Its post-September 11 resurgence saw the US government setting up more broadcast stations, such as Radio *Sawa* (Arabic for 'Radio Together'), *Al-Hurra* Television ('The Free One') and Radio *Farda* ('Radio Tomorrow' in Persian language), to win 'the battle for hearts and minds in the Muslim world' (p.274).

The availability of alternative media, however, poses a new challenge to such efforts: 'The emergence and growing importance of the pan-Arabic network *Al-Jazeera*, whose coverage of both the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts has made US public diplomacy less effective' (Thussu, 2005, p.281). Perhaps even more crucial is the core question of credibility and effectiveness of media in public diplomacy, especially when its content is not designed to perform what Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2006) call reinforcement function. One study conducted on college students

in five Arab countries who listen to Radio *Sawa* and watch Television *Al-Hurra*, for example, found that their perception of the news credibility of these media was negative (El-Nawawy, 2006). 'Moreover, the study revealed that the students' attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy had worsened slightly since they started listening to Radio *Sawa* and watching *Al-Hurra*,' he writes (p.183)—an apparent case of backlash effect (Morgan, 1990).

The picture is even more complex in the case of the relationship between the BBC World Service and its Northern Nigerian audiences, who incidentally share Islamic identity with the Arabs. In contrast with the Arabs-US media's case, the Northern Nigerians' perception of BBC's news credibility (as noted earlier) is positive (BBC World Service 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), even though their perception of the West is believed to be negative (in line with that of the Arabs). This intriguing picture alone points to an obvious knowledge gap that needs to be filled. And when this is combined with the global hypermedia space (Kraidy and Mourad, 2010) and geopolitical complexities (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009), an even more solid case for rigorous and dispassionate inquiry is clearly laid. The complex nature of media-audience relationship (particularly global media and transnational audiences, as revealed by this review) and the diversity and vastness of the subject matter suggest that this could only be done effectively by employing an interdisciplinary multidimensional approach (Morley, 2006). This study therefore draws insights from different theories of media-audience relationship and aspects of cultural studies and international relations to come up with a comprehensive theoretical framework that provides the main guideline for the research. It specifically draws useful insights from Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model, the concept of audience selectivity [in Klapper's (1960) limited effects tradition], Michelle's (2007) consolidated model and Nye's (2004a) concept of soft power to formulate the interdisciplinary multidimensional theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide the operation of this research.

Summary

This chapter has critically reviewed previous audience studies and various theories of media-audience relationship and international communications; and examined the role of radio in Africa, the dynamics of transnational audiences and the nature of international radio broadcasting and public diplomacy. It in particular reviews extensively the media effects tradition, tracing its historical development and explaining its variants, its efficacy, its lapses and its regular resurgences. It equally examines in detail the active audience debate, putting it in its historical context and explaining its related concepts and theories, such as the concept of audience selectivity, the two-step flow theory, the uses and gratifications model, the minimal effects tradition and the encoding/decoding model. International communications models ranging from Lerner's (1958) and Schramm's (1964) development model, Gramsci's (1971) hegemony thesis, Schiller's (1976) cultural imperialism, Boyd-Barrett's (1977) media imperialism, Herman and Chomsky's (1994) propaganda model and globalisation discourses were all examined in this chapter. The focus has been to get a clear picture of the past and present state of the field and its related areas so as to lay down coherent theoretical and methodological foundations for this study. And it comes up with an interdisciplinary multidimensional theoretical framework that guides this research.

III

Historical Context

Introduction

In July 2009 series of clashes occurred in Northern Nigeria between security forces and members of a militant Islamic sect *Boko Haram*. The security forces initially appeared to have overpowered the group, captured and killed its leader Muhammad Yusuf and many of his followers (*Daily Trust*, 2009; Herskovits, 2009; *Newstime Africa*, 2009). An estimated 1,000 people, mostly sect members, were reportedly killed in the first main clashes that lasted for about a week (Bello-Barkindo, 2009; *Al-Jazeera*, 2010). The government's view about the group was that it was an anti-modernity sect [they oppose Western education and science (Boyle, 2009; Gorman, 2009)] that sought for a violent overthrow of the secular government in the country. The sect's original version was different. They wanted to establish an Islamic government in the country, they admitted; but insisted that they were neither opposed to modernity nor did they seek for a violent change of government. Media reports, however, showed that they did attack several police stations, government buildings and churches (Boyle, 2009; *Daily Trust*, 2009; Schulze, 2009; Smith, 2009). They initially insisted, though, that they were only retaliating to earlier attacks on them by the security forces (Herskovits, 2009; Gorman, 2009). Later, they came out openly to admit that they were now at war with the government after series of bomb attacks on police stations, bars and buildings (*Africa Confidential*, 2011). Their most audacious operation (as at June 2011) was what appeared to be a suicide car bomb attack at the national headquarters of the Nigerian Police Force in the capital Abuja, not very far away from the presidential palace, killing several people (*Africa Confidential*, 2011, Campbell, 2011; Jacob *et al.*, 2011).

Their name, *Boko Haram*—a combination of Hausa and Arabic words meaning 'Western education is forbidden'—gives a hint of what they stand for, but the deeper meaning is that they are mainly opposed to Western culture. The name the group calls itself is *Jama'atu Ahlus Sunnah lid Da'awati wal Jihad* (approximately

'Movement for the Enthronement of Righteous Deeds')—the tag *Boko Haram* was given to them by the public because of their perceived negative perceptions of Western education. As their leader said before his execution in police custody, the sect was essentially opposed to those Western values and products that contradict the teachings of Islam (*Daily Trust*, 2009; Gorman, 2009; Smith, 2009). They were neither anti-modern technology nor anti-education in general, as their general portrayal by the media tends to stress. The sect's leader and many of his associates and family members had acquired Western education (Boyle, 2009) and had been using modern technologies in their everyday life—and in their campaigns of violence. The majority of his followers, though, were unemployed illiterate youths—giving credence to argument that the primary factor of the uprising was socio-economic rather than religious (Herskovits, 2009; Jega, 2009; ICG, 2010).

The sect is certainly a fringe group within the context of present-day Northern Nigeria which is largely populated by politically moderate, culturally conservative Sunni Muslims (ICG, 2010). But the group's anti-Westernisation stance was neither new nor unpopular in the region. Other groups before it had exhibited similar tendency, and even the mainstream movements tend to encourage a shift away from Westernisation. The re-introduction of the strict Islamic law (*Sharia*) in most parts of the region by populist politicians over a decade ago following Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999 was a popular move among many Muslims, even though the motive of the politicians was less holy, as many of them were later alleged to be involved in embezzlement of public funds, and their states turned out to be among the worst run in the country (Herskovits, 2009). So, although the *Boko Haram* sect is generally seen an extremist group, their members do share a common anti-Western sentiment with the mainstream Hausa Muslim Northern Nigerians. The Hausa word *boko* being used to refer to Western education since its introduction in the region over a century ago—though derived from English word 'book' (Philips, 2004)—is actually a derogatory term to portray Western education as 'hollow', although increased enrolments in Western-style schools has significantly softened the derogatory conception (Jega, 2009).

Ironically, this is a region that was once conquered and controlled by Britain, was seen by the colonial administrators as a model of British outpost (Larkin, 2008),

and has been a key target of the Hausa language service of the BBC for several decades now (Briggs, 1985; Gumel, 2007). The level of consumption of BBC products in the region is one of the highest in the world: as stated earlier, Nigeria as a whole is the largest radio market for the BBC World Service (BBC World Service, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010) and the BBC Hausa Service, which has a weekly audience figure of 26 million (about 75 per cent of them live in Northern Nigeria), is the leading language service in the BBC in terms of audience figures (BBC, 2008). So, why, despite all these, the Muslim Northern Nigerians still seem to have negative perceptions of the West? This is part of the key issues raised in this research. To see how the past might have offered a guide to understanding the present, this chapter examines the historical background of Northern Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general. The second part looks at the historical development of the media in Nigeria and the role they played at various stages of the country's development.

The historical background

The peoples living in the territory that later came to be known as Northern Nigeria have a long history of interactions with various cultures and peoples from other territories. One of the most defining encounters they had was with the North African Arabs and Berbers that began probably in the tenth century through trade and travels, and through which Islam was brought into the region (Davidson, 1969/2004; Batran, 1989). The other outstanding encounter was with the Europeans through travels, trade and conquest, and through which colonialism and Christianity came to the region (Lugard, 1902; Dudley, 1968; Barnes, 2004). As a geopolitical entity, Northern Nigeria was formally formed by Britain on 1 January 1900 following the transfer in 1899 of the West African territories that were under 'the exclusive trading rights' of the British Royal Niger Company (Dudley, 1968, p.12). The company, formerly known as United Africa Company under Sir George Goldie in 1878 and later renamed National African Company before it was granted the royal charter by the British government in 1886, was originally on a trading mission in the area and had entered into trade 'agreements with the multifarious peoples of the middle Niger and Benue' (p.12).

The Berlin Conference of 1885 that partitioned African continent among contending European powers had given lower River Niger to Britain. As the man who later became the first British head of colonial Northern Nigeria, Frederick Lugard (1902, p.5), wrote, Sir George Goldie had 'succeeded in securing the disappearance of all foreign flags just in time to announce at the Berlin Conference of 1885 that the Union Jack alone flew on the lower Niger, and thus to secure to Great Britain the sole custodianship of its navigable waters'. Competition from France and Germany—both of whom had interests in the region—was minimised through another agreement that offered the company exclusive trading rights along the Niger-Benue basin; but there was still some competition among them and resistance from some local rulers. To forestall further trouble, mainly from the French, 'the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was declared' and the territories were taken over by the British Colonial Office, with Frederick John Dealtry Lugard as the first chief commissioner of the region (Dudley, 1968, p.12).
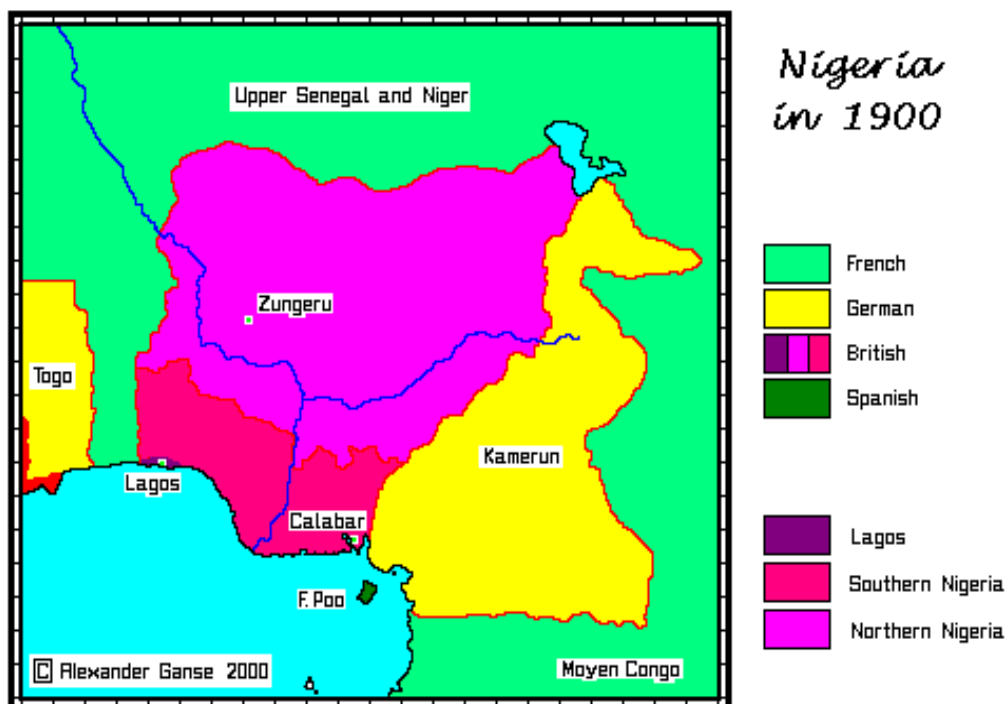
Map showing in 1900 the Protectorates of Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria and Lagos Colony (all under British sphere of influence) and the territories under French, German and Spanish control at that time. The two rivers that 'dissect' Nigeria—River Niger (left) and River Benue—are shown by in blue lines.

Figure 3.1 Online Source: Zum.de
Available from: <http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.zum.de> [Accessed 13 October 2009].

North's long Islamic tradition

Prior to the British proclamation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, the territories that constitute this region were actually made up of the Sokoto Caliphate, Kanem-Bornu Kingdom and many autonomous chiefdoms and communities with their respective independent rulers and long histories. 'The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria,' Lugard (1902, p.1) wrote, 'is almost the only part of the British tropical Africa which possesses a history extending over many centuries.' The Sokoto Caliphate at the time he met it was a huge Islamic empire made up of several emirates, with a well-established system of government, based on Islamic laws (Stewart, 1986). The caliphate, founded in 1800s by Sheikh Usman dan Fodio, was one of the Islamic states in southern Sahara and Sudanic belt that traced their origins to 'Islamic reform movements that predated European colonial interests in the region' (p.193). Centuries before the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, Islam had spread in the region with many of the Hausa rulers and their subjects practising it (Adamu, 1984). The Kanem-Bornu (Borno) Kingdom in the east was also a well-established Islamic state which was a 'caliphate' in its own right before the Sokoto Caliphate took over its hegemony in the nineteenth century (Last, 1989, p.588). Islam had also spread down to Nupe land (around River Niger) whose leader was also a Muslim long before the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate (Fisher, 1975).

The spread of Islam in the region started with the trans-Saharan trade between North Africans and West Africans in the tenth century or even earlier (Davidson, 2004/1969), resulting in continuous contact and cultural interactions. 'Across the years they drew the cities and their courts and commerce into the world of Muslim culture… Schools of learning were established. Scholars travelled back and forth' and the fame of West African kings 'spread out across the Muslim lands' (p.218). As Sudanese historian Abdul Aziz Batran (1989, p.545) also noted, 'in Hausaland, Massina and Senegambia, West African rulers not only exhibited a commitment to Islam, but also had intimate relationship with the Muslim trading and scholarly communities'. The king of the Hausa state of Kano, Muhammad Rumfa (reigned 1465-99), had as his adviser the itinerant North African scholar, Muhammad ibn Abdal-Karim al-Maghili, who was then teaching in Kano. 'Al-Maghili wrote for

him (*Ta'if fi ma yajib al-Muluk*) the Obligation of the Princes, to explain how a Muslim ruler should organise his affairs. It marked the beginning of a systematic Islamisation of Hausa government,' Davidson (2004/1969, p.220) explained. The Islamisation was even stronger in Borno whose contact with the Muslim world was much wider, as one of its rulers, Idris Alooma, was reported to have met ambassadors of 'Ottoman Sultan in 1600 with flashing troop of soldiers' (p.222).

In the late eighteenth century, alleged misrule and neglect of Islamic practices in Hausaland led to the emergence of an Islamic reform movement and the launching of *djihad* (holy war) by Usman dan Fodio. The war was formally declared in 1804 after Usman dan Fodio's *hijra* (migration) from Degel to Gudu where he was chosen as *amirul muminin* (the leader of the faithful). Some historians drew parallelism between this *hijra* and Prophet Muhammad's in 622 AD from Mecca to Medina, and on how the reformists used it to add legitimacy to their cause (Batran, 1989; Last, 1989). Similarly, Batran (1989) argued that religious and political developments in the wider Islamic world had also inspired the West African reformists to launch their *djihad*, citing the effect of the capture of Mecca in 1803 and Medina in 1805 by the Wahhabi Islamic sect. 'Notwithstanding the rejection of some of the Wahhabi doctrines by a large segment of Muslims (the reformers in Hausaland belonged to Sufism which Wahhabis condemned), the Wahhabi revolution had naturally served as a catalyst for militant action in the world of Islam' (Batran, 1989, p.543). The *djihad* culminated in the replacement of the Hausa rulers with Fulani rulers and wider spread of Islam and its adoption as a state religion in the new empire. Elements of the traditional Hausa form of governance were merged with Islamic ones to run each of the semi-independent emirates, with Sokoto as the headquarters of the caliphate. 'Under the overall supervision of the caliph,' Ajayi (1989) noted, 'the individual *amirs* (emirs) had certainly achieved more durable political structures than the Hausa rulers they had displaced' (p.778). Although the emirs later re-absorbed 'many aspects of Hausa nobility and privileges', as Ajayi further observed, 'the relative degree of peace that the caliphate enjoyed, the attention to the markets, industries, crafts and trade routes, the power of judges and other officials and the control of *amirs* over the officials, all ensured a higher degree of executive authority in the state' (p.778). This was how the caliphate was run for about a century before its own internal

difficulties began to put strains on its own cohesion and the advent of British colonialism brought it to its knees.

Indirect rule

After the British conquest, the colonial authority left the existing system of administration largely intact and operated what came to be known as 'Indirect Rule' (Dorward, 1986; Stewart, 1986). A dearth of colonial administrators and the sophistication of the emirate system made it convenient for Britain to adopt the indirect rule system (Lugard, 1904; Nafziger, 1973; Dorward, 1986), just as it did in its other West African protectorate of Sierra Leone. 'With only one British administrator for every 100,000 Africans in Northern Nigeria, and five administrative officers for the entire Sierra Leone Protectorate with a population of over one million,' Dorward (1986) wrote, 'day-to-day responsibilities for maintaining law and order, mobilising labour and/or collecting taxes devolved upon the local African authorities' (p.402). The 'system reached its fullest elaboration in Northern Nigeria' where Lugard 'had found the sophisticated Hausa-Fulani government and Islamic judiciary well suited to his needs; it was strengthened by the system of "native treasuries" developed by (the lieutenant governor of the region) H. R. Palmer between 1906 and 1911' (Dorward, 1986, pp.402-403). Its introduction in Northern Nigeria was informed and facilitated by Lugard's experience in dealing with Muslim communities in India. Stewart (1986) observed that 'colonial attitudes towards Islam were influenced by early Muslim responses to colonial intrusion and by past experience in dealing with Muslim populations. British administrators in the Sudan and in Northern Nigeria drew upon experiences in India in matters of Islamic laws' (p.202).

Under the indirect rule system, British Common Law was brought in to run alongside Islamic and traditional justice system. The Common Law was being applied mainly in criminal matters while *Sharia* was being used in family and personal matters. There has been debate on whether the adoption of this system had hindered or helped the caliphate. The claim that indirect rule favoured the caliphate was backed by arguments that it extended the hegemony of the caliphate to the so-called 'pagan' areas where its influence had not reached prior to the British conquest, and that the application of *Sharia*, though reduced from its

original form, was being extended to those non-Muslim areas. Stewart (1986, p.205) argued that although the codification and administration of Islamic law under the British indirect rule had 'undermined the adaptability' of *Sharia* to local customary law that characterised it prior to the conquest, it extended it to some communities where it had little effect before. In Northern Nigeria 'the extent and enforcement of the Islamic law was surpassed in the Muslim world only by legal practice in Saudi Arabia' (Stewart, 1986, p.206).

However, the argument that indirect rule had aided the caliphate ignored the fundamental fact that the caliphate as whole was now a conquered territory, with its leaders serving as agents of British Colonial Office. 'The change in regime, however much a notional "colonial caliphate" sustained the image of continuity, required very different ways of administration: offices and office-hours, careful book-keeping, the beginnings of a formal bureaucracy,' noted Last (2003, p.5). 'It involved new styles of doing justice, within the framework of a modified shari'a law. It involved writing Hausa not in Arabic but roman script, using 'Arabic' numerals (and not the numerals Arabs use) and new methods of mathematics' (p.5): real colonialism. Emirs who did not conform to British colonial policies were deposed and replaced with those amenable to them. The head of the caliphate (Sultan of Sokoto) himself, the emirs of Kano and Bauchi, the Etsu Nupe, the Lamido Adamawa and so on were all overthrown—some of them violently—and replaced with compliant rulers (Lugard, 1904).

Similarly, attempts to challenge British supremacy often met violent suppression, as seen in the Satiru village incident near Sokoto in 1906 when Mahdist's attack on a British column resulted in the razing of the entire village by the British forces (Stewart, 1986, pp.198-199). In any case there were many Muslim leaders who refused to accept colonial rule, regardless of the compromise offered to them. Muslim clerics and local leaders who did not want to be associated with the British rule withdrew 'from the political realities of infidel occupation,' Stewart (1986, p.201) stated. Some even 'emigrated from the European occupied lands… Among the thousands who did so were the Hausa saint, Umar Janbo (who lived in Darfur under Ali Dinar before fleeing to Mecca where he died in 1918) and Sultan Mai Wurnu (son of a former Sokoto notable who settled in Sudan in 1906)' (p.201).

They were influenced by the radical views of the North African scholar Muhammad al-Maghili who had urged a flight from what he called 'infidel rulers' to Islamic territory (Batran, 1989). He was reported to have said: 'The inhabitants of any land reflect the true religious sentiments of the ruler. If the ruler is Muslim, his land is *Bilad al-Islam* (Islamic city), if the ruler is *kafir* (infidel), his land is *Bilad al-kufr* and a flight from it to another is obligatory' (cited in Batran, 1989, p.543). Heeding this advice, many Muslim leaders rejected British rule and fled. For them the codification and administration of *Sharia* under the indirect rule system was still no match to the application of *Sharia* under the pre-colonial caliphate, no matter how compromised the application had become, which was actually the case at the dying days of the caliphate (Last, 2003).

The implementation of British indirect rule itself provoked other forms of reaction too. Within the Muslim communities many Islamic leaders criticised emirs and other local officials for becoming agents of British colonial authorities (Stewart, 1986). The Christian world was also critical of the system, as the Christian missionaries expressed displeasure over reports that the colonial administrators had entered into an agreement with the Muslim leaders to restrict Christian missionary activities to non-Muslim areas only following hostilities between the missionaries and the Muslim authorities in 1900 (Stewart, 1986; Barnes, 2004). There was an exception, though, in the case of Zaria emirate where the emir had allowed the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to establish a mission headed by Dr Walter Miller (Barnes, 2004). But in general Lugard had pledged to the Muslim rulers that the Colonial Office would not interfere with their religion. 'Government will in no way interfere with the Mohammedan religion,' he had said in his March 1903 address to new Sultan Attahiru, Waziri and other elders of Sokoto (cited in Dudley, 1968, p.13) after deposing the Sultan that rejected British rule. This agreement essentially meant shutting Christian evangelists out of the Muslim areas, to the annoyance of the missionaries. Dr Miller and his estranged sister, Ethel (who later defied the order and consistently preached in the prohibited areas and published provocative pamphlets denouncing Islam), were very critical of the policy (Barnes, 2004). The World Missionary Conference in 1910 also came out openly to say that it opposed the idea of identifying 'British state policy with the

predominance of Islam' that it said was a danger to both the Christian missions and the colonial regime (Stewart, 1986, pp.207-208).

Even among the British colonial officers, the issue of indirect rule and its mode of application in Northern Nigeria was a subject of fierce debate. A colonial district officer in the North, W. R. Crocker, was so critical of its mode of application that he wrote a series of critiques against it, arguing that it had been turned into a 'theological formula to be discussed only by the hierarchs' producing a 'pro-Fulani and pro-Moslem creed of a fervour and a singleness unseen since Dan Fodio days' (cited in Larkin, 2008, p.31). Later, in his book, *Self Government for the Colonies* (1949), Crocker criticised pro-indirect rule governors who 'discouraged, sometimes…banned, the teaching of English and of modern trades and techniques and who insulated the people from all outside contacts and knowledge in the Holy Name of Indirect Rule' (cited in Larkin, 2008, p.31). This, he said, was the reason why the Northern Region had to rely on southerners to be employed as clerks and technicians to work in government and commerce. The indirect rule was also under attack in its later days from the emergent western-educated northerners who were critical of the wide powers conferred on the conservative emirs under the system. But the British colonial authority was keen to maintain what Lugard described as the 'dual mandate' of modernising the region and maintaining stability (Lugard, 1904, 1922; Perham, 1970; Larkin, 2008).

The attitude of the colonial regime towards Islamic education was, however, ambivalent. In one respect it was supportive in the sense that it encouraged some integration of Western and Islamic education to produce judicial officers, teachers and clerical staff to run the judiciary, schools and local offices. This was what informed the establishment of schools in Kano, Katsina and Sokoto and the rest of the region (Stewart, 1986). In another respect it suppressed it, making its scholars irrelevant in governance and giving Western education a clear priority over it (Philips, 2004). It completely neglected tens of thousands of Koranic schools spread all over the region; and their products received no certification for formal employment or recognition. It is this dual education system with its discriminatory pattern and attendant social problems that have remained in the region up to this moment—putting Muslim North in weak position in Nigeria's educational system.

Merging North with South

When Britain in January 1914 merged the Northern Protectorate with the Southern Protectorate to form Nigeria, with Frederick Lugard as governor-general, it decided to maintain the indirect rule system in the North. Attempt to introduce it in the Ibo-dominated Eastern Region using warrant chiefs was less successful, and the British had to more or less rule there directly (Nafziger, 1972). In the Western Region too it was not as successful as it was in the North. Even in the North its adoption was less successful in the non-Muslim areas of middle-belt region, particularly in the Tiv land along the lower Benue River, where centralised administrative structure similar to emirate system of the Muslim North did not exist. In the Muslim areas too there was serious resistance, first, as noted above, from the clerics, then from the emerging educated elite and from the peasants. 'In Sokoto, Potiskum and Borgu, in Muslim Northern Nigeria, the *talakawa* peasantry rebelled against the oppressive and often corrupt native authorities' (Dorward, 1986, p.427). Despite all these, though, the Colonial Office regarded the implementation of the system as very successful in the North.

Division between the North and the South did not go away with their administrative unification as one country; it persisted throughout the colonial era and beyond. The introduction of Richards Constitution in 1946 consolidated the 1939 division of Nigeria into three regions—Northern, Eastern and Western Regions—with their own respective representative bodies at the regional level and representations at the national legislative and executive councils (Williams, 1984; Sagay, 2009). The former Northern Protectorate was left intact as the Northern Region while the former Southern Protectorate was split into Eastern and Western Regions. Further changes after the 1953 constitutional conference increased their representations in the new federal government. The conference had also accepted northern politicians' proposal that 'representation in the proposed national House of Representatives should reflect population, which means that on the basis of the latest census figures the North would have half of the seats' (Williams, 1984, p.348). Northern Region's population, based on the 1931 census being referred here was 11.4 million as against 8.6 million for the other two regions put together; the pattern was maintained in the 1953 census with the North's 16.8 million

against 13.6 million of the other two regions (Williams, 1984, p.348). Thus, with the population and territorial sizes larger than the two regions' put together, the North became the dominant political partner in the Nigerian federation—a situation that has been largely maintained up to this moment, though diluted by a series of structural changes such as creation of states and local government councils and informal recognition of six geopolitical zones (Northwest, Northeast, North central, Southwest, Southeast and South-south zones) in the sharing of federal political offices.

Pre-independence formation of political parties largely followed ethnic and regional patterns, although the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC)—renamed National Council of Nigerian Citizens after the part of Cameroon that was under the United Nations' trusteeship and was being administered in Nigeria was returned to Cameroon following a plebiscite in 1961—originally had a national outlook. The Northern People's Congress (NPC), led by Sir Ahmadu Bello, a great grandson of the Sokoto caliphate's founder Usman dan Fodio, controlled the Northern Region (Williams, 1984). The Western Region was dominated by the Action Group under the leadership of a charismatic lawyer Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Akinyemi, 1972). The NCNC, led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe who had a distinguished academic background from the United States and owned the nationalist newspaper *West African Pilot* (Dorward, 1986), controlled the Eastern Region. The three leaders also belonged to the dominant ethnic groups in the country—Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo—respectively. There were several smaller political parties that challenged the dominance of these parties, particularly in the North where the Northern Elements' Progressive Union (NEPU), the ideological rival of NPC, led by Mallam Aminu Kano, and the United Middle-Belt Congress (UMBC), which championed ethnic minorities' rights in the Middle-Belt, battled NPC; but they were unable to break its control of the region (Dudley, 1968; Williams, 1984). The NPC went on to win the pre-independence national elections and forge an alliance with the NCNC to form a national government to which the British eventually handed over power when the country was granted independence on 1 October 1960 (Williams, 1984). Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the most senior federal minister from the NPC, became prime minister—NPC leader Ahmadu Bello declined national leadership and opted to

remain the premier of the Northern Region—while Dr Azikiwe became governor-general and later Nigeria's president, a post that was mainly ceremonial in nature since the country was then practising British model of parliamentary democracy (Williams, 1984; Sagay, 2009).

Postcolonial period

The three-region structure inherited at independence was maintained until 1963 when Mid-Western Region was carved out of the Western Region following agitation by ethnic minorities in the area (Williams, 1984), but also as a subtle way of weakening the influence of the opposition leader Obafemi Awolowo (Uche, 2008), though he too was an advocate of minorities' rights in other regions (Alkasum, 2005). The regional rivalries and bitter bickering between rival politicians continued until a violent military coup in January 1966 terminated the civilian regime, and the lives of several of its leaders (Akinyemi, 1972; Nafziger, 1972). The coup followed wide spread disturbances in Western Region resulting from alleged frauds in the 1965 elections in the region (Akinyemi, 1972). The coup leaders, mostly from Ibo ethnic group, killed many military officers and political leaders, mostly of Northern extraction, escalating the ethnic and regional panic that has been the regular feature of the country's political landscape (Williams, 1984; Daura, 2010). As one former Nigerian bureaucrat, Sani Zangon Daura (2010), recalled, the coup 'took a very heavy toll' on Northern and South-western leaders. 'Northern political as well as top military officers were murdered in cold blood. Also, Yoruba political leaders (opposed to Awolowo) friends of the North along with key Yoruba army officers were similarly killed by Igbo officers,' he wrote. 'It became quite clear that the coup was an Igbo-affair designed to take over the government at all costs and took over the country alas temporarily' (p.13). Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa and Northern Premier Ahmadu Bello were among those killed by the coup leaders (Williams, 1984; Perham, 1970). The new military head of state, Major General Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi, himself an Ibo man, was not involved in the killings; but he failed to take firm measures to douse the ethnic and regional tensions it had heightened. Instead he introduced a unitary form of government that worsened the existing tensions (Nafziger, 1972; Williams, 1984).

In July 1966 military officers, this time mostly of Northern extraction, staged a counter-coup, killing both General Ironsi and the military governor of the Yoruba-dominated Western Region, Lieutenant-Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi. Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from a northern ethnic minority group, became the new head of state (Williams, 1984). However, the military governor of the Ibo-dominated Eastern Region, Colonel Odumega Ojukwu, rejected the new arrangement (Williams, 1984; Perham, 1970). There were further tension and a near-state of anarchy, with the killings of Ibos in many parts of the North (Perham, 1970; Bamisaiye, 1974; Uche, 2008). Gowon's attempt to stem the tide was largely unsuccessful. He abolished the unitary system introduced by his predecessor and replaced the regional structure with a 12-state federal structure on 27 May 1967 (Perham, 1970; Nafziger, 1972; Williams, 1984). Despite series of entreaties, Ojukwu refused to recognise the new administration and on 30 May 1967 announced the Eastern Region's decision to secede from the Nigerian federation, renaming it 'Republic of Biafra' (Perham, 1970; Uche, 2008). A bitter civil war that lasted for three years and claimed on both sides large number of lives was fought to keep the country one (Perham, 1970; Williams, 1984). After the war, the federal government declared a 'no victor no vanquished' policy and pursued a programme of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction (Cunnliffe-Jones, 2010). Oil export which by 1970s was making 'substantial contribution to federal revenue' helped in funding the programme (Williams, 1984, p.366).

Incidentally, it was the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1958 in the then Eastern Region that was seen to be one of the factors that propelled and prolonged the conflict (Nafziger; 1972; Perham, 1970; Uche, 2008). Many have argued that the existence of oil in the region had on one hand emboldened Ojukwu to insist on secession, and on the other prompted fierce federal resistance against it (Nafziger, 1972; Uche, 2008). 'I am convinced that if there were no petroleum discovered in large quantities in parts of the former Eastern Region, the secessionist leaders would not have tried to break up Nigeria,' the then commissioner for economic development Yahaya Gusau told a reconstruction and development conference in March 1969 (cited in Nafziger, 1972, p.234). Ironically, the bulk of the oil was not located in Ojukwu's ethnic Ibo land; it was located in the areas of the ethnic

minorities dominated by Ibo under the regional arrangement. And so Gowon's introduction of the 12-state structure worsened the Ibos' case.

Foreign oil firms operating in the country played their own roles too in the conflict, relative to the size of their investments and the positions taken by their respective countries. British oil company Shell-BP was accused of backing the federal side—though there were instances when it was equally accused of helping the Biafrans too, in fuelling planes that took arms and aids to them. The French oil firm *Societe' Anonyme Francaise de Recherches et d'Exploitation Petrolieres* (SAFRAP), like the French government, backed Biafra, as General de Gaulle openly declared that France 'has assisted, is assisting, Biafra to the extent of her possibilities' (cited in Perham, 1970, p.241; Uche, 2008). The US Gulf Oil which operated in the areas controlled by federal troops paid its royalties to Nigeria's government (Uche, 2008). Uche argued that Shell-BP, jointly owned by Shell and British Petroleum, which prior to the conflict produced about 84 per cent of the country's 540,000 barrels daily output, sided with Nigeria to protect British interests. This, according to him, was impelled by Britain's desperation to get Nigeria's oil at that time 'because the June 1967 Middle East Six Day War, which resulted in the blockade of the Suez Canal, extensively disrupted the supply of Middle East oil to Europe', and several Arab countries had also banned the sale of oil to Britain (p.113). Uche (2008) maintained that, 'although the Nigerian crude oil export to the United Kingdom, at the onset of the war, was worth only £47 million, representing 10.3 per cent of the volume of UK's crude oil imports, it had great potential and was increasingly becoming vital to the UK economy' (p.113). With Shell-BP having invested £250 million in Nigeria and Britain having additional £175 million worth of other investments plus an annual trade exports of £90 million and 16,000 Britons living in the country, he further argued, the best option open to her was to pursue a 'One-Nigeria' policy.

However, Perham (1970), a close associate of Lugard and a distinguished Oxford academic who had originally backed Biafra but later called for reconciliation after visiting the federal side, argued that Britain's policy on Nigeria's civil war was actually ambivalent. 'The British had shown a divided mind over the civil war,' she wrote (p.240). 'So we have had the strange situation in which British weapons,

including Saladin armoured cars, were destroying Biafran lives, while British food and medical supplies were being dangerously flown in to preserve them' (p.241). Some Western nations and organisations were openly supporting Biafra, especially after a successful media campaign, aided by a Geneva-based public relations firm *Markpress* which was working for the Biafran side, had presented the conflict as a war between Northern 'vandals' and Ibo Christians, with television pictures of dying Ibo children being displayed on international television screens (Perham, 1970; Bamisaiye, 1974). Perham noted that the Pope even 'used the word "genocide" in the closing stages of the war, and had quickly to recant' (p.240). The British ambivalence was perhaps informed by the inherent contradictions of addressing its domestic politics and pursuing its international economic and political interests. While at home many politicians, trade unions (including the dock workers who refused to load arms for shipment to Nigeria) and the press were mainly siding with Biafra (Akinyemi, 1972; Bamisaiye, 1974) and urging the government to do same, its investments in Nigeria and the fact that the Soviet Union was selling arms to Nigeria (Perham, 1970; Uche, 2008) made a definite and open support to only one side delicate. 'The claims of pity and religious affiliation clashed with those of economic self-interest and of detached political judgment,' wrote Perham (1970, p.241). 'Our links were educational, social and most realistic of all, economic, with Shell-B.P.'s huge investment in an oil of excellent quality and much more accessible spatially and politically than that of the ambiguous Middle East,' she added (p.241). Those economic and political interests, threatened by the potentials of Soviet penetration on the federal side and French on the Biafra's, got the upper hand and Britain tilted more towards the federal side which eventually won the war.

Gowon's regime lasted for nine years before a military coup in 1975 brought in a new government, led by General Murtala Mohammed, who was later killed in a failed military coup in 1976 after spending barely seven months in office (Cunnliffe-Jones, 2010). He was replaced by General Olusegun Obasanjo whose government prosecuted and executed all those convicted of involvement in the foiled coup. The government then organised a successful transition programme and handed over power to a civilian regime on 1 October 1979 (Koehn, 1989). Modelled after US presidential system, the Second Republic, led by Alhaji Shehu

Shagari, a Hausa-Fulani Muslim from Sokoto, was meant to be a clean break from the 13 years of military regime and the parliamentary system of the first civilian regime (*Economist*, 2004). But the parties that came to power were largely the reincarnation of the ones that dominated the First Republic. Shagari's National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was a resurrection of the Ahmadu Bello's NPC, though now more national in structure and spread. It formed an alliance with Dr Azikiwe's Nigerian People's Party (NPP), itself a resurrected NCNC, though now narrower in spread. The main opposition party, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), led by the same opposition leader in the First Republic Chief Awolowo, was a mere replica of the Action Group. The former key opposition party in the North, NEPU, was renamed People's Redemption Party (PRP) and won two states in the region. Perhaps the only new party in the new arrangement was the Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP), which was actually a splinter group from NPP and also had some links with small parties of the First Republic that had support among the Kanuri ethnic group in Borno area [of the defunct Kanem-Bornu Kingdom (Adamu, 1984; Last, 1989)].

The Second Republic lasted for only four years before it was toppled by the military in December 1983 following alleged electoral frauds (Koehn, 1989). This ushered in series of military regimes that lasted for 16 years—with the exception of the 83-day interim administration of Chief Ernest Shonekan—before the country returned to civilian rule in 1999 that has so far remained uninterrupted (Cunnliffe-Jones, 2010). The country witnessed its first civilian-to-civilian transition in May 2007 after a national election that was described by both local and international observers as deeply flawed (Abubakar, 2007; BBC News, 2007). Former military ruler Obasanjo was the one who became the civilian president on the return of the civilian rule in 1999 where he spent eight years in power before he was succeeded by Umaru Yar'adua who died while in office in May 2010 (BBC News, 2007; Nossiter, 2010). The then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan completed Yar'adua's term and was elected in April 2011 for a fresh four-year term in office (Stearns, 2010)—his election was greeted with violence in the North over allegations of vote-rigging (Campbell, 2011).
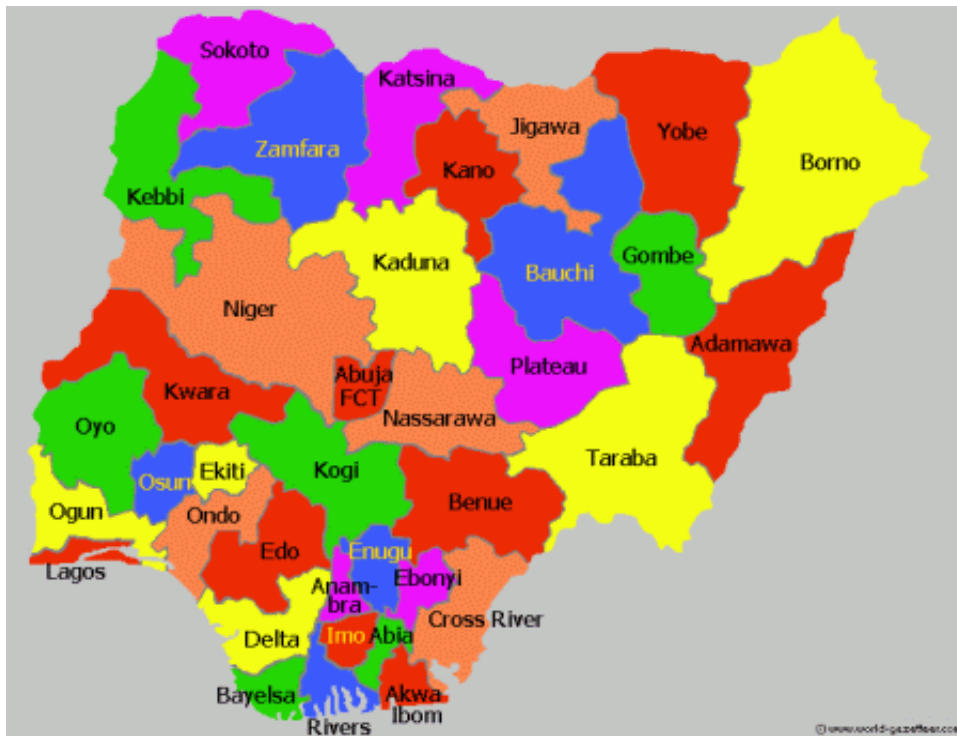
Map showing Nigeria's 36-state structure and Federal Capital Territory Abuja

Figure 3.2 Online source: Sahelblog.wordpress.com
Available from: <http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://sahelblog.files.wordpress.com> [Accessed 16 November 2010].

The presidential system of government is still retained and the federal structure remains in force. There were some changes introduced during military regimes, though, such as the increase of the number of states from 12 to 36 and the provision of the third tier of government, the local government councils, which the country now has 774 (Hanson, 2007). The whole set up constitutes a huge structure that is mainly sustained by oil revenue which, according to one-time finance minister Olusegun Aganga, accounts for about 80 per cent of federal government's revenue (Seria and Bell, 2010). Generally, as noted earlier, the Nigerian society is pluralistic and complex. 'While it may be easy to acknowledge the ethnological visibilities and boundaries of the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, it is certainly not easy to demarcate the boundaries of the minority ethnic nationalities. The use of sociological, anthropological, cultural and linguistic classifications could assign as low as 375 minority ethnic nationalities and as high as 1450 such groups in the country' (Oyovbaire, 2001). Northern Nigeria, as noted in the 'Introduction' chapter, is currently made up of 19 states (and the federal capital Abuja) out of the 36 states of the Nigerian federation. It covers more than

half of the country's territory of about 923,733 square kilometres and well over half of its estimated population of 166 million—based on the 2006 National Census that put Nigeria's population at a little over 140 million at that time (FGN, 2007). The predominant religion in the region remains Islam, though there are large numbers of Christian and other non-Muslim populations, particularly in the southern part of the region, often referred to as the Middle-Belt, where frequent ethno-religious conflicts create what Kastfelt (2006, p.14) called 'enclave culture' caused by the problem of 'postcolonial citizenship'. Northern Nigeria, as stated earlier, has an estimated 250 ethnic groups [there is no agreed definite number of ethnic groups in Nigeria (Oyovbaire, 2001; Philips, 2004)] with Hausa language serving as the lingua franca and English as the official language.

The media in Nigeria

The history of media in Nigeria did not start with broadcasting; it began with the print media in 1859 when the first newspaper was established in Abeokuta, five-and-a-half decades before Britain's proclamation of Nigeria as a country. The print media started as a small Christian missionary outfit before moving into small private concerns and later expanded to medium and large entities with both private and government involvements. They began as organs of spreading Christianity and anti-slavery campaign, then moved to agitation for self-determination in the struggle for independence before turning to ethnic nationalism, and then progressed to the promotion of national unity and civilian rule before diluting into big business, supporting diverse interests often dictated by the nature of their ownership (Oyovbaire, 2001).

Broadcasting, on the other hand, was introduced during the colonial era and was under the tight control of government (both colonial and postcolonial) before the wave of economic liberalisation in the 1990s, mainly dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, forced the government to soften its control and allow for private ownership (Larkin, 2008). Further changes in the country's political and economic climate and advancement in communications technologies pushed other forms of broadcast media, particularly the film industry, further away from government's control (Larkin, 2008; NBC, 2009). The same

factors are now transforming the print, the wider broadcast industry and the new media in their structures, their mode of operations and their engagements with both the government and the Nigerian public.

The print media

It was Reverend Henry Townsend, a Christian evangelist, supported by the Anglican Church, who started the print media in Nigeria with the establishment of the first newspaper on 3 December 1859 in Abeokuta, the capital of the current south-western state of Ogun. It was a bi-monthly newssheet which commenced publication in the local Yoruba language and expanded to English language as well, carrying 'articles on religion and society' (Falola, 1999, p.22). Known by its Yoruba name as *Iwe Irohin,* the paper focused on anti-slavery campaign and promotion of Christianity (Babalola, 2002; Oyovbaire, 2001; Sambe, 2005). Southern Nigeria, due to its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, had had earlier and much greater contact with the Europeans when compared with Northern Nigeria; and Christian missionaries had been establishing their bases in the region. As Oyovbaire (2001) noted, several missions—the Church Missionary Society, the Baptist, the Methodist and the Catholic Mission—had between 1842 and 1885 established their presence in southern towns such as Abeokuta, Onitsha (the current commercial centre of south-eastern Nigeria) and Calabar (the capital of the present southern state of Cross River), where another reverend Hope Waddel of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland set up a printing press, producing educational pamphlets and later a newspaper, the *Calabar Observer* (Sambe, 2005, p.120).

Under the guidance of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Reverend Townsend established a viable printing press and *Iwe Irohin*, saying: 'my object is to get the people to read; and get them to inculcate the habit of reading' (cited in Oyovbaire, 2001). Many more missionary newspapers followed and the CMS expanded its business to book publishing and merchandising through the CMS Bookshops that still exist in some parts of Nigeria. Most of the early Christian newspapers were short-lived, though, lasting between six to 24 months. 'The important point, however, is that between the 1850s and the late 1920s, the Christian press acquired some status of not only discharging the responsibilities of

religious proselytization but also of incursion into questioning the emergent colonialism and its multiple oppressive practices in Nigeria' (Oyovbaire, 2001).

The abolition of slave trade in 1807 and the migration of freed slaves (some of them forcibly) from Europe and North America to West Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had fostered legitimate trade in commodities such as cocoa, cotton, diamond, gold and tobacco between Europeans and West Africans (Uche, 1989). It also gave way to evangelisation and colonisation of the West African coast and the spread of Western education in the region (Uche, 1989; Oyovbaire, 2001). Britain, Uche observed, employed gun-boat diplomacy to control the region: it annexed Lagos in 1861, deposed its ruler Oba Kosoko and replaced him with his nephew whom it had hand-picked; it overthrew Benin Kingdom in 1897; and deported the powerful King Jaja of Opobo in the Niger Delta region to the West Indies in 1897 (Uche, 1989).

The annexation of Lagos and opening of the hinterland drew many people to Lagos, boosting commercial, social and educational activities as well as establishing its status as the West Africa's most populous and cosmopolitan city— a position it still retains. It was the city where the first secular newspaper in Nigeria, *Anglo-African*, was founded in June 1863 by a Jamaican freed slave, Robert Campbell, who was both a journalist and a printer. *Anglo-African* was regarded 'as the first real newspaper in Nigeria' and showed considerable interest in reporting news events (Babalola, 2002; Sambe, 2005, p.123). It was followed by *The Lagos Times* on 10 November 1880 and *Lagos Observer* on 12 February 1882. There were other publications coming up around this time, but 'the most successful and influential newspaper' of the period was the *Lagos Weekly Records* (Sambe, 2005, p.124), established in 1891 by John Payne Jackson, an Americo-Liberian, who was regarded as 'the real founder of Nigerian political journalism' (Williams, 1984, p.331). Expanded and renamed *Lagos Weekly Times* in partnership with Consul Leigh, 'the paper was a determined agent in its propagation of racial consciousness', and 'dominated the period 1891-1931' (Sambe, 2005, p.124). The other paper that took similar direction was the *Lagos Daily News*, established in 1925 by Victor Bababunmi but bought by one of the best known Nigerian nationalists, Herbert Macaulay, who used the paper to attack

British colonial policies, promote cultural consciousness and campaign for his party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), which dominated Lagos politics at that period (Dorward, 1986).

The British colonial interest began to feel uncomfortable with Macaulay's radical press and politics, and started taking measures to check him. To do that, some British business interests, in alliance with some wealthy Nigerians, established *Daily Times* in 1926 and made Macaulay's opponent, a wealthy influential Lagos lawyer, Sir Adeyemo Alakija, its chairman (Oso, 1991) and Ernest Ikoli its editor, having sold his *African Messenger* to them. This, as Oso (1991) observed, was the beginning of the capitalisation and commercialisation of the Nigerian press because 'most of the earlier newspapers were owned and managed as one-man businesses, the owner being the editor, reporter and, in most cases, the printer' (p.43). The emergence of the *Daily Times* took the shines off the radical nationalist press, never to recover until the arrival on the scene in the 1930s of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe who was among the foremost Nigerian nationalists.

Zik, as he was popularly known, had (as noted earlier) a brilliant academic background from the United States that included training in journalism. He had edited the *African Morning Post* in the early 1930s in Accra (the capital of Ghana, then known as Gold Coast) where he had 'had skirmishes with the British colonial government' (Uche, 1989, p.95). His establishment of the *West African Pilot* on 22 November 1937 transformed the face of Nigerian journalism, bringing into it greater level of professionalism, vibrancy and clearer focus on the fight against colonialism. Sambe (2005) noted that Zik's journalism was daring, 'with shocking directness in his editorials and news items…banner headlines to sensationalise news and heighten emotions', and 'laced his political messages with human interest' (p.125). The boldness paid off as it pushed up 'the circulation figure to an astonishing 12,000 copies daily, which was more than doubled in the 1940s' (p.125). Zik also introduced newspaper chain business in the 1940s, with his publishing firm, the Associated Newspaper of Nigeria, launching among others, the *Eastern Nigerian Guardian* in the Niger Delta's city of Port Harcourt in 1940, the *Nigerian Spokesman* in Onitsha in 1943, the *Southern Nigerian Defender* in Warri (another Niger Delta's city) and in 1949 the *Comet* in the northern city of

Kano, becoming the first daily newspaper in Northern Nigeria (Sambe, 2005, p.126; Uche, 1989).

Prior to this, the few newspapers in the region were not daily and were mainly published in Hausa language under the control of the colonial administration. North, with its dominant Islamic background, lagged behind in Western education. 'The colonisers promoted English and Christianity… And as the church controlled education, development lagged in the Muslim north' (*Economist*, 2004). Although Northern Nigeria had a long educational and literary tradition dating back centuries before the British conquest, the tradition was mainly based on Islamic and Arabic system (Williams, 1984; Uche, 1989). Its Muslim rulers and scholars had been communicating and spreading education in Arabic, Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri and Nupe languages, not in English, the language introduced to them by colonialists and Christian missionaries. This and the Northern Muslims' suspicion of Western education made English newspaper publication less attractive in the region (Uche, 1989). Hausa language which had been 'reduced to writing long before the advent of the British' (Williams, 1984, p.331) became the key language for the first newspaper publication in the region, with the establishment of a quarterly periodical called *Jaridar Najeriya ta Arewa* (Northern Nigerian Newspaper) in 1932 (Yahaya, 1988). Other newspapers, like *Yar Gaskiya* (The Truth)*,* published in Hausa *ajami* (Hausa in Arabic script), and *Suda* were both established in the 1940s (Yahaya, 1988). But the best known Hausa newspaper at the time was *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* (approximately 'Truth is Worthier than Wealth'), established in the late 1930s (Yahaya, 1988; Auduson, 2010) by a government publishing agency, Gaskiya Corporation, Zaria, which also pioneered Hausa serious educational and literary publications (in Roman script), many of which were written by one of the best known Hausa intellectuals, Dr Abubakar Imam, who was also the first editor of the paper (Yahaya, 1988). *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* was—and to some extent still is—a popular Hausa newspaper covering various subjects and carrying local, regional and international news, and circulates in different parts of the region. The corporation later added an English language newspaper, *Nigerian Citizen,* which later became *New Nigerian*, based in the regional capital, Kaduna, and which still exists (Auduson, 2010).

These were (and still are) government-controlled newspapers, and as such the credit for producing the first daily private newspaper in Northern Nigeria remains with Zik who in 1949 also established the *Northern Advocate* in the north-central city of Jos. All these had in turn helped extend his political reach to the region and earned him respect among other politicians. His flagship newspaper also attracted praises from his political contemporaries. Chief Obafemi Awolowo was quoted to have said: 'The *West African Pilot* blossomed into every corner of the country as the champion of the common man', and that it 'was a fire-eating and aggressive nationalist paper of the highest order' (Uche, 1989, pp.95-96). Chief Awolowo too engaged in newspaper business with his Amalgamated Press of Nigeria, publishing *Nigerian Tribune* since 9 November 1949 (it still exists as his family's enterprise), the *Daily Service,* which he inherited from the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), and many more. They all contributed to the nationalists' independence struggle (Uche, 1989).

The success of Zik's chain of newspapers forced the rival *Daily Times*, linked to Mirror Group of London (Sambe, 2005), to reorganise its operation and get more foreign capital injection (Uche, 1989). It was at the time the UK press baron Cecil King was also trying to prop up British colonial interests in West Africa, acquiring newspapers in the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Nigeria to help achieve that goal. In his book, *Press Gang*, British journalist-cum-media academic Roy Greenslade (2003) said King's media adventure in West Africa was vague. King's 'story of his ventures in the region is offensively patronising and his central editorial aim, "to keep the political temperature low", was overtly political and vaguely imperialist' (Greenslade, 2003, p.60). But the pro-British media in Nigeria were not vague in their mission: they did try to 'keep the political temperature low'. As Uche (1989) noted, 'the *Daily Times* and the *Daily Express* remained quite aloof and unconcerned in the nationalist struggle for an independent Nigeria. These two daily newspapers were controlled by private British business enterprises and were basically interested in exploiting a hitherto untapped and potentially rich market with a very active media audience' (p.97). *Daily Times* did admit that 'since the original company was absorbed by overseas interests…it has maintained a neutral role in party politics, while at the same time attempting to promote economic and social interests of Nigeria as a whole' (cited in Uche, 1989, p.97).

The colonial administration too did manage to keep the temperature low by embarking on a gradual process of transfer of power through careful and prolonged negotiations with the nationalists. The British government, under the influence of chief secretary Sir Hugh Foot (later Lord Caradon), had decided that the Nigerian government would not be 'overtaken by events' as the Gold Coast's had been in 1948 (when they witnessed a riot initially linked to nationalists), and begun series of local conferences to prepare for independence (Williams, 1984, p.347). In any case, despite all the hypes about the nationalists' agitation for independence, the dominant elements in the independence movements were not as radical as they were being portrayed: they 'were moderate, and sometimes conservative, closely connected with bourgeois families or with chiefly houses' (Williams, 1984, p.340). Similarly, as Williams further noted, 'the nationalist leaders who slowly moved to demand—"request" is a better word in most cases—independence were in no case either prompted by outside forces or intent on internal social revolution…They sought a transfer of power, not the transformation of society' (p.340). But it is still fair to admit that they did make appreciable efforts in the independence struggle, considering the strength, the bulk of experience and the manipulative capacity of the forces they were up against (Oyovbaire, 2001). The way they employed the press in prosecuting their campaign, as Uche (1989) and Oyovbaire (2001) noted, had also helped to speed up the process of terminating the colonial rule.

However, as soon as the independence was attained, the Nigerian press shifted its focus away from its idealistic orientation of promoting national interest to the pursuit of parochial issues of regional rivalries and ethnic nationalism (Oso, 1991; Sambe, 2005). The political parties that came to power were regional in their structure, membership and orientation; the mood of the nation took that direction; and the leanings of the media proprietors and the content of their publications reflected it. Regional governments competed to set up or strengthen their own newspapers to project their regions in good light and highlight the failings of other regions (Uche, 1989). The Eastern Region's government turned its weekly *Eastern Nigeria Outlook* into a daily paper in 1960 and renamed it *Nigerian Outlook*, though the content had not gone hand-in-hand with the new name; Northern Region's government had its *Nigerian Citizen* (that looked more like Northern

Citizen) and *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* with similar orientation; and the Western Region, controlled by the main opposition party at the national level, had its own media reflecting that sentiment. The federal government, controlled by the Northern-based NPC in alliance with Eastern-based NCNC, established its own *Morning Post* and *Sunday Post* in 1961 (Uche, 1989). The Western Region, now under the control of the opposition leader Chief Awolowo, and being the real base of the country's print media, capitalised on that advantage to its full benefit and used the media to portray the national government as incompetent. 'Incidentally, the press became known by a section of the political class for its reportage and advocacy as a vehicle for partisanship, and thus acquired the derogatory image of being the "Lagos press"' (Oyovbaire, 2001).

As the country's political scene degenerated into regional and ethnic conflicts, the media followed the trend, reflecting, and in some cases aiding, the dangerous descent into violence that eventually culminated into the 1967-70 civil war during which the media, on both sides of the divide, indulged in massive propaganda in support of their sides (Sambe, 2005). 'The media were not neutral during the Nigerian civil war. They actively supported the government of their geographical locations. They also acted as the leading organ of the regional and state governments in the articulation of the interests and need of their constituencies in the federation' before and after the war, Uche (1989, p.153) stated. When the war ended, the campaign for reconciliation and mobilisation of public opinion on the need for nation building were assigned to the media. 'The task of the press became how to make whole what it helped to break,' Sambe (2005, p.154) noted, adding that the newspapers also broadened their reach and coverage. The *Daily Times*, *Nigerian Tribune, New Nigerian* and later *The Punch* 'devised various scheme to wear some kind of national toga' (p.154). The military government in 1975 took control of the *Daily Times* and *New Nigerian* while many state governments went on to establish their own local newspapers with each competing for readers with the privately-owned newspapers.

The return to civil rule in 1979 saw the emergence of many more newspaper houses, the best known of which was the Concord group of newspapers, owned by wealthy businessman Chief Moshood Abiola. Established in 1980, the group

expanded and published several titles: *National Concord*, *Sunday Concord*, *Weekend Concord*, *Community Concord* (located in many states of the federation) and vernacular newspapers in three major languages of Hausa (*Amana*), Yoruba (*Isokan*) and Igbo (*Udoka*) (Uche, 1989). The primary motive of establishing Concord was political, though the economic and other interests were also significant. 'The *National Concord* is the only privately-owned post-independence Nigerian newspaper that has had a very influential impact on Nigeria's political development…(and) wielded a very wide political influence during the Second Republic,' noted Uche (1989, p.103). Chief Abiola, a Yoruba Muslim from the south-western state of Ogun, the home state of opposition leader Chief Awolowo of UPN, belonged to the ruling NPN that had a stronghold in the North. Trying to widen its reach to the South, the ruling party promised to rotate its presidential ticket between the northern and southern politicians. Abiola began to position himself for contest to become its candidate in the next presidential election and as such established his chain of newspapers to help pursue the project. '*National Concord* came to exist in order to protect the economic, religious and most especially, the political interests of the then ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN),' Uche (1989, p.103) asserted, adding that it went about promoting the ideals of the ruling party and exposing the alleged misdeeds of the opposition leader Awolowo. Uche argued that Abiola needed to demonise Awolowo, who was revered in the Southwest, to take over the region's leadership and make his party acceptable to his people. In the end, however, the gambit failed as the NPN re-nominated President Shehu Shagari to run for a second term, with some of its leaders claiming that the party's ticket was not for sale, and that the North-South rotation formula was meant to begin after Shagari's two terms. Enraged, Abiola officially quit politics, and the Concord Group switched side to UPN which again lost to NPN in the 1983 presidential election. But the election was alleged to be marred by wide-spread rigging, generating complaints and disaffection that eventually led to the return of the military later that year (Uche, 1989).

The Concord Group initially did well under the military regime, some of whose leaders were friendly with Abiola. He returned to politics when the military regime of his friend, General Ibrahim Babangida, began a transition programme. But after conducting the presidential election in 1993, believed to have been won by Chief

Abiola, General Babangida annulled the election and remained in power, sparking fears of renewed ethnic and regional conflicts. The Concord chain of newspapers and *The Punch* titles were banned by the regime which had also earlier banned the Northern-based *Reporter* newspaper, owned by former deputy head of state, General Shehu Yar'adua, who had also sought for presidency but was barred by the regime. Further unrest forced General Babangida to step aside and set up an interim government, led by Chief Ernest Shonekan (Cunnliffe-Jones, 2010), who hails from Abiola's region, to help stem the slide into ethnic and regional conflicts. The arrangement did not last long: 83 days after its formation, the interim government was toppled by General Sani Abacha whose regime later jailed Abiola and Yar'adua as well as several other politicians, human rights activists and journalists who campaigned for an end to military rule. Both Yar'adua and Abiola died in detention in mysterious circumstances. The execution earlier in 1995 of playwright and minority rights activist Ken Saror Wiwa by the same regime over alleged murder of four moderate leaders of his Ogoni ethnic group had brought international condemnation and massive media attention on the regime (Reuters, 1995; Boddy-Evans, 1995) and it was desperately struggling to survive.

The suppression of independent local press tends to be worse under military regimes, forcing some of them, particularly radical publications such as *The News* and *Tell* magazines, to go underground and operate what they called 'guerrilla journalism' (Olutokun and Seteolu, 2001). 'Successive military governments, from the Murtala/Obasanjo regime to Buhari/Idiagbon and from Babangida to Abacha, continued to deal serious blows on the press, the most sinister of which were the bombings of Dele Giwa in 1986 and Bagauda Kaltho in 1996,' Ishiekwene (2008) noted. Many more journalists and publishers faced tough times: some, like *TSM* magazine publisher Chris Anyanwu and magazine editor Kunle Ajibade, were jailed; a few went into self-exile; and the publisher of the *Guardian* newspapers Alex Ibru was shot and wounded in an assassination attempt during Abacha regime (Mumuni, 2008). Even before this incident, the *Guardian* was a victim of a previous military regime, led by General Muhammadu Buhari in the mid-1980s. Its assistant news editor Nduka Irabor and diplomatic correspondent Tunde Thompson were jailed for violating a military decree that barred publishing false report on public office holders, and the paper was fined N50,000 (Uche, 1989).

The previous government of General Gowon, which enacted newspaper prohibition of circulation decree of 1967 and public officers (Protection against False Accusation) decree of 1976 that provides for jailing of its violators to two years in prison, and Obasanjo's regimes (both military and civilian) did also attempt to muzzle the press and intimidate journalists (Uche, 1989; Ishiekwene, 2008)—though none had put them in as much danger as they found themselves under the Abacha regime.

Abacha's sudden death in 1998 paved way for the return to civilian rule in 1999 which saw the emergence as president of one of the people he had jailed, former military ruler Obasanjo, who hails from the same Ogun State as Abiola and Awolowo. Under the liberalised political atmosphere, the media space widened with the emergence of additional titles and expansion of existing ones. Among the improvements noted is the emergence of more private press in the North. The Abuja-based Media Trust, set up in 1998, added new titles of *Daily Trust, Sunday Trust*, *Aminiya* (Hausa) and *Kano Chronicles* to its existing *Weekly Trust,* formally based in Kaduna (Auduson, 2010). New publications such as the *Leadership* newspapers (with nearly similar number of titles) and *People's Daily*, both based in Abuja, have also sprung up. In the South too leading newspapers such as the *Guardian*, *Punch, Thisday, Tribune, Champion* and *Vanguard* have improved the quality of their print and coverage. New ones such as the *Independent*, *The Nation* (which is a reinvigorated *Comet*—not Zik's—after its purchase by former Lagos State governor Bola Tinubu), the *Compass* and *Sun* (a replica of Rupert Murdoch's *Sun*) and many more, have come out in the South. There was a fairly healthy competition among them under a largely free atmosphere (Auduson, 2010). Their attention now generally focuses on issues ranging from accountability in governance and sustenance of democracy to coverage of celebrities and corporate frauds. They have succeeded in, among others, exposing many corrupt politicians (Olutokun and Seteolu, 2001) and electoral frauds in the country, and helped in scuttling Obasanjo's attempt to extend his rule beyond the two terms of eight years allowed by the nation's constitution. Though the press too are 'not immune to corruption, ethnicity or factionalism,' as Olutokun and Seteolu (2001) noted, they are 'providing information of a critical nature, and shaping the discourse agenda in ways that deepen the quality and content of Nigeria's burgeoning democracy'.

Their independence, being mainly privately-owned and have to compete in the market place, might have helped in strengthening their competitiveness and in broadening their outlook in handling some national issues, their past parochialism notwithstanding. And they turned out to be more successful in private hands than under government ownership. 'Although governments owned newspapers, most of them could not stand the rigour of market forces and were more of mere conduit pipes for leakage of public funds while some others were deliberately starved out of the media scene even by their owners' (Oyovbaire, 2001). On the whole, the Nigerian press has since its inception in the tiny corner of Anglican mission in Abeokuta in the nineteenth century undergone tremendous transformation in terms of structure, contents, operations, outlook and number of outlets, ranging from the highbrow newspapers and magazines to soft-sell tabloids, all competing for space and readership, and performing different functions dictated by the changing nature of the Nigerian society.

The broadcast media

Broadcasting in Nigeria took off on a different note from that of the press. First, it was Britain that introduced it in the form of radio networks and mobile cinemas to promote the interests of the colonial regime and to 'modernise' the colony (Larkin, 2004). Secondly, the early development of colonial broadcasting in Nigeria was a 'function of three mutually incompatible policies': transfer of BBC-modelled broadcasting, extending 'BBC services to British expatriates' in the colony, and developing 'local broadcasting service' (Katz and Wedell, 1977, p.77). And thirdly, broadcasting was tightly controlled by government—in both colonial and postcolonial periods—until pressure from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank for economic and political liberalisation impelled its 'deregulation' in 1992 and paved way for the emergence of private ownership. Nigeria's early experience with radio broadcast started shortly after Britain began 'Empire broadcasting' with the launching of the BBC's Empire Service in December 1932 'to keep expatriates and loyal subjects of the King in constant touch with "the mother country"' (Briggs, 1985, pp.138-139). When the Empire Service began to beam its programmes to Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and West Africa

(Briggs, 1985), the British colonial personnel in Nigeria and their local associates were among the early audiences.

The first phase of broadcasting in Nigeria commenced with wired broadcasting, whose experimental work started in Lagos in early 1933 and was commissioned on 1 December 1935 as Radio Distribution Service (RDS), which was later renamed Radio Diffusion Service (Ladele *et al.*, 1979). Wired broadcasting was first developed in Britain before it was exported to other parts of the world by a firm called Broadcast Relay Service (Overseas) Limited. It was a system of relaying radio programmes to audiences by wires that were 'connected to loudspeakers' fixed in the subscribers' homes; and as such the RDS in Lagos would pick up BBC signals from Britain and relay it 'via a land line to individual subscribers' (Ladele *et al.*, 1979, p.8; Larkin, 2008, p.50). Two stations were established in Lagos relaying, at the beginning, only BBC programmes; but later one hour was provided for local programming featuring news, entertainment and local announcements (Ladele *et al.*, 1979). The guidelines for subscription had earlier been set out in *Gazette Notice* No. 1098 of 1935, and a subscriber was charged half shilling per month 'after an initial payment of three months rental in advance' (p.8). The service became an instant hit, with the number of subscribers (500 at the beginning with a long waiting list) increasing 'to about a thousand before the beginning of the Second World War in 1939' (p.8).

Early expansion of colonial radio

British policy on colonial broadcasting was often informed by both its imperial ambition and a response to its rivals'. In the run-up to the Second World War, Germany had by 1935 established 'six short-wave transmitters' dishing out its own propaganda, receivable in British colonies (Ladele *et al.*, 1979, p.12). Britain responded to this by trying to expand its own broadcasts to the colonies. The Colonial Office in 1936 set up a committee under the chairmanship of the Earl of Plymouth 'to consider and recommend what steps could usefully be taken to accelerate the provision of broadcasting services in the Colonial Empire, to coordinate such services with the work of the British Broadcasting Corporation,

and to make them a more effective instrument for promoting both local and Imperial interests' (cited in Ladele *et al.,* 1979, p.12).

The committee among others recommended expansion of the overseas service of the BBC, urged colonial governments to take practical steps to increase the reception of BBC's services in their areas, suggested that broadcasting should remain in government's hands and run as a public service, and that the idea of using 'both wired and wireless broadcasting' be considered (Ladele *et al.,* 1979, p.13). 'They were convinced also that colonial broadcasting should serve purposes other than entertainment and that it should be used as an instrument of "advanced administration" – a means of education and instruction of the people in public health, agriculture and rural development. In order to make the most impact, the Committee recommended the installation of loudspeakers in schools, halls, town squares and other places of public assembly for communal listening' (p.14).

The Colonial Office accepted most of the recommendations and began the expansion programme. In Nigeria the broadcasting time in the two stations in Lagos was increased, and new stations were established in Ibadan in 1939, Kano in 1944, Kaduna, Enugu, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Jos, Zaria, Calabar and Port Harcourt in the subsequent years (Sambe, 2005, p.82). Individual subscribers listened to the programmes from the loudspeakers installed in their homes; but public loudspeakers were also installed by government at public libraries, post offices, near chiefs' palaces and at other important public places for people to gather at fixed time to listen to the broadcasts. The subscribers were mostly expatriates and wealthy Nigerians, so the majority of the audiences had to rely on the public loudspeakers to listen to broadcasts, which at the beginning were only in English, which they did not even understand. But when local music and broadcasts of greetings from Nigerian soldiers serving at the Second World War overseas were added, radio's popularity increased rapidly (Larkin, 2008). Locally-produced programmes featuring Nigerian artists began in 1939 under the supervision of the government's public relations department, the present-day ministry of information and culture. 'After the war, radio broadcasting soon became relatively well established. By 1948 there were 12,000 radio sets in Nigeria, in addition to 8,000 wired boxes' (Katz and Wedell, 1977, p.79).

The dominant feature of radio at that time—and even afterwards—was its publicness both in the way of audiences' engagement with it and in the authorities' utilisation of it. There were persistent efforts to put it into the service of the colonial regime for imperial services and to let it serve modernisation function. 'In Nigeria, and indeed in most of the developing world, radio in its early years was a public not a private phenomenon,' Larkin (2008, p.71) noted. 'Radio was not solely located inside domestic interiors where it created a listening community in the precise social locale of the family. Instead it was owned by the state and based in community listening centres or broadcast out of loudspeakers over the streets and open spaces of the city…(and it) is intimately tied to the necessities of colonial rule' (p.71).

Switching to wireless broadcasting

Wired broadcasting in Nigeria lasted for almost 20 years before the country switched to wireless broadcasting in 1951 (Ladele *et al.,* 1979). This too was as the result of new developments in broadcasting in the British Empire as a whole. Technological advancement was also an important factor: cheap wireless radio sets, particularly the Saucepan Special made for Africans (Spitulnik, 1998), have emerged in the market in the 1950s. The main factor, though, was the British decision to improve on the state of broadcasting in its colonies. In 1948 the Colonial Office set up a committee, led by BBC engineer L. W. Turner and telecommunication engineer F. W. Byron, to carry out a survey on radio broadcasting in four West African colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast (Ghana), Sierra Leone and The Gambia. The committee found that broadcasting facilities, particularly in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, were inadequate; and recommended, among others, the introduction of wireless broadcasting and the replacement of old broadcasting equipment (Ladele *et al.,* 1979). 'In the light of these observations, the report concluded that there was an urgent need to establish a proper wireless broadcasting service in Nigeria, even if existing wired broadcasting systems would be continued and expanded where possible' (p.17).

The adoption of those recommendations resulted in both the establishment of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) in 1952 to replace the Radio Diffusion Service (RDS) and the switch to wireless broadcasting. The Lagos office was upgraded and turned into the national headquarters, the stations in Ibadan (West), Kaduna (North) and Enugu (East) were restructured and upgraded to regional stations, and Marconi transmitters were installed in those cities (Sambe, 2005). One of the remarkable improvements noticed in the new service, according to Ladele *et al.* (1979), was the successful transmission of over 30 outside broadcasts from various parts of the country during the visit of Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip in 1956.

The establishment of NBS and the switch to wireless system brought tremendous changes in the nature, content and structure of broadcasting in colonial Nigeria. Broadcast materials were now coming from national (Lagos) and regional (Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu) levels; the direct international broadcasts from the BBC no longer took precedence; and the local provincial broadcasts were downgraded. The intention appeared to be to use radio to mould listeners into Northerners, Westerners and Easterners at regional level; into Nigerians at national level; and into members of the British Empire at the international level. The attempt to create regional identity was problematic, though, in the sense that none of the three regions was homogeneous: they all have ethnic minorities who complained of domination by the major ethnic groups. Northern Nigeria with its huge area and wide ethnic diversity presented a special case. Although Islam is the dominant religion and Hausa is the lingua franca, there are some people in the region who are uncomfortable with one or both. Creating a balance was delicate. The old Ilorin Province, for example, although it belonged to Northern Region geographically and is predominantly Islamic, its people are predominantly Yoruba-speaking and many of them tended to prefer broadcasts from the Yoruba-speaking Western regional broadcasts in Ibadan than the broadcasts from Kaduna (Larkin, 2008). Switching to wireless system and initiating programmes from regional rather than provincial level meant that local news such us 'Kano News and Zaria News were replaced with a single "Northern Region" broadcast in Hausa, a decision that had great consequences for non-Hausa-speaking areas of the North,' Larkin (2008) observed. 'Minority languages like Tiv, Igala, and Nupe

would now have to receive a news broadcast in their language once a week instead of every day. The colonial Resident of Ilorin sent an immediate telegram on receiving this news, arguing that "for political reasons" alone there should be full regional news in Yoruba' (Larkin, 2008, p.67). The response he got from the controller of programmes in the Northern Region was that the regional broadcasting authority would do programmes that would make them listen to the station. 'It is up to us here in Kaduna to do all we can to provide programmes that will keep the Northern Yoruba tuned to the North Regional rather than the West Regional Programme,' the controller wrote, '(but) it will be difficult to stop listeners with private wireless sets from listening to Ibadan' (Letter of Controller, Northern Region, 9 April 1954, cited in Larkin, 2008, pp.67-68).

This idea of choice offered to listeners by the wireless system was a major issue that provoked stiff resistance from conservative colonial administrators who saw colonial subjects' access to rival broadcasters as a threat to British hegemony. Wireless system exposed Nigerians to other broadcast stations from places like Russia and the Arab world that were competing with Britain for sphere of influence in Nigeria. The then emir of Kano was, for instance, said to have been going out to Dala Hill in his Rolls-Royce with his radio set to listen to broadcasts from radical Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt in the 1950s, and the emir of Gusau requested for the inclusion of radio frequencies of 'Egypt, the Gold Coast, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan' in the *Nigerian Radio Times* (Kukah, 1993; Larkin, 2008, p.68). This exposure to alternative broadcasts was one of the things the conservative colonial administrators had sought to prevent by opposing wireless broadcasting. The Resident of Adamawa Province, in his opposition to the introduction of the system, had written to say that wired broadcasting 'has obvious scope as a counter to subversive activities' and that broadcasting 'is primarily dictated by political consideration' (Minute on Radio Diffusion Service, 1951, cited in Larkin, 2008, p.66). Similarly, a broadcasting officer at the time Mr Bunting had warned of the consequences of switching to wireless, especially when he felt that a large number of people could not afford wireless sets: 'It is these people that the government wishes to reach with propaganda and instruction. If they did have their own wireless sets, they would be unlikely to tune them in to reasonable stations' (cited in Larkin, 2008, p.66).

Despite the stiff opposition, however, the wireless argument won and Nigerians were offered the chance to listen to different broadcast stations—along with their political intents as well. The wired loudspeakers that were the hallmark of wired broadcasting made way for Saucepan Specials and wooden cabinets that made radio an object of domestic consumption (Larkin, 2008)—and highlighted another distinguishing feature of the wireless system: mobility. The wireless set is mobile and the invention of cheap transistor radio in the 1940s and its spread to the Third World nations in the 1960s and 1970s brought massive expansion in radio ownership (Mytton, 1993; Mytton and Forrester, 1988) and made it the object of both domestic and public consumption.

The switch to wireless in Nigeria had loosened the British colonialists' control on the choice of broadcasters, but it had not lessened their control of broadcasting in the country, much to the annoyance of many Nigerian nationalists. The Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) which was supposed to emulate the BBC's model of impartiality was clearly breaching that, and was siding with the colonial regime against the nationalists. A parliamentary motion by independence advocate, Anthony Enahoro, calling for self-government in 1956 did not go down well with the colonial regime. The colonial government 'used the radio station to broadcast to the people (its own position), but refused the nationalists the use of radio to explain their own version of the story' (Sambe, 2005, pp.83-84). The nationalists then agitated for NBS's transformation into a public corporation and succeeded in getting it turned into Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on 1 April 1957 'as the first public broadcasting corporation so established in any British colonial territory' (p.84). But this did not end the alleged partiality against the nationalists. Ironically, it was this situation that led to the establishment in 1959 of the Western Region's television station (Larkin, 2008), the first television station in Africa (Mytton, 1983; Sambe, 2005).

The colonial administration in the Western Region used the NBC to criticise Chief Awolowo-led Action Group, the dominant political party in the region, and when Awolowo demanded the right of reply, he was denied. Then, Awolowo, as premier of the Western Region's government, entered into agreement with a UK firm, Overseas Rediffusion Limited, and established a radio and television station under

the Western Nigerian Broadcasting Service in 1959. The Eastern Nigerian government imitated this, entering into agreement with the same UK firm, and set up its own broadcast station on the day of Nigeria's independence, 1 October 1960. 'The pattern was repeated later by the Northern State, which in 1961 entered into a similar partnership with Granada and EMI of England, and even by NBC in 1962, which, in reaction to the introduction of television by the regional governments, signed an agreement with an American company, NBC International' (Katz and Wedell, 1977, pp.81-82). Thus, all the three regional governments had their radio and television stations and the central government too had hers.

Postcolonial broadcasting

The regional broadcasting structure that began to evolve in the run-up to independence became the dominant pattern of broadcasting in the first phase of postcolonial Nigeria, particularly during the First Republic (1960-1966). With both the central and all the three regional governments controlling their radio and television stations (in partnership with foreign firms in the case of the television stations), the policy of trying to simultaneously create both national and regional identities continued. But the obvious contradiction in this made it difficult to be sustained. The conflict between regional and national identities and the conflict among the competing political parties all set in. As such the regional broadcasting stations were competing with one another; and the Western regional broadcaster that was controlled by the Action Group-led regional government (but in opposition at the national level) posed even a stronger challenge to the national broadcaster controlled by the ruling NPC-led government. The Northern region's broadcaster, now known as Radio Television Kaduna, was more supportive of the national broadcaster since they were both under NPC government.

The national broadcaster was facing these problems at the time when the country, with its massive diversity, required more unifying forces; and the political parties were not helping matters. In 1961 all the major political parties in the country— the opposition Action Group and NEPU as well as the ruling alliance of NPC and NCNC—complained that the NBC was not giving them adequate coverage (Uche,

1989). The then minister for broadcasting T. O. S. Benson used this complaint and the argument in support of national unity to get the broadcasting ordinance of 1956 amended and allow the federal government to take full control of the NBC (Mackay, 1964). 'The demands of a government needing to assert its authority over a country of 50 million people of diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics, between 70 and 80 per cent of whom were illiterate, made closer controls of broadcasting inevitable,' Katz and Wedell (1977, p.83) noted.

The challenges from the television stations were even more daunting since they had the additional problem of logistics. The demands in terms of technology, electrification, staffing and financing were huge, and the partnership with the foreign firms brought with it the problem of policy formulation and programme contents since they had a say on both. 'This could account for the reasons why the early emphasis on programme content was on foreign programmes' (Uche, 1989, p.62). With all these problems, relations between the foreign partners and the regional governments became strained. 'The private companies very soon realized the limitations of the Nigerian market and were subject to heavy losses. This led in later years to financial intervention by the regional governments in order to keep the services alive, culminating with the private companies selling their shares to the regional governments and withdrawing' (Katz and Wedell, 1977, p.84). But the partnership between the federal government and NBC-International was maintained since it was a five-year agreement that stipulated for the sale of the firm's shares to the federal government at the expiration of the contract. This was achieved in April 1967 when the federal government became the sole owner of the television station and merged it with the NBC to become NBC-TV. The federal government also controlled the Voice of Nigeria which began operation in 1962 as the external service of Radio Nigeria to project positive image of Nigeria to the outside world (Uche, 1989).

The biggest trouble Nigeria's postcolonial broadcasting faced was the country's divisive regional and ethnic nationalism. And it was the factor that has shaped— and was in turn shaped by—the broadcast media. Neither the attempt to make the NBC serve as a unifying broadcaster nor the warning signals of the obvious consequences of regional politics was able to halt the country's descent into

regional conflict. Both the national and regional broadcasters had played major role in this. The controversial Western Region's elections of 1965 which worsened the regional rivalries saw both the national broadcaster and the Western Region's broadcaster announcing conflicting results in favour of their respective controlling governments (Uche, 1989). The election crisis degenerated into serious violence followed by the coup and counter-coup of 1966 and subsequently the 1967-70 civil war during which the broadcast media played an even more negative role than witnessed earlier (Uche, 1989; Sambe, 2005). The NBC was engaged in propaganda against the rebellious Biafra and the Biafran Radio was mounting its own against the federal government, each using language that encouraged violence. Their negative role only came to an end when the war ended.

It was then that broadcasting was again assigned the role of restoring what it helped to destroy (Sambe, 2005). The military government took full control of broadcasting and its attention was now focused on promoting national unity and national development. Since the regional-structure had been replaced by state-structure headed by military governors who were directly answerable to the military ruler, whatever decision the federal government took was binding on the state governments; and the broadcasting stations at both the federal and state levels were responding in similar fashion. As a one-time director-general of the NBC, Christopher Kolade (1977, p.ix), noted: 'Broadcasting, as a major participant in social change, played a vital role in the events of those years. It played a part in advancing the cause of rebellion, but it also helped cement national cohesion'.

Funding was by the federal and state governments, though there were revenues from commercials in some stations and licence fees from radio set owners (Uche, 1989), although the licence fee system was not sustained. In view of the increasing role assigned to the broadcast media for nation building, the funding too was increased. The federal military government, in its 1975-80 national development plan, allocated $82 million for radio development projects that included expansion and modernisation of the federal broadcaster (Uche, 1989). The external service, the Voice of Nigeria, which was believed to have performed poorly against its rival during the civil war, the Voice of Biafra, was given £12.5 million 'for expansion and modernisation' (Sambe, 2005, p.87).

The military government later promulgated a decree in 1978 restructuring the national broadcaster, now renamed Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), decentralising some of its services and specifying national broadcasting linguistic zones. In Northern Nigeria, FRCN Kaduna remained powerful, broadcasting in Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Nupe and English languages; in the East, FRCN Enugu broadcast in Igbo, Tiv, Izon, Efik and English; and in the Southwest, FRCN Ibadan broadcast in Yoruba, Edo, Igala, Urhobo and English; while in its headquarters in Lagos it ran only English broadcasts (Sambe, 2005). The federal radio stations transmit on the short- and medium-wave and on FM frequency. But the state-owned local stations are only allowed to transmit on medium-wave and on FM frequency.

This structure was maintained even after the country returned to civilian rule in 1979, though there were unsuccessful attempts to alter it, and some abuse of it by both federal and state governments who installed high-powered transmitters for state radio stations that were supposed to have been restricted to transmit only on medium-wave. More stations were also established across the country and by early 1980s there were about 48 radio stations 'that were sustained by a heavy dose of foreign disco music and entertainment programmes' (Sambe, 2005, p.95; Uche, 1989). The issue of partisanship also came up, turning the broadcast media, both the radio and television stations, into in some cases organs of the ruling parties at the federal and state levels (Mytton, 1983). They played a similar role that they had played in the First Republic; and by the time the 1983 elections were conducted, their partisanship was so obvious that people did not believe the election results they announced (Uche, 1989).

The military seized power barely three months after the discredited elections and took total control of the broadcast media. This continued until 1992 when the military government of General Babangida, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, agreed to deregulate the broadcast industry. Under the National Broadcasting Commission Decree 38 of 1992—amended in 1999 by General Abubakar's regime and later adopted as National Assembly Acts 38 and 55 of 1999 (see Appendix II)—private ownership of radio, television and satellite stations was allowed. The commission was given the power to grant such

licences and to monitor and regulate broadcasting in the country. Many private individuals and corporate bodies succeeded in getting the licences, and several private radio and television stations were established in many parts of the country. It brought rapid changes in the broadcasting scene of the country, as noted by the commission itself in its report on 3 September 2009. 'Today, as a result of that revolution…the number of broadcasting stations in the country has…risen to 394, from less than 30 before deregulation' (NBC, 2009). The director-general of the commission Yomi Bolarinwa also announced its intention to start granting licences for network broadcasting to private individuals and corporate bodies (*Daily Independent*, 2009). Previously, only government was allowed to run a network service; the existing networks, FRCN and Nigerian Television Authority, were both owned by the federal government. The commission justified its new decision on Nigeria's plurality and diversity. 'Given the size of Nigeria, culture and her religious diversity, commercial and national interest, plurality of broadcast networks is desirable' (NBC, 2009). This issue of plurality and diversity has long been gaining ground in Nigeria's broadcasting industry, with the continuous increase of broadcast stations in different parts of the country, though the partisanship of particularly government-owned stations still remains undisguised.

The Nigerian film industry

Perhaps the most recognisable part of the Nigerian media outside the country's shores, the Nigerian film industry has achieved a phenomenal growth that took many by surprise. Neither its poor funding and improvised staffing nor its low quality technology and implausible narratives have halted its rapid growth and spread within and outside the country. In less than two decades, and without state funding or outside aid, the Nigerian artists and local entrepreneurs have built a multi-million-dollar film industry that attracts massive audiences across African continent and generates jobs and joy for many. 'Since their introduction in the early 1990s,' Larkin (2008, p.174) observed, 'Nigerian films have transformed the media landscape not just in Nigeria but all over Africa, becoming the most dynamic media forms in African history'. Though predominantly produced as home videos, many of these films are now being screened in cinema houses, played on television stations, and are available on many satellite channels,

particularly the Africa Magic Movie channel. 'Nigeria churns out more than two feature-length films every day—nearly twice as many as the United States does—and has become the world's second-biggest movie-making country, trailing only India' (Bengali, 2009).

Known in popular parlance as Nollywood (a derivative from America's Hollywood and India's Bollywood), the Nigerian film industry is often simply assumed to be just the English-language home-videos produced mainly in Southern Nigeria. In reality it is much more than that. It is a multi-faceted industry, with the English-language films as dominant, and the fast rising Hausa-language films in Northern Nigeria and Yoruba-language movies in South-western Nigeria cutting their own sphere of influence within and outside the country. But they are all a departure from the early African films that sought to reveal Africa's cultural heritage and counter the negative portrayal of Africans in Western films. On the contrary, some of the current Nigerian English-language movies mimic Western films, though they try to combine that with Christian Pentecostalism and local witchcraft (Larkin, 2008). Some Yoruba-language movies do build on the traditional Yoruba travelling theatres but with the big dose of modern day life. And many of the Hausa-language films do copy generously from Indian movies, mixing them with Hausa traditions.

Nigerians' early experience with film began with its consumption during the colonial era when they came into contact with the commercial cinema and colonial political films. According to the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC), the first time a film was shown in Nigeria was in August 1903 at Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos and the first film shot, entitled *Palaver*, was in Jos, present-day Plateau State capital, in 1904 (NFC, 2009), a decade before the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria. But the wider experience was in the 1930s when both the commercial and political films penetrated deep into the hinterland. Cinema in Nigeria at that time was split into two different institutional practices, each with its peculiar form, mode of distribution and exhibition (Larkin, 2008). There were, on the one hand, the commercial cinemas that showed entertainment films from the United States and the United Kingdom to fee-paying urban movie-goers. And, on

the other hand, there were the colonial films sponsored by the colonial administration to promote its policies and spread British model of modernity.

Concerned with promoting such interests and the need to inspire war efforts among Africans, the British government established the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) during the Second World War and gave it the task of producing mobile cinemas for colonial subjects. A British medical officer in Nigeria, William Sellers, 'who had used magic lanterns and film screenings as early as 1920s to instruct colonial audiences about the danger of plague', was appointed as its head (Larkin, 2008, p.76). Unlike the commercial cinema practice of pay-for-entertainment that was a familiar feature around the world, the mobile film units 'were educational teams created by the government to show a mix of documentaries, newsreels, and pedagogical dramas intended to instruct audiences about the achievements of the state and educate them in modes of health, farming, and civic participation' (Larkin, 2008, p.77). With funding from the colonial authorities, Sellers and his mobile cinema teams moved around rural and urban areas, liaising with local officials and traditional rulers, to show the films. The endorsement of the local traditional authorities was imperative in Northern Nigeria because of Muslims' opposition to cinema culture, especially the vices associated with commercial cinema practices. But the traditional authorities endorsed the work of the mobile film units because it had been portrayed as being an educational and enlightenment programme. They reached many areas and attracted huge audiences. 'For millions of Nigerians, and for millions more all over the colonial world, mobile cinema units showing educational films were their first regular experience of cinema' (Larkin, 2008, p.78). The colonial film units produced films locally, making among others the '*Empire Day Celebrations in Nigeria* (1948); *Small Pox; Leprosy; Port Harcourt Municipal Council Elections* (1950) and *Queen Elizabeth II Visit to Nigeria* (1956), shot in Eastman colour', and showing them at village halls, open spaces, civic centres and other public places (Sambe, 2005, p.144).

Sellers made remarkable efforts in pursuing the project and even produced guidelines on making films for Africans and highlighted the need for film literacy for colonial subjects. Using language some may consider racist, Sellers in 1948

talked of creating films that would suit 'the visual limitations of Nigerian peasants' (cited in Larkin, 2008, p.108). In his later work, Sellers still spoke of cognitive differences between the 'illiterate' and the 'educated people' in film watching. 'Educated people usually focus their eyes at a point a few feet from the screen and by so doing appreciate the entire screen at a glance. The illiterate, on the other hand, scans each scene and his eyes travel from one part of the picture to another. For this reason, films for illiterate people contain scenes which are much longer than is usual in film making' (cited in Larkin, 2008, p.110). The tone of the language aside, Sellers's film practices achieved remarkable success in getting the colonial messages and modern health and educational practices across to millions of audiences; and his cinema theory found intellectual fit into the then emerging discipline of mass communications in the United States, especially the work of the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR) at Columbia University. In fact, Larkin put Sellers's work as being part of the original foundation of modernization theory, often credited to Daniel Lerner (1958). It was a long story, but in its shortest form, Larkin (2008) argued that the actual data on which the theory was based, the country reports on media penetration in the Middle East, gathered by BASR under US State Department's sponsorship, were summarised and condensed secretly for the State Department by German critical theorist Siegfried Kracauer who also had familiarity with Sellers's work. 'The significance of Kracauer's reading of Sellers and the presence of ideas developed by the CFU (Sellers's Colonial Film Units) in the work of the BASR is that this shows the link between a seemingly marginal film practice and a colonial knowledge regime in Nigeria, the emergent discipline of mass communications in the United States, and the rise of modernization theory more generally' (p.115).

At the end of the British rule in Nigeria, the work of the Colonial Film Units was taken over by the ministry of information which continued with the mobile cinema practices, producing, distributing and exhibiting documentaries, newsreels and dramas to educate and enlighten people on issues of local and national importance. With the improvement of communications technologies and increase in ownership of television sets, the role was transferred to the federal- and state-owned television stations. The government also established the Nigerian Film Corporation in 1979 and assigned it the task of developing the film industry in the

country. By 1994, the corporation had established a colour processing laboratory, commissioned its administrative block and launched the national film policy to promote Nigeria's cultural heritage (Sambe, 2005).

The development of commercial cinema in Nigeria, though, had a different trajectory. It began with films from the United States and Britain being screened in cinemas in major urban centres for those who were able and willing to pay for the entertainment. Commercial cinemas were largely free from government's control and concentrated on showing fiction films with foreign images. From the 1930s to 1950s, Nigerian cinemas were dominated by European and American films; but by the 1950s screening of Indian and Egyptian movies had begun while Hong Kong movies gained popularity in the 1970s (Larkin, 2008). The popularity of Egyptian films did not last long, but the Indian movies gained greater prominence, displacing Hollywood films in Northern Nigeria and becoming the main object of imitation by the Hausa film industry, locally called Kanywood, derived from the name of Hausaland's largest commercial city Kano (Adamu, 2009). The distribution of the foreign films in those days was monopolised by European, Lebanese and Indian businessmen (Larkin, 2008).

The emergence of Nigerian films in the early 1990s has, however, transformed the landscape significantly. There are still many foreign films in cinemas [though cinema houses are fast disappearing (UNESCO, 2009)], on television screens, on VCDs and DVDs—many of them pirated—and in numerous satellite channels. But it is the Nigerian films that dominate the market and have been spreading to the rest of African continent. Nigerian 'English-language films dominate other Anglophone nations from Sierra Leone and Ghana (in) the west, to Kenya and South Africa in the east and south (respectively), and they are beginning to cross over into Francophone Africa. Yoruba and Hausa films are dominant in their own linguistic communities, which extend well outside of Nigeria into Niger, Ghana, Benin, and Cameroon,' Larkin (2008, p.174) wrote. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) acknowledged the success of this multi-lingualism, stating that 'about 56% of Nollywood films are produced in Nigeria's local languages, namely Yoruba (31%), Hausa (24%) and Igbo (1%). English remains a prominent language, accounting for 44%, which

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may contribute to Nigeria's success in exporting its films' (UNESCO, 2009). The UNESCO's survey of global film production put Nigeria's film industry as the second largest producer of films in the world, with 872 productions (in video format) in 2006, behind India which produced 1,091 feature-length films and far ahead of the third-placed United States that produced 485 major films in the same year. 'The explosive growth of Nollywood attracts considerable attention, especially in developing countries looking for alternatives to the U.S. or European models of film production and distribution, which require considerable investment,' the UN body noted. 'To begin with, Nigerian filmmakers rely on video instead of film to reduce production costs. And as the survey points out, Nigeria has virtually no formal cinemas. About 99% of screenings occur in informal settings, such as "home theatre"' (UNESCO, 2009). Nigerian film producer and distributor, Charles Igwe, gave a figure of 600,000 VCDs being pressed weekly in the country and that several crates of VCDs and videocassettes were daily transported by air from Lagos to countries across Africa (Larkin, 2008). 'This makes Nigeria an emerging force in producing digital media content and in innovating modes of distribution and exhibition,' Larkin noted (p.174).

However, the Nigerian film industry is not devoid of major lapses. First, the filmmakers' deviation from the tradition set by early African filmmakers of using films to reveal the depth of African cultural heritage is seen by many critics as a major weakness. Their imitation of foreign films or even wholesale borrowing of themes and scenes from imported films has consistently raised questions about their creative capabilities. 'Nigerian films effortlessly and unselfconsciously borrow from a wide range of cultural forms and start with an assumption that the audiences and subjects of the film are familiar with and take part in a global mass culture' (Larkin, 2008, p.177). There are also charges of portrayal of too much violence and exhibition of indecent rituals, though the main industry's regulator, the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), and state-level regulators, like the Kano State censors board, do regularly check contents. The lapses are also clear in the preparation and production of the films. 'The budgets are meagre, the plotlines fantastical, the performances hammy and the breakneck shooting schedules an affront to logic and the elements,' Bangali (2009) observed. The poor funding and technical deficiencies yield substandard products. 'Critics argue that

the video films are technically poor, repetitive, and cheaply made…(and) they are vulgar, populist entertainment with none of the political or aesthetic skill of their celluloid cousin' (Larkin, 2008, pp.177-178).

But the critics often fail to critically examine the reasons behind the phenomenal success of the Nigerian film industry, despite the weaknesses outlined above. The ability to improvise on low quality technology and produce cheap films may be seen elsewhere as a weakness, but it is also a key strength of an industry keen to attract people with low disposable incomes. Similarly, the Nigerian filmmakers might have failed to toe the line of their 'celluloid cousins' to showcase the depth of African culture, but they have succeeded in engaging 'a popular African audience in a way that African cinema never has' (Larkin, 2008, p.178). While the early African filmmakers could afford to indulge in cultural promotion, regardless of commercial motive because they had access to national and international grants, the current Nigerian filmmakers 'receive no outside funding and rely solely on market success in an African market place, with all the advantages and disadvantages that bring' (p.178). Similarly, there may be much imitation and borrowing from foreign films but many of the narratives in the Nigerian films are appealing and compelling to mass audiences. The employment the industry generates, the new popular culture it produces and the 'new visual vernacular' it creates around the continent have confirmed its viability (p.174). 'Its ubiquity and international presence mean that the Nigerian government is beginning to recognise films as a major symbol of private initiative and a key force to counter Nigeria's international reputation for corruption and violence, offering more positive vision of Nigerian culture and industry' (Larkin, 2008, pp.174-176). On balance, the Nigeria's film industry, regardless of the listed lapses, has emerged as the most dynamic and vibrant part of the country's media landscape.

Summary

This chapter has looked into the Nigeria's past, right from pre-colonial through colonial to postcolonial periods, so as to unveil the historical, political, socio-economic and cultural forces that shaped its formation, its structure and its outlook. It has teased out the background of Northern Nigerians' long links with

both Islam and the West and the dynamics of such complex encounters. It has also examined the historical development of various media forms in Nigeria, from their early formation to their current state; and explained how the largely independent and ubiquitous press, the gradually liberalising broadcast media and the freewheeling film industry constitute the main domestic media landscape of the country. It has equally shown the kind of roles they have been playing in shaping the cultural, socio-economic and political lives of the people in the complex pluralistic Nigerian state, as the people too play their roles in moulding the media into their present state.

IV

The BBC and Northern Nigerians

Introduction

The BBC's first broadcast to Nigeria in the 1930s marked the beginning of a relationship that has continuously been undergoing tremendous transformation. From the wired transmission of radio signals to the wireless broadcasting on the short-wave radio (which still persists) and the rapidly growing multimedia interactive broadcasting that integrates direct audience participation in programming, the BBC's engagement with Northern Nigerians has been long and complex. It began with the Empire broadcasting, expanded with the establishment in 1957 of the Hausa language service, and continued to grow with the expansion of its operations in Nigeria in the last few years—though budget constraint is likely to halt further expansion now. This chapter examines the development of this relationship and the emerging trends that currently define it. In so doing, it takes a brief look at the origin of broadcasting in general and of the BBC in particular, unveiling the historical development of the World Service, its relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and its engagement with the new distribution technologies that are now playing an important role in the transformation of global media and their interactions with transnational audiences.

Early days of broadcasting

Broadcasting precedes the technology that makes it a viable human activity for, as Burrows (1924) asserted, 'nature has been "broadcasting" since the earliest thunderstorm'. Arthur Burrows, the first Secretary of International Broadcasting Union and first Programmes Director of the British Broadcasting Company, the forerunner of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), viewed the concept from both metaphorical and functional perspectives. 'With the first lightening flash,' he wrote in the preface of his *Story of Broadcasting* (1924), 'wireless waves were sent rippling across space, penetrating primeval forests, rocky caverns and

the haunts of such animal life as existed…for broadcasting from its beginnings has been associated with dramatic happenings.' His assertion remains open to debate, though, given Jean Seaton's (1997a, p.111) equally debatable argument that broadcasting 'is a social invention, not a technical one'—an argument earlier upheld by Raymond Williams's (1974/2003) anti-technological determinism. But as series of events in its development tended to show, broadcasting is a combination of both social and technological endeavours.

Without going deep into the long history of technical inventions and its associated controversies, it could be justifiable to begin with few landmarks achieved by some remarkable figures linked with the events leading to the advent of radio broadcasting. The effort of American inventor Samuel Morse on the invention of single wire telegraph in the 1830s and that of the German physicist Heinrich Rudolf Hertz on the practical demonstration of the existence of electro-magnetic waves in 1888 (Briggs, 1961, p.25) are important landmarks in this direction. These were done decades before broadcasting became a practical possibility. Some slow but steady technical progress followed before an Italian inventor and entrepreneur Guglielmo Marconi came into the scene and brought together many of these 'discoveries and inventions' (Crisell, 2002, p.15) to begin the transmission of radio signals. Described as 'the father of radio' because of this effort, Marconi harnessed those discoveries and inventions into a business and thus created a structure that gave impetus for the advent of broadcasting (p.15). Marconi came to London in 1896 at the age of 21 and patented his first *wireless* apparatus that was capable of 'transmitting signals over a hundred yards' (Briggs, 1961, p.5). But these were signals, as Briggs was quick to warn, 'not words, least of all programmes' (p.5). By 1901 his firm achieved the feat of sending signals covering a distance of over 2,000 miles: from Poldhu in Cornwall (Britain) to St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada (Briggs, 1961). This prompted Marconi to remark that for the first time he 'felt absolutely certain that the day would come when mankind would be able to send messages without wires not only across the Atlantic but between the furthermost parts of the earth' (cited in Briggs, 1961, p.25).

The credit for the first radio broadcast, however, goes to a Canadian-born American engineer Reginald Fessenden of the University of Pittsburgh in USA 'who first used wireless waves to carry human voice' in 1902, and improved on that on the Christmas Eve of 1906 when he transmitted 'both speech and music over a distance of several hundred miles' (Briggs, 1961, p.27). It was in the same year that the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America hired a 15-year-old boy, David Sarnoff, as an office boy at a weekly wage of five-and-a-half dollars (p.28). Barely ten years after joining the company, Sarnoff had not only become a brilliant engineer but he had also acquired the professional confidence of predicting the personal and social potentials of radio and its commercial viability. 'I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a "household utility" in the same sense as the piano or phonograph,' he is reported to have said in 1916 (cited in Crisell, 2002, p.17). There were, before this prediction, Marconi's experimental "broadcasts" of 1913 and 1914 (Briggs, 1961, p.37). The First World War, especially from 1914 to 1918, prompted rapid development in wireless telegraphy, further providing ground for radio broadcasting. By the end of 1920, news and sports and entertainment programmes were already being broadcast by radio stations in America and Argentina (Briggs, 1961). In 1922 the Marconi Company began entertainment broadcasts from Writtle near Chelmsford in Britain (Crisell, 2002), and by 1925 the Soviet Union (as noted in the 'Literature Review' chapter) had become the first country to use short-wave radio to broadcast communist propaganda from Moscow to international audiences (Thussu, 2006).

BBC at the beginning

The best known broadcaster in the world did not start as a public service broadcaster that gives it much of its current fame; it began as a commercial entity. The British Broadcasting Company Limited, as it was first known, came into being as a result of tough commercial negotiations among competing wireless companies that wanted to set up broadcasting stations in Britain (Briggs, 1961; Seaton, 1997a). As a solution to the scarcity of airwaves that could not meet their demands, they were advised to merge and get a licence to operate a single broadcasting station (Seaton, 1997a). The Postmaster General had received nearly a hundred applications from these companies but he persuaded the main ones—six

of them—to jointly set up the British Broadcasting Company (Briggs, 1985; Seaton, 1997a). It was founded on 18 October 1922 and began its first daily broadcast on 14 November 1922, 'with Burrows reading a six o'clock news bulletin' (Briggs, 1985, p.37). Exactly one month later a 33-year-old austere Scottish engineer of Calvinist upbringing, John Charles Walsham Reith, was appointed its first general manager (Stuart, 1975; Crisell, 2002).

Reith who, by his own admission at that time, 'hadn't the remotest idea as to what broadcasting was' and would 'have found difficulty in discovering anyone who knew' (Stuart, 1975, p.128) later became one of the most domineering figures in British broadcasting history. In the fifteen-and-a-half years he spent in the BBC, starting as the general manager of the then private company, then its managing director and eventually the director-general of the now transformed public corporation, Reith moulded BBC into a national institution and laid the foundation of making it an international one (Briggs, 1985). Seaton (1997a, p.112) noted that 'Reith's domination of the Corporation in its early days was massive, totalitarian, and idiosyncratic, and for many decades the traditions of the BBC seemed to flow directly from his personality' using, in Taylor's words, 'the brute force of monopoly to stamp Christian morality on the British people' (cited in Seaton, 1997a, p.112).

The BBC spent just four years as a private company before it was turned into a public corporation with a Royal Charter granted on 1 January 1927, becoming the first public service broadcaster in the world. 'The Royal Academy and the Bank of England function under Royal Charter…So does the BBC. It is no Department of State,' declares its 1927 *Handbook* (cited in Seaton, 1997a, p.113). The decision followed the recommendation of the Crawford Committee that the commercial firm be replaced by a 'Public Commission operating in the National Interest' (p.113). This was the result of the growing belief among many politicians and the public that broadcasting should be treated as a 'public service', as Labour Member of Parliament Charles Trevelyan put it in 1923 (Aitken, 2007, p.9). In any case, Aitken (2007) argued, Reith was already 'managing BBC as a public corporation' (p.9) even before it became one. 'The company operates as a public utility service and it is of great importance that this should be definitely recognised,' Reith

(1924, p.57) himself wrote in his *Broadcast over Britain*. He wanted (and managed to maintain his) control over the corporation, even though there were governors, one of whom—Ethel Snowden—disliked him and had wanted to replace him (Seaton, 1997a, p.118). In the entry of his diary on 11 January 1927, Reith expressed his own deep dislike of Ethel Snowden, describing her as 'a poisonous creature' (Stuart, 1975, p.142).

Right from the early days, Reith ensured that BBC programming embraced variety: news, talks and music; religious and educational programmes; political broadcast, though banned, was allowed for the 1924 general elections; and King George V's speech at the opening of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in April 1924 was relayed (Briggs, 1985, p.67), becoming the first of the subsequent heavy royal representations. 'Broadcasting in the 1930s was dominated by state openings, royal anniversaries, visits, deaths, births, and by the Coronation,' Seaton (1997a, p.125) stated. Reith believed that broadcasting needed to be a 'servant to culture' and that 'there should be no concession to "vulgar"' (Briggs, 1985, p.55). Attempt to ensure a standard broadcasting code was also part of the early features of the BBC, as Briggs (p.69) observed that new artists were handed a card before entering studio with a written instruction: "No gags on Scotsmen, Welshmen, Clergymen, Drink, or Medical matters. Do not sneeze at the microphone." Heavy dose of serious items prevailed, and Reith was always quick to defend the corporation's content selection. 'It is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need—and not what they want, but few know what they want and very few what they need' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.55).

Another early feature of the BBC was its crave for independence and political neutrality, the key ingredients of impartiality. Reith was not a politician, although he had attempted to pursue a political career on Tory's platform (Seaton, 1997a). He tried to put BBC on the path of neutrality. The first major testing time was in 1926 during the General Strike. Reith preferred neutrality, but the government wanted him to shut out union leaders (Seaton, 1997a). '(The then Chancellor of the Exchequer Winston) Churchill wanted to commandeer the BBC, as the government has the right to do. Reith argued that if the BBC was taken over the

strikers would merely close the service down,' Seaton observed (pp.120-121), noting, however, that this still did not stop some workers from describing the BBC as the "British Falsehood Corporation". In the end government had much of its way, but the BBC, at least, had attempted to show neutrality. It 'emerged from the crisis with an ethic of political neutrality, which was expressed as much in the tone of its broadcasts as in any formal regulations' (p.121). But still, Seaton continued, the BBC since 1927 courted government to evade restriction in its reporting. 'We ought to be arbiters of what Government news goes out,' wrote an official of the corporation, 'not a commercial company like Reuters,' (*BBC Written Archives* cited in Seaton, 1997a, p.122).

More cases of government interference were witnessed in the 1930s. One of them was the government's pressure in 1935 to bar a communist, Harry Pollitt, from participating in a debate with a fascist, Sir Oswald Mosley, because the former had earlier made a remark in support of armed revolution. The debate was dropped with no mention of the government pressure (Seaton, 1997a, p.122). Similarly, when the then Neville Chamberlain Government pursued a policy of appeasement in an attempt to avoid going to war against Germany, the BBC toed that line, much to the annoyance of pro-war politicians, such as Churchill, who wrote to Reith expressing his frustration of 'the present British method of debarring public men from access to a public who wish to hear' (cited in Seaton, 1997a, p.126). Incidentally, Churchill succeeded Chamberlain in 1940 and led Britain to victory at the Second World War. Reith too admitted to persistent government's pressure during the conflict. 'Vansittart would like the BBC to get pro-France in our news and stop using words like insurgent,' he wrote in his diary in 1939 (cited in Seaton, 1997a, p.112). It was not only the case of frequent government interference that marked the 1930s BBC; it was also the period that saw the emergence of the BBC's Empire Service, the forerunner of the BBC World Service.

From 'Empire' to 'World' Service

The BBC Empire Service was the product of the corporation's dual desire of advancing British imperial interests and providing news service to the expanding

British Diaspora and colonial subjects. The idea of Empire broadcasting was conceived by Reith several years before the service was introduced in December 1932. Reith had first contemplated it in 1924 but financial and technical inadequacies halted it (Briggs, 1985). 'Trial broadcasts in November 1927,' Briggs noted, were welcomed; and in 1929 a BBC memorandum to the Colonial Office sought government action, having 'described the limited existing broadcasting facilities' in Australia, Canada, Ceylon, East Africa, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand, Singapore and South Africa, and 'the complete lack of facilities' in Colonial Africa, West Indies, Rhodesia and the remaining parts of the Empire (p.139). The memorandum spoke of the desire of the countries to see the service introduced and noted that, given the growth of external services of other countries, it was 'not impossible to conceive of a situation in which deliberate recourse to propaganda might become desirable' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.139).

Still the government did not show keen interest, and so the BBC in November 1931 declared its intention to do it on its own. The Empire was divided into five zones—Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and West Africa—with each zone being served by directional aerials opened in December 1932 and the programmes beamed to them, in addition to six omni-directional aerials designed for transmitting special programmes to listeners around the world (Briggs, 1985). Programming was not costing the corporation much as most of the items were already prepared for the domestic audiences. The news bulletins which 'seem to be the most generally appreciated items in the daily programme' proved easier to run as the Empire Press Union, with the cooperation of Reuters and Newspaper Proprietors' Association, had agreed to the corporation's daily bulletin plan (p.140). The first week's programme cost only ten pounds, and when the Empire Service was given a weekly allocation of £100 after the success of the King's Christmas broadcast, the move was seen as 'daring' (p.140). King George V's broadcast in 1932, less than a week after the service's inaugural broadcast, was the first ever Christmas day broadcast (Mytton, 1993). 'Through one of the marvels of modern science, I am enabled this Christmas day to speak to all my peoples throughout the Empire,' the monarch declared. 'I speak now from my home and from my heart to you all, to men and women so cut off by the snows and the deserts or the seas that only voices out of the air can reach them' (cited in Mytton,

1993, p.2). The event was seen as a major milestone in BBC's international broadcast. 'It was the most spectacular success in BBC history thus far,' Reith (1949, p.169) remarked in his book *Into the Wind*. 'The King had been heard all over the world with surprising clarity'.

Although the Empire broadcasting began on Reith's personal initiatives, the imperial interest was clear from the onset. Cecil Graves, the first director of the service, used to consult high commissioners and heads of government departments concerned with Empire work 'before constructing any Empire programmes' (Briggs, 1985, p.140). He and his deputy, J. B. Clark, shared intense 'sense of imperial interest' with Reith which 'was enlivened in the mid-1930s by the fear that the unity of the Empire was being threatened, not so much by the natural development of movements towards self-government inside it as by the machinations of other great powers' (p.140). The Germans and Italians were then expanding and intensifying their international broadcasts, and the BBC responded by expanding hers too. Rex Leeper, head of the Foreign Office News Department, spoke of political and cultural 'projection' of Britain abroad and in 1936 said: 'We must concentrate not only on our own rearmament, but on bringing other nations by our side' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.140). Clark was later to succeed Graves as the director of the Empire Service, and it was he who oversaw its expansion and transformation into Overseas Service in 1939—it became General Overseas Service in 1943 (BBC, 2007) and later External Services (Browne, 1982). Significantly, Clark played an important role in setting up the first language service, the BBC Arabic Service, in 1938.

If there was any ambivalence on the Foreign Office's interest in BBC's overseas broadcasting, the circumstances that led to the emergence of the BBC Arabic Service had erased it. The corporation that began the Empire Service initially on its own after failing to get government funding was now being persuaded by the same government to introduce a foreign language service to be funded by the government. Significantly too, the BBC that was as late as March 1937 opposed to the idea of a non-English language service, stressing in a report that 'to introduce foreign language into the Empire Service would…inevitably prejudice the integrity of the service' (cited in Briggs, 1985, pp.138-139), was now, barely few

months after that declaration, willing to start one. The threat of the Second World War and the need to advance British influence in the Arab world were the key factors that prompted such a quick and radical turn. Starting 'a short-wave BBC radio service in Arabic was clearly related to British foreign policies, not least in response to the Italian and German state broadcasters having done the same before the BBC caught up on January 3 1938,' Issawi and Baumann (2010, p.137) observed. The Italians were broadcasting to the volatile Arab world from Bari in southern Italy; and when the Foreign Office personnel surveyed the situation, they felt that a counter service should be put in place. A good share of the Middle East was still 'under some form of British rule' at that time, and bombarding them with propaganda from Radio Bari was clearly a threat to British interests (Browne, 1982, p.161). So in October 1937 it was announced in the British House of Commons that the Arabic Service would be launched. 'At first the Foreign Office did not contemplate leaving it to the BBC, which was not represented at a crucial meeting in September 1937 of a Cabinet Committee on Arabic broadcasting presided over by Sir Kingsley Wood…Minister of Health' (Briggs, 1985, p.141). But after different options were considered and the choice narrowed to BBC, the corporation's leadership was invited to the committee's meeting a month later. At the meeting 'Reith, Ashbridge, and Graves (along with the then Chairman of the Governors, R. C. Norman) expressed the BBC's willingness to undertake Latin American and Arabic broadcasts, "but in its own way"' (p.141).

This, from the onset, was their expression of how the service would carry out the conflicting roles of providing impartial news and promoting the imperial interests of the now threatened British Empire. This inherent conflict, and the one between the Foreign Office and the BBC, was to emerge on the very day of the Arabic Service's first broadcast. Launched by a son of the King of Yemen in a big ceremony attended by many Arab diplomats, the Arabic Service was 'aimed at a target audience of nearly 40 million people,' Briggs (1985, p.142) reported. What made the first broadcast important in underlining the tension, and the inherent contradiction, was the inclusion of a news item announcing the execution of a Palestinian on the orders of a British military court. 'Another Arab of Palestine was executed by hanging at Acre this morning by order of a military court. He was arrested during recent riots in the Hebron Mountains and was found to possess a

rifle and ammunition,' said the third news item of the station's first bulletin on 3 January 1938 (cited in Issawi and Baumann, 2010, p.138). The news provoked angry reactions from both the Arab world and the Foreign Office. The King of Saudi Arabia reportedly wept at the news and an Iraqi newspaper condemned it as lacking in 'taste' (BBC, 2007). Head of Foreign Office News Department Alex Leeper wrote a letter to the BBC, complaining that broadcasting such a story was unnecessary. 'Is the BBC to broadcast to the Empire the execution of every Arab in Palestine… It seems to me unnecessary, though I suspect it gives its conscience a warm glow' (cited in BBC, 2007). The BBC responded in a manner that later became its standard response to such kind of pressure. 'The omission of unwelcome facts of news and the consequent suppression of truth run counter to the corporation's policy,' Empire Service director Clark stated in a guidance note to a sub-editor in the Arabic Service (cited in Issawi and Baumann, 2010, p.138). The incident was seen as a major triumph for the corporation as it had demonstrated to the Foreign Office—it was still called Foreign Office at that time before it was renamed Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 1968 (Sreberny, 2010a)—its ability to do things 'in its own way', and laid the ground for winning the confidence of listeners (Briggs, 1985). But this was just the beginning of a series of pressures it was later to face, and the transformation it was to undergo, as the Second World War loomed.

Barely three months after the introduction of the Arabic Service in 1938, two new language services, the Spanish and Portuguese programmes for Latin America, were launched on 15 March 1938 following the realisation that the region was 'just as vulnerable to outside pressure as the Middle East' (Briggs, 1985, p.143). European services—German, French and Italian—were also introduced, government grant was increased and more high-powered short-wave transmitters were built (Briggs, 1985). Chamberlain Government's policy of appeasement was still being reflected in both the domestic and overseas broadcasts. Reith was persuaded, against his wish, by the prime minister to resign (Briggs, 1985, p.145) and was replaced in 1938 by Frederick Ogilvie, a former Conservative Member of Parliament who reportedly deferred more to government than Reith had ever done (Seaton, 1997a). In 1939, the BBC 'was protecting the Foreign Office, and passing off Foreign Office demands as its own policy,' noted Seaton (1997a, p.122). As

the war began, the policy of appeasement ceased and the Foreign Office's demands increased. Barely a fortnight into the war, British diplomats in the Near- and Middle-East wrote to the editor of the BBC Arabic Service, asking the station to adopt 'extreme measures of anti-German (or anti-Axis) propaganda' (*BBC Written Archives* cited in Issawi and Baumann, 2010, p.139). However, the response of the director general, quoted from the same source, was that 'our Arabic bulletins are, as you are aware, already extremely forceful. They are based on emphasis on the might and unity of the British Empire and France, day to day Arab reaction which is so far entirely favourable, condemnation of Germany's war methods and reasonably objective communiqués on the fighting' (cited in Issawi and Baumann, 2010, p.139). The BBC was trying to walk the tightrope of maintaining a balance between peddling propaganda and providing *reasonably objective* news service, Issawi and Baumann (2010, p.139) observed.

The fall of France in June 1940 and the beginning of air raids against Britain, however, marked a turning point in both the war and the BBC's broadcasts. There was the feeling that German propaganda facilitated Germany's success against France, and British officials felt that the BBC needed to do something urgent—it was, after all, seen as the 'voice of Britain' (Seaton, 1997b, p.141). The corporation was goaded into action to counter the Axis-propaganda. 'While "an unlimited supply" of talks and features on record was sent to different parts of the Empire, a number of exile governments were given free access to BBC microphones – the Dutch Radio Orange being the first' (Briggs, 1985, p.188). French exiles too were running *Ici la France*. 'It is important to keep General de Gaulle active in French on the broadcast,' Churchill said, 'and to relay by every possible means the French propaganda on Africa' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.189). In the first of the series of his broadcasts to rally the French against Nazi Germany, General de Gaulle on 18 June 1940 said: 'Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and will not be extinguished' (cited in Tran and Davies, 2010). He later expressed his appreciation of the BBC's gesture, stating in his memoirs that 'the British, among other merits, had that of immediately discerning, and of using in masterly fashion, the effect which a free radio was capable of producing upon imprisoned peoples' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.190). It was a relationship that the BBC equally cherished: it held a big celebration on 18

June 2010 to mark the 70th anniversary of General de Gaulle's first broadcast—a celebration attended by both British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy who also expressed gratitude for the British war effort (Tran and Davies, 2010).

Apart from giving the exiles opportunity to air their campaigns during the war, the British perspective too was significantly maintained. Churchill's speeches as prime minister were regularly broadcast, even though he had earlier claimed that propaganda had limited effects (Briggs, 1985). He was reported in November 1939 to have reacted to German propaganda by saying: 'If words could kill, we would be dead already' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.196). Yet he became a key player in using propaganda to prosecute the war. 'Churchill was of course an expert propagandist, and the government, whatever it said in public, remained desperately concerned with the public mood throughout the war,' argued Seaton (1997b, p.138). And as Britain's war prospects looked bleak before America's involvement in the war, the BBC's war efforts increased dramatically in 1940 and 1941 with greater attention being put on external services and special programmes designed for North America aimed at persuading the United States to join the war. It devoted 'seven and a half hours of daily broadcasts to the USA at a time before it had entered the war,' Chignell (2008) observed. The motive was disclosed in the *BBC Handbook* of 1942. 'All night long the BBC studios are filled with people scorning sleep in order to broadcast to North America,' it stated, 'they know that they are doing something to further the cause of Anglo-American understanding, on which the future of the world depends' (cited in Chignell, 2008).

One other remarkable issue related to BBC's role during the war was the controversial introduction in 1941 of a **V** sign by Victor de Laveleye, the BBC's Belgian Programme Organiser, to signify victory in support of the Resistance movements in the occupied territories. The campaign was received warmly by many Dutch, French, Belgians and Scandinavians; but was later discouraged as it might lead to 'premature revolts' (Briggs, 1985, p.196; Seaton, 1997b). 'Yet the V campaign worried (German propaganda chief Paul Josef) Goebbels, who complained about "the intellectual invasion of the continent by British radio", and it persuaded Churchill (seldom a believer in words without deeds) to send a

message to Europe on 19 July 1941 that "The V sign is the symbol of the unconquerable will of the people of the occupied territories and a portent of the fate awaiting the Nazi tyranny"' (Briggs, 1985, p.197). The expansion of BBC continued steadily during the war to such an extent that the number of its staff jumped from 4,889 in September 1939 to over 10,000 in December 1941 (Briggs, 1985). 'By the time Germany was defeated in 1945, the BBC was broadcasting in 45 languages and was the biggest international broadcasting organisation in the world' (BBC, 2007).

Cold War BBC

The victory of the Allied powers in the war relieved the BBC of the intense propaganda burden, and the broadcasting expansion programme came to an end. 'With the end of the war, a whole phase of broadcasting, we may hope, has come to an end,' proclaimed the *BBC Year Book* of 1946, 'that phase, in which deliberately false and misleading propaganda has been loosed upon the world with the express purpose of enslaving public opinion, and causing strife among nations' (p.7). The BBC was blaming the Axis side for the propaganda, saying: 'Broadcasting in Germany was consciously used to mutilate the soul of the German people' (p.7). And since it was over on that side, it was also over on the Allied side, the statement suggested, as the contraction began. The number of BBC staff was cut and the total hours of broadcasts to Europe reduced. The emphasis was no longer on the kind of broadcasts that characterised the war coverage, noted Briggs (1985); it was now on 'talking to Europe about ourselves, our characteristics and our institutions, so that our listeners can understand us better' (p.312). The Cold War that followed presented a different scenario and the BBC began to remodel itself to suit the new situation. The main opponents now were not the fascists and Nazi Germany; they were the communist Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact as well as other communist nations and movements springing up in different parts of the world. The ideological warfare was mainly between capitalism and communism/socialism (Browne, 1982). BBC's broadcasts in Russian targeting the Soviet Union began in March 1946 and by 1949 the Russians reportedly started jamming the station, as it had been doing to the Voice of America's broadcasts (Briggs, 1985, p.313).

Before the Cold War took off firmly the BBC was still downsizing its external services and funding was being cut. Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Gaitskell, who later became Labour Party's leader, had even contemplated a 20 per cent cut, but the then BBC Director General Ian Jacob described the move as 'the height of folly in the present international situation' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.315). At that time the international competitors were reported to be increasing their broadcasting activities. 'The Voice of America booms,' *Daily Mail* declared in March 1951, 'the Voice of Stalin roars, the Voice of Britain must whisper' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p.315). The BBC then responded fully to the Cold War situation performing its role of news coverage and enhancing British public diplomacy efforts, prompting (as noted earlier) Harvard academic Joseph Nye (2004a) to describe it as an 'important soft power resource for the UK in Eastern Europe during the Cold War' (p.90).

The intrusive government interventions witnessed during the war had gone; but, as Peter Goodwin (2005) noted, subtle pressure continued as seen, for instance, in the case of Hydrogen Bomb debate programme in 1954 that the government blocked the BBC from running and in the case of Eden Government's pressure on the BBC over its reporting of the Suez Crisis of 1956. Conservative Prime Minister Anthony Eden was displeased with the BBC's coverage of the crisis emanating from the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on the Suez Canal (Browne, 1982) following the nationalisation of the Anglo-French-owned canal by Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser. The government put much pressure on the BBC to mellow down. Browne (1982) noted that the prime minister was 'deeply displeased' with the BBC's coverage, and 'one high-ranking BBC staff member subsequently claimed that Eden had plans to take over BBC for the duration of the conflict' (pp.163-165). That did not happen, though. The corporation withstood the pressure and became even-handed in the coverage of the crisis both on its domestic and on external services mainly because the government and the official opposition were divided on the matter (Goodwin, 2005). Opposition leader Hugh Gaitskell campaigned openly against the government over the crisis. 'In the end the BBC came through the Suez Crisis with its reputation for independence from the Government if anything enhanced,' Goodwin (2005, p.113) asserted.

Within the British Empire itself the liberation movements in the colonies had emerged stronger after the Second World War, and there was very little the weakened Empire, smarting from the devastation of the war, could do to suppress them. New strategies had to be employed to plan a gradual physical exit from the colonies while still retaining a grip on them. The Empire Service—or Overseas Service in 1939, General Overseas Service in 1943 and World Service in 1965 (BBC, 2007)—has (with its combined English and other languages' services) since become BBC External Services [renamed BBC World Service in 1988 (Mytton, 1988)]. The British Empire itself has become the Commonwealth (Ladele *et al*., 1979). The transformations explain the strategy of exporting British broadcasting model—ideological, structural and technological—to the colonies as well as targeting their populations as audiences of the BBC's international broadcasts.

The case of British colonies in Africa was a good example of this strategy, which was essentially an extension of what had long begun. 'Many a British colony made its first contact with broadcasting through the British Broadcasting Corporation', and their broadcasting systems were modelled after that of Britain (Ladele *et al*., 1979, p.4). The Empire Service, as stated before, had been broadcasting to the colonies since 1932. The big leap came in 1936 when, following the threats of German international broadcasts, the Colonial Office set up Earl of Plymouth Committee to 'accelerate the provision of broadcasting services in the Colonial Empire, to coordinate such services with the work of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and to make them more effective instrument for promoting both local and Imperial interests' (cited in Ladele *et al*., 1979, pp.12-13). This led to the expansion of British broadcasting interests in the colonies. Those territories that had not begun wireless broadcasting were urged to start it; and those with it, such as Kenya, 'the first colonial territory' to begin wireless broadcasting service in 1928, were encouraged to expand theirs (Ladele *et al*., 1979, pp.13-14).

Similarly, in 1949 the BBC, following a request from the Colonial Office in November 1948, commissioned a survey under Turner-Byron Committee to study the state of broadcasting in the then British-controlled West African countries of Nigeria, Gold Coast (Ghana), Sierra Leone and The Gambia (Ladele *et al*., 1979). The committee made recommendations on how to speed up the development of

broadcasting in these countries. The Colonial Office forwarded the recommendations to the respective countries, and offered them technical and financial assistance to help in their implementation. The Colonial Office, for instance, offered to release £390,000 from 'the general reserve' to help Nigeria meet the estimated £978,000 capital and recurrent expenditures required to implement the recommendation in the country—lack of funds in the colony prevented full implementation, though (Ladele *et al*., 1979, p.20). The BBC on its part provided technical and managerial assistance, including releasing one of its senior staff, former controller of BBC Light Entertainment Programme and war time head of presentation Tom Chalmers, to head the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, 2007). All these were going on at the time when the BBC was equally trying to expand its international broadcasts to these countries. Part of this effort was the introduction of a West African language service: the BBC Hausa Service.

BBC Hausa Service

BBC Hausa Service was launched on 13 March 1957 as part of the Colonial Office's new initiative for Africa (Browne, 1982; Briggs, 1985). With colonialism coming to an end in virtually all parts of the continent, Britain was reassessing its role in Africa and emphasising the issue of Commonwealth. The BBC was now paying 'particular attention' to the Commonwealth interests 'by providing certain territories with programmes more closely designed to appeal to special local interests,' according to its *Handbook* of 1958. West Africa, it continued, was now being served with both the English and Hausa language programmes. Beyond the openly declared reasons, however, the decision to introduce the Hausa Service could also be explained by the Britain's desire to maintain its influence in the region beyond the colonial era. As stated in the preceding 'Historical Context' chapter, Britain was apprehensive of the region's susceptibility to Moscow's and Cairo's influence, part of the key reasons why some colonial officials even opposed—though in vain—the establishment of wireless broadcasting system in Nigeria (Larkin, 2008). The spread of wireless broadcasting had been making available to Africans 'information outside the imperial circuit of the British Empire' and they were seen as becoming potentially vulnerable to broadcasts from

'Russia, Egypt, and other challengers to British power' (Larkin, 2008, p.67). Britain had also long been uncomfortable with the kind of radicalisation that swept its other important West African territory of Gold Coast (Ghana), prompting it to be taking conscious and deliberate approach in handling Nigeria's move towards independence more carefully to avoid being 'overtaken by events' (Williams, 1984, p.347).

The choice of Hausa language was perhaps necessitated by the strategic importance of that language, the size and spread of its speakers and the ideological motive of the broadcaster. 'Hausa is a major world language with more first-language speakers than any other sub-Saharan African language…most of whom live in northern Nigeria and in southern areas of the neighbouring Republic of Niger, where Hausa represents the majority language' (Jaggar, 2001, p.1). Jaggar equally argued that Hausa 'is the most important and widespread West African language, rivalled only by Swahili as an African lingua franca, and has expanded rapidly as a first or second language' (p.1). It 'is also spoken by diaspora communities of traders, Muslim scholars and immigrants in urban areas of West Africa', such as in Benin Republic, 'Burkina Faso, Cameroon, (northern) Ghana and Togo, as well as the Blue Nile Province and western regions of Sudan' (p.1)—and so broadcasting in it was the best way of reaching its speakers, as one of the BBC officials admitted (Shosanya, 2011). Significantly, majority of Hausa speakers are Muslims who have great affinity to the Arab world [they were, as noted earlier, already showing interests in broadcasts from Cairo (Larkin, 2008)], and in the continuous quest for a share of their loyalty, the decision to broadcast directly to them using the language they understand well seemed logical.

The first BBC Hausa Service programme began with a 15-minute evening broadcast, comprising news bulletin (read by a Northern Nigerian living in London Aminu Malumfashi), a talk *West Africa in the News* (translated and read by another Northern Nigerian Abubakar Tunau) and an item on Ghana's Independence (read by Zakari Muhammed) (Gumel, 2007). The three were all Hausa-speaking students in the UK; and the 15-minute programme was initially only broadcast twice a week—Wednesdays and Fridays—before it became a daily programme in 1958, transmitted both in the afternoons and evenings by full-time

staff. After Nigeria's independence in 1960 'detailed plans for the expansion of the service were drawn and in May 1962 the first dawn transmission was also introduced and the afternoon transmission was in addition extended by 15 minutes,' wrote Babandi Gumel (2007), a former long-serving staff of the station. The target audiences are obviously the Hausa-speakers that (as stated above) constitute the largest population in Nigeria and Niger Republic (a former French colony) and substantial number of people in Ghana, Sudan and Cameroon and a few other African countries.

The Hausa language service was soon followed by two other sub-Saharan African language services—Swahili (on 27 June 1957) and Somali (18 July 1957)—for Central and East Africa (BBC, 1958). This came just few weeks before seven existing services targeting mainly West Europeans were closed. Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Portuguese (for Europe), German (for Austria) and Afrikaan language services were all closed between August and September of 1957 (Briggs, 1985). The move further confirmed BBC's shift away from Western Europe to first Eastern Europe, as noted earlier, and then the developing countries of Asia and Africa where it felt its services might have more impact on the audiences. A 'new relay station at Ascension Island aided a big expansion in services to Africa, both in English and in local languages,' the corporation stated. 'This came at a time when Britain wanted to maintain friendly links with its former colonies… There were also efforts to appeal to French-speaking Africa, with a daily bulletin in French for Africa introduced in June 1960' (BBC, 2007).

From the onset the Hausa Service programmes were mainly comprised of international news and current affairs, news of local interests to the target audiences, interviews with local leaders and features on women, health, education and agriculture or on any topical issue deemed relevant to Hausa speakers. Young western-educated Hausa elite who were later to play prominent roles in Nigeria's political and economic development were featuring in various programmes either as broadcasters or as contributors. Among the then young Hausa men who worked in the early days of the service were Alhaji Umaru Dikko who became Nigeria's transport minister in the Second Republic (1979-1983), late Abubakar Rimi who became the governor of Kano State in the same period, former communications

minister late Dr Ibrahim Tahir, Ambassador Shehu Malami, a descendant of Usman dan Fodio and first Nigeria's high commissioner to South Africa (Malami, 2010), and a leading Nigerian banker Umaru Mutallab, who is also incidentally the father of Umar Faruk Mutallab, the suspected Christmas Eve underwear bomber, now on trial in US on terrorism charges (Childress, 2009). Mutallab had several months earlier alerted the US and Nigerian intelligence agencies of the suspicious movements of his son but the agencies failed to act until he was arrested in December 2009 over alleged attempt to bomb a Detroit-bound US airline (Childress, 2009). The BBC Hausa Service's ability to attract the elite, and emerging elite, to be both participants in its programmes and listeners of them was an important strategy of exercising influence in the region.

Since the Hausa programming was meant to attract both the elite and the general public in the target area, content selection was done to reflect that, with global and West African news and current affairs as well as developments in Nigeria and Britain getting prominence. Gumel recalled that he once ran a 200-week long feature series on world affairs *Duniya Ina Muka Dosa* (The Global Trends) in the early 1980s that discussed the historical, geographical and political backgrounds of each country in the world. British writer Jean Boyd initiated another programme *Nana Asma'u*, presented by Yusuf Muhammed Kankiya, on the life of Islamic female scholar Nana Asma'u, daughter of the Sokoto Caliphate founder Usman dan Fodio (Gumel, 2007). There were also entertainment-cum-promotional programmes, such as *Dan Arewa a London* (Life of a Northern Nigerian in London), portraying the cultural contrast between Northern Nigeria and Britain.

All these, coupled with the radio listening culture developed among the Hausa people since the early days of radio broadcast (Abdulkadir, 2000; Larkin, 2008), made Hausa Service very popular in Nigeria and Niger. Its impact expanded in terms of the rapid increases in audiences and their interests in international and local affairs. A BBC audience survey in 1993, for instance, found that the Hausa Service has an estimated weekly audience of 11.5 million in Nigeria where 93 per cent of the urban households owned a radio set at that time (Eggerman, 1996, cited in Abdulkadir, 2000). British academic Graham Furniss narrated his encounter with a Hausa-speaking barefooted farmer in a remote Nigeria-Cameroon border

area who fascinated him with discussions on the intrigues of Pakistani politics (Fardon and Furniss, 2000). The impact extends to Hausa language itself. 'The long standing use of some African languages in international broadcasting has had a profound influence upon the spread of the language and its standardization and modernization,' Fardon and Furniss (2000, p.4) noted.

BBC Hausa Service kept expanding, with more local contents being added, more full-time producers recruited and new stringers employed to file reports from Nigeria and Niger, and even a few from Europe (Gumel, 2007). Abba Abdullahi who later became the managing director of a Northern Nigerian newspaper *Triumph*, for example, was reporting for the station from Paris; as was Ahmed Yerima who sent regular reports from Moscow, particularly during the collapse of communism and the break-up of the Soviet Union. In the late 1990s the Hausa Service moved to expand the level of its delivery by going into partnership with a local private radio station in Nigeria, Ray Power, for relay and rebroadcast of its programmes through the local FM stations owned by the local partner. This was in addition to the existing short-wave broadcasts. But the partnership suffered a major setback in early 2000s when the Nigerian government banned local media from transmitting live news broadcasts from foreign stations, affecting the rapid rise of the BBC's audience figures (BBC World Service, 2004). 'This ban affects BBC FM broadcasts, through its partner Ray Power, in the cities of Abuja, Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, and Port Harcourt,' the World Service said. 'Approximately 2.3 million adults listen to the BBC on Ray Power only and are the key group affected by the ban' (BBC World Service, 2004). The corporation later succeeded in signing partnership and rebroadcast agreements with some FM stations in the neighbouring Niger and Cameroon Republics. The ban remains in force in Nigeria, though. Still, further expansion on the range of broadcasts was made and audience figures began to increase. One of the highest figures recorded was in 2007 when the estimated weekly audience figure was put at about 26 million (BBC, 2008), making it the language service with the largest number of listeners in the World Service. It was a year after a new production and transmission centre was opened in the Nigeria's capital, Abuja, and the number of daily transmissions increased to four—two in the morning and one each for afternoon and evening programmes of 30 minutes each (BBC World Service, 2008).

Rapid development and spread of communications technologies enabled BBC Hausa Service to further improve on its delivery system and reach in recent years. In addition to the existing short-wave and FM broadcasts on radio, the service is now effectively employing the new media of mobile telephony, Internet and social networking sites of Twitter and Facebook to deliver its services to millions of audiences. 'BBC Hausa is now a multimedia broadcaster, using radio, online and mobile,' said the head of the service Jamilah Tangaza (2009). 'To help us deliver the best for our audiences, we looked at how (the Internet and mobile telephone) were changing the way they live their lives and their increasingly sophisticated approach to media' and made use of them. This led to the introduction of the Hausa mobile news service *Labarinku a Tafinku* (Your News in Your Palms) that in turn led to the increase of the online audiences (Tangaza, 2009).

BBC Network and Focus on Africa

The BBC World Service programmes targeting sub-Saharan Africa are not limited to Hausa, Swahili and Somali services alone; there are also Kinyarwanda/Kirundi (introduced on 8 September 1994) which is partly in English, *BBC Afrique* (the French for Africa service that began on 20 June 1960, as noted above), Portuguese for Africa (since 4 June 1939 but was closed 2011 due to spending cuts) and African English service which runs the Network and Focus on Africa programmes. Administratively they are all placed under the Africa and Middle East Region which includes the Arabic Service that targets Arabic-speaking North Africa as part of its focus on the Arab world. The BBC, as stated earlier, mainly broadcasts to sub-Saharan Africa on the short-wave. 'The transmitters used are situated in Seychelles, South Africa, Cyprus, Ascension Island and the UK' (Mytton, 2000). The broadcast range expanded through partnership and agreements with many independent local FM radio stations in several countries that relay BBC broadcasts to African audiences in good sound quality. Computer and telephony technologies, as noted above, led to further expansion and reach to audiences; and they also offer opportunities for wider participatory programmes in all the services (BBC, 2008).

The African English service has a wider target of attempting to cover Africa as a whole, and has an average of five hours of programming daily (BBC World

Service, 2007). It runs the *Network Africa* programmes that are transmitted in the morning, the *Focus on Africa* programmes transmitted in the evening, *Africa Have Your Say* which is an interactive programme, and the *Fast Track* which is devoted to sports. The service tries to pride itself as being distinctively African with reporters spread across the continent and producers in both London and Nairobi flouting their African-ness. A one-time editor with the service, Elizabeth Ohene, criticised those who tended to see the service as solely a Western medium. 'Just at the level of personnel, this is a simplification,' she said in 2000. 'African Service currently has 141 reporters in 51 countries on the African continent… Of these 141 reporters, I would think that (only) 16 might be described as foreign correspondents' (Ohene, 2000, p.78). She also maintained that advances in technology made 'control of news from London less and less consequential' and the local content more significant. 'Although our news will continue to carry the BBC brand name, not only will we get increasingly close to the ground but, so to speak, that ground will increasingly come to us' (p.79).

The BBC's strategy of employing local reporters on the ground and combining various services to target Africa enhanced its supremacy in attracting audiences in the continent. Even in terms of English language listeners alone in the 1980s, the audiences in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zambia, as proportions of their populations, were the highest in the world (Mytton and Forrester, 1988). The situation remained the same in the 1990s. A BBC audience research in Ghana carried out in 1991, for instance, revealed that radio was the most popular medium and BBC was the best known international broadcaster (Sieger, 1993). Similarly, a survey conducted in 1991 to establish broadcast media penetration and audience size in Zambia showed that 'radio is the main source of entertainment and news for the adult Zambian population', and that the BBC was among the foreign stations listened to by many Zambians (Claypole and Daka, 1993).

The BBC's popularity in sub-Saharan Africa was often linked to both the colonial factor noted earlier and the lack of competition from local broadcasters, especially in the days of state monopoly of the broadcast media in the continent. But the liberalisation of the broadcast media in the 1990s did not diminish BBC's popularity per se: it even created new opportunity for the BBC to enter into

partnership and agreements with local FM stations and extend its broadcast range in many countries (BBC, 2008). Similarly, the colonial factor argument does not hold ground in the case of the former French colony of Niger where the BBC Hausa Service was seen as the most popular international broadcaster (BBC, 2004), benefiting from the fact that Hausa is the biggest language in the country. This was how the strategy of glocalisation (Tomlinson, 1991) in terms of using multi-language services, opening of local production centres—as in the case of Nairobi (Kenya) for central Africa and Abuja (Nigeria) for West Africa—and the increase in local contents proved effective. The level of success is such that the BBC claimed in April 2003 that the impact of the World Service in countries like Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania was 'as great as Radio 2 (Britain's most listened to station) in the UK' (cited in Aitken, 2007, p.14).

The changing trends of the World Service

Top of the four aims of the BBC World Service, according to its *2008 Annual Report*, is to 'be the world's best-known and most-respected voice in international news, thereby bringing benefit to the UK, the BBC and to audiences around the world'. The main points of the remaining three aims—to provide the most trusted and relevant international news and analysis, facilitate global conversation and 'enable people make sense of their increasingly complex world' (BBC, 2008)—are all supportive of the premier one. Striving to achieve them in a rapidly changing global environment presents a new challenge radically different from the ones previously faced by the corporation. But then, from its roles in the Empire days through to war years and Cold War era to the ones in the present post-September 11 world, the BBC's functions have never been static. Whether as a provider of 'impartial' international news or as a 'mediator of British diplomatic relations' (Sreberny *et al.,* 2010b, p.279), the World Service has managed to maintain its relevance throughout those periods, delivering its services through diverse forms of distribution technologies.

Its relationship with its paymaster, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has also been dynamic all through those years. It ranges, in Sreberny's words, 'from a tighter relationship of propagandistic direction, especially at times of war and

political conflict, to a much looser relationship of mutual understanding as to the BBC's role as "public diplomat"'; and from a tighter control through censorship to a subtle control 'by financial reward or punishment' (Sreberny *et al*., 2010b, p.279). One of the most notable changes seen in such relationship in recent years, as Sreberny *et al*. (2010b) rightly pointed out, was the government's decision during the 2004 Spending Review Settlement to place the World Service under Public Diplomacy category, openly acknowledging the public diplomacy role of the service. Lord Carter's UK Public Diplomacy Review Team made this clear:

> The UK benefits from the existence of two World-Class institutions with strong brands, the British Council and the BBC World Service, and the Review Team recognised the valuable role they play, and the importance of appropriate editorial and managerial independence… Public diplomacy funded by tax payers must support Government goals and objectives, and public diplomacy partners must prove themselves able and willing to work collaboratively within an agreed strategic framework.
>
> (FCO, 2005, p.4)

The World Service, the review noted, was the largest receiver of public diplomacy funding in the 2004/05 budget, getting £225 million out of the £617 million expended that year (FCO, 2005, p.6). Although the director of the World Service has only observer status on the Public Diplomacy Board and both the BBC and Foreign and Commonwealth Office have insisted that the corporation's editorial independence is guaranteed by the Royal Charter, its placement on that category has a telling effect on its standing (Sreberny *et al.,* 2010b), as does, of course, the fact of its funding source and purpose.

Since the 2004 Spending Review Settlement came into effect, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had ensured a steady increase in the funding of the BBC World Service mainly to increase Britain's public diplomacy efforts in the Middle East—the introduction of the BBC Arabic and Persian television services in 2008 and 2009 respectively (BBC, 2008; Sreberny *et al*., 2010a) being the key projects (more on this later). The rise in the funding of the World Service was reflected in the annual budgetary allocation to it. For instance, the government's grant-in-aid to the World Service was increased from £225 million in 2004/05 noted earlier to £239.5 million in 2006/07 and then to £255 million in 2007/08 (BBC, 2008). The amount jumped to its peak of £272 million in 2009/10 (Hiller, 2010b) before

Britain's debt and deficit crisis forced spending cuts that saw the allocation to it for the year 2010/11 first brought down to £261 million and then followed by an even more radical change introduced in the 2010 Spending Review Settlement (Robinson and Sweney, 2010; Thompson, 2011).

Perhaps the most significant change in government's relationship with the BBC in recent years, the 2010 Spending Review Settlement did not only cut spending for the World Service, it attempted to fundamentally alter its funding arrangement. Under the settlement the government resolved to transfer the funding responsibility of the BBC World Service from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the BBC's licence fee with effect from 2014 (Robinson and Sweney, 2010; Foster, 2010; Thompson, 2011). The agreement, reached on 19 October 2010, stipulated that the BBC should from its licence fee bear an estimated annual cost of £340 million to fund the BBC World Service, the BBC monitoring department and the high-speed broadband roll out, and part-fund the Welsh language service channel S4C (Robinson and Sweney, 2010; Foster, 2010). The deal, endorsed by the Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt and BBC Director General Mark Thompson, was reached after what the culture secretary described as 'the fastest negotiation in the corporation's 83-year history', as the corporation was also slammed with an unprecedented 16 per cent funding cut over a period of four years (Foster, 2010, p.6). The then chairman of the BBC Trust Sir Michael Lyons said although the settlement was 'tough', it guaranteed what he called 'certainty and stability' (Lyons, 2010).

However, subsequent happenings showed that Sir Michael's optimism was perhaps premature. First, the spending cuts compelled the World Service to consider reducing the number of its language services, cutting its staff strength and restructuring its offices and operations. On 26 January 2011 the BBC announced the closure of five language services (Albanian, Macedonian, Serbian, Portuguese for Africa and English for the Caribbean), with an estimated 30 million fall in the global audience (BBC News, 2011). 'Today will be a painful day for the BBC and for the millions of people around the globe who value the World Service,' Director General Mark Thompson (2011) said as he announced 'a series of cuts that have been made necessary by last autumn's Comprehensive Spending Review'. Apart

from the closure of the five foreign language services 'in their entirety', the BBC also announced 'the reduction of others to a web presence alone, as well as significant cuts to the English language radio service – both reductions in programmes and in distribution' (Thompson, 2011). It planned to also slash '650 jobs from a workforce of 2,400 over the next three years' to save £46m a year (BBC News, 2011).

The announcement generated adverse reactions and prompted the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee to launch an investigation, which found that the decisions to both cut and transfer the funding of the World Service would be harmful to UK's interests (FACOM, 2011; Burrell, 2011). In its 90-page report released on 13 April 2011, the committee chaired by Conservative Member of Parliament Richard Ottaway said:

> We believe that the BBC World Service is of such value to the nation that its income should be ring-fenced against spending cuts. The recent dramatic events in North Africa and the Middle East have shown that the "soft power" wielded through the World Service is likely to bring even more benefits to the UK in the future than it has in the past, and that to proceed with the planned cuts to the World Service would be a false economy.
>
> <div align="right">(FACOM, 2011, p.3)</div>

The committee warned that the transfer of funding responsibility to the licence fee could allow BBC senior managers to 'raid' the World Service funding, jeopardise foreign languages' news services and weaken the 'Parliament's right to oversee its work' (FACOM, 2011, p.8). The report was welcomed by the new chairman of the BBC Trust Lord Patten who promised to raise the issue with Foreign Secretary William Hague. 'I know he (foreign secretary) regards the World Service as an important part of this country's soft power and I'm sure that with goodwill and without megaphones we'll be able to sort it out,' Lord Patten declared (Wynne-Jones, 2011). Whether they eventually 'sort it out' or not, the issue has further highlighted the complexity of the BBC's relationship with the government, even when the two have no open confrontation over editorial matters—which usually tends to be the source of dispute. Since the release of the 2003/04 Hutton Inquiry which censured the BBC following the corporation's broadcast of accusations in May 2003 that Tony Blair's Government had exaggerated Iraqi military capability to justify its involvement in war in Iraq (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009; Hill and Alshaer, 2010) and the subsequent reorganisation of the corporation triggered by

the inquiry's report, relations between the BBC and the government have been fairly cordial.

The concerns raised over the World Service's spending cuts were prompted by the fear that it might lose its influence at a time when global politics is also witnessing rapid changes. Even before the changes in North Africa and the Middle East began this year, the dynamics of the post-September 11 global geopolitics and the West's 'war on terror' have generally transformed the focus of international broadcasting (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). And the public diplomacy initiatives among the Western nations tend to concentrate on the battle for the 'hearts and minds' of the Muslims (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009; Thussu, 2005, p.274). The BBC is being shaped by these changes as it too has been part of the process of shaping them. In an era of touch technology and multimedia explosion, it faces the challenge of having to deliver on both its roles of providing international news service and of mediating British 'digital diplomacy initiatives' (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b, p.280). Series of reports and happenings within the World Service showed the kind of strategies the corporation has been employing to face the challenge.

The first major strategy is the use of new technologies by its various services to deliver their products. 'Broadband technology and mobile communications are transforming audience behaviour in many markets,' Lord Carter's review team observed in 2005. 'The BBC claims to be leading the way among international broadcasters in introducing greater interactivity and video content in key languages', it noted, 'and online forums in which people can express their views are now an established feature of BBC websites in many languages' (FCO, 2005, p.27). Within the subsequent three years the corporation moved fast to further integrate both the new and existing technologies for the delivery of its services. By the year 2008 BBC World Service was available in about 154 cities 'on FM, as well as via satellite, cable, podcasts, mobiles and online – in addition to short and medium wave' (BBC, 2008). By harnessing various services to deliver multimedia products, the BBC has succeeded in getting an estimated 241 million people using its international services weekly through the World Service radio, World News television, online and mobile offerings, according to its 2010 audience surveys (Hiller, 2010a). This is three million higher than a year earlier, even though the

short-wave audience figure has declined by about 20 million from its peak of 188 million in 2009 (Hiller, 2010a, 2010b). BBC World Service Director Peter Horrocks admitted that the drop in the short-wave audiences was 'dramatic', but maintained that the surveys also showed 'the success of our multimedia strategy and investments for global audiences' (Hiller, 2010a, p.2). His predecessor, Nigel Chapman, had in 2008, following a report that showed the success of the World Service's multimedia approach, said 'we demonstrated our ability to innovate while retaining the affection of audiences who have been loyal to us for a large part of our history' (BBC, 2008).

It was, as noted earlier, the year the World Service launched the Arabic television channel in March which Chapman said was the 'culmination of a four-year journey to secure funding and deliver a high-quality television service in a vital region of the world' (BBC, 2008). This was not the first time the BBC launched an Arabic television channel. It had had one in the mid-1990s as a joint project with the Saudis, but it collapsed following a BBC Panorama programme that criticised Saudi government (Hill and Alshaer, 2010). The current channel is solely the World Service project funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. A year after its launch, a Persian television channel was also launched, targeting the same region and pursuing similar objectives. The two new channels came at a huge cost for both the World Service and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. First, they had to sacrifice 'no less than ten other language services to regions that were now deemed to be "democratic" and so neither any longer in need of BBC content nor any longer of interest to British foreign policy interests' (Sreberny *et al*., 2010a, p.130). The 10 language services sacrificed were Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Greek, Hungarian, Kazakh, Polish, Slovak, Slovene and Thai which served Thailand that was later hit by political crisis 'but lacked news feed from the BBC, an unfortunate consequence of the cuts' (p.130).

The BBC Persian television which targets Farsi speakers mainly in Iran, but also in Afghanistan and Tajikistan and in diaspora, has lesser financial allocation, with an annual budget of £15 million (Usher, 2009). It was launched in London on 4 January 2009 amid opposition from Iranian government officials who denounced it as an organ of 'espionage and psychological warfare' (Ash, 2009). The Arabic

channel, however, costs the Foreign and Commonwealth Office an average of £25 million annually (Martin, 2008). Still, this was far lower than what was spent at the launch of its main rivals, *Al-Jazeera* in 1996 with $90 million and *Al-Arabiyya* in 2003 with $300 million, by the Qatari and Saudi royal families respectively (Hill and Alshaer, 2010). Chapman believed that the BBC Arabic channel was a worthwhile project as it complements the 'revamped radio and online services, enabling us to compete effectively as a trimedia broadcaster' (BBC, 2008). Significantly, the 'new channel investigates the issues that dominate people's lives in the Middle East and wider Arab world, from regional politics to global economics, from conflict to climate change,' he said (BBC, 2008).

However, Hill and Alshaer (2010) viewed these moves as being part of British public diplomacy strategies. Analysing specifically the Arabic channel's interactive programme 'Point of Debate', they noted how the programme 'has sought to encourage the form of questioning and debate that accords with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's public diplomacy objectives' (Hill and Alshaer, 2010, p.152). The issue they raised centres on the recurring debate about the contradictory context of the World Service's funding source and its claim of being an impartial provider of international news and analysis—a contradiction that both the corporation and its funding body consistently down play. They both insist that the BBC has a 'complete editorial independence' (FCO, 2005. p.4). 'We aim to be trusted for the accuracy, editorial independence and expertise of our journalism,' Chapman said. 'We will cover hard-hitting stories without fear or favour to anyone' (Martin, 2008). But Hill and Alshaer (2010, p.153) maintained that the fact that it is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that funds the World Service 'raised crucial questions about the degree to which it should be regarded as an instrument of foreign policy'. Despite the claim of editorial independence, they argued, 'the launch of the (Arabic) channel—and the freeing up of resources for it by the closure of other BBC services—suggests quite clear political concerns' (p.165). It is a feeling shared by many audiences in the Middle East who see the establishment of the Arabic channel as 'a subcontracting of the public diplomacy side of the War on Terror to the more sophisticated Brits' following the failure of the American-sponsored Arabic language television *Al-Hurra* to make significant impact in the region (Jarrah cited in Hill and Alshaer, 2010, p.162). A

study earlier cited in the literature review here showed that Arab students had negative perceptions of the news credibility of both *Al-Hurra* and the other US-sponsored Arabic language international broadcaster, Radio *Sawa* (El-Nawawy, 2006).

Whether the BBC's perceived reputation of credibility and impartiality would enable it to do what direct propaganda has failed to do in the Middle East is open to interrogation, but it is hard to divorce the BBC's focus on the Middle East in particular and the Muslim world in general from the renewed Western interests in them after the bombings of the New York twin-towers and Pentagon in the US on 11 September 2001 and the subsequent US-led war on terror (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). The diversion of resources from other services to establish the Arabic and Persian television channels, the concentration of news coverage on happenings in the Muslim world and the remodelling of editorial perspective to accord prominence to stories that highlight Islam-West cultural divergence are clear testimonies to this.

The expansion of the BBC Hausa Service which targets the mainly Muslim Hausa speakers in West Africa appears to be in line with this shift. One former staff of the service, Bala Muhammad, argued that the establishment of the service in the first instance was for propaganda purpose. 'The British did not set up the Hausa Service out of philanthropy or because they loved the Hausas. It is for a propaganda purpose, pure and simple, especially targeted towards those peoples who have refused, despite colonialism, to change their worldview to that of the West,' he wrote in his weekly column in Nigeria's *Weekly Trust* (Muhammad, 2010). The expansion saw the Hausa Service increasing the number of its transmissions from three to four per day in December 2006, the same period when it opened a big production centre in the Nigeria's capital, Abuja, where it now carries out its morning transmissions (BBC World Service, 2008). Although (unlike the Arabic and Persian services) the BBC Hausa Service does not have a television channel, it does, as noted earlier, employ new technologies of telephony and Internet to deliver its products to audiences. The short-wave radio transmission remains its main platform, but the online and mobile telephony services are expanding rapidly. The online audience figure reached 1.2 million in April 2010

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and was projected to double in a year (Tangaza, 2010). The mobile phone approach, the head of Hausa Service noted, has a huge potential, given the fact that Nigeria was in 2009 described as the fastest growing mobile phone market in the world, with over 70 million subscribers and an annual growth of 8.5 million subscribers (Tangaza, 2009; Okonji, 2009).

The Hausa Service has introduced an interactive programme that allows mobile phone users to send their stories and pictures to be used on the BBC Hausa web page, *BBC Hausa.com*, and on BBC Hausa Facebook, in addition to accessing BBC's content through their mobile phones. This has provided user-generated content for the station and increased its relationship with audiences, Tangaza stated. 'It's a radical departure from how BBC Hausa has served its audience over many generations, but by tapping into how our audience wants to communicate we are making sure BBC Hausa remains a relevant and essential part of Nigerian life' (Tangaza, 2009). To further widen audience participation, the service in April 2010 introduced a weekly interactive programme called *Ra'ayi Riga* (Have Your Say) in which listeners reach the Hausa Service through phone calls, Skype, text messages, Facebook, Twitter and emails to air their views (BBC, 2010a). It is similar to the other services' audience participatory programmes, such as Africa English's *Africa Have Your Say* and the main World Service's *World Have Your Say*—all of which are geared towards achieving the BBC's 'global conversation' objective or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 'digital diplomacy initiatives' (Sreberny *et al*., 2010b, p.280). '*Ra'ayi Riga* brings informed debate to our diverse and ever-growing audiences, making them part of the global conversation,' Tangaza noted. 'In doing so, it also empowers participants to make informed decisions on issues they find important' (BBC, 2010a). The online services too have been further improved in May 2010 with a new wide-face format, multimedia website offering BBC Hausa content in written text, audio and video while the mobile version allows mobile phone users to access the online text and audio content (BBC, 2010b).

All these are coming out of the reorganisation that has been taking place in the World Service to make good use of new technologies and harmonise different services. Price *et al.* (2008, p.161) noted that the World Service 'seems to have

multiplied its interactive practices and more solidly and consistently brought listeners into the process of contributing content—bringing old technologies into a new media environment'. Former World Service director Nigel Chapman had earlier said that they had been working to modernise all the major language services, declaring that 'we are focusing on multiple means of delivery, whether it be through increased FM relays, partner stations, streaming on the web, downloadable programmes or podcasts' (BBC, 2008). The BBC Arabic Service, for instance, is organised on multimedia lines, with its studios located in the new BBC News Centre with fully integrated digital radio, television and online production systems (BBC, 2008). The BBC News which had long been re-organised on multimedia lines has streamlined its different platforms to 'tear down' what the current World Service director called 'fortress journalism' (Horrocks, 2009). This was part of the new drive where 'all the resources of BBC journalism, in the UK's nations and regions and across the BBC World Service, are drawn together and leveraged for the benefit of all our audiences' (Horrocks, 2009). Such cooperation enables domestic audiences to benefit from the programming materials the World Service gathered overseas and the international audiences to benefit from BBC's domestic materials. Even within the World Service, sharing of materials has proved useful for their respective audiences. Harmonisation and leveraging also offer mutual benefits to both the BBC's domestic and international services. It means that the BBC's home services, funded by the licence fee, would gain from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office-funded World Service and vice-versa. They have, of course, been working together since inception, but such corporation is being coordinated now in a more vigorous and systematic manner. 'The BBC World Service has had, for example, the immense benefit of synergies with the BBC itself and the capacity to use the extraordinarily successful bbc.co.uk news portal,' Price *et al*. (2008, p.160) noted. 'It is not only new technologies themselves, but additional opportunities for cross-promotion and branding, that have provided the World Service with new strategies' (p.160). Given that the BBC domestic service got £3.5 billion in 2009 from the licence fee plus £1 billion generated by the commercially-oriented BBC Worldwide (*Economist*, 2010) and that the World Service has substantial diasporic cultural capital and wide reach (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010a, 2010b), leveraging their services could enable the BBC to remain, at least for now, the mightiest public

service broadcaster in the world. Its biggest threats, however, may turn out to be the British declining global influence and its struggling economy.

Different strokes: the case of an interview and episodes

The relationship between the BBC and Nigeria has always been complex in both consumption and coverage. Nigeria, as stated earlier, is the largest radio market of the BBC World Service, despite a recent decline in the short-wave audience figures as indicated in the latest survey that shows a fall of 2.9 million in short-wave audiences but a jump of 1.2 million in online audiences (Tangaza, 2010). The consumption of BBC products is very high, and the impact considerable. The BBC's coverage of Nigeria, whether through the Hausa Service (with its large number of local reporters stationed in different parts of the country and a huge bureau in Abuja) or the BBC Africa English service (with its own set of reporters too) or the BBC World Service English (with the foreign correspondent stationed in Lagos and contributions from the local reporters) or the BBC online services or the occasional special assignments by teams sent from London, has also been massive. Because of this wide and multi-layered engagement, the coverage of Nigeria does occasionally generate controversies. Two recent incidents—*The Yar'adua Interview* and *Welcome to Lagos* episodes—provide classic examples.

The Yar'adua Interview

This was a telephone interview conducted by the BBC Hausa Service with the then ailing Nigerian President Umaru Yar'adua while he was on his sickbed in Saudi Arabia. The president, who was suffering from both kidney and heart diseases, had fallen seriously ill on 23 November 2009 and was rushed to King Faisal Hospital in Jeddah. Either because of the seriousness of his sickness at the time of his departure or because he did not have much trust on his deputy or because the Nigerian constitution was not quite clear about it or a combination of them, Yar'adua left without officially handing over to the then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan. Nigeria's constitutional provisions on the role of the vice president in the absence of the president were not explicit. One particular provision of the constitution, Section 145, became the centre of attention at that period. It says: 'Whenever the President transmits to the President of the Senate and the Speaker

of the House of Representatives a written declaration that he is proceeding on vacation or that he is otherwise unable to discharge the functions of his office, until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such functions shall be discharged by the Vice-President as Acting President' (FRN, 1999, p.60). During Yar'adua's absence, Nigerian politicians and activists subjected this section to different interpretations: some said it meant that the vice president automatically assumes power in the absence of the president, while others said the president needs to send a letter to the National Assembly before the vice president can assume power (Okoye, 2010). Whatever the interpretation, concerns were mounting over the apparent power vacuum, worsened by a complete lack of information on Yar'adua's state of health.

Two months into his medical trip, and amid claims that he was either dead or brain-damaged, Yar'adua granted a telephone interview to the BBC Hausa Service. It was recorded in both Hausa and English languages and aired on 12 January 2010. 'At the moment I am undergoing treatment, and I'm getting better from the treatment,' he told the station. 'I hope that very soon there will be tremendous progress, which will allow me to get back home' (BBC News, 2010a). Perhaps to underline the currency of the interview, Yar'adua praised Nigerian footballers who were competing in the African nations' cup at that time and wished them success. The interview, conducted by senior producer Mansur Liman, did put to rest the death and brain damage claims, apparently planted by opposition politicians in the media. But it neither ended the power vacuum controversy nor the demand for clear information about the state of the president's health, especially as his weak and cracking voice aired on a hazy short-wave radio presented a picture of a very sick man. The interview itself generated a new set of reactions from many opposition politicians and commentators who questioned the authenticity of the president's voice and the propriety of using BBC rather than the Nigerian media to deliver such a message after over 50 days of absence from the country. Journalist Garba Deen Muhammed, in his weekly *Sunday Trust* column *Bark Byte*, berated both the BBC and the presidential aides for the broadcast. 'First they chose a foreign radio station, the BBC Hausa Service; then they chose only audio interview rather than a more convincing video (TV) interview; and then because people usually judge others by their own standard, those fellows expected

us to swallow such mind boggling absolute rubbish!' he wrote. 'My conclusion is that the voice that spoke in that mysterious interview was not Yar'adua's' (Muhammed, 2010, p.24). His colleague, Tunde Asaju, in the same newspaper, argued that the decision to use BBC for the interview was an assault on Nigerian government media. 'It is not the first time that Yar'adua and government officials would pass a subtle vote of no confidence on its own megaphones, but by far this is the strongest and shamefully the most painful' (Asaju, 2010, p.25).

If some opposition politicians and commentators saw the Yar'adua's BBC interview in a negative term, some senior Nigerian politicians viewed it positively and turned it into a political tool to resolve the crisis created by the president's long absence. The country's state governors and federal legislators met in February and resolved that, to address the problem of the power vacuum, the vice president should be appointed as acting president pending the return of the president (BBC News, 2010b). But the fact that the president had not given a written consent as required by the constitution presented a problem. Then the issue of the BBC interview was brought up, and some of them ingeniously suggested that it could be used as an alternative to written consent. And so the Nigerian Senate on 9 February 2010 voted with an overwhelming majority to appoint Vice President Goodluck Jonathan as acting president, citing Yar'adua's interview with the BBC as a notice to the parliament that he had gone on medical leave abroad. 'We came to the conclusion that the president, through his declaration transmitted worldwide on the BBC, has furnished this parliament with irrefutable proof that he's on medical vacation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,' declared Senate President David Mark as the Senate passed the vote (BBC News, 2010b). The decision was of dubious legality but it held up until Yar'adua eventually died on 5 May 2010 and Jonathan was sworn in as the substantive president. Former BBC Hausa Service producer Bala Muhammad said the Senate vote has now put an official stamp on BBC as Nigeria's 'national' radio (Muhammad, 2010).

Welcome to Lagos

The controversy over *The Yar'adua Interview* had not gone before another BBC broadcast on Nigeria sparked a new one: this time on alleged negative portrayal of

the Nigeria's biggest city in its television programme. *Welcome to Lagos* was a three-part BBC documentary series that explored 'the lives of slum dwellers who are living at the sharp end of the fastest growing mega-city in the world' (BBC2, 2010). Lagos, Nigeria's largest commercial centre, has 16 million inhabitants with an annual growth rate of 600,000 (BBC2, 2010). The BBC's series, directed by Gavin Searle, looked at the lives of those at the bottom rung. Produced by Will Anderson and narrated by black British actor David Harewood, it was run at 9:00pm on the 15th, 22nd and 29th of April 2010 on BBC2.

The first episode featured the lives of people who live on top of Olususun rubbish dump in houses built with scraps. About one thousand people live on this rubbish dump, and the film focused on the everyday life of two of its dwellers, musician Eric Obuh (nick-named Vocal Slender) and trader Joseph Orji, who earn their living from the scraps in the dump. 'If there was a bigger, dirtier, "stinkier" dump where I could earn more money for my family, then I'd go there to work,' Joseph declared (BBC2, 2010). The second episode portrayed the lives of those who live and work on the floating slum of Lagos Lagoon. Here, 65-year-old fisherman Chubbey, who has 18 children and five grandchildren and lives along with them in houses built on rafts, provides for himself and the family on the earnings made from building fish ponds and renting out rafts. On another side, two young men, Kissme and Daniel, earn their own living diving in the Lagoon and digging out sand that they sell to builders. The third and final episode was about the everyday life of those who live in illegal shanties on the beach of Lagos. Housewife Esther Ogunleke lives here with her husband, Segun, in a house they built with scraps of woods, cardboards and tarpaulin that was under a constant threat of government's task force which regularly demolishes such illegal dwellings. Esther is worried about this, as she does about another woman's text messages she discovered on her husband's mobile phone (BBC2, 2010).

In terms of technical and production qualities, *Welcome to Lagos* is an innovative television piece with entertaining narratives that took four months of hard work to produce. The BBC hailed it as a series that highlighted how the poor were adapting to modern city life, especially now that more than half of the world's population live in cities. 'With extraordinary access to some of the poorest parts of

town, the series celebrates the resilience, resourcefulness and energy of Lagos's 16 million inhabitants, and shows how successfully many of its slum dwellers are adapting to the realities of the world's increasingly extreme urban future' (BBC2, 2010). The film received rave reviews in the UK media. The *Guardian* in London did an editorial in praise of it, saying it was worth 'a repeat' as the stars in the film 'do not wallow in self-revelation, but are ordinary, resourceful people who get by' (*Guardian*, 2010). Television critic Sam Wollaston (2010) said the series was 'extraordinary' as indeed the life in Lagos has always been. 'It doesn't pretend that life is brilliant for these people, but nor does it feel sorry for them. It's more a celebration of their resourcefulness,' he wrote after watching just the first episode. British journalist Rachel Cooke's hyper praises came after watching just the first ten minutes of the first episode. 'Ten minutes in…and I understood that Welcome to Lagos is great: one of the most moving, interesting and uplifting things I have seen in years,' she stated in the *New Statesman*. 'If David Cameron really wants to teach young people life lessons, he should just send every 14-year-old in the country a DVD of this series'. For her 'this documentary shows the BBC at its best' (Cooke, 2010).

But for many Nigerians, including some prominent personalities, the documentary provoked negative feelings towards the BBC. Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka condemned the series as 'condescending' and unworthy of the BBC. 'There was this colonialist idea of the noble savage which motivated the programme. It was patronising and condescending,' he argued. 'There was no sense of Lagos as what it is – a modern African state. What we had was jaundiced and extremely patronising. It was saying "Oh, look at these people who can make a living from the pit of degradation"' (Dowell, 2010). Lagos State information commissioner Opeyemi Bamidele shared that view and sent a complaint to BBC demanding that it should commission an alternative series to 'repair the damage…caused to our image' (Dowell, 2010). Nigeria's high commissioner to Britain Dalhatu Sarki Tafida who equally forwarded Nigeria's protest letter to the BBC described the documentary as 'a calculated attempt to bring Nigeria and its hardworking people to international odium and scorn' (Nwaubani, 2010). Sultan of Sokoto Saad Abubakar, the traditional head of Nigerian Muslims, went even further: he wanted the government to remove BBC from the cable and satellite portal that beams its

television programmes in Nigeria. 'If I were the government, I would ask NBC (Nigerian Broadcasting Commission) to yank BBC off DSTV ('Digital Satellite Television' that provides cable and satellite services from South African-based media firm Multichoice) until they apologise or show the positive side of Lagos,' he told a government peer review team that visited him in his palace few days after the series were broadcast (Shuaib, 2010).

Those were the reflections of the sharp contrast between the Nigerian and UK audiences' reception of the series. It has some similarities with the case of the *Slumdog Millionaire*, the 2008 Danny Boyle-directed British film, set in the mega-slums of Mumbai in India. While the film was greeted with critical acclaim in the West winning several Oscars and other awards, many Indians dismissed it as 'defamatory' and unreflective of the real life situation in their country—it even sparked off street protests by slum dwellers who objected to their depiction in the film as 'slumdogs' (Weaver, 2009). The contrast was equally clear in the film's reviews. *Wall Street Journal*'s film critic Joe Morgenstern (2009), for instance, described *Slumdog Millionaire* as 'the film world's first globalized masterpiece'. But Indian critic and writer Gautaman Bhaskaran (2009) dismissed it as 'superficial and insensitive'. Significantly, Indian-born British author Salman Rushdie (2009) was strongly dismissive of it, saying it failed the test of plausibility—striking a cord with Soyinka's condemnation of *Welcome to Lagos*. The factual-fictional divide that differentiates the two films did not alter the similarities of the reactions they generated.

However, while *Slumdog Millionaire*—as a work of fiction that blends Hollywood with Bollywood styles—has an artistic licence to exaggerate reality or even be far away from it, *Welcome to Lagos* is a factual documentary with no such luxury. And being the product of a medium that builds its reputation on claims of impartiality, it tends to carry a stronger stamp of authenticity. The sharp contrast in its reception by Western and Nigerian audiences reflected both the cultural tension and cultural relativism that often mark such encounters. While the depiction of how the urban poor endured (and 'enjoyed') the harsh life of Lagos slums served as a source of entertainment to some Western audiences, it was seen by many Nigerian audiences as a deliberate attempt to sustain the stereotypical Western

depiction of Africans as 'savages' (in Soyinka's word). It was an age-long ideological and cultural contrast in perception. But it also highlighted the complexity of reception research. The fact that it is the Western-savvy non-Westerners, Soyinka and Rushdie in this case, that show more strident opposition to the Western media's portrayal of their societies underlines the depth of such complexity.

Summary

The BBC and Nigerians, as highlighted above, have a long and complex relationship that began in the 1930s and has been undergoing transformation ever since. This chapter has traced the historical development of such engagement, its changing nature and the emerging trends being shaped by the changing dynamics of global geopolitics and advancement of communications technologies. It has touched on the BBC's roles from its early days as Empire Service—advancing the interests of the British Empire and informing its citizens and colonial subjects of developments at home and abroad—to its present position as the best known global broadcaster with its inherent contradictory functions in providing impartial news and enhancing British public diplomacy. Also discussed was the BBC's complex relationship with its funding body, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the difficult balancing act of attending to its demand and that of the audiences.

The BBC's interests in Nigeria, first as a British colonial outpost and now as the largest radio market for the broadcaster, were equally brought into focus. Its role as provider of information to colonial Nigeria through wired broadcasting and its assistance in establishing local broadcasting outfits as well as the establishment of the BBC Hausa Service and the latest expansion of its operations in Nigeria were all highlighted. The Nigerians' engagement with the medium that they regard as the leading foreign broadcaster in their country, their consumption of its products and their perception of its coverage of their country—sometimes with admiration, sometimes with suspicion, but mostly with passion—was also briefly discussed here. They all form part of the landscape into which this study attempts to probe deeper.

V

Methodology

Introduction

The methodological endeavour of this study is primarily grounded in the qualitative research tradition, but without neglecting the essential ingredients of the quantitative approach, as it also utilizes massive quantitative data derived from a positivist research culture. Qualitative methods were used to obtain the primary data that was amply supplemented by statistical data originally drawn from large scale surveys. It is a unique approach designed to meet the novelty of this research, which is focused on unveiling in detail the relationship between the BBC World Service and its audiences in Northern Nigeria. Specifically, focus group discussions, in-depth individual interviews, qualitative content analysis and documentary research techniques were employed for the study. Statistical data drawn from large scale BBC audience surveys were amply used to complement the primary data obtained through the qualitative research tools. This chapter unpacks the methodological strategies employed for this study, the justification for applying them, the sampling procedure used, the areas covered by the study, the background of the participants drawn, the nature of the data generated, the ethical issues involved, the problems encountered, and how they were resolved.

The methods and the justifications

Addressing the question of methodological framework is essential in any research effort and the choice of specific methods to operationalise it requires careful and intense scrutiny. It becomes even more intense when the issue involves researching audiences because various studies of the same subject, using different methods tend to produce different, sometimes contradictory, results. Poor selection of research techniques—or misapplication of even the correct ones—could yield distorted outcomes. Perhaps nowhere is the need to carefully distinguish the divide between the quantitative techniques and qualitative approach and strike a right cord is as significant as it is in studies that involve media audiences. Using detailed ethnographic approach (Ang, 1996; Spitulnik, 2000), for example, may

give one a clear picture of a specific audience response to a specific media text; but it could hardly provide opportunities of making accurate generalisations about media effects or influence (Burton, 2005; Morley, 2006). Conversely, a macro-audience study with strong bias on quantitative techniques may fail to offer accurate insights into specific audience behaviour towards specific media content (Burton, 2005).

This suggests the need for using mixed-method approach, combining both the quantitative and qualitative instruments to get both the broad and deep insights into the audiences' behaviour (Barker, 2006). But even this would not necessarily guarantee adequacy nor would it always be feasible. In any case, Hoijer (1990, p.32) has warned that a 'single study cannot grasp the dynamics and all the complexities of the reception of mass media products'. And Morrison (1998, p.155) was quick to stress that 'a single method cannot either'. What is imperative, Hoijer (1990, p.32) insists, is 'to choose a perspective and be aware of that choice and its underlying assumptions'. Essentially, Silverman (2000) argues, the choice of research methods should be determined by the objectives of the study. In this regard, Michelle's (2007) advocacy for the adoption of 'consolidated model' in reception research is justifiable. The consolidated model, she explains, facilitates systematic investigation into how audiences' interpretations are 'shaped by social group memberships, cultural competencies, and discursive affiliations' (Michelle, 2007, p.181). It is this model that was liberally applied here to investigate the reception aspects of the research. But since this study also sought to examine the production side and the nature of the media content itself, the methodological endeavour was equally expanded to incorporate them.

Taking all these into consideration, therefore, this study employed a multi-method approach to fully explore the intricacies of the BBC's engagement with its Northern Nigerian audiences: from the production processes, through the content produced, to their actual consumption, and in some cases re-production. Individual in-depth interviews, documentary research (in the libraries and archives and online) and qualitative content analysis were used to interrogate the production side and analyse the content produced. Focus group discussions, individual in-depth interviews and documentary research were employed to generate data from

the reception side and gain insights into the audiences' engagement with international media. All these techniques are, of course, qualitative in nature; but they are complemented by a generous use of statistics obtained from BBC's large scale surveys that supply important quantitative details and useful demographic features of its Northern Nigerian audiences. The BBC does carry regular quantitative surveys of its audiences in Nigeria that unveil the audience figures, their demographic features, their preferences in terms of programming and transmission time, and the station's performance in comparison to both the local and international competitors. This study has accessed and analysed such surveys covering nearly one decade, with specific emphasis on those conducted in the years 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10. Other materials accessed from the corporation and analysed for this study are its official publications, specimen of the programmes for the Hausa Service audiences, press releases and online contents.

The interrogation of the production side was primarily done through the qualitative research approach. Face-to-face in-depth interview method was used to obtain data from BBC executives, producers and reporters. The interviews were conducted with the BBC's executive editor for African region (in London), BBC Abuja bureau editor (in Abuja, Nigeria), a BBC World Service correspondent who covered Nigeria for years and is now a producer in the World Service newsroom at Bush House (in London), a former BBC Hausa Service senior producer who had also worked as senior reporter for the station from Nigeria (in Abuja), and a senior Hausa Service correspondent who had worked as a producer at the Bush House (in London). The interviews were conducted between April 2009 and March 2010 in London for those based at the BBC World Service headquarters and in Abuja for those working (and the former staff who had worked) for the Hausa Service in Nigeria. The length of each of the recorded individual interviews ranges from 13 minutes to about 30 minutes (in all cases the stay with the interviewees lasted much longer than the period spent for recording the interview; two of them—with the executive editor of African region and former World Service correspondent— lasted for over an hour each). All the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and analysed. Brief follow-up telephone interviews were conducted again in October 2010 with the executive editor, the former senior producer and the senior

correspondent/producer to further confirm the original views they had expressed in the earlier interviews, and to strengthen the internal validity of the study.

The viability of in-depth interview method was well-acknowledged by many media researchers and scholars (Priest, 1996; Berger, 1998; Gunter, 2000; Wimmer and Dominick, 2003). It generated 'a great deal of detailed information' (Berger, 1998, p.57) required for this study. It particularly enabled me to ask follow up questions to get clarifications and sometimes obtain 'unexpected information' (Berger, 1988, p.57; Priest, 1996) that I might never have gotten through a questionnaire survey technique. Although the method may have its deficiencies in terms of being time-consuming, limited to smaller samples and harder to analyse, it has the merits of facilitating rapport, enhancing 'greater flexibility of coverage' and allowing 'the interview to go into novel areas, and…produce richer data' (Smith and Osborn, 2003, p.57). That was exactly what it did for this research.

The BBC's personnel interviewed have deep knowledge of the workings of the BBC World Service, particularly BBC Hausa Service—the key arm of the corporation targeting Northern Nigerians. They have collectively garnered massive experience totalling about 60 years of working for the organisation. Among them, the one with the least number of years in the BBC, the Abuja bureau editor, has put in three years working for the corporation, but had earlier spent about two decades working for foreign and local radio stations in Nigeria. The former World Service correspondent who was at the time of the interview a producer at the World Service newsroom has put in over six years in the service. The former senior producer had worked for the Hausa Service and African Service for about 13 years, starting as a stringer in Nigeria to producer in London and later acting Abuja bureau editor before resigning as senior producer/senior reporter to take up a senior managerial role in a Nigerian newspaper organisation. The senior correspondent has spent nearly 18 years working for the Hausa Service and African Service first as a stringer in Nigeria then as a producer in London, Abuja bureau editor in Nigeria and senior correspondent. The executive editor of African region had by the time of the interview already put in over 20 years working for the World Service, starting as a producer in the Hausa Service, then senior

producer and later head of the Hausa Service before becoming executive editor African region overseeing all the services targeting sub-Saharan Africa. Together they provided valuable data required to fully examine the production side of the media involved.

A further interrogation of the production side was achieved by examining BBC's official publications (year books, annual reports and in-house newspapers), annual audience surveys, online content and press releases—in addition to several books, journals, articles and reports written about the corporation. The bibliography section contains the list of the publications consulted. The BBC's annual audience surveys in Nigeria for nearly one decade were accessed, but it was the ones from the year 2004 to the year 2010 that were found to be up-to-date and very relevant for this study. And among them, it was those for the years 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 that were selected and extensively analysed (see 'Contents and Quantification' chapter). The statistical details and other quantitative data obtained from those surveys were generously used in this study to redress its quantitative deficiencies and strengthen the quality of its findings. The annual surveys' data actually proved very useful in examining both the production and reception aspects covered by the study.

Qualitative content analysis of a selection of transmitted BBC Hausa Service programmes was also undertaken to critically examine the materials being produced and transmitted for Hausa-speaking audiences. Three different programmes, transmitted in three different years (2008, 2009 and 2010), were obtained from the sound archives of the BBC Hausa Service, transcribed, translated into English language and analysed. The first programme was aired in the afternoon of 6 October 2008 (Hausa, 2008, see Appendix I) while the second and the third were transmitted in the afternoon of 14 October 2009 (Hausa, 2009) and in the evening of 14 July 2010 (Hausa, 2010) respectively. These, as would be explained later, did not constitute a full representative sample of BBC Hausa Service programmes, though. They were essentially picked to provide a general idea of the format and content of the programmes. Qualitative content analysis technique was used to examine them and establish the nature and pattern of the content, and to get a glimpse of the execution of the editorial policies of the

producing organisation. Although content analysis has lost the kind of prominence it got during the Second World War when it was often being used as a stand-alone quantitative research method to explore the intent of media content and its effects on audiences (Gunter, 2000; Wimmer and Dominick, 2003), it is still a very useful tool in media research, especially when used as a qualitative method, as was done here. The technique is also criticised as being prone to bias and as 'a secondary instrument for recording social reality' (Gunter, 2000, p.58); but combining it with other methods—again as was done here—has reduced such deficiencies.

Some have argued that content analysis tended to be more objective when used as a quantitative, rather than as a qualitative, method (Gunter, 2000, p.60); but Krippendorff (2004) has dismissed 'the validity and usefulness' of making such distinction. 'Ultimately, all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers' (p.16). Essentially, as a research tool, 'content analysis is an *empirically grounded method*, exploratory in process, and predictive or inferential in intent' (Krippendorff, 2004, p.xvii, emphasis original). It is a 'technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use' (p.18). It is the attempt to make such valid inferences on the policies and motives of the producers and even possible impact on the audiences (Gunter, 2000) that motivated the application of this method here. In this respect, it has enabled this study to unveil the pattern and particularities of BBC Hausa Service content and provide some insights into the objectives and ideological orientation of the organisation and their engagement with the audiences (part of the content was from interactive programming).

On the reception side, two different tools were primarily used to generate data from audiences in Northern Nigeria: face-to-face individual in-depth interview and focus group methods. This was in addition to the secondary data obtained from the BBC's annual surveys on Nigerian audiences and the inferences made from content analysis, as explained above. First, the face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents drawn from three cities in three different geopolitical regions that made up Northern Nigeria: (1) Yola in the Northeast, (2) Kano in Northwest and (3) Abuja in North-central zones. These were ten

respondents, male and female (though the male size is larger, eight of them, which in a way reflects the BBC audiences' make-up in the region), aged 25 to 70, and with varied backgrounds and experiences. They comprised of a local newspaper publisher, a petty trader, a television producer, a female school administrator, a factory worker, a university lecturer, an ex-trade unionist, a one-time female newspaper editor, a postgraduate student and an ex-soldier-cum-parliamentarian. Each of them was interviewed at length (ranging from approximately 12-minute to 25-minute recorded interview per respondent) at different locations: their places of relaxation, places of work or at home (each was given the right to choose a place they felt they could freely express their views unencumbered by any restraining factor; and they did so). Eight of them who are fluent in English language were interviewed in English, the remaining two—the petty trader and the factory worker—were interviewed in Hausa language. All the interviews were tape-recorded (the Hausa ones translated into English) and transcribed for analysis. They produced the 'Results and Analysis I' chapter. The shortcomings and benefits of using in-depth interview method have been well explained above; it can only be reiterated here that the technique has indeed enabled this researcher to obtain rich and qualitative data that provides deep insights into the patterns and trends of Northern Nigerians' interactions with international media.

Focusing on focus groups

Focus group technique is the major instrument used to gather data for this research because of the vital role it plays in audience studies (Morley, 1980; Merton, 1987; Priest, 1996; Morrison 1998; Gunter, 2000; Greenbaum, 2000)—and as such it is given a special focus here. The merits of employing this method have been well laid out. First, as Priest (1996, p.109) notes, 'focus group is better than individual depth interview because the participants react to one another as well as to the interviewer'. This provides what both Morrison (1998) and Greenbaum (2000) call 'group dynamics' that enables the researcher to generate rich material. 'It is the dynamic exchange between the individuals in the group that gives focus groups their special characteristic and strength as a research method' (Morrison, 1998, p.168). The 'one-on-one' scenario of the individual interview method, Priest

(1996) maintains, puts the interviewer as superior to the interviewee while focus group gives the participants a much more relaxed atmosphere.

The superiority of this technique over what Morley (1980) calls 'fixed-choice questionnaires' that separate 'content from the form' is well documented, 'for it is not simply the "substance" of the answer which is important, it is also the form of its expression which constitutes its meaning' (p.31). Focus group is equally seen as less expensive than large scale survey, and the insights of the people who participated are immediately made available (Berger, 1998). Besides, Morrison (1998) argues that 'the freedom of participants to construct their own meanings is' an additional strength of the focus group method over survey research (p.179). Similarly, Greenbaum (2000) notes that group interactions allow participants who share opposing points to, with the encouragement of the moderator, try and convince one another of the viability of their viewpoints. 'As a result of this process, the richness of the information generated in the session can be dramatically improved as each side draws on more reasons for its view' (Greenbaum, 2000, p.11).

Gunter (2000) has spoken of attempts to promote focus group 'as a solution to the constrained artificial question and answer format of the structured, questionnaire-driven interview' since it allows 'natural conversation'; but careful scrutiny 'reveals that it is just as controlled in many respects as is a laboratory experiment' (p.278). And, of course, it is also wrong to equate focus group with ethnography— as some researchers erroneously do—because it is not (Morrison, 1998; Barker, 2006); but it is an approach capable of furnishing a researcher with group feelings, nuances and lived experiences. David Morley, famous for his use of focus groups in audience studies (Morley, 1980, 1986), has, as noted earlier, argued that the technique 'treats the audience as a set of cultural groupings rather than as a mass of individuals or as a set of rigid socio-demographic categories' (Morley, 1980, p.163). Agreed that he has warned 20 years later that over-reliance on focus groups for all sorts of audience research could be counter-productive, but that does not remove the efficacy of the technique when applied appropriately. 'Ethnography is excellent for some purposes but for others it is not suitable,' he also cautions. 'In some statistics will help' (Morley, 2006, pp.106-107). He is

right: the statistics accessed from BBC's audience surveys, as stated earlier, proved very helpful for this research.

There is also the concern raised by the very person generally believed to have founded the focus group method, Robert Merton—though Kitzinger (1995) has said it was invented by Emory Bogardus—about the danger of using focus group as a stand-alone technique, instead of complementing it with, or subordinating it to, other methods (Merton's letter to Morrison on 18 April 1995, cited in Morrison, 1998, p. xiii). Morrison was particularly keen on stressing this issue, criticising audience researchers, such as Morley, who used focus group as a stand-alone method. 'Its founders insisted that it was only truly valuable when combined with other methods' (Morrison, 1998, p.134). However, Lunt and Livingstone (1996) insist that even as a stand-alone technique, the method provides rich and valid data in qualitative research, arguing that many researchers 'would challenge Merton's relegation of the focus groups method to a secondary position relative to surveys and experiments' (p.89). Still, the idea of combining focus group with other methods has the potential of maximising the validity and reliability of research findings (Gillham, 2000)—and that was what prompted this study to combine it with the other methods (individual interview, content analysis, documentary research) stated above. Morley (1980) himself admitted that he would have combined it with individual interviews, had resources allowed him 'the luxury of both' (p.33). This, of course, did not diminish the fact that even as a stand-alone method focus group has its peculiar utilities in unveiling the mindsets of the participants. And, as Kitzinger (1995) observes, the 'method is particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way'. This is why it emerged as the most significant method employed for this research.

Focus group interviews were exclusively done to generate data from selected audiences in different parts of Northern Nigeria to reflect the geographical diversity of the region and the plurality of the participants' backgrounds. A total of six focus groups' interviews were conducted in the three geopolitical zones of the region—in addition to the two pilot focus groups conducted to prepare the ground

and to get a guide for the main ones. The six focus groups were conducted between December 2009 and March 2011 in the three zones: Yola city and Njoboli village both in Adamawa State (Northeast zone), Katsina city in Katsina State (Northwest zone), and Abuja city and Gwagwalada town both part of the Federal Capital Territory (North-central zone). Apart from the diversity in the geographical locations of the groups, each group has its unique characteristics in terms of social strata and professional and occupational backgrounds of its members (see Appendix III).

It is important to make clarifications here on the approach employed to categorise the groups in different classes. It was a rough categorisation guided by insights from previous studies on social stratification in Nigeria. Because of the series of changes the Nigerian society has been witnessing right from pre-colonial through colonial to postcolonial periods and because of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of the country, social stratification system is a complicated and contested issue in Nigeria (Smith, 1959, 1991; Smythe, 1958). Smith (1959, 1991) did much work on Nigeria and noted that the Hausa Muslims had an organised complex stratified society. Smythe (1958) studied the stratification system in Nigeria during the dying days of colonialism and identified five different classes (the high public officers, the professionals, the business class, the minor white collar workers and the labouring class) that he equated with five corresponding classes—the upper class, upper middle class, lower middle class, working class and lower class— respectively in the United States. He did not put 'the beggars, those without visible means of support (and) the habitually unemployed' (p.171) into any category, though. Perhaps the most recent relevant work on the subject was the one done by the Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2007 in which it gave a broad poverty classification and middle class categorisation. The first broad categorisation produced three groups: the core poor, the moderately poor and the non-poor (NBS, 2007, p.13). It essentially used economic factors, primarily expenditure criterion, to make the categorisation. It identified five different classes in the country: the lower class, the lower-middle class, the upper-middle class, the lower-upper class and the upper-upper class (p.14). This study drew useful insights from all the three studies, particularly the last one, to give a rough categorisation of the focus groups here.

Each of the six focus groups was placed in an approximate class or category based on the socio-economic, educational, occupational and professional backgrounds of the majority of its members. The first focus group, which was organised in Yola, was mainly composed of people who could be roughly described as members of the urban lower middle class. The second Yola group comprised mainly of members of the urban working class. The Njoboli group was mainly composed of villagers who live on subsistence farming and petty trading—it is categorised here as the peasant group. The first Abuja group was made up of professional journalists who have vast experience working for media in Nigeria. Their educational and professional backgrounds as well as their apparent comfortable incomes and lifestyles gave them a conventional middle class status. The second Abuja group was that of Abuja University's students who were categorised as youth group; they were pursuing their undergraduate studies in the university. The Katsina group could be classified as political class who were exposed to local politics and holding leadership positions in the local community. Their income is apparently higher than that of a typical Nigerian middle class, though their educational level is not above that of the conventional middle class in Nigeria.

The common denominator linking all the groups is that they are predominantly Hausa-speaking Muslim Northern Nigerians (though many of them are not native Hausa speakers). They are also regular audiences of international media—ranging from those who only access the international media through short-wave radio sets (they are the majority) to those who mainly access them through satellite television and Internet. The average size of the groups was six people and the length of recorded interview per group was approximately 40 minutes (the actual time spent with each group averages over one hour). The interviews with four of the groups were conducted in Hausa language while the remaining two—with the professional journalists and students—were conducted in English language. All were tape-recorded, (translated into English, for the Hausa ones), transcribed and analysed, using Vicsek's (2007) scheme of focus groups analysis. The data produced the 'Results and Analysis III' chapter.

Sampling and selection

The key procedure applied in selecting the subjects for data generation for this study was purposeful sampling. Since it was neither feasible nor necessary to reach all the media audiences of a big area—as Mano (2004, p.78) argues in his Radio Zimbabwe listeners' case—the sensible thing to do was to get a sample of the audiences and generate the data from them. That was what was done here in the selection of participants (though not fully representative samples) from among the BBC audiences in Northern Nigeria, who constitute the population in the reception aspect covered by the study. The concept of sampling appropriated here was that of Mason (1996, p.83) which was described as a procedure of identifying, choosing and gaining 'access to relevant units' that supplied data for this research. Purposeful sampling is the most appropriate in this case because the reception side covered by the study specifically requires audiences of international media, particularly the BBC; and this procedure helps greatly in weeding out irrelevant participants. All necessary caution and care were taken to ensure that relevant participants were selected to get appropriate data from them. This is because, as Morrison (1998) warns, 'no amount of cleverness will overcome the faults structured into the base material by a poor sample' (p.197). The warning was taken seriously here.

All the participants were selected from the audiences of international media in the three geopolitical zones of Northern Nigeria. As clearly explained in the 'Historical Context' chapter, Northern Nigeria is a vast region dominated by Hausa-speaking Muslims. There are Christian and other non-Muslim minorities, mostly found in the southern part of the region; and the number of ethnic groups in the region is estimated to be well over 250. Islam is clearly the main religion and Hausa language largely serves as the lingua franca. Once run under colonial administration and during the First Republic as a single region, Northern Nigeria had undergone several administrative and political changes that now see it as having 19 states as well as the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, out of the current 36-state structure that made up Nigeria. For administrative and political consideration, Northern Nigeria was structured into three geopolitical zones: Northwest, Northeast and North-central. These structures serve as the guides for

the selection of places and participants in the conduct of this research (see the map below). Different groups of international media audiences were drawn from each of these three geopolitical zones. Separate respondents were selected for individual interviews and focus group interviews (details for each zone are discussed later in this chapter).
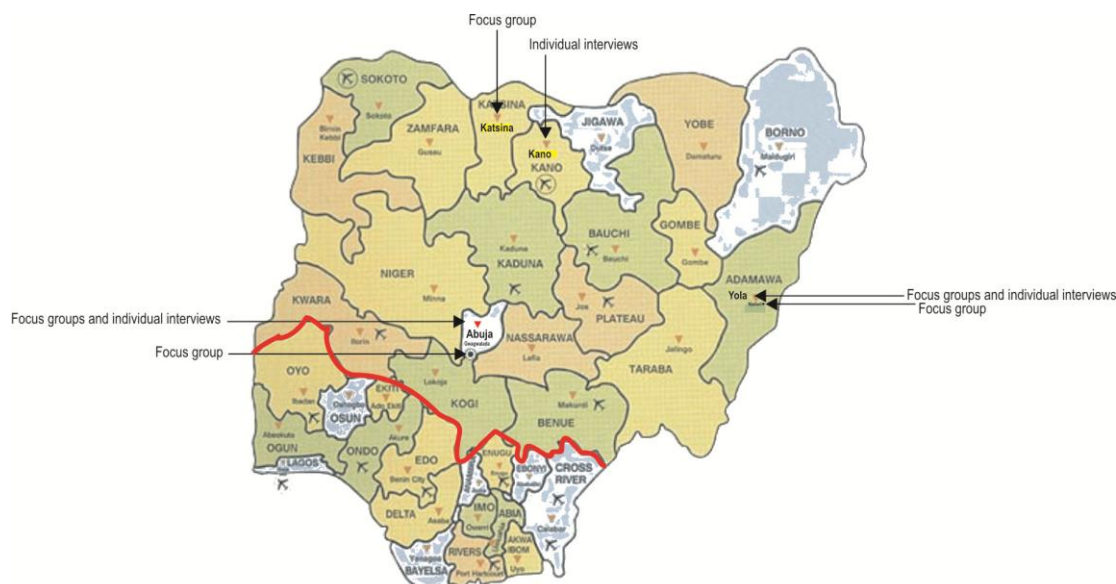
Map of Nigeria showing the places where focus group and individual interviews with the audiences were conducted (Abuja, Gwagwalada, Kano, Katsina, Njoboli and Yola). The red line demarcates Northern Nigeria from Southern Nigeria, as they were in the early colonial period, before the adoption of the 36-state structure along with the Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

Figure 5.1 Online source of the map: Nonlypictures.blogspot.com.
Available from: <http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://2.bp.blogspot.com> [Accessed 16 January 2011].

The sampling and selection of units for the study were not restricted to the reception side alone; they were extended to the content and production side too. Here too, since it was unrealistic and unnecessary to study all the production units and all the contents of BBC's broadcasts to Northern Nigeria, relevant units were carefully selected for the study. On the content side, the BBC Hausa Service broadcasts, being the most focused on Northern Nigerian audiences, were regarded as the most appropriate. From these, the broadcasts within the past three years—2008, 2009 and 2010—were considered to take care of both the recent and not too recent products of the broadcaster. After this identification, it was then decided that one transmitted programme should be selected from each of the three years. A random sampling procedure was used to select them from the BBC Hausa Service

sound archives. This was done with the assistance of the BBC Hausa Service's head and two producers at the Bush House in London.

The three transmitted programmes selected are as follows: (1) the afternoon programme of 6 October 2008, (2) the afternoon programme of 14 October 2009, and (3) the evening programme of 14 July 2010. They, of course, did not constitute the full representative samples of all the BBC Hausa Service programmes. They were essentially selected to provide examples of the form and content of the Hausa Service programmes, to get a glimpse of how the programmes were, what the nature of their content was, what were the patterns of their production and presentation and whether they conformed to the editorial policies and objectives of the producing organisation. After their careful selection, they were transcribed, translated into English language and analysed (they constitute the first part of the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter). And, as already seen in the preceding chapter (BBC and Northern Nigerians), two important bits of BBC's coverage of Nigeria that sparked controversies in the country—*The Yar'adua Interview* by the World Service (both in Hausa and English) which was aired on 12 January 2010 and *Welcome to Lagos* run by BBC2 television on the 15th, 22nd and 29th of April 2010 (BBC2, 2010)—had been discussed as part of that chapter.

Other selections that were also done here relate to the periods covered by the BBC's annual audience surveys in Nigeria; and the participants picked for the study of the production side. These, though, were based more on availability than on any systematic sampling procedure. The BBC annual survey reports this researcher was able to access ranged from the surveys' brief summaries for the years 1996/97, 2002/03 and 2003/04 to the reports of the surveys for the years 2004/05, 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10. This was facilitated by the help of the executive editor of BBC's African region and the BBC's marketing, communications and audiences' department. Useful data from all of them were utilised in this research; but it was the surveys for the years 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/2010 that were specifically selected and extensively analysed to get the full picture of the composition of the BBC's audiences in Nigeria, their demographic features, their programming preferences and their assessment of the

station in comparison to its local and global competitors (it forms the second part of the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter).

The selection of the subjects for the study of production side was essentially based on expertise and availability. Based on the researcher's personal experience, having worked for the BBC World Service (particularly the Hausa Service), it was easy to know that the BBC executives, editors, producers and reporters are generally very busy people with little time to spare for other people's work. For this reason, and the fact that some staff might be unwilling to talk, it was clear from the onset that it would be difficult to get many of them to talk. This necessitated the need to identify those of them who had expertise on the subject for this research and target them for interviews. Experience of working for the corporation and contacts with the staff helped in identifying the persons with enormous expertise on the subject matter. They were, as stated earlier, the executive editor of the African region at the Bush House in London, the Abuja bureau editor (in Abuja office, Nigeria), the former World Service correspondent in Nigeria who became producer in the World Service newsroom at the Bush House in London, the former senior producer/senior reporter who left to become a senior manager of a Nigerian newspaper company, and the senior correspondent for the Hausa Service and African Service who had also worked as a producer in London. They were all contacted individually, and each of them graciously agreed to grant a face-to-face interview to the researcher at their convenient times. The data generated from the interviews conducted with these personnel, as stated earlier, proved very valuable in the examination of the production side. It produced the 'Results and Analysis II' chapter.

Focusing on the Northeast

The interrogation of the reception side constituted the key part of this research, and the methodological and sampling endeavours devoted to it were equally great. As stated above, Northern Nigeria was structured into three geopolitical zones: Northwest, Northeast and North-central. This geopolitical division guided the selection of places for the conduct of this research. The Northeast zone, to start with, is dominated by Muslims, although it has a large Christian and other non-

Muslim peoples, and has a large number of ethnic minorities. The dominant ethnic groups here include Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, with the Hausa language being the lingua franca across the zone. It has six states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno (of the famous Kanem-Bornu Kingdom, see 'Historical Context' chapter), Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. This zone was considered very important and was given considerable attention in this research because the BBC's annual surveys show that the BBC has huge audiences here, and their number has been rising even at the time when the audience figures in other zones were declining (BBC World Service, 2007; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). For instance, the 2008/09 survey notes that BBC listening has witnessed 'small increases in the North Central and North East regions' (BBC Global News, 2009); and the following year's survey reveals that, even though audiences have particularly decreased in Northwest and North-central regions, 'listening has increased in the North East' region (BBC Global News, 2010).

These put the Northeast as a region with a favourable BBC reception, and deserving of this research's attention. Within the region Adamawa State was picked as the right place for the study. It was selected for ease of access to the audiences (mainly because the researcher had familiarity with the area, having worked there as a journalist), for its centrality in the region and for the composition of its peoples (it has a large Muslim population—mostly Fulani—and several ethnic minorities; and both the Christian population and the Muslims generally live peacefully with each other here). The researcher's wide contact with its peoples and good knowledge of the area also minimised the difficulties of getting the respondents and in organising the individual interviews and focus group discussions.

The state capital, Yola, a drab dusty city founded in the nineteenth century, is the place where many subjects for the interviews were selected. Established by a famous Islamic scholar, Modibbo Adama, who had handled the far-eastern portion of the nineteenth century *djihad* spearheaded by Usman dan Fodio that led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate (see 'Historical Context' chapter), Yola was the headquarters of the old Adamawa Emirate which covered substantial parts of north-eastern Nigeria and northern Cameroon (Abba, 2003; Njeuma, 1978). The

Fulani-dominated Adamawa Emirate was founded at the beginning of nineteenth century but was overrun in 1901 when the British in Nigeria and the Germans in Cameroon deposed its rulers after brutal military campaigns (Njeuma, 1978). The British part remains in Nigeria and constitutes parts of present-day Adamawa and Taraba states while the German part (which eventually ended in French hands after Germany's defeat in the two world wars) is now in the present-day Cameroon Republic (Njeuma, 1978).

Yola might have lost its prestige as the headquarters of the largest emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate, but at least it is still the capital of Adamawa State. It currently boasts of many educational institutions, including the Federal University of Technology and American University of Nigeria (which offers American-style university education), and several small-scale industries and businesses. It is the city where participants for two separate focus groups and individual interviews for this study were selected. Before even the participants were sampled, though, the first pilot study (a pilot focus group) was conducted in the city as a trial to test how the focus group interviews would likely be. In this respect ten BBC listeners were randomly selected and invited for a group interview at Yola Press Centre in the centre of the city on Saturday afternoon, 13 June 2009. Five of them turned up about 30 minutes into the appointed time; and another two came in some 15 minutes later (keeping to time is not a well-known part of Nigerian culture). The other three did not show up and did not send any excuse. But the seven available, all men aged 31 to 49, constituted a good number. The researcher ordered for soft drinks for them from the Press Centre's canteen, and the discussion commenced in a lively fashion. That was how the first pilot focus group interview was conducted and the discussion lasted for about one hour. Another pilot focus group was conducted in Katsina for the same purpose. They both provided a good guide on how the subsequent focus groups for the main study were eventually conducted.

Side-by-side with the planning and organisation of the focus groups, individual interviews with the audiences were also being planned in Yola and other places identified for them (more on this later). The individual interviews were easier to plan and conduct; and no pilot was conducted ahead of them as the researcher's journalistic skills and background provided adequate guarantee of carrying them

smoothly. The respondents were selected through purposeful sampling procedure. It was decided that they should all be listeners of global broadcasters, particularly the BBC; should come from different professional or occupational backgrounds; and should be of varying age and gender (though insisting on getting female respondents was not really productive as cultural barrier here did not encourage women to participate in this kind of session with a man; and, in any case, BBC's audience surveys indicate that the audiences tend to be predominantly male). Still, efforts to include women were pursued with some little success. The individual interview part was the first to be conducted; and four respondents were selected in Yola. They are: the publisher of a local newspaper, the female school administrator, the former soldier-cum-parliamentarian and the television producer. Each of them was interviewed at length (average of 13 to 25 minutes of recorded interview per person) at their convenient places and times. The publisher was interviewed in his office in the afternoon, the female school administrator at her home in the afternoon, the former soldier-cum-parliamentarian in his party's office in the afternoon, and the television producer at the Yola Press Centre in the morning.

Yola Group I: the lower middle class

Planning, organising and conducting the focus groups were far trickier, despite the pilot study done to prepare grounds for them. It would have been easier, for instance, if one were to do just focus groups with students or trade union members or farmers' group, as the experience would show here (more on this later). But doing it based on social class membership and residency of a place and interest in global media products was a huge task. First it required great efforts to identify a group that has strong homogeneity, whose members are audiences of international media and who are also ready and willing to meet at the same time for a panel discussion with the researcher. It took a long time and constant contacts with people in different parts of the city before the researcher managed to figure out how this could be done.

The first focus group was planned and organised with the help of two contacts who happened to be regular listeners of the BBC. They suggested several names of

persons they considered to be within their social status—roughly lower middle class—and who they believed were consumers of international media. Among the names suggested, 15 persons were contacted and requested for focus group discussion. Four of them turned down the request politely, two would not give firm commitment and nine accepted to attend. The first suggested schedule for the meeting, Saturday, 19 December 2009, failed to work, as most participants called to say it would not be convenient for them. The researcher had thought that weekend could be the most convenient time since some of them might have work commitments on working days, but it turned out that weekend was not convenient for them. Most of them were not conventional city professionals or civil servants who operate on eight-to-four (it is not five-to-nine here) work schedule; they are mainly independent small scale entrepreneurs who have greater control of their time. Through liaising with them we worked out a generally convenient schedule of Tuesday afternoon of 22 December 2009 (it was to be between 12 noon and 1:30pm, which did not interfere with their early afternoon prayer time of 1:30 to 2:00pm). One of the early contacts provided his spacious office for us in the centre of the city to hold the discussion. Of the nine persons who pledged to participate, only six came within the agreed time; two sent excuses and one came when we had just finished the discussion.

The six persons (five male and a female, and aged 33 to 60) who participated in the first main focus group discussion are as follows: a mason who runs a small construction business, a female restaurant owner, an owner of a small tailoring enterprise, a politician who is also the local chairman of retirees' union, a businessman who owns a shop in the city and a small scale businessman who is also a director of an Islamic movement *Izala* in the city. *Izala* is the short name of an Islamic sect *Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'a Wa Iqamatul Sunnah* (approximately 'Movement for the Eradication of Un-Islamic Norms and Establishment of Righteous Practices')—though it began as a radical group, it is now largely a moderate Sunni Muslim group in Nigeria but with a significant dose of Saudi-based Wahhabi ideology (Loimeier, 1997). All the six participants are regular listeners of international media, have good Islamic education and most of them have above secondary school level of Western education. Although they have varied business and occupational backgrounds, they are roughly within the same

economic and social status here. Their group could be categorised broadly as an urban lower middle class group. Other common traits noted about them in the process of discussion were that they hold similar political view—roughly centre-left political ideology, with all of them being opposed to the current ruling political party in Nigeria, the People's Democratic Party (PDP)—and they appear to be keen observers of events both locally and around the world.

The discussion opened with informal introductions, greetings and exchange of banters among the participants who had previously known one another—all of which lasted for about 30 minutes. Then the actual interview followed in a frank and open session, with participants expressing their views clearly (and sometimes passionately). It was done in Hausa language to avoid any encumbrance resulting from language deficiency. There were debates and disagreements among them over some issues, most of which they eventually arrived at a common position after long arguments—although the director of the Islamic sect and the mason tended to hold contrary views on few issues and appeared to steer others towards their respective positions (the director, for instance, strongly considered BBC to be biased against Islam while the mason viewed it largely as an objective international media). The researcher moderated and recorded the discussion. The recorded time of the main interview was about 43 minutes. The participants demanded no payment for their participation. They turned down the offer for soft drinks; they did not even drink water. They said they were happy they had participated in the discussion; and that, they said, was enough compensation for their time and lost earnings. This group, the urban lower middle class, was for easy reference named Yola Group I.

Yola Group II: the working class

The second focus group discussion was planned and organised through similar strategy. Two contacts, considered of working class background and who were regular listeners of BBC (apparently most adults in Yola do listen to BBC or other international broadcasters), were requested to help in contacting friends and acquaintances with similar background and who also accessed international media. They mentioned several names and 11 of them were contacted and invited for

panel discussion. Incidentally, in this case too, six of them turned up for the discussion, scheduled for 5:00pm on Monday, 11 January 2010. The time was negotiated with them: they did not want morning and afternoon because they were at work at those times; and they did not want weekends because they usually used them to attend to other pressing issues or for resting. The fixed time of 5:00pm, they felt, was perfect for them; they would come to the discussion directly from their work places, after which they would go home. It did not also interfere with their early and late afternoon prayer times as well as the evening and night prayer times. The chosen venue was a small open shed in the inner city where few of them usually sit and relax after working hours. When the researcher arrived there around 4:45pm, there were already five people sitting there, two of them were among the invited participants who live near the place. By 5:20pm six of the invited participants were at the venue, and when it became clear that the rest would not be able to come (four of them had sent excuses, one did not), the discussion commenced after preliminary introductions and exchanges of greetings.

The six participants (all male, aged 27 to 56) comprised of a primary school teacher, an electricity worker, a panel beater, a motorcycle mechanic, a student-teacher, and an aide to the state governor who was given the job mainly as a plan to integrate in government a member of the working class rather than as a measure of his skills or political influence (his salary is also within that of the working class category). The group as a whole, although with membership of varied occupational backgrounds, could be described as having a common social and economic standard of the working class. They are all Muslims and do listen to international radio stations, particularly the BBC and VOA. Unlike the Yola lower middle class group (which generally held a left-leaning political view), this group, although of working class status, ironically, tended to share a right-of-the-centre political persuasion, and was supportive of the ruling party. The presence of the governor's aide might have encouraged that, but he had in no way attempted to exert his views on others during the discussion. So their political leaning was most likely their self-chosen ideological tendency.

The whole discussion, conducted in Hausa language to give the participants chance to express themselves very well, was open and frank. There were

passionate arguments and strong views expressed, but there were no attempts by any of the participants to dominate the discussion or to impose their opinions on others. Incidentally, despite the wide age gap, say between the 56-year-old and the 27-year-old, and the established culture of deference (by the young to older persons) known among Hausa-Fulani people, the discussion was quite smooth with each participant putting out their arguments forcefully, unhindered by contrary views expressed by older participants. They all did it without any show of disrespect or contempt for one another's views. The participants here too did not demand payment for their efforts; no soft drink, not even water, was offered to anyone. Nearly one-and-a-half hours were spent at the venue (including the waiting time) but the actual time of the recorded interview was 31 minutes. Since the venue was an open place where people usually sit and relax, there were about seven other people watching us as we conducted the discussion. They were not interfering, though. Similarly, some passers-by regularly did stand and watch the session before walking away. They too did not interfere. The only interferences were the noises of moving motorcycles and bicycles that passed the venue while the discussion was being conducted.

Njoboli Group: the peasant group

The last focus group discussion conducted in the Northeast zone took place in Njoboli village in eastern part of Adamawa State. Njoboli is a large village some 30-minute drive from Yola (it used to take longer before a new road was constructed in the last decade to link it to the city). It is a farming community with predominantly Muslim peasants and petty traders. Located not very far away from Nigeria's eastern border with Cameroon Republic, Njoboli is typical of a Nigerian village settlement, though it has amenities such as electricity supply, schools and a road which many villages lack. The people live in houses that are surrounded by their farms and cattle and sheep and other livestock. The place was chosen in an effort to get some insights into the peasants' interactions with international broadcasters. Easy access to the village and availability of a contact person who was familiar with the area and had friends there who could facilitate a group interview prompted the selection of this place.

The contact assisted first by linking the researcher with his friend who lives in the village, and second by agreeing to be part of the planning and organising of the session. Together the details of how to identify prospective participants, reach out to them, and invite them for group interviews were worked out. The Njoboli resident, a middle-aged farmer with apparent middle level income (by the village's standard), did the leg work in the village; received regular instructions on what he should be doing; contacted prospective participants; and kept us informed of the progress being made. When it became clear that all the preliminary works had been done and the participants were ready for the discussion, an agreed time and date were fixed. On Sunday morning, 27 February 2011, the Njoboli focus group discussion was conducted. It was held under a big tree in front of the house of the Njoboli resident who had helped enormously in organising it. All the participants and the moderator sat on two wide mats spread under the tree and talked.

The number of persons invited was ten, but eight of them showed up; and among the eight, two persons declined to participate, saying they did not know what to really say about their experiences in engaging with the media. Efforts to persuade them to participate failed. However, as we were about to begin, three other people, who were not among those invited, came and joined the group at their own volition. One of them said he would like to participate in the discussion and his request was granted. In the middle of the discussion, two other uninvited persons came and sat down in the group; one of them said he would like to partake; he too was allowed to do so. In the end, there were eight participants—all males, aged 25 to 53. They comprised of a farmer-shop keeper, a farmer-student, a farmer-petty trader, a herdsman, a farmer-teacher, a farmer-cattle herder, a farmer-day labourer and a farmer-tailor.

They are predominantly peasant farmers; but since crop cultivation here is seasonal (usually from May to November when rain-fed farming is feasible), they complement their farming endeavours with other sources of income. Almost all of them keep livestock. Many of them have some knowledge of Islamic education and few of them have secondary school level of Western education (the teacher has college education). They are listeners of international broadcasters; and they appear to have greater knowledge of happenings around the world than initially

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assumed. They all expressed their views freely in Hausa language, with the researcher just moderating and recording the discussion. Over one hour was spent with them; but the length of the recorded interview was about 48 minutes. They neither demanded nor were they offered payment for their participation in the discussion. Even the Njoboli resident who did quite a significant work in organising the session did not receive anything for his contributions. The only thing some of the participants requested for at the end of the session was that they be offered lift in our vehicle to drop them at their houses—which was done gladly for them.

Focusing on the Northwest

The Northwest region is the most populated of all Nigeria's geopolitical zones, according to the Nigerian Population Commission (FGN, 2007; INEC, 2011). It is the main home base of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, though there are indigenous ethnic minorities here too. It is the most predominantly Islamic region of the entire country, though there are Christians and other non-Muslim groups too. The zone is made up of Jigawa, Kaduna (the political capital of the old Northern Region), Kano (Northern Nigeria's biggest commercial centre), Katsina (one of Nigeria's earliest learning centres), Kebbi, Sokoto (the seat of Sokoto Caliphate, see 'Historical Context' chapter) and Zamfara states. The Northwest has always been a key target area for the BBC Hausa Service, and has been a big supplier of audiences. The latest BBC audience survey, though, indicates a decline of audience figures in the zone (BBC Global News, 2010). The 2009/10 survey notes that for that year in Nigeria generally the Hausa Service 'audiences have fallen' and 'the decrease is particularly evident in the North West and Central regions' of the country. 'The main reasons given by Hausa speakers for listening less frequently are poor reception quality, lack of time to listen and using alternative sources' (BBC Global News, 2010).

Still, the Northwest is probably the most vital area for the BBC Hausa Service operations because of the magnitude of its geopolitical and historical significance to the station as seen from the nature of its composition noted above. After all, the battle for the hearts and minds of the Muslims is one of the major concerns of

many international broadcasters now (Thussu, 2005, 2006; Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). Getting a glimpse of the BBC and other international broadcasters' audiences in the region was, therefore, important for this study. The limited resources and scope of this research would not allow the generation of huge data from large samples covering the entire zone. As such a decision was made to get some audiences from Kano and Katsina to generate data that could provide some insights into their interactions with global media. It was resolved that lengthy face-to-face individual interviews with some selected *Kanawa* (Kano people) and a focus group with *Katsinawa* (Katsina people) would help in meeting this need.

The *Kanawa* identified for the individual interviews are as fellows: a university lecturer, a former female newspaper editor and a factory worker. They are all regular consumers of international media, and they provided detailed information on their interactions with, and thoughts about, the international media. Kano, the most prosperous city of the Sokoto Caliphate, has a long history of vigorous intellectual, industrial and commercial activities, and boasts of the largest urban centre and highest population figures in Northern Nigeria (Ado-Kurawa, 2004). Metropolitan Kano consists of eight local government areas and the 2006 census shows that it had at that time a population of over 2.8 million (FGN, 2007). Kano State as a whole, of which Kano city serves as capital, had a population figure of over 9.4 million then, according to the 2006 census figures (FGN, 2007), making it the state with the highest population in Nigeria. So the people interviewed did not, by any stretch of imagination, constitute a representative sample of Kano's international media audiences. They just gave a glimpse of what was obtainable with regard to a few of such audiences. The main consolation, though, was that this research (as reflected in the 'Literature Review' and 'Historical Context' chapters) has made copious references to a significant academic work done by Brian Larkin (2008) on Kano people's engagement with the media.

Katsina Group: the local politicians

Katsina city is just 170 kilometres away from Kano and is one of the biggest and oldest cities closest to Nigeria's northern border with Niger Republic. Previously a city-state, it was probably founded in the tenth or twelfth century (Palmer,

1926)—'there is much less information on the early history of Katsina' (Adamu, 1984, p.273). It has been a well-established centre of Islamic education since the fourteenth century (Palmer, 1926; Adamu, 1984) and was one of the early trade routes linking North African merchants with West Africans (Palmer, 1926). It had bitter rivalry with Kano, though, over the control of the trans-Saharan commerce for two centuries (Fisher, 1975). 'Early in the seventeenth century, two Kano *Sarkis* (kings) died on campaigns against Katsina,' noted Fisher (1975, p.117). 'Both Sarki Kutumbi of Kano and his son Al Haji were killed in battle by the Katsinawa, after which a treaty of peace was made between Kano and Katsina,' wrote Herbert Richmond Palmer (1926, p.226) who had served as British colonial resident for Katsina, Kano and Bornu Provinces. The war between Kano and Katsina, both under the leadership of Muslim kings, apparently ended when they were confronted by the threat of invading non-Muslim armies of Kwararrafa who actually invaded Kano and moved east to besiege the then powerful Muslim kingdom of Bornu until they 'were driven back' by its ruler Mai Ali Umarmi 'and apparently severely defeated around 1680' (Palmer, 1926, p.226).

So Katsina had quite a long history of politics, war, commerce and learning long before the advent of colonialism at the beginning of the twentieth century. During the colonial administration too Katsina was among the earliest places in the North to get Western type of schools. Northern Nigeria's first colonial education officer Hans Vischer in 1912 opened a formal Western school in the city and established in 1923 Katsina Teachers' Training College (Stewart, 1986) where a significant number of early Nigerian leaders, including its first prime minister Tafawa Balewa and Northern Nigeria's premier Ahmadu Bello, were trained. Katsina State itself produced many prominent Nigerian scholars and leaders, including former head of state General Muhammadu Buhari who later became Nigeria's opposition leader, former president Umaru Yar'adua and his brother General Shehu Yar'adua, who was the deputy of the former Nigeria's military leader Olusegun Obasanjo in the 1970s. Currently, the state capital has many higher educational institutions, including Umaru Yar'adua University and Katsina University. It terms of composition, Katsina is a classic Hausa-Fulani state, almost entirely Islamic (non-Muslims are mainly migrants), and Hausa is the native language.

The historical and geopolitical importance of the city as well as the background and composition of its population, being the natural target of the BBC Hausa Service and many other international Hausa language broadcasters, made Katsina a natural choice for focus group discussion. Familiarity with the city, being the birth place of the researcher, and massive contacts with the people—despite long absence—made it quite easy to plan and hold a focus group discussion in the city. Personal friends and acquaintances were first contacted on telephones to make contact with local community leaders and sound the idea of their possible participation in a panel discussion. Elderly community leaders did not give positive response but middle-aged elected politicians and local officials were somewhat enthusiastic. Ten of them were contacted, seven agreed, and five turned up for the discussion.

A venue was suggested by one of the participants, the secretary of Katsina Local Government Council, who along with the other participants felt that it was convenient for all of them to be there early evening. It was a construction site where some of them were building new houses, in a newly-provided site near the highbrow Government Reservation Area (GRA), the neighbourhood of the rich and influential people in the city. GRA quarters, which exist in almost all Nigerian towns and cities where colonial administrators had lived, were colonial creations meant to separate the British colonial administrators and their staff from the natives (Larkin, 2008). These were areas demarcated far away from the original towns and cities where the natives lived; it was in those reserved areas that the houses of the colonial officers and their staff were built; and they lived there during the colonial administration. After independence, however, the local administrators who replaced the colonial officials moved to those places. Many rich and influential locals too bought plots of land and built houses and moved to those areas. In the case of Katsina, though, there are still many rich and influential people who still live in the old city (as has also been the case in many other cities in Northern Nigeria). Some of them own residences in both the highbrow neighbourhood of GRA and in the old city.

The venue for our discussion was in the area that is part of the extension of the GRA; and the participants were among a growing number of 'young' politicians in

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the city whose prosperity was reflected by the new houses they were erecting. We met in the early evening of Tuesday, 22 February 2011, at the construction site. New roads were being built and their houses were near completion. We gathered in one of the uncompleted buildings, owned by one of the participants. The five participants were all male, aged 34 to 50, and apparently comfortable with their positions as local officials in the city. They comprised of the secretary of Katsina Local Government Council, its supervisory councillor in charge of education and social services, supervisory councillor in charge of agriculture, one elected councillor, and a former bank worker-turned-politician. They all have at least college-level education, have wide access to a variety of international media products and were well exposed to local politics, which was not surprising, considering the fact that they are career politicians.

The discussion was held openly and freely, unhindered by any form of interference. The participants were very familiar with one another, and none of them attempted to force his views on others. There were some divergence of views on some issues at the beginning but gradually their views began to converge as each participant brought forward his arguments. The whole discussion was conducted in Hausa language. The researcher served as the moderator while at the same time tape-recording the session. The recorded length of the discussion was 33 minutes. The time spent with them was well over one hour, though. There was obviously no demand for payment for participation in the discussion; and given their comfortable social status, no offer of drinks was made to any of them, knowing fully well that it would be turned down.

Focusing on North-central zone

The North-central zone presents a different scenario from both the Northwest and Northeast regions' in multiple ways. The historical background of the region, the composition of its population and the reports of BBC's audience surveys about the station's audiences in the region collectively provided a picture of quite a complex region. The states of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau as well as the Nigeria's capital Abuja made up the region; but the difference with the other regions is better viewed from a wider perspective. While the Northwest and to a

large extent the Northeast have predominant Hausa-Fulani Muslim population, the North-central could more appropriately be described as the region of Northern Nigeria's ethnic minorities—some of whom are majority in their respective states, such as the Tiv in Benue State, the Nupe in Niger State and the Igala in Kogi State. The dominance of Islam is also an area of contestation in this region. It may be obtainable in states like Niger, Kwara, Nasarawa, the Federal Capital Territory Abuja and perhaps Kogi; but Plateau and Benue are predominantly Christian states. And most people in Kwara and part of Kogi (the Okun people) have greater linguistic attachment with their Yoruba kinsmen in the Southwest than with the Hausa-speaking people of the Northwest, even though they largely share Islamic affinity with the latter.

In terms of trends regarding BBC audience figures in the region, the situation is equally fluid. The 2008/09 survey indicates that the BBC audiences in the region have increased slightly but the following year's survey shows that BBC listening has decreased significantly in the region (BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). Similarly, while the Northwest and Northeast were clearly identified with strong BBC Hausa audiences, the North-central zone was identified with both Hausa and English audiences (BBC Global News, 2009). This could be understood from the background of the strong presence of both Hausa-speaking people and non-Hausa speakers in the region. As a whole the North-central region presents a combination of complexity and dynamism deserving of careful examination. Gauging global broadcasters' audiences' perspectives in the region became imperative for this study. To do this effectively, it was decided that both individual interviews and focus group discussions should be conducted in the region. The obvious location is the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, for its centrality (in the region and for the whole country), its accommodation of diverse groups (both those within and those outside the region) and its accessibility (by air and by road). The researcher's familiarity with the city, having served as his former working place, and the availability of contacts to help in picking out participants were additional benefits.

The Federal Capital Territory is a fairly new creation that came into being after the federal military administration of General Murtala Mohammed realised in the mid-1970s that Lagos was too congested to remain as Nigeria's federal capital. They

also apparently wanted a central and fairly neutral place that was not dominated by any major ethnic group to serve as a unifying city for the country, hence Abuja's eventual appellation as "Centre of Unity" (Ogbogbo, 2005). They set up Justice Akinola Aguda Committee which in 1976 identified the most central place in Nigeria that was lightly occupied by indigenous Gwari (Gbagyi), Gwandara and Bassa peoples (many of whom have now relocated to the outskirts of the city) and suggested it as the best location for a new capital (Ogbogbo, 2005; FCT, 2010).

Historically, the old Abuja was founded by the Hausa ruling dynasty of Zaria in the fifteenth century but it did not fall under Sokoto Caliphate after the nineteenth century *djihad* (as the other Hausa-controlled territories did), though it did fall under its 'political suzerainty' during colonialism due to the indirect rule system (Ogbogbo, 2005). Similarly, Ogbogbo (2005) noted, although Abuja's original 'inhabitants were predominantly practitioners of African traditional religion, a good number of them later embraced Islam and Christianity, during the colonial era'. As a centrally-located and sparsely occupied territory, Abuja became attractive to Justice Aguda's committee. So when the committee completed their study, they recommended that Abuja become Nigeria's new capital. It was built as such, and by December 1991 some federal establishments, including the Presidency, have already relocated to the new city.

Many more government establishments relocated later, and new ones were also established. Diplomatic missions and embassies, big international and local business concerns, small scale enterprises and local shops have all found themselves in the new capital. The headquarters of the West African regional grouping, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the regional office of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are also located there. With all these, come hundreds of thousands of people who are trooping and settling down in the city. 'Twice the size of Lagos, Abuja was planned to accommodate a population of 3.1 million people when fully developed' (Ogbogbo, 2005). It may soon exceed this target, though. Already, the 2006 census figures put its population at over 1.4 million (FGN, 2007). With an annual rate of population growth in some parts of the city put at about 20 per cent, Abuja is the fastest expanding city in Nigeria, recording the highest rate of population growth

in the country (FGN, 2007; INEC, 2011). Of course, it is not only the people in the North-central region, or people in Northern Nigeria alone, that troop to Abuja (though they might be the largest group, given the proximity and affinity factors); people from all parts of the country are moving and settling in the city.

This is a problem both for the city's administrators and for anyone doing a research that involves the city. Abuja's administrators would be dealing with the nightmare of planning for such a rapidly rising population and provisions of amenities for them while a researcher would have to contend with sampling trouble. The decision on who to pick among the residents of the city and interview to generate data that could give insights on the people's engagement with international media became problematic for this researcher. The realistic way to handle it, given the limited resources, was to seek for long-term residents who have been in the city for at least five years or who have long familiarity with the city and who are regular listeners of international broadcasters, particularly the BBC World Service, and generate the data from them. These criteria were used in selecting participants for both the individual interviews and focus group discussions.

The individual interviews, being the easier bit, were the first to be planned and carried out. Three persons with varied experiences and backgrounds were selected for lengthy face-to-face interviews. They are: a post-graduate student, a veteran trade unionist and a petty trader. They were interviewed separately on different days and at the locations of their choice: the graduate student on Monday afternoon, 14 September 2009, at Abuja Press Centre; the veteran trade unionist on Tuesday afternoon, 15 September 2009, at the office of his friend; and the petty trader on Saturday night, 19 September 2009, at the home of his friend. The length of time spent with each of them was about one hour each; but the length of the recorded interview averaged 14 minutes per respondent: graduate student (13 minutes), trade unionist (15 minutes) and petty trader (14 minutes). They all responded to all the questions put to them and expressed their views quite clearly. The veteran trade unionist and graduate student were interviewed in English while the trader was interviewed in Hausa language which was later translated by the researcher. They were all transcribed and analysed along with the other individual

interviews that collectively provided the data for the 'Results and Analysis I' chapter.

Abuja Group I: journalists (the middle class)

The first focus group discussion planned and carried out in Abuja for this study was with professional journalists who are not only heavy consumers of international media products but also professional users of them and producers of local media goods. Abuja, being Nigeria's political capital hosting the Presidency and the National Assembly and all the highest echelon of the Judiciary, is the centre of intense media coverage. The coverage intensifies with the gradual rise of activities in the private sector and international presence and other related matters noted earlier about the city. The number of journalists and media outlets (both those based in the city and those with headquarters elsewhere but set up offices here) is growing rapidly. Getting a lot of journalists to interview would not be difficult. The trouble, though, was that some of them would not fit into the criteria designed to select participants for this research. The main criteria set for picking participants within this region were, therefore, applied in selecting the journalist respondents, too. They have to be long-term resident of Abuja and consumers of international media goods, particularly the BBC World Service's products, in addition to being journalists.

These criteria were met by many journalists in the city and about eleven of them were identified and requested for participation in focus group interview. They were all willing to partake but three of them could not spare time for it, while two others who initially agreed had to back out at the last-minute because of some emergency assignments they had to do. The remaining six were, however, ready for it; and we met at the line editors' room of the Media Trust's head office in Jabi, one of Abuja's suburbs, for the session. They comprise of a deputy daily newspaper editor who is also a former editor of a weekly publication, a political editor, a sports' editor, a business editor, a deputy news editor and a deputy political editor. They are well educated—each has at least a university degree— and have long experience in the profession (an average of ten years' journalism practice). With their educational and professional backgrounds and apparent

comfortable income (as stated earlier), the members of this group appeared to have a conventional middle class status by Nigerian or even universal standard.

They seemed to be well aware of what was required in focus group discussion, and there was no need to spend time for lengthy introductions and exchanges of greetings as witnessed in the previous panel discussions with other groups. Members of this group were very busy people, and some of them were working on their laptops and BlackBerry phones for the short moment spent waiting for the last participant to join the team. As soon as the nature and objectives of the research as well as the confidentiality aspects and general requirements were explained to them, the session began. It was a very vigorous and open debate, with each participant putting out his viewpoint in clear terms. The session was held in the afternoon of Thursday, 10 February 2011, in English language. The time spent was about one hour, with the actual recorded time of the interview being a little over 40 minutes.

Abuja Group II: the university students

The second focus group discussion done in Abuja was the one organised with the undergraduate students of Abuja University. The university is not located in the centre of the city (though it has an outreach centre and offices there); its campuses (both the temporary and permanent ones) are located in a nearby town, Gwagwalada, about one hour drive from Abuja, on the way to Kogi State capital, Lokoja, the town hosting the confluence of Nigeria's two biggest rivers, River Benue and River Niger. Driving from Abuja to Gwagwalada is quite difficult nowadays because the major road linking the two places is also the road to the city's airport, Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, which has been undergoing reconstruction work for several months now. There were heavy traffics and road diversions and reckless driving along the road. It took more than two hours of difficult driving from Abuja to reach Gwagwalada, and the delay nearly killed the planned focus group with the students.

The discussion was planned some eight months earlier. It started with the help of a lecturer in the university who introduced the researcher to the president of the

national association of political science students of the institution in February 2010. The researcher maintained contact with the president and sought his assistance for a focus group interview with undergraduate students, briefing him on the kind of participants required. The president started working on that, but the university was closed for holiday before he managed to finish. When the school resumed and the president was ready to proceed with the planning for the session, the researcher was not in Nigeria at that time. By the time the researcher returned, the president, who was a final year student when the discussion began, has already completed his studies and left the university. Luckily, however, his successor was his friend and he introduced the researcher to him.

It was with the new president, a tall gentleman in his 20s, that the plan for the focus group proceeded, still with some assistance of the former president. They remained in touch with the researcher, providing updates on the progress of the plan and the potential participants contacted. When it became clear that every thing was in place for the session to hold, a tentative date, Saturday, 19 March 2011, was suggested as a possible day; but the former president said the students were not likely to sacrifice their weekend for any panel session. The new president was left to negotiate with the other potential participants to work out the best date. They resolved for Monday afternoon (1:00pm), 28 March 2011, at a club opposite the temporary campus of the university in the centre of Gwagwalada town. Thinking that the drive from Abuja to Gwagwalada was just one hour, as it used to be, the researcher left the city at 11:45am. The congested traffics and diversions pushed it to over two-hour drive. He did not reach the venue until 2:00pm, and by then most of the invited participants had already left. Through mobile phone conversation with the president while on the way, the researcher had already known that he was too late. The 1:00pm appointment they gave was based on their lectures' schedule which gave them one hour break within which they had hoped to attend the panel session and resume classes at 2:00pm.

By the time the researcher arrived, only the president and one other student were still waiting at the venue. There was virtually nothing to do but to wait for others to finish their classes and be persuaded to participate in the session. The president disclosed that some of the students were not actually attending a scheduled lecture;

they were attending a special lecture organised by their lecturer who had defaulted in the previous scheduled lectures and now wanted to cover for the lost session. He said that since it was not a normal lecture session, some of them had told him that when I arrived he should inform them so that they could come out for the focus group discussion. But I told him that I would be the last person to encourage that. We waited for them until they finished around 3:30pm before the session began. The researcher ordered soft drinks and snacks at the club's canteen for them and opened the session. There were ten students—nine males and a female—most in their 20s and two in their early 30s. They were all undergraduate students in their final year, except one who was a year behind. Just as the discussion began, one of the students excused himself saying he had an urgent matter to attend to. Some of the participants frowned at him (apparently feeling bad that he took the drinks and snacks without partaking in the discussion), but the researcher quickly told them that there was no compulsion in participation.

The remaining nine students participated in the discussion, and most of them spoke passionately to express their views. Only two of them—the female (who left before the completion of the session) and one other student—spoke in less passionate way, though they too spoke clearly with conviction on what they believe in. The discussion was done in English language. The venue was very noisy, with very loud sound coming from a huge power generating set supplying power to the club (electricity supply was very poor in Nigeria) and a small noisy market nearby adding to the problem. Other students too were coming and going out of the venue, but they refrained from interfering in our discussion. With the exception of the noisy interference, the session was very lively, lasting longer than any of the other sessions, mainly because of the number of participants (which was the largest of all the other discussions) and also because of the students' apparent tendency to put out lengthy arguments in defence of their positions. Apart from the one-and-a-half hours spent waiting for the other participants to return, the time spent with them was about one hour, 35 minutes. The time spent recording the discussion was one hour, four minutes. Again, it was the longest of all the other recorded sessions.

Ethical issues

The methodological approach employed for this research tried to conform to all the ethical principles required for a research of this nature. All the participants and contacts involved in this research were adequately and clearly informed of the nature of the research and its aims and objectives. They were all treated openly and politely in a fair and even-handed manner. The respondents were given complete assurance of confidentiality in all the views they expressed. There were some who clearly said that they were not worried about confidentially and that their names and other details could be included. These were some of the people whose details were slightly mentioned in some cases. But as a whole there was a deliberate effort to keep all the respondents' details in confidence. Any qualification given to any respondent must be in a situation where it was believed that a mention of such person's post could add to the quality of the data used, and it was done with the consent of the information's provider. Names of respondents were kept out to avoid exact identification and to reinforce the confidentiality principle.

On the personal level, the researcher's journalistic background has been both a help and a hindrance for this research in different ways. As someone who had worked for both the print and broadcast media, the knowledge of the operations of media and production processes must have sharpened my skills in interrogating the nature and workings of such processes and how they played out in audiences' interactions with their products. However, such prior knowledge might have equally put me in a disadvantaged position of taking things for granted or of being so much involved as to compromise the detachment expected of a professional researcher. I was very conscious of both and tried to avoid them. Of greater concern, though, was even my background as someone who has been working for the BBC World Service mostly on freelance basis on-and-off for about one-and-a-half decades; and on how independent I could be in researching such organisation. I was very conscious of this too, and tried hard to put a clear demarcation between my professional background and my academic research. The fact that the research was not funded by the organisation or any other organ with corporate interest in its

outcome made it to be even freer from any pressure that could compromise its standard.

The background of working for the BBC has actually been helpful in facilitating access to the people in the organisation that would have otherwise been very difficult to reach; just as it has been in providing the knowledge of some workings of the organisation that someone without such experience might not have known. The experience has also guided the search for appropriate persons to contact for relevant information used in the research. It has equally been useful in giving the skills for observing trends and putting them in proper context; but I refrained from including observation as part of the methodology employed here because I did not employ any systematic observation strategy in the study. Personal reflection had been helpful too, but this too has not been systematically applied here.

However, one drawback where my relationship with the BBC tried to affect this research was noticed during few of the interviews with the audiences in Nigeria. This was in the case of those audiences who recognised me as someone who has worked for the BBC and tried to answer questions in a way that they felt might please me. In a sense this created the danger of 'experimenter demand' (Morrison, 1998, p.185). I was acutely aware of this danger, and where I sensed it I took time and care from the beginning of the interviews to make it clear that the research was purely academic and had nothing to do with my work experience or with the BBC as an organisation. Similarly, in my questioning strategy I tried vigorously to show absolute detachment with whatever view any respondent was expressing, thus providing a real conducive atmosphere for them to freely voice their genuine views on any issue raised.

Summary

The methodological approach applied in drawing the primary data for this research was qualitative in nature. This was, however, amply complemented with statistical data drawn from large scale audience surveys done from a positivist research tradition. It was a unique approach adopted here successfully to maximise the benefits of the two traditions and minimise their shortcomings. Focus group

method has proved very useful in generating qualitative data from the audiences on the field, and so has individual interview technique in eliciting responses from both the media products' producers and consumers, which provided valuable insights into the interactions of the two sides. Qualitative content analysis and documentary research strategies have further strengthened the methodological efforts to enhance the quality of this research. This chapter has also unveiled the mainly purposeful sampling procedure adopted here in selecting the participants, their compositions and backgrounds, and the nature and quality of the data generated from them. The areas covered by the research and its scope—ranging from the interrogation of the production side both in Britain and Nigeria and the nature of the content being produced to the examination of their impact on their consumers in Nigeria—were equally laid out here. The locations where audiences were selected and studied—ranging from the sleepy city of Yola and the peasants' abode of Njoboli both in Northeastern Nigeria to the ancient city of Katsina in the Northwest and the rising Nigeria's capital of Abuja and the neighbouring provincial university town of Gwagwalada both in North-central region—were all revealed here, together with their brief backgrounds. The ethical issues concerned with this research, along with the pitfalls of the interrupting factors and how they were promptly addressed, were also not left out. All these were to ensure that all issues related to the methodological realm were clearly brought out and resolved here to put the outcome of the study in its proper context.

VI

Contents and Quantification

Introduction

In the competitive world of international communications and changing geopolitics, global broadcasters are not merely interested in reaching transnational audiences; they are primarily interested in influencing their attitudes and behaviours. The broadcasters' potent means of doing this are their products. Programming is one of the key factors that distinguish one broadcaster from the other: it is their respective selling point, their instrument of retaining and expanding their audience shares, and their strongest weapon of persuasion. The BBC World Service has distinguished itself—and often wants to be referred to— as an 'impartial' provider of international news and analysis. It does not only cover and distribute news on a global scale, but it also 'tailors' its programmes and services to meet the specific needs of various regions (BBC, 2008). It is within this framework that the BBC Hausa Service was conceived, and is being operated, to deliver services to the Hausa-speaking region of Africa, with Nigeria providing the largest number of the audiences. The World Service also assesses its reach, its performance and its reputation in the region through regular audience surveys. This chapter, apart from providing an overview of the guiding principles and structural framework that generally guide content selection and programme-making, equally contains content analysis of selected BBC Hausa Service programmes transmitted for its audiences. It also analyses BBC's quantitative surveys in Nigeria, with specific emphasis on the results obtained in the past four consecutive years, unveiling the BBC's audience figures and performance in the country, the audiences' demographics, their programming preferences and their assessments of the competing broadcasters.

Focusing on contents

As would be expected of a leading international broadcaster keen on keeping tabs on global news agenda, the nature of the daily content of the BBC World Service is generally shaped by the daily happenings around the world. The main

programming structures are determined by the BBC's aims and objectives, and guided by the *BBC Editorial Guidelines*—a book that contains every thing from procedures for content selection to guides on handling difficult subjects and coverage of sensitive events. It is usually reviewed and updated every five years to accommodate socio-political and technological changes and to meet the changing needs of BBC journalism. The latest one, released in October 2010, which accommodates changes brought in by advancement in delivery technologies, was an update from the preceding one, released in June 2005—itself a product of another review, significantly influenced by the editorial crisis that emanated from the 2003/04 BBC-Blair Government's dispute over the coverage of Iraqi War, as it was released after the Gilligan-Kelly Affair (Thompson, 2005; Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). Changing times, political environment and managerial structure of the corporation also determine the content of the editorial guidelines and the nature of its approving body. The 2005 edition, for instance, says: 'The guidelines are approved by the Board of Governors and are kept under constant review by the BBC's Editorial Policy team, who also develop other editorial policy' (BBC Guidelines, 2005, p.10). But the 2010 guidelines were 'written by the BBC Executive and approved by the BBC Trust' (BBC Guidelines, 2010) to reflect the fact that the BBC Trust is now the governing body of the corporation.

Essentially, the guidelines are drawn in accordance with the BBC's aims and objectives, and they in turn serve as a guide to achieving them. This forms the circle within which programmes and services are produced and distributed. The BBC World Service and its constituent language services operate within this framework. Top on the BBC World Service's aims, as indicated earlier, are:

- 'To be the world's best-known and most-respected voice in international news, thereby bringing benefit to the UK, the BBC and to audiences around the world
- To provide the most trusted, relevant and high-quality international news in the world and an indispensable service of independent analysis and explanation…
- To connect and engage audiences by facilitating an informed and intelligent dialogue – a global conversation – which transcends international borders and cultural divides…' (BBC, 2008).

The first two aims clearly deal with programming on international news and current affairs, and are operationalised in terms of gathering and transmission of news, interviews, analyses, features and related matters. The third aim relates to what they call 'global debate' that is being realised through interactive programmes, particularly those broadly branded as 'Have Your Say' which is run by almost all the services (BBC, 2008). It is called 'World Have Your Say' in the main BBC World Service English programming, 'Africa Have Your Say' in the African Service, '*Ra'ayi Riga*' in the Hausa Service, and so on. The BBC calls content coming from this and other interactive programmes 'user-generated content' since it comes from forums in which the audiences participate in 'multimedia debate and discussion' on topical issues, with a BBC presenter serving as a moderator of the debate (BBC, 2008; BBC, 2010a). But some researchers see such programmes as the BBC's strategy of achieving the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 'digital diplomacy initiatives' (Sreberny *et al*., 2010b, p.280; Hill and Alshaer, 2010).

Whether the emphasis is on the user-generated or BBC-generated content and whatever their ideological intentions are, the combined volume of content the BBC delivers to Nigerians on daily basis is enormous. It comes from its various services and through different distribution technologies accessible to Nigerians: on radio, on television and online. The global World Service English programme on radio is available for 19 hours daily; and for 24 hours on television and online (BBC World Service, 2008; BBC Global News, 2010)—it is the same content for the rest of the global audiences. The online content is delivered through the 'multi-media site **bbc.co.uk**' which 'is updated 24x7 and covers international news and in-depth analysis plus all programmes in audio online' (BBC Global News, 2010). The African English programming, with special focus on African continent, is approximately five hours a day that comes in the forms of Network Africa, World Today, Focus on Africa, Africa Have Your Say and Fast Track programmes (BBC World Service, 2008; BBC Global News, 2010).

The service that most intensely targets Nigerians is the BBC Hausa Service, with its four daily transmissions delivered on short-wave radio and satellite audio channel [the previous live news broadcast through FM partner station Ray Power

Radio, as noted earlier, was banned by the Nigerian government (BBC World Service, 2007)]. The Hausa Service content can also be accessed '24x7 online' at its multimedia site bbchausa.com and has additional hand-held mobile offerings (Tangaza, 2010). The formal schedules of the four daily Hausa radio transmissions are as follows:

- Morning transmission, *Shirin Safe*, 0530-0600 GMT (6:30-7:00 am in Nigeria)
- Late morning transmission, *Shirin Hantsi*, 0630-0700 GMT
- Afternoon transmission, *Shirin Rana*, 1400-1430 GMT (1345-1415 until 2011)
- Evening transmission, *Shirin Yamma*, 1930-2000 GMT.

The standard format for each of these programmes, as the content analysis below will show, is set in such a way that the main news headlines come first, followed by the 'core' and 'regional' news bulletins and then the full news reports (usually starting with the top international news or Nigerian news report, if it is adjudged to be of global significance), interviews and analyses. This is the standard format for weekday programmes. There is a slight variation for weekend programmes, such that the news headlines and core and regional news bulletins are followed by one or two full news report and then talks or listeners' letters or entertainment segment. A special sports' broadcast is also aired on Saturdays, usually focusing on English premiership matches; it was added just as the *Shirin Rana* (afternoon transmission) which used to be aired at 1345 GMT was shifted to 1400 GMT (Tangaza, 2010). The full news reports, interviews and analyses are arranged in order of their significance—news worthiness, timeliness, relevance to target audiences—and are usually followed with relevant listeners' text messages. The core news bulletins are the top international news stories that make the main headlines in the global BBC English offering (taken directly from the main news basket in the World Service's central newsroom and translated for Hausa listeners) while the regional news bulletins are those about West Africa in particular and Africa in general (that also undergo similar process as the core news bulletins). Other items accorded importance in the Hausa Service programming are news about Britain, stories about the Muslim and Arab world, news about the developing countries that Hausa listeners can easily relate to, and reports on health, education and other developmental issues. They are drawn from the World Service's newsroom or from other regional services, and translated by the Hausa

Service staff both at the Bush House in London and BBC's Abuja bureau in Nigeria. News reports, features and analyses from Nigeria, Niger, Ghana and Cameroon where the Hausa Service has resident reporters are often original sent in by the reporters. They are edited by the producers or editors and arranged along with other reports and transmitted to the listeners.

To clearly illustrate the nature of the form and content of the BBC Hausa Service programme, three different programmes, transmitted in three different years (2008, 2009 and 2010), were randomly selected and analysed here. They were taken from the sound archives of the Hausa Service's transmitted programmes, listened to, transcribed, translated into English language and analysed. The first programme was transmitted in the afternoon of 6 October 2008 (Hausa, 2008) (see Appendix I); the second was transmitted in the afternoon of 14 October 2009 (Hausa, 2009); and the third in the evening of 14 July 2010 (Hausa, 2010). As clearly explained in the preceding 'Methodology' chapter, these selected programmes are not by any stretch of imagination a representative sample of the BBC Hausa Service programmes that have continuously been transmitted for over half a century. They were primarily selected to illustrate the nature of the form and content of the Hausa Service programmes so as to get some insights into the station's programming structure, the arrangement of the contents, the patterns of their production and presentation and how they conform to the editorial policies and guidelines as well as the aims and objectives of the producing organisation. The form is identified in the kind of language and style used in the programmes and the way the items of the programmes were arranged and presented. The contents are analysed on the basis of the nature of the stories handled, the areas covered, the kind of emphasis given and the perspective taken as well as their conformity—or lack of it—to the BBC World Service's objectives and BBC's editorial guidelines. It is a qualitative content analysis presented under the following headings: 'Dose of international news and current affairs'; 'A Western perspective?'; 'From local to global perspective'; and 'The integration of interactivity'.

Dose of international news and current affairs

To start with the form, each of the three selected programmes is 30-minute long; is based on the Hausa Service's in-house standard format; follows identical technical procedure; and is presented in a simple broadcast language. Standard format here means editorial stratification of the programme, starting it, in this instance, with the news headlines and news menu (the most exciting news or clips of the programme), followed by core news bulletins and then full reports and interviews or analysis (see Appendix I). It is based on the BBC Hausa Service template designed by the station for the producers and presenters of its programmes to follow. It is sometimes modified or slightly altered as situation warrants, say, in the case of blanket coverage of big breaking news. In these three programmes, though, the standard format was strictly adhered to. The technical procedure, on its part, refers to the studio-enhanced strategies of demarcating different segments of a programme with assigned signature tunes signifying the opening of the programme, the news headline space, the starting and ending of news bulletins, the middle of the programme, the sports segment (for those with sports), and the completion of the programme. It was followed to the letter in each of these three transmitted programmes. In both editorial and technical spheres all the three programmes therefore follow the same template provided by the BBC Hausa Service.

The variation is, of course, in the contents because each of the programmes contains the reports of the happenings at its particular time on the specific areas and subjects it treated. This is clear right from the news headlines down to the final item in the programmes. The 6 October 2008 programme has four headlines with one menu clip in the middle as follows:

- *The global financial markets have slumped today, despite efforts by world leaders at the weekend to bolster financial institutions.*
- *In Accra, Ghana's capital city, some influential Nigerian and Ghanaian businessmen are holding a meeting. What do they want to achieve?*

 Our hope is that the leaders of these two countries (Ghana and Nigeria) would agree to implement whatever is discussed and agreed upon (at this meeting).
- *And in Niger Republic, the government has announced next year's budget.*
- *You would also hear that a conference has begun in Abuja aimed at boosting Northern Nigeria's economy.*

The 14 October 2009 programme has five headlines with one menu clip tucked deep inside:

- *The BBC has learnt that President Obama's government had informed Britain that it would soon release details on its planned military surge in Afghanistan.*
- *The European Union has said that the Guinean military leader should be prosecuted over human rights abuses.*
- *Bauchi State government in Nigeria has sacked 40 government officials. Stay tuned to find out why.*
- *We will also hear the outcome of the talks between African parliamentarians and authorities in Niger Republic (over the political stalemate in that country)*

They are our brothers and elders in West Africa who came here to know what is happening. We have explained things to them and they are satisfied.

- *The Ghanaian government has distanced itself from a report on the sale of the country's communications company* (to a British firm Vodafone).

The 14 July 2010 programme has four headlines with one menu clip in the middle:

- *The Iranian authorities have said that the country's nuclear scientist who disappeared in the United States is now on his way back home.*
- *More than ten Francophone countries from Africa are attending the anniversary of Bastille Revolution in Paris. How do commentators view African leaders' attendance of this anniversary?*

France wants to show to the world that it still commands respect among its former colonies and that it has the influence of a former colonial master.

- *The Director General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, Jacques Diouf, has visited Nigeria; we will hear what he goes there to do.*
- *We will also hear what effort the Cameroonian anti-graft agency is putting in fighting corruption in the country's health sector.*

As clearly seen above, the contents are obviously different; but the formats are identical. The way and manner the news headlines and menus in all the three programmes were organised and presented are virtually the same, the language in all the programmes is simple and the structure of the line up of the stories is similar. At the top of all the headlines in all the three programmes is the leading international story in the BBC at that particular time: the slump of global financial markets (for the 6 October 2008 programme); the Obama troop surge (14 October 2009); and the Iranian nuclear scientist's return (14 July 2010). These are most likely the lead stories for all the other services in the World Service at those times. The Hausa Service led with them in line with the World Service's objective of wanting to be the leading provider of global news. The leading international

stories were followed by important stories linked to Africa: the European Union's call for Guinean military leader Moussa Dadis Kamara's prosecution on alleged human rights abuses; the Francophone African leaders' attendance of France's Bastille Day anniversary—the 14 July French National Celebration marking the storming of Bastille Prison and the beginning of the eighteenth century French Revolution (Lusebrink and Reichardt, 1997); the Senegal-born UN Food and Agriculture Organisation chief Jacques Diouf's visit to Nigeria; and the controversy over the sale of Ghana's national telecommunications company to British firm Vodafone. Coming along with them were the West African regional stories (the Nigerian-Ghanaian businessmen's summit in Accra and the West African parliamentarians' meeting with Niger Republic's politicians over the country's political crisis, sparked off by the then President Mamadou Tandja's decision to extend his tenure in office) and the local stories on Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon—a sort of glocalisation (Robertson, 1992) strategy in the news line up.

After the news headlines, the next segment in each of the three programmes belongs to news bulletins, arranged in order of their perceived global importance, news worthiness, strength, timeliness and significance to the target audiences. The 6 October 2008 programme contains five bulletins—four central core news and one African-related bulletin. They are as follows: the sharp fall of stock market prices in Europe and Asia; the planned meeting of European finance ministers to discuss the global financial crisis; the unprecedented $5.2 billion loss suffered by a leading Chinese insurance firm; Pope Benedict's reaction to international financial crisis; and the call by the prosecutor of International Criminal Court for a renewed effort to arrest Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Koni over his soldiers' attack in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The 14 October 2009 programme too contains five news bulletins—four central core news and one on Nigeria—arranged as follows: the Obama troop surge in Afghanistan; the Afghan foreign minister's call for more recruitment and training of Afghan soldiers; US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's comments on her visit to Moscow to rally support for sanction against Iran; US State Department's call for Guinean military leader to resign (it was joined with the story of EU's call for his prosecution); and the abrogation of a law in Nigeria that barred hospitals from treating accident victims without police report. In the same fashion with the two previous programmes, five news

bulletins—this time all central core, but one with strong link to Africa—were put in the 14 July 2010 programme. They are as follows: Iran's announcement that its nuclear scientist, reported to have disappeared last year in US, was now on his way back to Tehran; Israel's blocking of the latest attempt by rights activists to ship aid to Gaza; a violent attack on two offices of the intelligence service in southern Yemen by suspected Al-Qaeda militants; NATO's confirmation of the killing of three of its soldiers and five civilians in an attack in Kandahar in Afghanistan; and Bastille Day celebration in Paris with Francophone African leaders in attendance.

The news bulletins combined with the headlines took the first six minutes of each 30-minute programme. They set the tone for, and give a clear picture of, the entire programme. The full news reports and interviews that constitute the bulk of the programmes are mainly the elaboration of the news contained in the headline and bulletin segments, plus two or three others on subjects that were not judged to be strong enough to feature in either. In the 6 October 2008 programme, those additional items are: the report on Commonwealth communications conference in Nigeria's capital Abuja; the World Teachers' Day celebration (Nigeria's ceremony covered); and the European Union's opening of its first immigration centre outside Europe, in the Malian capital Bamako to curtail illegal immigration of West Africans to Europe. The additional full news reports in the 14 October 2009 programme are: the anti-fake drugs campaign in Niger Republic; the report on global hunger index; and sport news mainly about European club players and qualification for football world cup in South Africa. For the 14 July 2010 programme, the additional reports are on the Nigerian national oil firm's debt denial and the controversy over road construction contract in the Northern Nigeria's city of Kano by a Chinese company.

Despite the time differences—the one-year gap that separates each programme from the preceding one or the two-year space between the first and the last programmes—and the various changes that occurred in between them in the rapidly changing world and the variations of the stories they contain, all the three programmes present the sameness paradigm: the identical technical procedure and standard format that comply with the BBC Hausa Service template as stated

above. Crucially, all the three programmes were made up of hard news focusing on international, African and West African affairs, full of politics and economics. Overall, from the headlines through the bulletins down to the full reports, these programmes have provided a general picture of the daily diet of news and current affairs that the BBC Hausa Service serves to its audiences.

A Western perspective?

A key binding thread that seems to run through all the three selected programmes is the perspective from which the main stories were treated and the prominence accorded them. All the leading news stories and even the other central core news in all the programmes are stories of great relevance to the West and therefore privileging a Western viewpoint. They are, of course, important to non-Westerners as well, especially those in the regions directly affected by the events being reported; but they do hold a greater significance in the Western world. The report on the global financial markets' slump, the European finance ministers' meeting over it and the other related stories that dominated the 6 October 2008 programme did have international significance, but that significance was of greater resonance in the West than it was, for instance, in Africa. Similarly, the stories that received highest prominence in the 14 October 2009 programme—the Obama troop surge in Afghanistan, Clinton's campaign for sanctions against Iran and even the US-EU pressure for resignation, and prosecution, of Guinean leader over human right abuses (to stress the moral concern of the West while African leaders were largely silent)—were more significant from the Western point of view and to those directly affected (Afghans, Iranians and Guineans) than to those in other areas. The same can be said of the stories that dominated the 14 July 2010 programme— the Iranian nuclear scientist's return to Tehran from US; the violent attack on two intelligence offices in southern Yemen by suspected Al-Qaeda militants; the NATO's confirmation of killing of three of its soldiers and five civilians in Afghanistan; and the Bastille Day celebration in Paris with Francophone African leaders in attendance. They are generally stories that are directly linked to the West—even those with strong regional appeals do have some links with the West.

Similarly, stories that may have some potentials of being promotional of Western opponents tend to be treated with some cautions. The Iranian scientist's return, for instance, was of propaganda value to Iran; but it was treated in a way that probably denied it that value. This is how it was reported:

Iran has said that one of its nuclear scientists is on his way back to Tehran after his disappearance in the United States a year ago. Its foreign ministry said Shahram Amiri will fly back en route Qatar, and is expected to arrive in Tehran on Thursday. Iran had said Shahram Amiri was kidnapped by Americans; and the foreign ministry said it would seek for compensation. The United States (however) *said that he had defected to US of his own volition and that he was free to return home at anytime. US State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley said America is not in the business of kidnapping people: "Ah, he is here of his own volition and he has chosen to return to Iran of his own volition. This is how we run our affairs here in the United States. We didn't kidnap him and bring him here and prevent him from returning to Iran," he said. The Iranians have said that they had assured Amiri of his safety and well being.*

The BBC here used its conventional style to treat this story—as it generally treats news stories—by ensuring that the elements of impartiality and balance were maintained. But in the process of doing that, it has also checked the propaganda edge Iran could have gained from the story, and perhaps even handed it over to the Americans. By balancing the story with the American side (supported with a sound bite from the US official in the 55-second bulletin), the BBC has effectively denied Iran the propaganda benefit of the story and even put the listeners in doubt of what really was the truth about the matter. One can, of course, argue that in the shadowy world of espionage and psychological warfare, separating facts from fictions is always a difficult task; and that the best the media can do (if they are not willing to devote resources and uncover the truth for the public) is to, at least, reflect all sides of the story—which in this case the BBC has attempted to do. But then, even at that, the media's orientation often determines which side receives a more favourable representation.

Generally, the BBC does attempt to adhere to its key editorial value of 'impartiality' (BBC Guidelines, 2005, 2010)—a situation that has in turn helped it to gain audiences' trust. But this does not change the fact that it is a Western cultural institution with Western values and orientation that are bound to be reflected in its products. As Hill and Alshaer (2010) observe, the BBC's claimed impartiality was equally open to questions. 'What the corporation's claims seek to

ignore or obfuscate is that, whilst the BBC may avoid making explicit identifications with the actors in the stories it covers, there is no "neutral" language or standpoint that exists beyond the politico-ideological, and that can be employed in reporting the news' (Hill and Alshaer, 2010, p.155). Price *et al*. (2008) had been cited earlier as arguing that all global media organisations 'are in some measure missionaries of ideological and cultural hegemony' (p.153). The BBC is not really an exception.

Philo and Berry's (2004) study of the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by British television channels—BBC and ITN—reveals, for instance, how established institutional structures, political and corporate pressures and structural imbalance ensured that the Israeli perspective got an upper hand in the coverage. They show how the news stories, in terms of their depth and substance, the sequence and prominence and the language used and angle taken, were routinely tilted in favour of Israel. The structure of the news operations and the slick Israeli public relations machine and lobbyists, in contrast to the weakened Palestinians' position, have all guaranteed that Israel got 'preferential treatment' in the British television's coverage of the crisis (Philo and Berry, 2004, p. 199). Although Brennan (2005) has criticised their findings as being coloured by alleged political bias, Shaoul (2004) argues that the work has unpacked massive evidence to expose 'dishonest media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict' (p.21).

The revelation of the dominance of Israeli perspective in the news coverage does not only show how the supposedly unbiased media could serve entrenched interests, but it also reinforces the dominant ideology's version of media role. It has been a long-held view of the hegemony theorists of various hues (Gramsci, 1971; Althusser, 1971; Hall, 1980) that the media are ideological apparatuses that reinforce the views of the dominant class. Hall (1980) considers broadcasting organisations and their news departments as extensions of the mode of production of the society in which they operate. He asserts that from the institutional foundation of the media to the socialisation and orientation of the journalists the dominant ideology—although not always unchallenged—does pervade. The process of converting 'a raw historical event' into a story is 'not a random moment', it is an organised process pursued by the institutional structure of

broadcasting in accordance with societal codes and conventions (Hall, 1980). Furthermore, he argues, even the idea of balancing stories in reality serves hegemonic interest by 'not overtly' biasing the operation of the broadcasting organisations and thus making them to be more credible. Although Altheide (1984) has challenged the hegemonists' claim about the extent to which ideology and control of economic interests pervade the media institutions and their news production processes, he has conceded that editorial pressures do sometimes come to bear on news production and that 'virtually all mass media researchers acknowledge the economic context and rationale for modern news organisations' (p.478). So both the theoretical and empirical evidence suggest that media products do reflect the cultural values of their producing organisations.

Seen from this context, the reflection of a Western perspective in the BBC Hausa Service products is not accidental; it emanates from the wider socio-economic and political structure within which the World Service operates, and made imperative by the social reality of news production and distribution. As a constituent part of the BBC World Service, the BBC Hausa Service, as stated earlier, draws the bulk of its materials from the World Service's central pool, and the original materials it produces equally have to reflect the values of the controlling corporation. The core Hausa Service news bulletins and reports are essentially the products of the World Service newsroom. All the lead stories and the central core news bulletins as well as some of the full reports contained in all the three selected programmes illustrated above, for example, were materials taken directly from the main English World Service newsroom filed by the World Service correspondents. They were translated into Hausa language by the Hausa Service staff and transmitted to the listeners. In the treatment of the stories, the BBC's editorial guidelines emphasising accuracy, impartiality, fairness and so on (BBC Guidelines, 2005, 2010) are generally followed. This does help remove some inaccuracies and obvious bias, but it does not obliterate the inherent tone of a Western perspective—which shapes the editorial guidelines in the first place.

From local to global perspective

The BBC World Service considers itself to be a truly international broadcaster that treats events from an international, rather than from a narrow Western or even narrower British, perspective. Its former director, Nigel Chapman, highlighted this claim publicly during the launching of the BBC Arabic Television in 2008 when he tried to differentiate it from other Western channels. He said: 'In the case of *Al-Hurra*, it's an American perspective… In the case of France 24, it's a French perspective. In the case of BBC Arabic Television, it's an international perspective' (Pfaffner, 2008). This is meant to strengthen the impartiality claim, build global credibility and provide an enduring structure of plausibility among the diverse services tailored for diverse regions around the world. It is, as noted earlier, a claim that may not be wholly sustainable; but it is one that tends to give the World Service an edge over other international competitors whose method of programme-making and strategy of hiding their ideological persuasions may not be as subtle.

It is also useful for practical operation and sustainability of the language services. It would do the World Service no good, for instance, to insist that its Hausa Service reporter in Kano must become a carbon copy of its English service Washington correspondent. But it would make a great sense to provide a refresher journalism course and *BBC Editorial Guidelines* (both of which could help in inculcating some basic ideological viewpoint) to the Kano reporter and ask him/her to report local events in the Northern Nigeria's city in a way that would be intelligible to both local and international audiences. This in reality is the usual practice and it is apparently an effective way of handling local stories in the language services. The original local news reports sent to the services retain local flavour and at the same time integrate elements that make them meaningful to wider audiences—that is, apart from meeting the conventional news elements of newness, unusualness, timeliness and so on. They are sometimes linked to international events (some of them Western) or are regionally-related or have universal appeal or have significant relevance or impact to the target audiences; or have a combination of two or more of these elements.

The original news reports filed by the Hausa Service reporters from Nigeria, Niger Republic, Ghana and Cameroon Republic often meet these criteria, as can be seen in the three selected programmes. The 6 October 2008 programme, to start with, contains five of such original reports; and each can be linked to one or more of these criteria. They are: the conference to boost Northern Nigeria's economy, chaired by United Nations' official Ibrahim Gambari, who hails from the region (local relevance); the meeting between Nigerian and Ghanaian business tycoons on regional investments (regional importance); the Niger Republic's bumper budget (relevance—and unusualness, given the fact that they appear to have a relatively healthy economy at the time of global financial crisis, though this perspective was not highlighted); the Commonwealth communications conference (relevance and colonial link); and the World Teachers' Day celebration in Nigeria (linked to international event). The original news reports contained in the 14 October 2009 programme are: the talks between West African parliamentarians and politicians in Niger Republic over the country's political stalemate (regional importance and local impact); the anti-fake drugs campaign in Niger Republic, based on regional initiative (regional link and universal appeal among developing countries); the abrogation of the Nigerian law barring hospitals from treating accident victims without police report (local impact); and the sacking of 40 government officials in the Nigerian state of Bauchi (local relevance). For the 14 July 2010 programme, the original reports are: the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation chief's visit to Nigeria (linked to a global body and potential impact); Nigerian national oil firm's debt denial (local and international relevance); the attendance of Francophone African leaders to France's Bastille Day celebration (link with the West); the Chinese firm-Kano road contract controversy (link with an international firm, local relevance, and perhaps even geopolitics—it was not raised in the report, though); and the anti-graft campaign in Cameroon (local relevance and universal appeal). This has generally been the style, and with it a clear pattern of linking local events to regional or global issues has been established in the coverage of local events to make the stories more appealing to wider audiences.

The integration of interactivity

Interactivity is currently one of the most significant areas of interest in the BBC World Service's programming. First, because it is probably the most effective way of achieving the corporation's key objective of encouraging 'global conversation' (BBC, 2008)—and of attaining the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 'digital diplomacy initiatives' (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b, p.280; Hill and Alshaer, 2010). Second, because it is not only a brilliant means of engaging the audiences by allowing them to participate in the programme, but it is also a creative way of breaking the monotony of dishing out daily dose of hard news and current affairs programmes to a public that is increasingly becoming weary of digesting such materials. And third, because it is a clever strategy of employing the new communications technologies to create a greater atmosphere of trust by making the audiences to feel that they themselves create the content—with the BBC, at least on the surface, being merely a platform, an impartial disinterested umpire—and therefore less likely to be seen as part of the corporation's political agenda, and more likely to exert subtle influence (Hill and Alshaer, 2010). These, among other factors, guarantee the viability of interactivity. And the World Service, as noted earlier, dedicates for it special programmes, such as the 'World Have Your Say', 'Africa Have Your Say', '*Ra'ayi Riga*' for the Hausa Service, 'Point of Debate' for the BBC Arabic Television, and so on. Long before these special programmes were dedicated to audiences' participation, however, interactivity was already being integrated in some regular news programmes where relevant audiences' comments were aired in between news reports. This makes even the regular programmes somewhat participatory, less monotonous, more conversational and probably more attractive to a wide range of audiences.

The Hausa Service's '*Ra'ayi Riga*' was introduced in April 2010 as 'a forum for a global conversation between Hausa-speakers, wherever they are, with contributions from grassroots listeners, opinion leaders, policy makers and experts' (BBC, 2010a). It is aired in the evenings of Fridays immediately after the news; and is intended to bring listeners to the 'centre-stage, giving them the opportunity to both set the agenda and voice their views' (BBC, 2010a). For each programme a theme is selected and announced by the service two days in advance;

a panel of discussants (representing different shades of opinions) is then formed (other participants outside the panel are also allowed to partake); and a presenter moderates the live debate of the discussants and participants who make their contributions via telephone calls, text messages, Facebook, Twitter and other devices made available by the new communications technologies. Quite a variety of topics, ranging from cultural issues and health matters to national politics and international affairs, are discussed. Among those so far debated include: 'Illegal Abortion', 'Referendum on Niger's New Constitution', 'The Prospect of Eradicating Malaria in Five Years', 'Nigeria's 50th Independence Anniversary', 'Causes of Rising Cases of Divorce in Hausa land', and 'The Implications of British 2010 Elections on African Continent'. It is often a robust debate with Hausa speakers from different parts of the world putting in their contributions. The audiences do indeed produce the content, but it is the BBC that determines its nature and form. It selects the topic, shapes the direction of the debate, decides the length of time each contributor gets, and influences which contribution receives greater or more favourable attention—and which does not.

The special interactive programme, as stated above, is not the only form of participation in the BBC Hausa Service programmes. The service has, since the popularization of Short Messaging Services (SMS), been integrating interactivity in its programmes—this was apart from the old system of reading listeners' letters as part of the old feedback mechanism. The existing integrated interactivity—mainly involving reading listeners' text messages—differs from the special weekly interactive programme of Fridays in the sense that it is not the entire programme that is dedicated to it—it is like an addendum to regular programmes. It is shorter, reactive and more controlled. But it is more frequent and cumulative since it is integrated in virtually each of the four regular daily programmes of the station. Essentially, it is a system whereby text messages are sent by listeners either in reaction to news items (that were read in the earlier programmes or being read live—some text messages are sent during a live programme) or just a general comment on any topic, and are placed and read in-between news reports or towards the end of the programme. To use the three selected programmes for illustration, one can see clearly how the text messages were integrated in—or, in rare occasions, completely left out of—a programme. They were, for instance,

moderately integrated in the 6 October 2008 programme and amply used in the 14 July 2010 programme, but not included in the 14 October 2009 programme, probably because the programme was filled up with so many news items that there was no space for text messages.

The 6 October 2008 programme provides an example of a moderate integration of interactivity. The first two text messages inserted were relevant to the leading news report in the programme—the slump of global financial markets—and so at the end of the report, they were presented as follows:

In his message to us, Hassan Alhaji Dauda, Mai Kanti Inusari, says, "I salute members of the Congress in America for resolving to help revive their country's economy."
However, Sulaiman Babban Rimi, Kagarko, in Kaduna State, Nigeria, says, "America and Europe, it is your capitalist system that has thrown you into the situation you find yourselves in now".

Here the text messages serve both as accompanying comments to the leading news report and as a demarcation between that report (stock markets' sharp fall) and the next, which is the report on Northern Nigeria's economic conference. It too was followed by two relevant text messages that the presenter put out as follows:

And now here are some of your messages: "May Allah make the conference on the economy of Northern Nigeria currently taking place become useful to all states of the country". This was from Saidu Abbas Dansadau, Zamfara State, Nigeria.
"Northerners, we should have determination and contentment so as to be self-sufficient in economic and social matters," says Sa'ad Garba Kagarko.

In total four text messages were integrated in this programme; and they were linked to relevant news reports. This is a standard BBC Hausa Service programme with few text messages inserted in-between few reports to enrich them and add elements of audience participation in the programme.

The 14 July 2010 programme, however, contains a wider integrated interactivity that was handled in a slightly different manner, although the first insert followed the same pattern of linking a text message to a relevant news report. It came after the news report on the visit to Nigeria by the Managing Director of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Jacques Diouf where he spoke of the need for more investments in agriculture to tackle food shortage in poor nations. The text message that follows was presented in this way:

"May God end the poverty bedevilling Nigeria," says a message sent by Babangida Chairman Kakabori, Hadejia, Jigawa State.

This was followed by a short announcement by the presenter, imploring the listeners to send more text messages through the BBC Hausa Service's text phone number: +447786202009. More similar announcements came later in the programme, but these times urging the listeners to participate in the next '*Ra'ayi Riga*' programme or visit *BBCHausa Facebook* and *bbchausa.com* websites. All these are part of the strategy of encouraging interactivity and audiences' participation in the Hausa Service's programmes both on radio and online.

The next news report, Nigeria's national oil firm's debt denial, too, attracted text messages as follows:

"Oh, NNPC (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation)*: where have you been putting all the monies? Justice or probe can only take place on the Day of Judgment," a message from Suleiman Musa Yaro Borgu.*
"EFCC (Nigeria's anti-graft agency)*: where are you when the underhand deal was taking place?" a message from Isa Suleiman Gashua.*

Usually, running stories, like this one, tend to attract text messages that are in sync with them because the listeners had heard an earlier report and responded to it, and the comments are now put out along with the latest report. In the case of this story, there was an earlier report that claimed that the oil firm was insolvent; but the company's spokesman refuted the claim (which is the focus of this particular news report). The listeners' comments were reactions to the earlier report; but they remained relevant and were put after this report, especially as the spokesman's denial probably did not provide a convincing rebuttal of the earlier claim of insolvency that was actually made by a junior finance minister. Even the title the Hausa Service gave the news report—'NNPC Insolvency Controversy'—suggests that the last might not have been heard of the story.

A similar pattern of linking text messages to news report was maintained in the case of the comment that followed the report on Francophone African leaders' attendance of France's Bastille Day celebration in Paris:

"The Francophone African leaders' attendance of the 14 July National Day ceremony in France is a new form of colonialism," says a message from Muntari Isuhu Al-Mustafa, Niamey, Niger.

This was the last text message inserted in-between news reports, but it was not the last in the programme. Many more were used before ending the programme, although they have no link to any specific report contained in the programme. The way they were used shows that it is not only text messages related to news report that get integrated in the programmes; even general comments or advice to the public or government or specific groups are considered, as shown in the following text messages:

"My advice to Nigerian Muslims and Christians is that they should live peacefully because it is said that living in peace is more worthy than living like the royalty," says Kabiru Abubakar Bulanyaki, Shagari Local Government Area (Sokoto, Nigeria).
"(Ethno-religious) crisis is rampant in Nigeria. Fellow Nigerian brothers, we should please be tolerant and live peacefully with one another,"* a message from Engineer Ado Kafinta, Mando, Kaduna.
"The people of Wukari (in Taraba State)*: please, be patient and seek to live in peace,"* says Abubakar Alamai, Husara, Nigeria.
"The authorities in Nigeria should please provide jobs to the youths because it is poverty that leads to the internal crisis that some unpatriotic people link to religion," says Abdulkarim from Benin, Edo State.
"Nigerian female football team: you should provide succour to Nigerians since the male team has failed (to do so at the last World Cup competition in South Africa)*," a message from Attahiru Hashim, Garin-Yerima, Taraba, Nigeria.*

The generous use of text messages seen in this programme illustrates the extent to which interactivity can be integrated in the BBC Hausa Service's regular programmes. All these text messages were deliberately quoted here verbatim, and the way they were used clearly explained, to illustrate important points. First, the approach reveals the nature of interactivity that takes place and the kind of content the listeners produce, which in turn provides some insights into their worldview. Second, it is also to show that the provision of interactivity is perhaps the only opening that enables one programme to be quite different from another, despite the standard BBC Hausa Service template that seeks to impose sameness paradigm for all programmes. Consider, for example, the 14 October 2009 programme which contains no single text message and the 14 July 2010 programme which airs nine text messages and a series of announcements encouraging further audience participation. The difference can be quite significant. Third, the provision for interactivity is a great leeway handed over to the producer to have some relative control of the programme's content and to manage transmission time more effectively. The inclusion of five consecutive text messages towards the end of the

14 July 2010 programme, for instance, might have been partly informed by time consideration. The available space may be too short for a full news report and too much for the closing signature tune: putting text messages in this case achieves the benefits of greater audience participation and smooth completion of the programme's transmission.

Overall, the three transmitted programmes have clearly illustrated the nature of the form and content of the BBC Hausa Service programmes and how they fit into the general framework of the BBC World Service, conforming to the BBC's editorial guidelines and fitting into the World Service's role of providing international news service and enhancing British public diplomacy. They provide a glimpse on the kind of technical and professional procedures being employed in the production and presentation of the programmes. They also offer an idea on the nature of contents being produced, the editorial and geopolitical and other considerations affecting their placements and the reflection of the centre-periphery (Galtung, 1971) structure in their arrangement. Significantly, they equally reveal how daily programmes try to achieve the aims and objectives of the corporation by providing international news and analysis, offering forum for debate and engaging audiences for dialogue across cultural and ideological divides.

Quantification of audiences

'Audiences are at the heart of everything we do' is the opening sentence of the 2010 *BBC Editorial Guidelines* (BBC Guidelines, 2010, p.3). All broadcasters are, of course, interested in audiences because they constitute the reason for their existence. Many broadcasters do not only produce contents for audiences, but they also conduct research on the audiences to at least know who they are and what they want. The BBC is one of the leading media that are best known for showing interest in audience research. Ironically, in its early days, the BBC had resisted the idea of engaging in audience research. Its first and perhaps most influential director general, John Reith, rejected the idea and apparently saw no relevance of audience insights in programme making. He assumed that the corporation was best suited to decide for the audiences what they need without their inputs, arguing that few people 'know what they want and very few what they need' (cited in Briggs,

1985, p.55). Another executive of the corporation at that time, Hilda Matheson, the first head of the Talks Department, concurred, insisting that 'broadcasting is not mass projection, though it seems to be so, it is an individual intimate business' (cited in Seaton, 1997c, p.152). Seaton observes that 'Reith's objection to audience research' was 'based on the principle of cultural homogeneity' which he would have loved to see in Britain. 'He did not want to know popular preference, because of the danger that programme organizers pander to it' (Seaton, 1997c, p.152).

However, before his departure, Reith had to come to terms with reality: he allowed the establishment of audience research unit 'in the domestic part of the BBC in 1936 when Robert Silvey was recruited to begin more reliable ways of assessing audience behaviour and opinion than had been relied on hitherto' (Mytton, 1993, p.2). Twenty-seven years later, in 1963, Silvey went on to stress the significance of audience involvement in broadcasting, stating that 'the impact of broadcasting, and hence its power, is not to be gauged simply by examining what it brings to people. It depends as much on what people bring to broadcasting' (cited in Briggs, 1985, p. ix). Since its first experience with audience research, the corporation has never looked back. By 1974 the BBC's domestic broadcasting research department had already begun to produce an *Annual Review of Research Findings* 'about television and radio audiences in the United Kingdom' (Mytton, 1993, p.2). This was facilitated by the fact that, as a public service broadcaster, established by a Royal Charter, the BBC was required to respect public opinion and to prove that its services are beneficial to the people, former Head of BBC Audience Research Graham Mytton notes, adding: 'Audience research is an important part of its public accountability' (p.2).

However, this effort was not being extended to the external services in the early days; they were relying on feedback from listeners' letters and information from monitors of short-wave signals and from 'military intelligence and captured soldiers of the Axis powers' during the Second World War (Mytton, 1993, p.2). The problem, though, was that feedback received 'from listeners or viewers in the form of letters, phone calls or other contacts are notoriously unreliable indicators,' Mytton notes. 'The only reliable way to establish the size, nature, behaviour and

other aspects of audiences is to carry out systematic surveys among target populations' (p.3). So the BBC's external services began to organise surveys during the war; and carried them out successfully in Sweden and United States, obtaining results that showed 'significant levels of listening to the BBC' (Mytton, 1993, p.2). In 1944 the first measure of BBC audiences in India was also obtained in a random survey conducted in Bombay. Since then the frequency of BBC's international audience surveys has been increasing and the scope widening. In 1992 alone, for instance, it conducted surveys in over 30 countries (Mytton, 1993). Countries with large BBC audiences such as Nigeria receive greater attention than others, with some of them being included annually in the corporation's global audience research. For a long time now the BBC World Service has been commissioning audience surveys on its Nigerian audiences every year.

BBC's quantification of Nigerian audiences

It is through the regular surveys that the BBC identifies not only the demographic makeup of its audiences and their programming preferences and consumption pattern in Nigeria, but also the level of media penetration and the general media landscape in the country. They also generate data for it to assess its own performance and those of its partners and competitors. A range of annual surveys successively conducted in nearly one decade reveals in progressive fashion important up-to-date data that provides insights into all these areas and many more. Salient aspects of some of these surveys are highlighted and analysed here, with specific emphasis on the results of surveys released in the last four years: 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10. The pattern indicates that the surveys are usually conducted in the last quarter of the year, using face-to-face interview method with adults aged 15 and above, on an average sample size of 3,200, and released within six to nine months of the completion of the fieldwork.

The BBC's research specifications for those four years show that the results released in March 2007 came out of the fieldwork done from 27 November 2006 to 15 December 2006, using face-to-face interviews with 3,264 respondents of the estimated Nigeria's adult population of 76.1 million (BBC World Service, 2007). The 2008 results emanated from the fieldwork conducted from 24 October 2007 to

10 December 2007, using face-to-face interviews with 3,278 respondents of the estimated Nigeria's adult population of 77 million (BBC World Service, 2008). The results released in May 2009 were based on the fieldwork conducted from 28 October 2008 to 21 November 2008, using face-to-face interview method on a sample size of 2,387 of the estimated adult population of 65.4 million—the North-west population was excluded because of the inconsistency of sample compared with the 2007 data (BBC Global News, 2009). The results released in June 2010 came out of the fieldwork carried out from 30 September 2009 to 22 October 2009, using face-to-face interview method on a sample size of 3,262 in the estimated adult population of 80 million (BBC Global News, 2010).

Audience demographics

The results of the regular surveys are usually accompanied with a brief background on Nigeria, giving a short description of the ethnic composition or prevailing political or socio-economic situation of the country at the time of the survey in question. They also reveal some demographic characteristics of the BBC audiences, their geographical backgrounds and the BBC services they prefer—all these are updated in each new survey. These are extracts taken from the surveys' reports of the following years:

2004/05
> *Nigeria is a diverse country composed of more than 250 ethnic groups. English, Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba and Fulani are the main languages spoken… BBC serves two distinct markets – Hausa speakers who tend to live in the North of the country and English speakers who tend to live in the South* (BBC World Service, 2005).

2006/07
> *The English and Hausa audiences tend to be mutually exclusive; with only 5% of the BBC's weekly audience listening in both languages. The Hausa audience is predominantly Muslim…and tend to live in rural areas in the North East and North West. The English audience is predominantly Christian…fairly evenly split between urban and rural areas and primarily live in the South Eastern, Southern and North Central regions. Overall the BBC WS* (World Service) *weekly audience remains skewed towards men; 62% of weekly listeners are men* (BBC World Service, 2007).

2007/08

Nigeria is an ethnically and religiously diverse country, consisting of 36 states. English is the official language, Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa are also widespread... Launch of Shirin Hantsi *(0730 Hausa programme) is a success – attracts 11.6m listeners weekly, making it the second most listened to BBC Hausa programme (just behind* Shirin Safe *which is broadcast at 0630). The programme is mainly reaching existing listeners – tend to be male, educated up to primary school level and aged in mid 30s* (BBC World Service, 2008).

2008/09

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the leading oil producer on the continent. However, few Nigerians, including those in oil-producing areas, have benefited from the oil wealth and more than half the population lives in poverty... Nigeria is an ethnically and religiously diverse country, consisting of 36 states... Thousands have died over the past few years in communal rivalry and there is continuing tension between the Islamic north and the Christian and animist south... Umaru Yar'adua of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) won the presidency following the April 2007 elections which were condemned by local and foreign observers, who alleged widespread vote-rigging (BBC Global News, 2009).

2009/10

The most populous country in Africa and one of the fastest growing economies in the world, Nigeria is located in western Africa on the Gulf of Guinea. Although the three largest ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) contribute the majority of the population, it is home to more than 250 of such groups, each with a distinct linguistic and cultural heritage. Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in as president when his predecessor, Umaru Yar'adua, died after a long period of illness in May 2010... As the eighth largest international exporter of petroleum, oil dominates both the economics and politics of the country – evident most recently in ongoing ethnic violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta. There are hopes, however, that a recent amnesty for militants will reduce hostilities in the region (BBC Global News, 2010).

Reading them together as a whole makes it repetitive (because the report of each year is meant to stand on its own); yet each report adds something that complements the others. Putting them together presents a picture of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country of 36 states with its predominantly Islamic North and mainly Christian South and three major languages of Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo. Although it has a less stable political system and is troubled by ethno-religious rivalry, the reports further show, it has huge human capital and economic

potentials. They also consistently reveal that the Hausa audiences are predominantly Muslim Northern Nigerians while the English listeners are mainly Christians who tend to live in the southern part of the country. Both audiences are overwhelmingly male in their 30s, and that the English listeners tend to live more in urban areas than the Hausa listeners. It is a general description, but it does give a little background of the country and useful demographics of the audiences to help understand the other data generated by the surveys.

Audience figures and trends

In the last decade the regular surveys reveal important patterns and key trends with regard to the size and spread of BBC audiences in Nigeria. They have shown that within the last ten years the BBC's weekly audience figure in Nigeria averages over 20 million; that Nigeria comes top as the BBC's largest market in Africa, or the BBC's largest English market in the world (audiences for both radio and television programmes in English), or the BBC's largest radio market in the world (combined radio audiences in English and Hausa languages). These are what the surveys' reports say concerning the audience figures and trends:

2003/04

> *The World Service audience has remained fairly stable since the mid 90s, 31% listen weekly in any language (32% listened weekly in 2002). Listening is highest for Hausa, though English also picks up substantial audiences… The BBC is the leading international broadcaster in both languages and despite the fall in English listening, Nigeria is still by far the BBC's largest English market, accounting for more than one in five listeners globally. Nigeria is the BBC's largest market in Africa with 21.7 million adults listening weekly* (BBC World Service, 2004).

2006/07

> *BBC WS has maintained its weekly reach with 32% of Nigerians listening weekly, approx 24.7 million listeners. This follows strong growth* (from) *2005-06… Hausa audiences have increased, with 27% of adults listening weekly (up from 24% in 2005). This growth may be partially attributable to* 'Shirin Hantsi'*, a new morning programme, which launched during fieldwork (Dec 1st 2006). English listening has fallen and has returned to 2004 levels, after a small increase in 2005; 7% listen weekly, compared to 10% in 2005 and 7% in 2004. There has been a big shift in the frequency of listening, with people listening less often than they used to* (BBC World Service, 2008).

2007/08

BBC audience estimate has increased since 2006 from 24.7 to 25.8 million adults listening weekly – just over a third (34%) of the population listening weekly… The BBC's strength continues to lie in the Hausa market in the Northern parts of the country, with this accounting for almost three-quarters of weekly reach (BBC World Service, 2008).

2008/09

Total weekly audience for BBC in Nigeria is 26 million adults. Radio audience is 24.4 million: 5.9m in English (-2.1m) and 19.7m in Hausa (+800k). TV audience is 4.9m (-1.0m) and online audience is 69,000 (+26k)... Almost two thirds of listening to the BBC is in Hausa, with 13% of Nigerians listening weekly. This is up slightly on last year, due to small increases in the North Central and North East regions… Nigeria is the BBC World Service's largest radio market (24.4m people listening weekly) – Tanzania is the next largest African market (11.7m) (see the diagram below). *It (Nigeria) has lost its crown as the WS's* (World Service's) *leading English market for the first time in more than 10 years – USA is now the largest English market with 6m listening weekly (100k ahead of Nigeria where 5.9m listen weekly)* (BBC Global News, 2009).

Top 10 BBC radio markets in the world
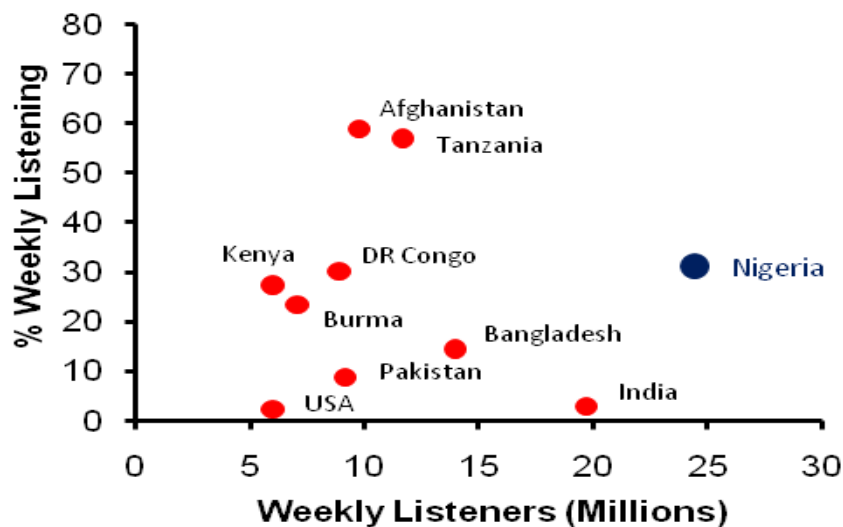
Figure 6.1 Source: BBC GND/Ipsos MORI (2009)

As can be seen above in Figure 6.1 showing ten largest consumers of BBC radio products, in terms of weekly percentages and number of listeners in millions, Nigeria comes top with 24.4 million listeners followed by India with nearly 20 million listeners. Although Afghanistan and Tanzania have the highest percentages of their adult population listening, they fell below Nigeria in terms of the number of listeners because Nigeria has much higher population figure than each of them.

2009/10

Nigeria is the BBC World Service's largest radio market (21.5m people listening weekly) and the Global News Division's second largest market (24.1m) behind the USA (35.3m). It has regained its crown as the WS's leading English market with 7.7m people listening in English weekly, overtaking the USA (6.6m) (BBC Global News, 2010).

So in terms of audience figures and trends, going through the statistics for these five different years shown above, it is clear that the BBC performed best in Nigeria in the year 2007/08 with a weekly radio audience figure of 25.8 million—perhaps the fact that the fieldwork was done during the Nigeria's election year 2007 has helped shore up the audience figures. This was followed by those of the year earlier (2006/07) with a figure of 24.7 million, then 2008/09 with 24.4 million (when added with its online and TV audiences, the 2008/09 figure rises to 26 million) and then way back to 2003/04 with 21.7 million. The worst is the result of the most recent survey, 2009/10, with 21.5 million listeners. Even when it is combined with the television and online audiences, as the new system under the newly-named Global News Division does, the weekly audience figure stands at 24.5 million, far below the peak radio audience alone of the year 2007/08 (25.8 million). The explanation provided by the 2009/10 report is that the BBC audiences decline due to a reported drop in listening to Hausa Service. It says: 'The main reasons given by Hausa speakers for listening less frequently are poor reception quality, lack of time to listen and using alternative sources – of which State radio and Freedom FM were the main sources switched to' (BBC Global News, 2010). The report also notes that the online and television audience figures are now increasing: 'TV audience is 5.7m (+0.8m) and online audience is 88,000 (+19k)'. The Hausa online figure has actually risen to 1.2 million by April 2010 (Tangaza, 2010)—the survey's figures were recorded during the fieldwork in September/October 2009.

The rise in online audiences could be a consolation for the BBC and an encouraging sign for its multimedia initiatives. However, the reasons given for the fall of Hausa audiences—poor reception quality, lack of time to listen, and a shift to local alternative sources—represent obvious worries for the BBC. It is even more worrying when it is viewed from the fact that Hausa listeners constitute two-

thirds of the entire BBC's audiences in Nigeria as revealed by the surveys. The poor reception quality has been a recurring issue since 2003/04 when the government banned local broadcasters from transmitting live news broadcasts from foreign stations; and the BBC has been complaining about it since then (BBC World Service, 2004). And though it might have been affecting audience figures (as the BBC says), it has not stopped the rises recorded in the years 2006/07 and 2007/08 (as the above figures reveal). So the poor reception quality argument has not adequately explained the sharp decline of the 2009/10 figures because in reality since the ban, and frankly even before it, the audiences have mainly been accessing BBC through the same delivery means, short-wave radio [71 per cent even in pre-ban period (BBC World Service, 2004)], with probably an improved reception now since the short-wave technology too has been improving, even if marginally. There is also an added factor of the Nigerian audiences in border towns accessing FM quality BBC broadcasts from the BBC's partner stations in neighbouring countries, as the recent surveys reveal (BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). The poor reception quality argument is therefore unsustainable. Accessing good alternative content in good quality from local FM stations sounds like a better explanation. Perhaps the local competitors are doing better now because of the gradual liberalisation of the broadcast industry in the country, improved investment and better contents or perhaps the BBC's programming quality has declined. These are viable areas for both administrative and intellectual inquiries in the coming years.

Media penetration

The BBC surveys also supply useful data on media penetration and spread in Nigeria, and provide trends on the utilization of distribution technologies and their potential impact on the pattern of media consumption. Statistics contained in the following five different surveys reveals the dominance of radio as the most accessible distribution technology to most Nigerians and the biggest source of news and information for them. But as years move on, the surveys also indicate a gradual reduction of radio's dominance as the television—terrestrial, cable and satellite—gains strength. Then comes the Internet which is now spreading in the country, with over 28 per cent of the population gaining access, according to the

latest figures from the Internet World Stats (2011)—up from the 20 per cent recorded in the BBC's 2009/10 survey (BBC Global News, 2010). But the most dramatic of all is the case of mobile telephony, which perhaps because of its multiple utility, ease of use and portability has become the fastest spreading technology in the country, turning Nigeria into the fastest growing mobile market in the world (Okonji, 2009)—and the biggest mobile market in Africa, having overtaken South Africa, as the latest of these surveys show. Despite the decline of its dominance, though, radio maintains its relevance as all the surveys reveal:

2004/05

Radio remains dominant and is listened to by 82% of adults weekly, whilst TV is viewed by 48%... Radio is the most used source for news and information. More than half of all Nigerians access the radio daily for news, compared to 26% daily for TV, 3% daily for newspapers and 1% daily using the Internet. International radio stations (are) *accessed by 12% daily* (BBC World Service, 2005).

2006/07

Radio has traditionally been the dominant medium in Nigeria but due to an increase in TV access, the gap between radio and TV consumption has been closing in the past couple of years. There has been a small increase in weekly radio reach (78% - 81% since 2005/06) but a large increase in weekly TV reach (from 52% - 65% since 2005/06). There are three main peaks in radio listening: 06-0900, 14-1630 and 20-2130 (local time). On a typical day, almost half of all Nigerians listen in the morning, and just over a third in the afternoon and evening periods... The TV audience reaches its peak in the evening between 8-10pm, when around a fifth watch, with the largest audience at 9pm (BBC World Service, 2007).

Daily radio and television use in Nigeria
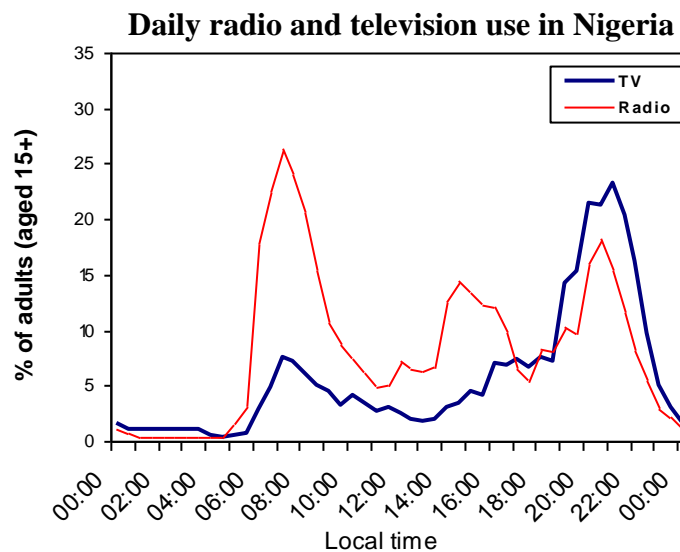
Figure 6.2 Source: BBC WS/Ipsos MORI (2007)

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The graph (figure 6.2) clearly shows that listening to radio is highest in the morning while watching television is highest in the evening. Radio has a distinguished advantage of having three different peaks: morning, followed by evening, and then late afternoon.

2007/08

Radio continues to dominate the market (82% listen weekly), though TV is gradually closing the gap (weekly viewing up from 65% in 2006 to 68% in 2007) and does dominate in Lagos and parts of the South... Cable and satellite penetration has grown, with 10% of households owning receivers (7% in 2006). LG Electronics (an electrical goods firm) *has concluded plans to introduce the first television with menu functions in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Mobile phone ownership continues to grow from 36% in 2006 to 50% in 2007. In Lagos mobile ownership has risen from 78% to 89% of adults. Weekly readership of newspapers/magazines has risen significantly year-on-year, now at 17% (compared to 13% in 2006)* (BBC World Service, 2008).

2008/09

Radio still dominant: 64% of adults listen to the radio daily compared to 59% viewing TV. However the gap is close and TV is dominant in the evenings. The vast majority of those who listen to the radio listen at home (95%), but substantial groups also listen in public (17%), at work (12%) or in the car (12%); with 13% of Nigerians listening via a mobile phone, particularly in Lagos where almost one quarter (23%) have listened in this way. A quarter of adults have access to a cable or satellite dish, with 11% able to access these services at home. 17% of adults have access to the Internet, though just 3% have access at home. Consequently, usage is low, with only 5% going online weekly... Nigeria has recently overtaken South Africa to become Africa's largest telecom market. 70% have access to a mobile phone and 12% to an iPod/MP3 player... Mobiles used widely for media consumption. Amongst those who have access to a mobile phone, 14% have received text alerts from a subscription service in the past four weeks (BBC Global News, 2009).

2009/10

Radio is the most popular media in Nigeria with 79% listening weekly. Two thirds are weekly television viewers. There are big differences in TV viewing by area, with weekly audiences highest in the (commercial) capital, Lagos (96% weekly), and lowest in the rural North West (42%). Just over a quarter of Nigerians have access to cable and satellite, but less than half of these (12%) have access in their household... Almost a fifth of Nigerians have access to the Internet, though only 5% go online weekly. Just under 3% have Internet access at home, though in Lagos this is higher (8%). High speed Internet access anywhere is low; at just below 3%... 14% of Nigerians listen to the radio on their mobile weekly with around half (53%) of these users aged 15-24 (BBC Global News, 2010).

Radio's resilience resonates throughout these reports; and its position has, in some instances, an inverse relationship with that of television, in others, a complementary one. Radio, as the extracts show, began on a very high point with 82 per cent of the adult population listening to it in 2004/05 when television viewing was 48 per cent; then it was unclear whether it was down or up in 2008/09 (the figures provided for that year was for daily consumption, which was 64 per cent with television's 59 per cent, not weekly consumption used in the other years); it declined slowly to 79 per cent in 2009/10 when television received an estimated 66 per cent. The other period they both witnessed a rise was in 2007/08 when radio recorded 82 per cent and television 68 per cent. Cable and satellite penetration has also been increasing with the latest record showing that over a quarter of Nigerians now have access to them; household ownership of cable and satellite has jumped from 7 per cent in 2006 to 12 per cent in 2009/10. The print media, newspapers and magazines, also witnessed a rise, from a figure of 3 per cent daily in 2004/05 to 17 per cent weekly in 2007/08. They were not included in the subsequent surveys.

As for the new media, the Internet appears to be rising steadily, though the surveys do not stick to one standard form of measurement. It shows a figure of 1 per cent of Nigerians using Internet daily in 2004/05, and then switches to weekly measure saying 5 per cent of them use it weekly in 2009/10, the same year when over a fifth of the country's population have access to it. There is no record of those who use their handheld mobile telephones to access the Internet. The real phenomenal rise is that of mobile phone ownership in the country, jumping from 22 per cent in 2005 to 70 per cent in 2008/09, a period of less than four years. A further significance of this is in its linkage to media consumption, with 2009/10 survey revealing that 14 per cent of Nigerians listen to radio on their mobile phones weekly, more than half of them youth. This is an important new development that may require further exploration.

Comparing with competitors

The surveys are not restricted to audience demographics, media penetration and BBC audience figures; they also gather data on the performance of other media,

both local and international, BBC's rivals and partners. The BBC, as noted earlier, has been in partnership with local private radio station Ray Power since the end of 1990s, originally transmitting news and other BBC contents on its local FM stations; but when the live news ban was imposed, the partnership was restricted to transmission of non-news materials only. Similarly, in November 2010, the BBC entered into another partnership with a Kano-based local private broadcaster, Freedom Radio, for transmission of non-news contents (Martin, 2010). It is not listed here as a BBC partner station in any of the surveys since the surveys were conducted before the new agreement.

The surveys categorise the local broadcasters into three different groups: (a) the state government-controlled broadcasters (each of the 36 state governments has its own broadcaster) collectively called state radio and television; (b) the federal-controlled broadcasters—Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)—with their national headquarters and zonal offices and local stations in the states; and (c) the private radio and television stations. With a possible exception of the NTA and FRCN, none of these stations is seen as being in direct competition for audiences with the BBC, though their performance tends to affect the audience share of the BBC—and collectively the state radio stations in particular constitute a formidable force. The BBC's recognised rivals, though, are the fellow international media, particularly the VOA and Radio *Deutsche Welle* for radio audiences and the CNN for television audiences—*Al-Jazeera* was still not being seen as a major competitor, and was only included in one survey (2008/09) when its influence began to emerge. The surveys reflect the audience shares of both the local and competing international broadcasters, as the following synopses from the last four surveys show:

2006/07

Weekly reach for Ray Power (the BBC's partner station) *has increased from 11% listening weekly in 2005 to 20% in 2006. However, claimed listening to the BBC via Ray Power has remained fairly stable, with 7% of weekly English listeners tuning in on Ray Power (was 6% in 2005)... Local state radio continues to attract the largest audiences. However, no single station attracts as many weekly listeners as the foreign stations. FRCN* (Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria) *stations have experienced a surge in listening over the past year. Freedom Radio is regarded as the opposition's answer to the government-owned FRCN and is listened to by*

9% of adults weekly... Overall reach of international radio stations remains relatively unchanged, though VOA has suffered a fall in English listening and DW (Deutsche Welle) *has experienced an increase in Hausa listening... The most watched national TV channel is NTA, with a weekly reach of 61%; a significant increase on 39% reach in 2005* (BBC World Service, 2007).

2007/08

Local state radio continues to dominate listening. However, in Lagos, where there are a variety of stations available, state radio performs poorly (9% weekly) – a fall of 26 percentage points since 2006… A new FM was launched in March 2008 by FRCN to serve its Hausa audience in Kaduna, but FRCN insist SW (Short-wave) *and MW* (Medium-wave) *are their priority. VOA is the BBC's closest international competitor, (19% listening weekly) followed by DW (14% weekly) – both have seen their audiences remain fairly static and are someway behind the BBC in terms of reach* (BBC World Service, 2008).

Top five most listened to radio stations in Nigeria

	2007	2006
Local State Radio	66%	69%
BBC	34%	32%
FRCN	22%	22%
Ray Power	23%	20%
VOA	19%	19%

Figure 6.3 Source: BBCWS/Ipsos MORI (2008)

Figure 6.3 above shows the five most listened to radio stations in Nigeria, both the local and foreign stations, for the years 2006 and 2007. Local State Radio is the collection of all the radio stations owned by 36 state governments in the country. It is not just a single radio station; it is a combination of at least 36 stations.

2008/09

Television in Nigeria is dominated by the Nigerian Television Authority (69% watch at least weekly)... As with radio, the market is more competitive in Lagos and NTA trails behind AIT, Galaxy TV, Silverbird TV and TVC continental in the city… BBC World News presents a strong challenge to CNN International, with 6% of the population watching BBC World News on a weekly basis compared to 8% watching CNN weekly.

Other international channels are less popular, with 2% or less watching each of Al Jazeera, Sky News, Euronews, Voice of America, or Deutsche Welle TV. The figures for Al Jazeera English are surprisingly low considering the emphasis they have put on covering news from Africa (BBC Global News, 2009).

2009/10

Local state radio continues to dominate listening – all 36 states offer their own stations and over half of the population (53%) tune in weekly. Cool FM is growing in popularity and has overtaken Ray Power in Lagos to become the leading private station in the city, though Ray Power is the most listened to private station nationally… VOA is the closest competitor to the BBC with 16% listening weekly. The gap between VOA and DW (Deutsche Welle) *has narrowed in the past year, though both BBC and VOA have seen a fall in listening – both broadcast in Hausa… Ray Power is the BBC's main partner in Nigeria, and is carrying non-news programmes only (due to the government ban). Ray Power is listened to by 23% of adults weekly – accounts for a fifth of weekly English listeners. In some parts of Northern Nigeria the BBC can be heard on partners based in Niger. In total 6% of weekly Hausa listeners tune in via a partner* (BBC Global News, 2010).

As can be seen, the state radio stations, because of the sheer size of their number (at least 36) and the intensity of their local coverage, have consistently come top nationally as a collective entity—Lagos being the only exception because the state radio faces competition from many private broadcasters in the city. Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) is the leading national radio broadcaster followed by the private radio station Ray Power. BBC consistently maintains its position as the leading international broadcaster followed by the VOA and Radio *Deutsche Welle*. Radio France International which began Hausa language transmission in 2007 (Sennitt, 2007) has not been included in any of the surveys. The federal government-controlled NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) is the leading television broadcaster nationally, followed by the privately-owned AIT (African International Television). The CNN is the leading global television broadcaster but is being challenged by the BBC World News; they are marginally followed by *Al-Jazeera* (the finding of this study, though, indicates that *Al-Jazeera* is gaining more ground now), Sky News and others.

All the international radio broadcasters rely heavily on short-wave for delivery to Nigerian audiences. The BBC, as noted earlier, has complained that, with the Nigerian government's refusal to allow it to broadcast news on local FM stations,

an estimated 87 per cent of Hausa (and 62 per cent of English) listeners tune in on short-wave. 'A small number of people are listening to FM relay (3% of listeners) and around a fifth of adults are listening via a partner station,' it says. 'A lot of FM listening comes from over the border, with people listening via stations (in the neighbouring) Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger' (BBC Global News, 2009).

Programming preferences

Another significant feature of the BBC audience surveys in Nigeria is the section dealing with audiences' interests (or lack of them) in different BBC's programmes. What sort of media products do Nigerians consume and what are they likely to want to consume are also looked into. They essentially gather data on the programming needs of the audiences to see whether the BBC is meeting those needs. They measure the popularity of programmes and the loyalty of audiences to the BBC brand. The changing patterns of their interests in different programmes can be noted from the findings of the surveys over the years. The following are synopses taken from the last four surveys:

2006/07

For the majority of Nigerians, regular news consumption is important. Two thirds access news at least once a day, almost 60% of whom tune in 2-3 times during a day. Nigerians are primarily interested in domestic news, followed by international news and then regional. Interest in regional and international affairs has been on the rise during the past year... English and Hausa listeners differ in the reasons they listen to radio. Both groups are interested in politics, but Hausa listeners tend to be more interested in social topics, whereas English listeners are more interested in entertainment, sport and education... Weekend Network Africa is attracting a younger and less male dominated audience than other news programmes. The recently launched English news programme and Africa Have Your Say are both doing well in attracting younger and female listeners (BBC World Service, 2007).

2007/08

BBC election coverage picked up large audiences (elections took place in Nigeria in April 2007). Around a quarter of adults turned to the BBC for coverage of their national elections. NTA (Nigerian state TV) was seen to provide the best coverage of the election, with the BBC doing well and ranked third (rated particularly highly by Hausa audiences)... Loyalty towards the BBC is strong in Nigeria. Over 70% of listeners are advocates of the station – listen monthly, agree they would continue to listen in the future and would recommend the station to others. Hausa speakers listen to BBC more frequently than they used to. This may be a

result of the launch of **Shirin Hantsi** *(new morning programme)... World Today and Network Africa reach the largest audiences. The World Today is listened to by 3% of adults weekly (7% in South-South) and Network by 2% weekly (4% in South-South)* (BBC World Service, 2008).

2008/09

Strong appetite for news consumption: more than two thirds of Nigerians access news and current affairs daily. More than half extremely interested and a further 44% of adults very or fairly interested in national news. There is also a sustained interest in news about the wider world, with 23% extremely interested in international news and 22% in African news... **Shirin Safe** *(early morning programme at 0630) leading Hausa programme...is listened to by 62% of BBC Hausa listeners weekly.* **Shirin Yamma** *(evening programme) is the second most listened to programme, followed closely by* **Shirin Hantsi** *(morning programme at 0730) and* **Shirin Rana** *(afternoon programme). There is a high degree of overlap with almost a third of listeners tuning in to all (the) 4 programmes. Network Africa most popular WS (World Service) English programme: Network is listened to by 22% of listeners weekly. Africa Have Your Say (18%), Focus (15%), Fast Track (14%) and World Today (13%) are all popular too* (BBC Global News, 2009).

2009/10

There is very little overlap between English and Hausa listening with only 11% of the BBC's weekly audience listening in both languages. News plays an integral role in Nigerian society, with 69% of adults following it daily. Interest in domestic news is near universal, with 95% of adults interested (45% extremely interested). A significant number also look beyond domestic news to regional, African or international affairs (19% extremely interested in each)... Loyalty to the BBC remains strong: Advocacy to the BBC has waned slightly over the past year, but remains high, with 86% of audience members (radio, TV or online) agreeing that they will continue to use the BBC (was 92% in 2008) and 85% saying they would recommend the BBC (was 90% in 2008) (BBC Global News, 2010).

The common finding of these surveys is the Nigerians' high news consumption. They have interest in domestic, regional, continental and international news. This has perhaps helped to sustain their interest in the BBC and other international media that focus on news and current affairs. Among the BBC services, the Hausa Service, being the most specialised on Nigeria, attracts the most attention and strongest interest; followed by Africa English programmes: Network Africa, interactive programme Africa Have Your Say and Focus on Africa. Within the Hausa Service, the early morning programme *Shirin Safe* (06:30am Nigerian time) tends to be the most popular, followed by evening programme *Shirin Yamma*

(20:30pm). There is strong loyalty to BBC brand with the surveys showing that most of the audiences intend to continue to consume its products and would recommend same for others, even though the advocacy appears to be in decline.

Performance ratings

Among the most important areas the surveys devote much attention to are the aspects of reputation and performance of the media. Data is gathered for the assessment of BBC's reputation and measurement of its performance in comparison with its major competitors. The key attributes the surveys often attempt to measure are the audiences' perceptions of BBC's trustworthiness, objectivity and relevance in comparison with those of the main domestic and international broadcasters. This is derived from the data gathered from audiences who use all the media in question and assess them in respect of those attributes. The surveys reveal the assessments, and often accompany them with diagrams to give graphic representation of each broadcaster's ratings. These are the detailed findings of the different surveys of the last four years:

2006/07

>   *The BBC WS continues to have a strong brand image in Nigeria, and is seen as the most trusted and objective news source in the country. However, the BBC is struggling with regards to relevance, which has been falling for the last few years (74% of listeners thought the BBC was relevant in 2003, compared to 64% in 2005 and 56% now in 2006). A limited presence on FM, due to the ban of live news by foreign stations on Nigerian FMs, may have contributed to this fall in perceived relevance. Amongst the other international broadcasters CNN is performing well and has strengthened its image over the past year in terms of trust and relevance. VOA and DW* (Deutsche Welle) *have remained at similar levels. FRCN is the only domestic radio station to show an increase in its rating for objectivity and more importantly trust, the attribute considered most important for a news provider by Nigerians. Local State Radio may have maintained its weekly reach, but the number of people rating its image positively is in decline – the largest fall being on its perceived relevance. Should this decline be sustained long term it may negatively impact on listening. NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) has strengthened its image over the past year on all attributes and is seen as the most relevant news source in the country. NTA has benefited from increased access to TV and has been undergoing a network expansion programme, which has improved coverage and reception quality of the channel across Nigeria* (BBC World Service, 2007).

Ratings of major foreign and local stations in Nigeria for the year 2006 on attributes of trust, objectivity and relevance

A source you can trust	**Provide objective news**	**Provide news that is relevant to me**

2006	**%**	**2006**	**%**	**2006**	**%**
BBC	72	BBC	60	BBC	56
CNN	50	CNN	43	CNN	37
DW	37	DW	42	DW	35
FRCN	34	FRCN	34	FRCN	38
Local State Radio	54	Local State Radio	52	Local State Radio	55
NTA	59	NTA	53	NTA	60
Ray Power	38	Ray Power	40	Ray Power	39
VOA	36	VOA	37	VOA	30
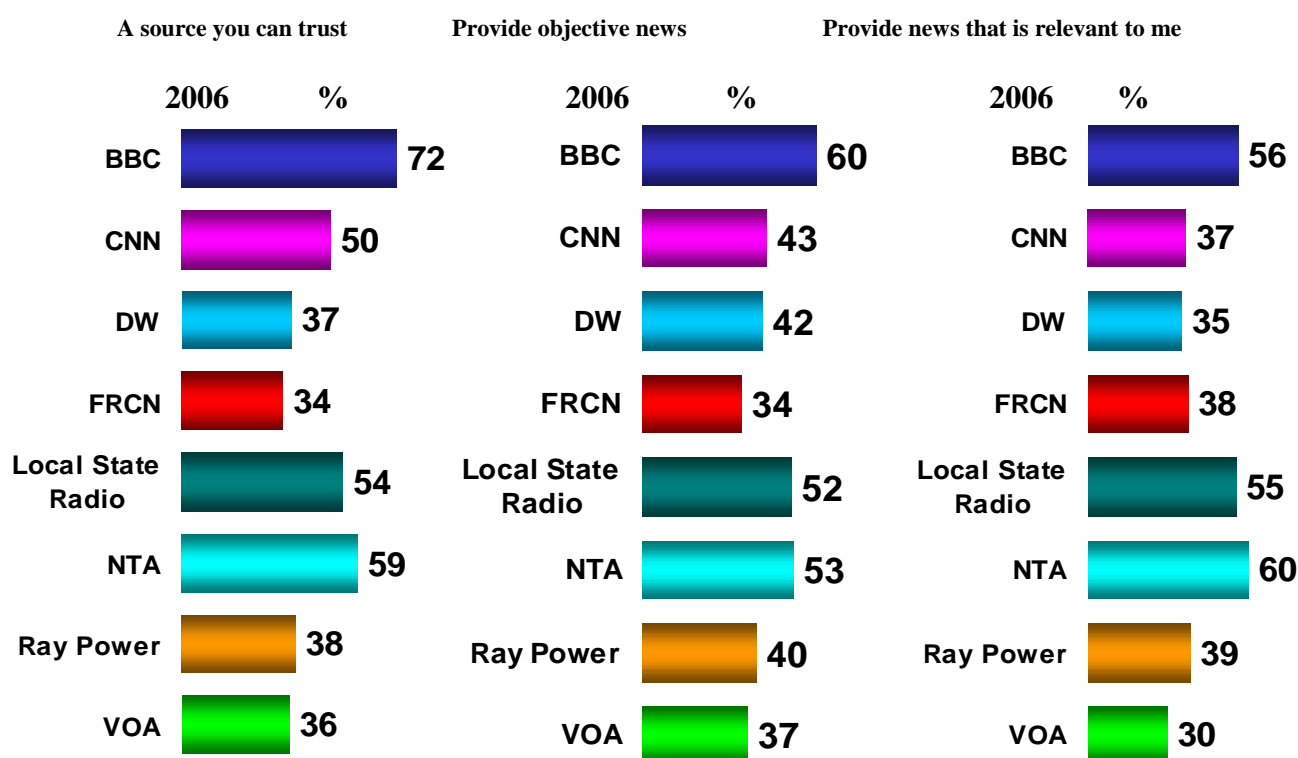
Base: those who have ever listened/watched each provider

Figure 6.4 Source: BBC WS/Ipsos MORI (2007)

2007/08

> *The BBC has retained its position as the leading international news brand in Nigeria and also remains the most trusted and objective news source in the country. Ratings for trust, objectivity and relevance have been fairly static for the BBC over the past year… Reputation ratings for all three measures are a lot more positive amongst Hausa listeners than English listeners. This reflects the highly competitive nature of the English radio market and the challenge BBC WS faces for English where programmes are aimed at a number of countries. Amongst the other international broadcasters, VOA and DW ((Deutsche Welle) have made significant improvements in trust and relevance ratings, though perceived objectivity has stayed about the same. CNN conversely has suffered a fall on all reputation ratings. State radio stations (FRCN and Local State Radio) have seen little change in the way they are perceived, whilst Ray Power (the only commercial FM tracked and BBC partner station) has seen its ratings improve, especially for trust, NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) has experienced a fall in ratings* (BBC World Service, 2008).

Ratings of the major foreign and local stations in Nigeria for the year 2007

A source you can trust	Provide objective news	Provide news that is relevant to me

2007   %   **2007   %**   **2007   %**

Station	Trust	Objective	Relevant
BBC	74	59	54
CNN	43	38	27
DW	54	39	46
FRCN	35	30	35
Local State Radio	58	47	58
NTA	56	48	54
Ray Power	48	43	45
VOA	47	37	37
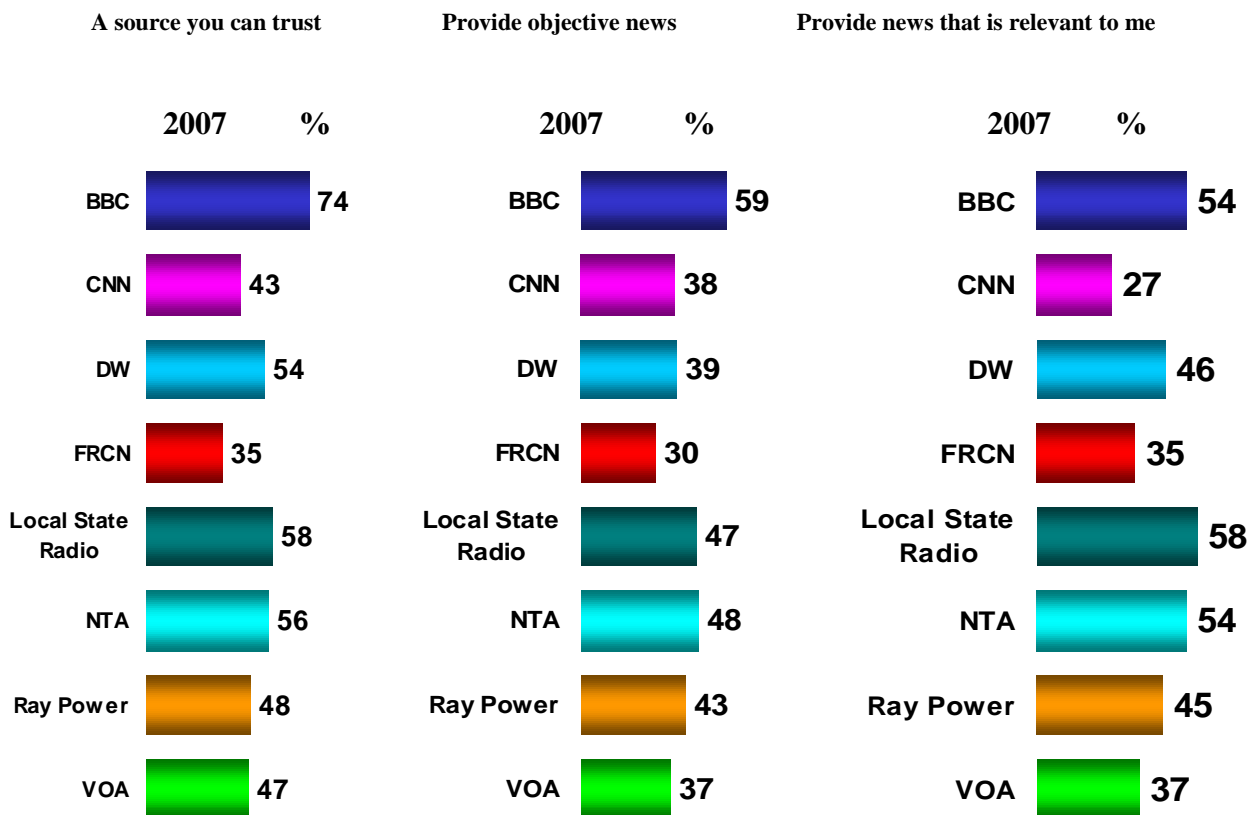
Base: those who have ever listened/watched each provider

Figure 6.5 Source: BBC WS/Ipsos MORI (2008)

2008/09

As in 2007, trust is the most important aspect of news programming. Other important attributes for news providers are to be easy to understand, provide news that is relevant and to provide high quality news. The BBC continues to have a strong brand image in Nigeria, and is seen as the most trusted news source in the country. It is also rated highly for objectivity and relevance. The BBC, along with most other international broadcasters, has seen its ratings fall since 2007. VOA suffered the biggest drop, followed by DW (Deutsche Welle), with CNN the only international station to strengthen its reputation (for trust, objectivity and relevance). The improvements for CNN may be linked to the US elections and a feel good factor towards the US; however, this does not seem to have benefited VOA as well. Government-owned NTA is seen as the most objective and relevant broadcaster in Nigeria, with local state radio also rated highly. All the state-owned stations have strengthened their reputations over the past year, with Ray Power the only domestic station tracked to suffer a fall (BBC Global News, 2009).

Audiences' trust on foreign and local stations in the year 2008

A source you can trust

2008   **%**

Station	%
BBC	67
CNN	47
VOA	31
DW	38
FRCN	41
Ray Power	33
Local state..	56
NTA	63
AIT	45
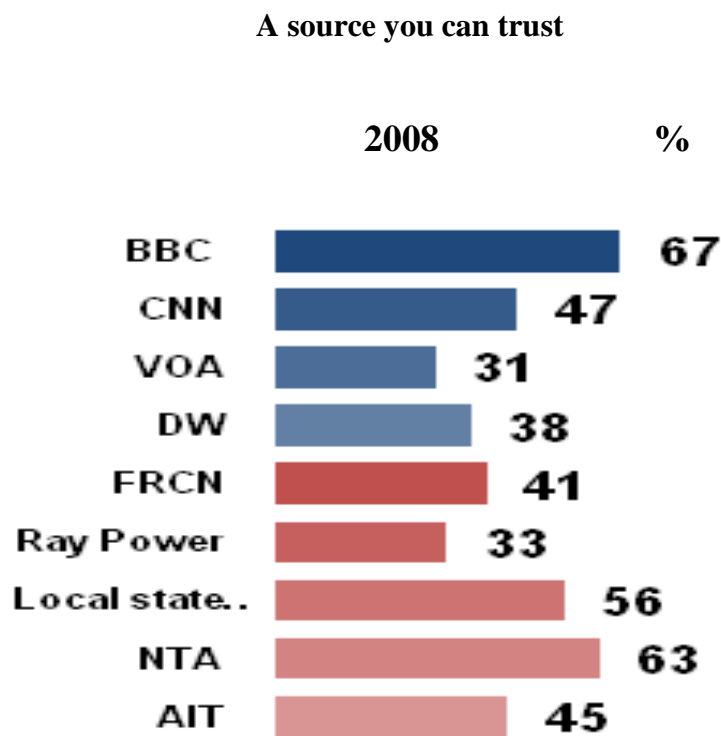
Base: All used each brand

Figure 6.6 Source: BBC GND/Ipsos MORI (2009)

2009/10

Due to tight government control of news Nigerians tend to have little trust in national broadcasters. More than half of those spoken to agreed with the statement "I trust foreign broadcast stations significantly more than broadcasters from my own country". Less than a quarter disagreed. The BBC benefits from the high level of trust and reliability that Nigerians have placed on external news sources and has a strong brand image. The BBC was rated top for most of the attributes asked about; the only exceptions were ease of understanding and relevance, which NTA came top for. The BBC's closest international competitor is CNN, followed by Deutsche Welle, Voice of America then Al Jazeera. NTA is the most highly thought of domestic source, followed by state radio, AIT, FRCN and Ray Power (BBC Global News, 2010).

Ratings on trust attribute in the year 2009

A source you can trust

2009   %

Source	Rating
BBC	76
CNN	58
VOA	46
DW	52
Al Jazeera	33
FRCN	36
Ray Power	34
Local state radio	55
NTA	65
AIT	46
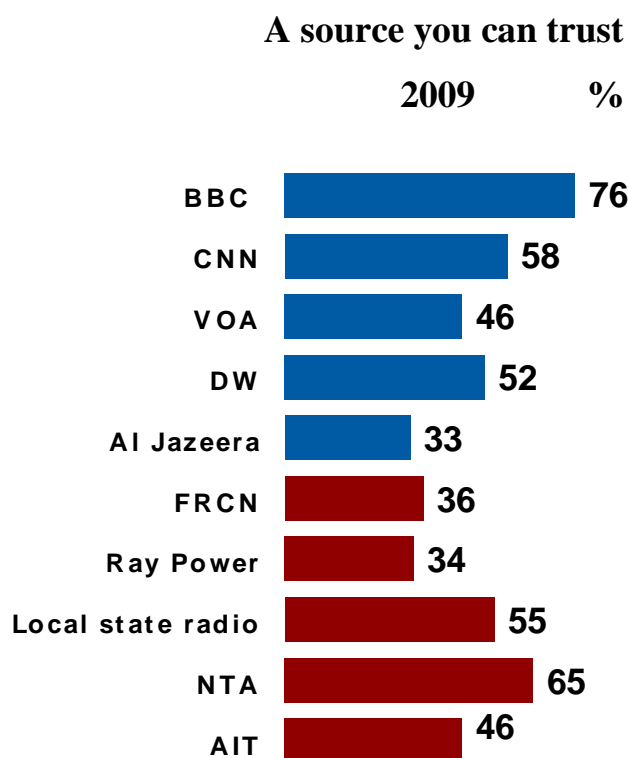
Base: All used each brand

Figure 6.7 Source: BBC GND/Ipsos MORI (2010)

In all the surveys the BBC comes top on trust and objectivity attributes. The only attribute it has not taken the top position for is that of relevance for which it plays a second fiddle to the federal government-owned television network NTA in 2006 (as figure 6.4 reveals) and to state radio collectively in 2007 (as figure 6.5 shows). Compared with its international rivals, the BBC performs better than all of them in all the ratings in all the surveys. The surprising challenge, though, is coming from the CNN which, the surveys show, has been getting appreciable improvement on its ratings. The suggested explanation of 'feel good factor towards the US'— perhaps due to the clear sign that the first African-American, Barack Obama, was about to be elected US president (the survey was conducted during the elections)—may hold, but, as the report was quick to note, such feeling was not extended to the VOA whose rating actually dropped that year to 31 per cent from the previous year's 47 per cent. In reality the CNN ratings have been relatively

good even before the 2008 US presidential election, as the 2006 rating too place it as second only to BBC among the global broadcasters. *Al-Jazeera*'s poor showing on trust attribute (coming fifth with 33 per cent in the 2009 survey) may be explained by the fact that the survey was done before the station gains much ground in the country; and that it was a nationwide survey, covering both northern and southern parts of the country. *Al-Jazeera*'s popularity is high among Muslim Northern Nigerians ostensibly due to its association with the Muslim and Arab world. The fieldwork for this study which was done in Northern Nigeria, for instance, reveals that its rating on trust is high among the respondents. The general trust rating for the local broadcasters is not really as bad as the comment quoted in the 2009/10 survey suggests, which says: '*More than half of those spoken to agreed with the statement "I trust foreign broadcast stations significantly more than broadcasters from my own country"*'. The overall rating on the trust attribute shows that the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is second only to the BBC, but ahead of all the other foreign stations in all the surveys on that attribute.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the guiding principles and structural framework that shaped the BBC World Service's programme-making endeavours; unveiled the nature of the Hausa Service's contents; and analysed a selection of these over a three-year period. It has also highlighted the World Service's measurement and assessment strategies and unpacked its level of performance and reputation vis-à-vis those of its key rivals, based on its own surveys in Nigeria. Data from these surveys, which are based on large samples and done by reputable agencies, complements this study as a whole. Vital statistics from the surveys gives us useful insights into the nature of audiences' demographics and their programming preferences, the level of the stations' reach and ratings, the changing dynamics of delivery technologies, and the emerging trends of the complex exchanges between the media and their audiences. The whole idea is to get a well-grounded background of this relationship and on the Nigeria's media landscape and the general operating environment where all these are being played out. This has helped to contextualise the findings of this study as presented in the subsequent chapters.

VII
Results and Analysis I
(Individual Interviews)

Introduction

This chapter presents the first of three sets of findings produced from the primary data obtained in the fieldwork conducted for this study. It specifically contains the results and analysis of the empirical data obtained through in-depth interviews with individual audiences of international media drawn from the Northern Nigerian cities of Abuja, Kano and Yola. The other two sets of findings, generated from in-depth interviews with the production side (the BBC personnel in London and Abuja) and from focus group interviews with audiences in Northern Nigeria, are presented and analysed in the subsequent chapters. The focus of this particular chapter is on the individual audiences' consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global broadcasters, particularly the BBC World Service; the pattern and impact of their engagement with the broadcasters; their conception of the West and its media and their perceptions of BBC's coverage of Nigeria, Africa and Muslim world. Some strands of conceptual and theoretical postulations emanating from the findings, such as the phenomenon of selective believability and the contradiction of credibility without acceptability, are also outlined here. The respondents have an urban background, with well above average educational level, and so the findings should be seen in that light.

Consumption of international media

Consumption of foreign media texts is a common phenomenon among Northern Nigerians. Many international radio broadcasters are aware of this situation and have long established Hausa language services to target these audiences (Fardon and Furniss, 2000). The BBC World Service, Voice of America (VOA), Germany's Radio *Deutsche Welle*, Radio France International (RFI), Radio Moscow [until 1990s (Jaggar, 2001)], Radio China International, Cairo Radio, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and even Libya's *Jamahiriya* Broadcasting Corporation (LJBC) all have Hausa language services. Northern Nigerian audiences access a range of these radio broadcasters as well as many

international television stations that transmit in English language such as the BBC World News, US Cable News Network (CNN), Rupert Murdoch's Sky News, France 24, Qatar's *Al-Jazeera* and Iran's Press TV channels. All the respondents confirmed that they do access a variety of international media; and many are regular listeners of international broadcasters, particularly the BBC, as clearly shown by the following responses:

> I can consider myself as a very regular listener of the BBC in that, at least in a week, I listen to BBC every morning for five out of seven days. I do listen to CNN; I do listen to *Al-Jazeera*, Sky News and Radio France International (*Graduate student*).

> I listen to many broadcast stations: BBC, Voice of America and France (Radio France International) and (local) stations here in Nigeria (*Petty trader*).

> I listen to Voice of America and BBC, but more frequently the BBC, and virtually every morning I do listen to it (*Female school administrator*).

> Ah, actually most of the time, whether at home or anywhere, I listen to BBC, I watch BBC World (News) and at weekends and Mondays I follow BBC sports from Network Africa and Fast Track… I watch *Al-Jazeera*, I watch CNN, I watch *Deutsche Welle* television, I listen to Radio France International even before they had Hausa service and now that they have Hausa service I listen to (them); I listen to Voice of America, both the VOA English and Hausa services, and *Deutsche Welle* and Radio China, their Hausa programmes (*Ex-soldier-cum-parliamentarian*).

Many tend to listen to as many global broadcasters as they could have access to, often on daily basis and usually in the morning. This is consistent with the findings of the BBC's surveys (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), analysed in the preceding chapter, that show that Nigerians consume a variety of foreign media products and that the morning period serves as the peak time for radio listening. 'On a typical day, almost half of all Nigerians listen (to radio) in the morning, and just over a third in the afternoon and evening periods' (BBC World Service, 2007). The convenience of using radio and its simplicity and cost effectiveness seem to make it a ready instrument for such utilisation. The relevance of radio in the lives of Africans has been well explained in previous studies (Spitulnik, 2000; Mano, 2004; Larkin, 2008) and empirical evidence from this study has not only reinforced those findings but also provided additional insights into Africans' engagement with the radio (more on this in the 'Results and

Analysis III' chapter). Both radio and television appear to be the key instruments through which the respondents regularly interact with a variety of international media. However, from their responses, both above and the subsequent ones, it is clear that although they listen to many international radio broadcasters, it is the BBC that they listen to most frequently:

> Personally, as someone who respects news, I would say I listen to almost all those I have access to. Normally, when I wake up in the morning I go for the Hausa service of the BBC, say around 6:30am, before I go to (BBC Network) Africa that comes my way. I then go to *Deutsche Welle* and others.

Most frequently?

> I would say is the BBC because at this age when there is no constant power supply, with just N20 (about eight pence) batteries I get access to the BBC throughout the day (*Television producer*).

> Always every morning I wake up I try to listen to (the BBC Hausa Service) (*Local newspaper publisher*).

> I listen to BBC, Voice of America and the Hausa service of Radio China. For television I watch *Al-Jazeera*, France 24 and CNN.

Most frequently?

> Honestly, for television I watch *Al-Jazeera* most and for radio I mostly listen to the BBC… I do also access them on the Internet in my (mobile phone) handset because sometimes when you are not at home you do access it from your handset to get the main headlines (*Factory worker*).

The predominance of radio and television as the delivery technologies for these audiences is clear, but the new platforms too, Internet and mobile telephony, have their potentials, as the last response indicates. The BBC's surveys (BBC Global News, 2009, 2010) have revealed the rapid spread of the Internet and mobile telephony in Nigeria and how they are emerging as platforms for accessing media products. The BBC's 2009/10 survey puts Internet penetration in Nigeria at about 20 per cent, which has already risen to 28 per cent (Internet World Stats, 2011), and mobile phone ownership at 70 per cent (BBC Global News, 2009); and that 14 per cent of 'Nigerians listen to the radio on their mobile weekly' (BBC Global News, 2010). The new platforms are indeed becoming significant among Nigerian audiences; and it is this awareness that, for instance, made the BBC to devote resources for its 'multimedia strategy' (Hiller, 2010a, p.2). The use of multiple platform and the interactions with a variety of media have shown a picture of the way the audiences' engage with international media. Further responses from the

audiences reveal additional data that helps produce the full picture of the pattern—the cultural factor. For some of the audiences listening to international radio broadcasts has become a habit inherited from parents and developed into a sort of culture being passed from one generation to the other. They grew up observing their parents listening to international radio stations, particularly the BBC Hausa Service, and automatically took after them—as the following responses from a university lecturer and a former newspaper editor reveal:

> First of all, we listen to BBC because it has been a tradition from our great-grandfathers; we inherited it, it is like a norm when you are growing up in the North (Northern Nigeria). You have your father who is always listening to the BBC Hausa Service to keep abreast with world affairs and internal political and social happenings in the environment. So we grew up to listen and to discuss with our parents… Later on other channels started coming up to challenge the BBC and compete. This is why we have variety of alternatives (*University lecturer*).

> I was virtually brought up in a BBC (listening) family. My father, that's the first thing he listens to every morning after morning prayer; so we kind of grew up, of course, when my mother began to join, that means the two of them would listen in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon… So really, the BBC is the one I have the most access to, and because of this historical connection, as an adult now and a mother myself, I listen to it often (*Female ex-editor of Hausa newspaper*).

This radio listening 'tradition' they both tried to stress was equally noticed by Abdulkadir (2000) in his study of Hausa radio culture in Nigeria. His conclusion was that majority of Hausa-speaking Northern Nigerians do not only regard radio listening as 'a habit', but they also 'see it as a Hausa cultural value' (Abdulkadir, 2000, p.130). This explains the popularity of international radio broadcasters among these audiences and the high consumption of their products. The BBC's historical link to them, being the one that started broadcasting to the region in the 1930s (Briggs, 1985; Larkin, 2008) and maintains closer relationship with them since then (Gumel, 2007), gave it an edge over the others. Overall, all the above responses put together reveal a pattern of international media consumption that is characterised by regular interactions with a variety of media through multiple platforms, predominantly radio and television, and enhanced by a culture of interaction developed from a desire of wanting to know the happenings around the world.

Perceptions of BBC's credibility

One of the most crucial elements in media-audience relationship is the issue of credibility or trustworthiness of the media. The level of audiences' perception of media credibility determines to a large extent the level of impact or influence that media may have in their lives (Rampal and Adams, 1990). The credibility question is even more crucial to audiences in regard to the consumption of news and current affairs programmes. And since the respondents here have indicated that they do engage with the BBC more than they do with any other international media, it is significant to find out their assessment of its credibility or trustworthiness. The bulk of the responses reveal that their perception of the BBC's credibility is very high. All but one of the respondents rated BBC as the most credible and trustworthy international broadcaster that serves as a benchmark against which the authenticity of other broadcasters' news reports are often adjudged. They used different criteria to advance their respective reasons for giving such high rating to the broadcaster.

The following respondents used what they see as BBC's accuracy, independence and impartiality as well as the timeliness and depth of its coverage of events as their criteria for rating it very high. They were responding to the question: "Which of the global broadcasters do you think is the most credible?"

The BBC, of course.
Why?
Well, their news has been genuine. And they give us first hand information (*Female school administrator*).

I tend to look at the BBC as the most credible medium in terms of the BBC's editorial policy of getting all sides of the news… After listening to all international broadcasters, the stamp of credibility will come from the BBC (*Graduate student*).

I take whatever they say in the BBC as the truth because I have been monitoring. Most of the time, they would send a reporter down to the smallest village in a community to go and talk to them... So with that, I think we develop confidence in BBC (*Ex-soldier-cum-parliamentarian*).

Truly, I think, I trust the BBC most because we believe that it is not censored. They find the way of telling the truth (*Local newspaper publisher*).

> Well, the BBC comes first… The most reliable station is the BBC. I say this with authority because most of the time when you ask somebody the source of his news, if and when he tells you in the North, it's that he heard it over the BBC; just be assured that it is authentic (*University lecturer*).

The respondents' use of words such as 'genuine', 'reliable' and 'authentic' and phrases such as 'getting all sides' and 'not censored' conveyed the level of their positive assessment. The key attributes of accuracy, independence, impartiality and timeliness and depth of coverage that they associate the BBC with are consistent with some of the broadcaster's own editorial values (BBC Guidelines, 2010) and they are essentially the instruments that build the credibility of any media (Rampal and Adams, 1990). For some of the respondents, though, the issue of credibility and trustworthiness is a philosophical question that is better judged in relation to each station's specific coverage of events and ideological orientation. Although they still awarded a high credibility rating for the BBC using even some of the attributes listed above, they avoided giving a blanket endorsement:

> Ah, trust, that's a tricky word. As a journalist myself when you say trust, I think, I will hinge every broadcaster to the philosophy of its organisation. Like the Hausa BBC is Hausa centric, sort of, for Hausa listeners across West Africa. But the English service, say for instance Focus on Africa and Network Africa, they are broader because they go for the whole continent. In that wise I think the BBC Hausa Service influences my decision more (*Television producer*).

> Honestly, I do believe some news reports I get from the BBC and the rest of them. At times I do believe about 70 per cent of the news report I get; and at times below this (*Petty trader*).

> First is the BBC, among the radio stations. For the television it is *Al-Jazeera*, that's the station that carries accurate reports. You see them broadcast stories even about Nigeria that we here do not get locally, that's why we trust them (*Factory worker*).

Their caution, notwithstanding, they did give BBC high credibility rating. The television producer gave it to BBC Hausa Service in particular, the petty trader to BBC as a whole and the factory worker to BBC and *Al-Jazeera* for radio and television respectively. They are more or less within the category of the other respondents before them. However, the sole respondent who did not rate the BBC as the most credible international media, a trade unionist, feels that Radio France International's liberal reporting style earned her that accolade:

Well, right now I trust Radio France International the most.
What about the BBC?
They are very good, but as at now, ironically, (it is) Radio France International. You know the French people have always been 'I don't care'—so they don't care even with their news, they go into details. As at now I listen to France International and they do a very good job more than the BBC in analysing issues; they are very liberal (*Trade unionist*).

So another perspective on assessing media credibility has now been added by this respondent. His key reason for giving Radio France International high credibility rating is his perception of its liberalism: 'they are very liberal'. He feels that their 'I don't care' attitude makes them to reveal every thing to the audiences without perhaps incorporating any ideological agenda into it: 'they don't care…they go into details'. The feeling that he is allowed to get full details of the happenings earns them his trust. His perception, however, contrasts sharply with that of the former BBC World Service director Nigel Chapman who sees France 24 television channel (Radio France International's affiliate) as representing 'a French perspective' (Pfaffner, 2008)—in an open attempt to challenge a competitor.

Putting this aside, the overwhelming positive credibility rating the respondents generally gave to the BBC has in a way confirmed the results of the previous BBC audience surveys in Nigeria that consistently reveal such perception for the station (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). For instance, the BBC's 2008/09 survey says: 'The BBC continues to have a strong brand image in Nigeria, and is seen as the most trusted news source in the country'. A previous study in Asia (Rampal and Adams, 1990) also pointed to the positive credibility rating of the station and concluded that such positive perception enhanced the broadcaster's effectiveness in its public diplomacy role. The findings here are therefore consistent with what was revealed both in Nigeria and elsewhere. The key difference, however, is that the findings here do not stop at the rating exercise alone; they go further to provide full insight into the audiences' perception of the international media, what they really think about them and why they think the way they do. This is why the study succeeded in equally unveiling the kind of criteria and attributes the audiences used to make their assessments.

Influence in understanding international affairs

High consumption of BBC's products and positive perception of the station's credibility would presumably enhance its effectiveness in influencing its audiences. BBC World Service's programming for Northern Nigerian audiences, and indeed for all transnational audiences, is dominated by international news and current affairs—even its coverage of local events in Nigeria, as the analysis in the preceding chapter reveals, is usually done from an international perspective. So how effective is the broadcaster in influencing Northern Nigerians' comprehension of international news and current affairs? It is virtually impossible to measure with exactness the level of such effectiveness because the audiences do also engage with other international media and even more significantly because the existence of intervening variables makes assessment of media impact very difficult (Klapper, 1960; Liebes and Katz, 1993; Liu and Johnson, 2011). Still, since the respondents have confirmed both high consumption of BBC products and good credibility rating for the station, it is important to find out directly from them how much influence they think it exerts in their comprehension of international affairs. Their responses reveal that the broadcaster has great influence in such respect. Almost all the respondents regard the BBC as their major source of global news, and believe that it does help them greatly to comprehend international affairs. For some, though, the BBC has enhanced their understanding of international affairs in more profound way than it does for others, as shown by the following responses:

> Well, actually I cannot quantify it (the BBC's influence) because I can say 80-90 per cent of what I know internationally, I know it through the BBC. When you say you visit, visit actually, you can visit some places, you cannot visit the whole world in your lifetime. But at least if you monitor very rich credible radio station like the BBC, you would know a lot of things, you would know a lot of places, and you would even learn some languages in the BBC. Definitely, I don't think BBC is comparable to any other broadcast station (*Ex-soldier-cum-parliamentarian*).

> I get up-to-date information from the BBC as far as it relates to international affairs. I would like to give an example: the BBC influences my view and perception in relation to probably events that are happening in Iran, events that have been happening in (the) Republic of North Korea. Now, my views and perception and even my outlook on these two countries have been largely shaped by the news…that I get from the BBC (*Graduate student*).

Yes, (the BBC) does (influence my understanding of international affairs) because if I listen to it, I learn more about things I didn't know before, news and current affairs, especially the happenings in the Western world (*Petty trader*).

Indeed, it does, because they do not just broadcast news, they also do analysis on issues and features on health and education, and provide other useful information (*Factory worker*).

I say I am an ardent listener of the BBC… I am in Nigeria, I have never been to Cuba, I should not know anything about (the US detention facility in) Guantanamo (Bay), but everything I have heard from the BBC about Guantanamo is exactly how it is (*Television producer*).

It is clear from these responses that the BBC has indeed been effective in enhancing these audiences' comprehension of happenings in many countries around the world, in providing them with useful information on health and education and even in enhancing language learning. Whether they are talking about getting '80-90 per cent' of international news from the station or admitting its role in shaping their perception of Iran and North Korea or crediting it with providing information about the Western world and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba or praising it for offering 'analysis of issues' and 'features on health and education', the respondents are all revealing the kind of influence the BBC wields on their lives. For others, though, the BBC's influence on their comprehension of international affairs is measured with some caution. Although they regard the BBC as a key provider of international news and analysis, they believe that other factors or sources of news equally play important part in their comprehension of global affairs. They tend to look for news from many sources and make critical judgment on them—as their responses indicate:

Yes, BBC does (influence my comprehension of international affairs), but it gives me a mind to think in my own way because when you listen to BBC you hear the same story, and you listen to Radio France International, which I usually listen to, you hear the same story but taken from a different angle. So you begin to wonder; you have to do your own independent judgment (*Trade unionist*).

BBC is not the only source of my information, I have other sources, but it has really helped in trying to give me more confidence. Sometimes I compare what I read to what is being aired in BBC and I find out that it is almost what comes out of the BBC Hausa Service (that) is really very reliable and…trustworthy. So it really assists me (*Local newspaper publisher*).

> As an academic I verify news; I don't only listen to the BBC, I go to the website, I browse, I download very critical issues, I analyse them and then I listen to other radio stations that might give me similar news in another version with some other additions or subtractions (*University lecturer*).

As can be seen from their narratives, the trade unionist was cautious in his assessment and would not give too much credit to the BBC for influencing his grasp of global affairs (he apparently believes that Radio France International does more for him), the local publisher gave much of the credit to the BBC Hausa Service, and the lecturer to both the BBC and other media. Despite their caution and despite the critical tone of their responses, they all indicate that the BBC does exert influence in their lives—though not as much as the other respondents perceive it to be doing. Collectively, they all point to a wide range of influence that goes beyond aiding comprehension of news and current affairs to other aspects of people's everyday life. Overall, this finding indicates the broadcaster's effectiveness in playing the dual role of providing news service and promoting British public diplomacy as others (Rampal and Adams, 1990; Nye, 2004a; Sreberny *et al.,* 2010b) have noted, for as would also be seen in the subsequent chapters even merely associating Britain with the positive perception of BBC as a credible broadcaster brings benefits to the country (FCO, 2005), let alone when it plays a role in shaping its audiences' comprehension of international affairs.

Perceptions of the West

The respondents' high consumption of international media products, mainly from the BBC, and their admission that the broadcaster has greatly influenced their understanding of international affairs confirm their consumption of Western cultural goods. Does this automatically translate into positive perceptions of the West, particularly Britain and the United States? The data gathered does not produce a categorical answer of 'yes or no', but it does reveal that on balance the respondents' perception of the West is generally negative. Ambivalence may be applicable in some respect, but closer examination of the content and tone of the responses suggest that the majority of the respondents have negative perceptions of the West. There is a tendency among many of them to project a picture of ambivalence, marked by "I-like-them-but" responses, but the responses still reveal more of negative, rather than positive, perceptions. They also tend to give lengthy

explanations to defend their respective positions, perhaps because of the complexity associated with cultural encounter or perhaps because this is an issue with a very wide grey area and sometimes with emotions attach to it. The following responses provide examples of both the tendency to offer lengthy explanations and to be ambivalent, even though on balance they do reveal negative perceptions of the West:

> I do like some things about the West, but I also dislike some of the things they do… The things I like about them relate to the issue of good governance: for example, I like the way their leaders resign when they make mistakes. I appreciate the fact that when you are found wanting or there is evidence against you, you resign. I respect them for that… But I detest some of the things they do…like what is happening in Iraq and what is happening in Afghanistan. These things really make me to detest them because of the way people are being molested. What I like about them is the issue of raising awareness about human rights…but at the same time I dislike them for violating the same human rights of others… What they say contradicts what they do (*Petty trader*).

> Britain makes its case selectively. It treats different countries in different ways; it treats, for instance, Uganda differently when Uganda commits a crime; and then treats a place like Gambia differently when Gambia commits a crime... I don't think Britain treats Africa as a whole with the same glove…

But what is your opinion on how they treat African countries in different ways?

> I don't like the way they handle them because it is the system of divide and rule. By giving different favours to different countries, it will be very difficult for African countries to bring their forces together to have one voice on certain things (*Television producer*).

> Actually, you'd like some (Western policies)…democracy and good governance… Definitely, I so much like the way they (Britain and United States) do one two three things, but not entirely what they do. We must like one or two things because we have to say the truth—at times they are good. But when the leader (of another country) is against their interests, definitely, no matter how democratically he comes in, they would tend to hate him. Definitely, that is what they do; they go to any length and make sure that they remove him from office…

You think there is double standard in their policies?

> Most of the times, but they try as much as possible to hide that double standard. They only try to export one two three things that you believe, but later they come with the fourth one which is a bad one (*Ex-soldier-cum-parliamentarian*).

These responses highlight the dilemma of adjudging any entity that possesses more than one side. The respondents tried to make assessment of what they regard

to be both the positive and negative sides of the West before showing where their loyalty belongs. The positive perception was shown in the way they associated the West with 'good governance', 'human rights' and 'democracy'. The negative view was revealed when they linked the West with 'double standard', 'divide and rule' and ruthlessness. It is a contradictory assessment reflecting the contradictions of global politics itself. Perhaps their high consumption of Western cultural goods has influenced them to view the West in positive way by associating it with those positive attributes. However, reports of West's involvements in military invasions, regime changes and subversions of some non-Western governments swayed them to a negative view. This probably explains why they went to some length to consider both sides before delivering their verdict. Some respondents, however, have less difficulty in passing judgment. This comment by a graduate student clearly expresses positive perception of the West, although it equally reveals that his view might have been influenced by exposure to positive media portrayal of the West:

> The news that I get actually is that everything is almost near perfect in the West in terms of their politics. For instance, you can hardly hear anything in relation to corruption, although recently we hear the issue of corruption in the British Parliament. But you hardly get to hear those ones in the Western media and invariably it shapes your perception in relation to events and in relation to the West. It shapes your perception for you to think that everything is almost near perfect in the West…

Does the regular listening of the BBC help to make you have favourable perception of British foreign policy?

> The good thing about the BBC is that whenever they are broadcasting news in relation to British foreign policies, especially policies that relate to Africa, they tend to give you a fair and balanced view of the foreign policies. And, of course, I tend to appreciate the way they present the foreign policies in a way that we tend to accept it that, of course, they mean well—that's the Western countries actually mean well for Africa (*Graduate student*).

It is a positive perception apparently aided by his consumption of media content portraying the West in a positive light, as he explains. His case reflects a classic case of 'preferred' reading of media text (Hall, 1980), decoding the Western media's messages in accordance with the way the producers encoded them. Unlike the respondents before him (particularly the petty trader and the ex-soldier) who exhibited a case of 'negotiated' reading of the text, the graduate student accepted the dominant meaning encoded in the message. As discussed in the 'Literature

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Review' chapter, Stuart Hall (1980) has in his encoding/decoding model proposed three different readings of media messages by audiences—preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings—to reflect the audiences' acceptance, negotiation with, or rejection of the producers' intended meanings of the messages. The instances cited above show both the case of preferred reading and that of negotiated reading. A case of oppositional reading too has been identified here as some respondents have expressed views that show a clear negative perception of the West. They see both the West and the alleged Western media's positive portrayal of the West as part of a continuous domination of the developing countries by the rich industrialised nations. They tend to blame the West for the misfortunes of the developing countries or for the alleged unfair treatment of Muslim nations. Most of the respondents who hold these views speak with passion and give lengthy explanations to support their arguments:

> Well, one thing that I know is that I have read much about history and I know how the West has been quite very unfair in trade, in investment, in colonialism. Colonisers: how they left us in the dark, how they left us in want, in poverty, in misery, and we are grappling today with leadership tussle, leadership struggle, and any negative news that comes, comes from us—no positive news comes from us. So the media is dominated by the West. Having colonised us and raped the countries of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia, they gave us nothing... We are dominated technologically, we are dominated by the media, the Western media; we are dominated by the Western power, we are dominated by the World Bank, the IMF… And then collaborators within us that have other leaders outside that want us to be more backward than forward. So we find tremendous resources and amount of money going out of Africa and not developing Africa but still developing Europe (*University lecturer*).

The lecturer used both the past and the present to provide justification for his negative views on the West, beginning with its historical role in colonialism and the consequences of it to the current trade and investment relations that he considers unfair. He also touched on institutional structures such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as technological and media structures, all of which he feels confer advantages on the West and help perpetuate the unfair relationship. It is clearly a negative perception with no attempt to find any positive aspect of the relationship. The following lengthy comment from a former editor also reveals negative perception of the West, though from a different perspective:

> [T]here was a time when we unquestionably thought that Britain was on our side… As our former colonial masters, we have this affinity. But I think the (first) Gulf War was the first defining moment when we began to question what we were hearing on the BBC. And you know people were quite unhappy with the way, for instance, the BBC tried to first of all justify the gang up against Saddam Hussein, even though we're all aware that Saddam started it all by invading Kuwait... And then when it became a matter of all these people ganging up against Saddam, when we thought he was fighting a super power, Saddam became like a Muslim hero at that time. I remember many children born at that time, for his standing up to the US, they were named Saddam… So, I think, that was like a defining moment because truly that was when we began to see the BBC as partisan and in some ways even anti-Muslims or anti-Arabs; we're not too happy with the way they ganged up with the US, and they're all for the Gulf invasion, regardless of the laws (*Female ex-editor of Hausa newspaper*).

A historical perspective was used here too but not in the way it was played in the earlier response. The former editor, unlike the lecturer, is not so keen on passing blame on colonialism; she feels that the colonial link with Britain should have actually made Britain to be on the side of its former colonies. Though not condoning colonialism, she apparently believes that it should have been transformed into an instrument that would help to build a better relationship between the former imperial power and its former colonies; but, in her view, it did not turn out to be that way. And that is one of the key sources of her dismay. This was worsened by what she saw as the West's interference in the Muslim world. 'The defining moment,' in her opinion, was the first Gulf war in the early 1990s when the US-led coalition forces ejected Saddam Hussein's Iraq out of Kuwait. Here too, though she was not in support of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, she was clearly opposed to the 'gang up' against the Iraqi leader, even condemning the BBC for trying to justify it. So the blame is not just on the West, it is extended to its media too—as the following comment from the local publisher equally reveals:

> I think, truly, while they (Western media) try to be credible, they are trying to make the entire people of Northern Nigeria or Nigeria or here in Africa to believe in Western programmes… People should look at America and Britain as countries that decide for us... But if you look at their programmes in the news items, you'd realise that it is not always true because for one, as a Muslim, I really believe that they have some sentiments, because it is not only the BBC that I listen to. I listen to it regularly but I listen to other international stations too… Sometimes I get more annoyed if I listen to some of these policies because instead of making me happy, I feel it annoys me… I only listen to hear their own side of the story that I cannot be allowed to hear from this (local media's)

perspective. But truly it has not influenced me so as to love Britain so dearly. This is their news items, they are doing this; I should like them for this, no… I respect them, but I don't love them that much (*Local newspaper publisher*).

All the last three lengthy responses show a clear case of oppositional reading of media messages (Hall, 1980). Clearly, high consumption of Western media has not endeared the West to these audiences. On the contrary, it produces backlash effects (Morgan, 1990) or what Klapper (1960, p.13) calls 'boomerang effects', as the audiences perceive the West negatively, accusing it of short-changing the less-developed world. The responses are lengthy and clear enough to adequately explain what the respondents exactly mean, and it is evident from them that the university lecturer's argument falls within the context of imperialism and centre-periphery theories (Galtung, 1971; Wellhofer, 1989), the female ex-editor's focus is on the West's alleged antagonism to Muslims and the Arab world and the local publisher stands somewhere in-between them, expressing views that have a tinge of both African and Islamic sentiments. The respondents also tend to equate the West with Britain and United States—in fact, not only these respondents but most of the respondents in this research usually mean Britain and United States when they use the term 'West' and vice versa, which is actually a common practice in Nigeria, emanating perhaps primarily from the country's colonial, commercial and linguistic ties with these two countries.

Perceptions of BBC's coverage of Nigeria

The best known function of the BBC World Service is provision of international news and analysis. Transnational audiences primarily turn to it for this service. Nigerians are not exception, and they mostly turn to it both for international news and for news about their country—and for other services as well. Most of the respondents in this study do not only regard the BBC as their main source of international news and current affairs, but they also see it as a source of news in Nigeria mainly because of its wide coverage of events in the country. Their perception of BBC's coverage of Nigeria is generally positive—part of this was already shown above in their comments under the themes of international media consumption and BBC credibility rating. Many Nigerians tend to use BBC as a yardstick against which they measure the performance of local broadcasters—not

in terms of resources or quality of staffing and programming or handling of global news and so on, but in terms of treatment of Nigerian stories. The respondents rated BBC high on the basis of what they see as its in-depth coverage of Nigeria, timeliness and accuracy of its news content, its ability to cover politically-sensitive stories that many local broadcasters (predominantly-controlled by the government) avoid and its perceived impartiality in covering such stories. The following comment by a television producer attempts to capture some of the listed attributes:

> Anytime (you) listen to the BBC, you are sure to hear something from close home than, say, even a radio station within the country. Like for instance now, if there is a scandal in the federal government, we first hear it in the BBC. On the NTA network, you won't see it, you'll never see it at all—sometimes, you'll see it next week. But most of the times, at the time it happened or shortly after, you get it in the BBC (*Television producer*).

The attempt to make comparative assessment comes out boldly: he tried to highlight how far the BBC could go to get a local story that a local radio station has not picked, how free the BBC is to cover a federal government scandal that the government-owned Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) could not cover and how timely the BBC's coverage of stories could be. He used BBC as a benchmark to measure the performance of local broadcasters in covering Nigeria, having adjudged the station to have performed well. Other responses too portray positive perception of the station—this one in particular speaks glowingly of its coverage of both Africa and Nigeria:

> I tend to listen to BBC Hausa Service. I know there is an African service, and I often heard people quote what they heard on the World Service. But truly I'm more of a Hausa Service listener, and as the result I know that they tend to cover Africa very well and Nigeria excellently well (*Female ex-editor of Hausa newspaper*).

So, despite this respondent's earlier misgivings about BBC's coverage of the Gulf war (as noted earlier), she feels its coverage of Nigeria is excellent. She is particularly emphatic on the Hausa Service which she listens regularly. This view is reinforced by a similar one from another female listener in this comment:

> To a quite extent, because of their Hausa service, I think, virtually everybody in Nigeria tunes in to his radio to listen to them. So, I think, they have been doing very well and they have covered a lot (*Female school administrator*).

The underlining message in both comments is that they feel that not just they themselves as individual listeners but others too must have felt comfortable with the BBC's coverage of Nigeria as revealed by the positive comments the former editor said she heard from others and by the way the school administrator saw people tuning in to listen to the station. But there are others who are slightly more cautious. The local publisher does share with the other respondents the positive view about the BBC's coverage of Nigeria, but he notes that it does so from its own perspective:

> I have confidence and I listen more to BBC because I trust them… They would tell you what you're supposed to know from their own perspective, although here locally…they are not allowed to be aired. It is censored there too, but at a very minimal level (*Local newspaper publisher*).

Looking at all the comments it is clear that the respondents' satisfaction with the BBC's performance in Nigeria is not in doubt. Even the last comment that raises the issue of the broadcaster giving reports from its own perspective and of being censored does still stress that it at least offers more open coverage than the local stations which may not even be allowed to broadcast some stories. This is not to say that Nigerians are comfortable with the way BBC covers each and every story in their country—far from it. As seen in the *Welcome to Lagos* episode cited in 'The BBC and Northern Nigerians' chapter, the broadcast of that programme by BBC2 in April 2010 (BBC2, 2010) provoked outrage among many Nigerians. So there are cases of discomfort, but the responses here are on the general coverage. The respondents' satisfaction with the BBC is on its cumulative coverage of Nigeria in general. Overall, their assessment is consistent with the results of BBC's audience surveys (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010) that show Nigerians' high rating of its performance in their country. And this was mainly facilitated by their satisfaction of the local coverage. 'Research shows that for many people a major reason for listening to foreign broadcasts is to obtain news, especially locally relevant news, not otherwise obtainable' (Mytton and Forrester, 1988, p. 477). Although much has changed since the 1988 research was conducted and many local broadcasters (particularly the private stations), in fairness to them, do now cover areas that they could not previously cover and the new media reports all sorts of stories now, the significance of BBC's coverage of local stories is still high in Nigeria. It is the

measure of such significance that both the BBC and some Nigerians claim that the impact of the World Service in Nigeria could be compared to that of a national radio (Aitken, 2007; Muhammad, 2010).

Perceptions of BBC's coverage of Muslim world and Africa

Of all the themes discussed, the issue of BBC's coverage of Islamic world and Muslim-related affairs seemed to have provoked the greatest passion from almost all the respondents. Islam, as discussed in the 'Historical Context' chapter, plays significant roles not just in the religious but also in the political, social and cultural lives of Muslim Northern Nigerians whose Islamic identity also seems to invoke their interests in happenings across the Muslim world. Incidentally, the international media too are awash with stories and issues related to Muslims and Islamic world. Finding out the audiences' position on the BBC's coverage of the matter is essential for this research. The respondents were passionate on the subject and keen to express their views on it. The majority believe that the BBC's coverage of Islamic world is very negative (a hint of that has already emerged from some of their responses above). Similarly, some of the respondents also feel that the BBC's coverage of Africa is also negative, though not as negative as they see with regard to its coverage of Muslims and Islam-related issues. The central focus of their argument is that the West is antagonistic to Islam and that the Western media, including the BBC, are toeing the same line, portraying Muslim nations negatively to justify actions taken against them. The respondents, being Muslims themselves, gave it a "we-versus-them" perspective—as the following comments show:

> Well, you see, their true belief is that Islam is (an) aggressive religion. We're always fighting and fighting and fighting (*Trade unionist*).

> [T]he Gulf war was the first thing that made us feel like the Western world was capable of being brutal against Muslim countries, and not caring about, you know, casualties and stuff… It was not like before when once you said the BBC, that's the ultimate authority. You know, with time, the people of Northern Nigeria have begun to question the BBC's objectivity, of course, as regards to Islam and our relationship with the West (*Female ex-editor of Hausa newspaper*).

From the content and tone of their comments, it is clear that both of them situate themselves as being at the receiving end of what they see as unfair treatment of

Muslims by the West and its media. The use of "we" and "our" signifies their sense of involvement and victimhood. The trade unionist is concerned with the portrayal of Islam as an 'aggressive religion' while the former editor talks about the West's brutality 'against Muslim countries' and the BBC's lack of 'objectivity' in reporting it. Both of them share a pessimistic view of BBC's coverage of the Muslim world—just as the following respondents too:

> To a large extent I don't think they are fair to the Muslim world… (The BBC is) not very accurate (in its coverage of Islam)… There was a case…it's the Muslim community which Britain was trying to blame, and they were trying to cover it up (*Female school administrator*).

> Well, one thing I must tell you is that the coverage has been negative, and without sentiment I would say so. Number one, it has not been well-researched. Every issue is supposed to be researched by investigative journalism and much resources and personnel need to be trained to understand the genesis of a problem… Every issue is unique in itself, for example, religious riot in the North during the Second Republic (in Nigeria) is quite distinct in its origin, in its genesis, in its consequence with what happened with the *Boko Haram* (see the introduction of 'Historical Context' chapter) (*University lecturer*).

Although the instances they tried to cite were different, their focus was to illustrate alleged unfair coverage of Muslim-related issues. Their reading of the BBC texts, like that of the two respondents before them, is oppositional (Hall, 1980). They simply rejected the content of BBC's coverage of the particular issues involved and apparently did not even bother to negotiate for a middle ground meaning. This tends to happen when audiences are confronted with media messages that are not congenial with their dominant belief (Klapper, 1960). Considering the significant roles Islam plays in the lives of these respondents, negative stories about Muslims or Islam-related matters may not be compatible with their prevailing views, and so they tend to reject them. In a way it is part of the difficult relationship between the West and Islam and the wider complexity of cultural encounter. This comment by the former parliamentarian provides an insight into this complexity:

> Well, actually, I have problem naturally with the West because of their religious understanding. Ah, they don't understand what Islam is. For us in Northern Nigeria, I can say majority of us are Muslims, and whatever touches on religion definitely touches us deep inside. And for them, they are ignorant of that because…they don't consider religion as anything. But here, without religion, you are nothing—that's our belief and that's how it is. So the only problem we have with them (is) when they just say

anything…against my religion. If not, we don't have problem with them. Most of the things we do here in Nigeria, we copy from them; they brought us up…though we know they have their interests (*Ex-soldier-cum-parliamentarian*).

For him the West's inability or unwillingness to comprehend the feelings of Muslims is the source of the difficulties in the relationship. The West may not consider religion significant, but for him and Muslim Northern Nigerians it is. And that, in his view, is the parting point; and it comes into fore if the West does anything against his religion. Otherwise, he says, 'we don't have problem with them…they brought us up…though we know they have their interests'. It is a clear example of the complexity associated with cultural encounters. However, unlike the other respondents before him who show a clear oppositional reading of Western media text, his appears to be more of a negotiated reading (Hall, 1980). He considered their side and tried to reconcile it with his. The other respondents before him did not do that. But there is also a dominant reading from at least one respondent (the factory worker) who feels that the BBC's main focus is on enlightening people and that it has been covering Muslims and Islam-related matters accurately and fairly:

> In my understanding, honestly, the BBC concentrates in enlightening people. They do not hide things; they do not show religious bias…they balance their reports. My belief is that they do not show religious preference (*Factory worker*).

Other respondents, however, raised the issue of alleged negative depiction of the less-developed world, particularly Africa, and positive portrayal of the West. Their argument is that there is a structural imbalance created by the West to present itself in a positive light and others negatively; and that all the Western media, including the BBC, are guilty of this. They describe it from what they regard as the existence of an unfair information flow model:

> There is a one-sided flow of information: good is from the West, bad is from the developing world. You can hardly hear anything coming from Africa except that of conflict, except that of war, except that of coups, except that of corruption… Certainly, 95 per cent of what they do is to portray the West in a positive light. I don't know whether there is certain information they are supplementing or they are suppressing, but from the news we get, 95 per cent of the news is the positive portrayal of the West (*Graduate student*).

> Truly speaking, I think, over 60 or 70 per cent of their programme are based on their policies... They would tell you what you're supposed to know from their own perspective (*Local newspaper publisher*).

Both the graduate student and the local publisher are united in this case: they share the view that the West uses its control of information flow for its own benefits. They even tried to quantify the extent to which they think the West is taking advantage of such control. They may not have provided scientific evidence to back any of the claims, but the way they put them reveal an attempt to emphasise the magnitude of the problem. Their argument goes beyond the issue of alleged negative or positive portrayal of one side or the other and raises a more serious question of alleged suppression of truth. 'I don't know whether there is certain information they are supplementing or they are suppressing,' says the graduate student to highlight that concern. Like the case of alleged unfair coverage of Muslims and Islamic world which most of the respondents show stronger worries about, the alleged poor depiction of Africa too shows a picture of oppositional reading of Western media texts (Hall, 1980). Both cases reveal the audiences' negative perceptions of BBC's coverage of those areas.

Credibility and selective believability

The responses so far seen and analysed above have revealed significant contradictions: high consumption of BBC's products and positive perception of its credibility on one hand, and overwhelming belief that it gives positive spin on the West and negative portrayal of Islam and Africa on the other. Similarly, despite the unanimity among all the respondents that the BBC and the rest of the international media do aid their comprehension of international affairs, many of them show strong negative perceptions of the West—notwithstanding the alleged positive portrayal of the West by the Western media, including the BBC. Do the respondents realise the contradictions produced by their responses? Apparently, the majority do—and their explanations could be summed up in the following words: credibility does not automatically translate into believability. Although they view the BBC as the most credible broadcaster, they still select which aspects of its broadcasts to believe. In any case, they do not extend the credibility rating to its coverage of Muslims and Islam-related affairs. And since they perceive the

BBC's coverage of such issues to be negative, they tend to reject them and apparently resist its possible influence in shaping their views on such matters. The following comments reveal how they resist its influence when they suspect motives in its messages:

> Since I have known the United States and Britain and other parts of the world well, whenever I hear BBC I feel like they are just propagating their masters' voice because I have already made up my mind by knowing them. So I get hardened on issues—certain issues whatever they tell me, I never believe them (*Trade unionist*).

> Regular listening (of the BBC) does not change my views on anything, unless I see practically that what I know before is now different. Whenever I see in practical terms something that is different from what I thought of it, I change my view to reflect the reality… Am, at anytime I listen to radio and hear about British policies or actions, I listen to them, but they don't change my ideology or stand on them (*Petty trader*).

As seen from these two comments, audiences may use their existing knowledge to assess media messages and decide to accept, reject or recast them to fit into their own views. The trade unionist, for instance, has already built strong defences against those BBC messages that may attempt to promote British or American interests, and so it may not be able to influence him in that respect. He made this clear when he said: on 'certain issues whatever they tell me, I never believe them'. The petty trader would listen to them, but they would not make him change his 'ideology or stand', unless he sees practically that what he knows 'before is now different'. The two scenarios reflect Klapper's (1960) conception of how audiences' predispositions influence their perception of media messages. His argument that the phenomena of 'selective exposure…selective perception, and selective retention' do play a role in audiences' consumption of media (Klapper, 1980, p.19) are quite relevant here; and selective perception in particular appears to offer an explanation for this particular case. But the concept of selective perception alone does not explain fully the contradiction of positive credibility rating of a medium and rejection of its messages. A clearer explanation appears to emanate from the audiences themselves—as the following comment reveals:

> There is a difference between being credible and being able to influence my decisions. You see, Britain is the greatest ally of the United States and…when it comes to the conflict in the Middle East, they already have a stand. They have perceived these people as militants; they look at Muslims from a particular perspective. I look at Islam as a peaceful religion; they look at Islam as a kind of religion that propagates fights,

terrorism and what have you. So these are clearly distinct; so anytime they mention Muslims, I know where to draw my own line. But I know for sure that credibility is not the same as being sincere (*Local newspaper publisher*).

The local publisher's argument here is that credibility does not always lead to believability—and this is the general feeling among almost all the respondents. The fact that they see BBC as a credible medium does not mean that they would believe all its messages. They still examine them before deciding to select those that are in tandem with their existing beliefs and reject the dissonant ones, or interpret them in their own way (Klapper, 1960). There are undoubtedly elements of selective perception in this scenario. But other elements such as cultural, ideological and religious factors are equally involved here too. They are quite glaring from the respondent's statement: 'I look at Islam as a peaceful religion; they look at Islam as a kind of religion that propagates…terrorism'. These are indeed opposing viewpoints, and these differences do play out in the interactions between them, for as Liebes and Katz (1993, p.x) argue, media consumption 'is an interaction between the culture of the viewer and the culture of the producer'. The cultural and ideological gulf that exists between them tends to put a wedge between the producer's intended meaning of media content and the meaning the consumer gives it. It is an additional characteristic of transnational audiences' consumption of media that adds to its complexity. This complexity—and the fact that the media landscape itself has changed quite significantly—renders some of the existing concepts incapable of explaining some of the tendencies these audiences exhibit. What is emerging from them appears to be more than selective perception; it is selective believability (more on this in chapters IX and X). The huge ideological, religious and cultural differences between Muslim Northern Nigerians and the West tend to widen the gap between the intended meanings and the audiences' readings of Western media texts. This, of course, does not stop them from consuming and comprehending Western cultural goods. They do, as their responses clearly show. The major area of contention often arises when they are confronted with messages that challenge their prevailing views. And this is the situation that renders even the BBC's credibility credentials incapable of enhancing its influence.

Summary

The findings have clearly confirmed that there is a high consumption of international media texts, particularly the BBC Hausa Service products, by Northern Nigerian audiences. They reveal the pattern—and passion—of their consumption of these media and its apparent impact on their perceptions of global affairs. Although the audiences mostly access the BBC Hausa Service, they also access other services of the BBC in English (the main World Service, BBC World News, Network Africa, Focus on Africa and Fast Track) on radio, on television and online—and several other international media. The audiences regard BBC as the major provider of international news and analysis (an important provider of Nigerian news as well) that aid their comprehension of international affairs. They rated BBC as the most credible and trustworthy international broadcaster because of what they see as the accuracy, timeliness, depth and impartiality of its coverage of global and national news stories. However, their general perception of the West is negative, despite the positive portrayal of the West by the Western media. Similarly, despite their high rating of the BBC, they view the broadcaster as being unfair to Muslims and Africans because of what they believe to be its negative portrayal of Islamic world—and to a lesser degree of Africa. The defining moment of their suspicion of BBC's alleged unfairness to the Muslim world appears to have begun from its earlier coverage of the conflicts in the Middle East, with one of the older respondents even making references to its alleged unfair coverage of the first Gulf war. These perceptions seem to create their suspicion and mistrust of BBC's coverage of Muslims and Islam-related issues. They tend to reject such reports and resist BBC's possible influence in shaping their views on such matters.

The respondents are mainly middle-aged Muslim men (only two are women), reflecting, in a way, the predominance of male audience as demographic features of the BBC listeners in Northern Nigeria also show (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). It is also worth re-stating here that they are entirely urban audiences who have well above average educational level—much higher than that of the general population which includes huge rural dwellers. This shortcoming is, however, addressed in chapter IX which presents the focus group discussions' results obtained from more participants who possess all the key demographic characteristics of the BBC audiences in Northern Nigeria.

VIII
Results and Analysis II
(BBC's Perspective)

Introduction

The production and distribution of media products naturally precede their reception. The old one-way flow model wrongly placed reception at the terminal end of the media production-consumption pact; but, as has long been established now, the media-audience relationship is a far more complex process of continuous interactions between producers and consumers. The evolution and refinement of various feedback mechanisms and the emergence and popularity of interactive programming, facilitated by new communications technologies, have redefined both the production and reception of media products. The kind of transformation taking place in the sector is so great that the dividing lines between the two is becoming blurred, particularly with the growing popularity of the user-generated contents (discussed in detail in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter above). However, this ongoing transformation has not yet altered the fundamental structure that makes the production side the main determinant of what goes down to the reception side. This role guarantees its viability in reception studies. To clearly comprehend the dynamics of media reception, therefore, it is imperative to get some insights into the processes and procedures of content production and the roles of those responsible for them.

This chapter attempts to do that. Using empirical data obtained through face-to-face in-depth interviews with BBC's managerial and production personnel, it teases out the nature and dynamics of media production. It specifically looks at the processes and procedures involved in the selection and production of contents for the BBC Hausa Service audiences. It also unpacks the pattern and dynamics of the relationship between BBC managers, producers and reporters; the BBC's engagement with new communications technologies; the shift to interactive programming; the relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; the treatment of audiences' complaints; and the BBC personnel's perceptions of the corporation's impact in Northern Nigeria. Those interviewed are the BBC's executive editor for African region, the Abuja bureau editor, the erstwhile main

BBC World Service correspondent in Nigeria who is now a producer in the corporation's newsroom in London, one of the BBC Hausa Service's senior correspondents in Nigeria who was previously a producer in London, and a former senior reporter who was also a senior producer of the Hausa Service. Together they provide useful insights into the media production side to help fully understand the nature of its relationship with the reception side.

Content selection

The focal point in the media-audience relation is the content the media produce for audiences' consumption. Content production is the primary concern of all media practitioners, from reporters and producers to editors and managers; and enormous energy, time and material resources are devoted to such venture. The BBC, as noted in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter, has a well-organised system that guides and shapes its content production. Programmes are made in line with the aims and objectives of the corporation; and the *BBC Editorial Guidelines* provides guides for programme making, right from content selection to its processing and presentation to the audiences. Despite this, though, individual initiatives do also come into play, for as the BBC's Director General Mark Thompson says in the introduction to the 2005 *BBC Editorial Guidelines*, it is essential that programme makers use their 'own best judgement' in handling difficult situations. 'No set of rules or guidelines can ever replace the need for producers, editors and managers to use the wisdom that comes from experience, commonsense and a clear set of editorial and ethical values when confronted with difficult editorial challenges' (BBC Guidelines, 2005, p.2). This highlights the important roles of managers, editors and producers—and how their experience and wisdom come into play—in content production. The BBC personnel themselves narrate, in the extracts below, how the combination of the editorial guidelines, personal judgements and changing circumstances come into play in the selection and production of BBC contents for its Nigerian audiences. A senior BBC Hausa Service correspondent who has also worked as producer at its head office in London outlines the framework that guides the selection of contents for Hausa Service programmes:

> [T]he BBC has a set of rules as regards to programmes. The aim is always to be fair, to be objective and unbiased.

Do you have any instructions from the top on what kind of materials to broadcast to your audiences in Northern Nigeria?

> Well, except for news—there are core news items that are in the system (the main news pool in the BBC World Service newsroom)—they have to fall according to the standard of the World Service, whether Northern Nigeria, Southern Nigeria, Africa or elsewhere—it's got to be the same standard. But for reports, they come from the area that is your target, and in this case, having worked for the Hausa Service in Northern Nigeria, that is our target area. Yes, we do get news reports from reporters who are in Northern Nigeria, and every time the instruction is that these reports must be as factual as possible. And they must be objective; they must be balanced; nobody tells you to publish or report a particular thing that suits his or her interest from the top (*Senior correspondent/producer*).

This is typical of the responses from the BBC personnel interviewed. It shows that the BBC's objectives and editorial guidelines offer the basic framework that guides programme making, and that the World Service newsroom provides the language services—the Hausa Service inclusive—with the core news bulletins that they broadcast to their audiences, as earlier explained in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter. The language services then source other stories from their target areas which should also meet the BBC's editorial standard. By this respondent's assessment, the BBC's editorial value of impartiality is emphasised as the reporters are told to ensure that their reports are accurate, objective and balanced. There is also the issue of editorial independence given to the reporters on the field to report what they see, without interference from the top, as long as they abide by the editorial guidelines. This issue of relative editorial independence for both the reporter and producer was made clearer by the following responses from both the World Service correspondent/producer and former senior reporter-cum-producer:

> I don't think there is much (interference), for myself there is no superior editorial judgment about what I cover or not; it's very much left to me as a bureau chief in Lagos to decide what is valid or what is not (*World Service correspondent*).

> It (content) is largely determined by the producer. You know, in the BBC system there are a number of (editorial) meetings in each department that sort of discuss the main story being offered by the correspondents from the various parts of the world that particular service is covering. It is at that meeting that a decision is made as to which of the story offers that have been made would be taken to be broadcast (*Ex-senior reporter-cum-producer*).

The last comment contains additional element that also plays a role in content selection: editorial meetings. Here the producer, editor, presenter and others involved in programme-making would meet and discuss the various stories offered by the local reporters from the target areas among which they select the ones that would be included in the programme, with the producer playing a key role in the selection of the stories. These are daily production level decisions taken by each language service ahead of the programmes to be produced in the day. At the higher policy making level still, equally in consideration of the BBC objectives and editorial guidelines, long-term decisions are taken as to which broad areas to focus on and which global issues to be given greater coverage. This deals with long-term general issues, not specific stories covered over a short period of time. It gives direction on the areas of coverage and the overall method of treatment of the broad areas identified. The following comment from the BBC's executive editor for African region reveals how the broad editorial issues are decided at the top level and why the focus is now shifting to much wider areas:

> I know for a fact that in the past international broadcasters like the BBC were focusing more on issues like tragedies, disasters, coups, natural disasters and upheavals and scandals and so on and so on. But now for the past years we have been trying to widen the agenda in the sense that there is now actually no no-go area for us. We do programmes on health, for example, we do sports, we do arts, we do business and we do interactivity, of course… We make local issues relevant and put local issues in the context of what is happening around the world. And we make global issues relevant to people in all target areas (*Executive editor, African region*).

This adds yet another layer to the series of layers surrounding content consideration. It is a confirmation of the deliberate and conscious effort involved in making editorial policies that offer guides on the broad subjects to be considered for coverage. There is, as this response shows, a deliberate decision by the BBC to widen the areas of coverage for the African audiences; and to put local issues in international context and make global issues comprehensible to the target audiences. The executive editor even went on to give specific example (too lengthy to be quoted verbatim) of how the BBC tried to make its coverage of the global financial meltdown understandable and relevant to BBC Hausa Service audiences by linking what has been happening in the local Nigeria's economy to the events in the international financial markets, and vice-versa. This is in concert

with the BBC's editorial approach of giving international perspective to local events, as discussed in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter. Overall, the responses have highlighted the complexity of content selection and production in the BBC Hausa Service. They have clearly shown that, from its selection and processing to its presentation and delivery to the audiences, media content production, as Hall (1980) argues, is not a random process. It is a well-organised systematic process that involves different layers of personnel making conscious and deliberate decisions guided by a well-thought out framework and established rules and regulations.

Shift to interactivity

The deliberate decision of the BBC's management and editorial policy makers to widen its areas of coverage, as explained earlier by the executive editor for African region, has increased the variety of its contents. Programmes on health, sports, arts and business and so on are clear evidence of the increase in the variety of the contents. But none of them nowadays gets as much attention as interactivity, which has now become a key area of programming in the corporation. Interactivity, as noted earlier, has the multiple benefits of directly engaging the audiences, generating content from them, infusing variety in programmes, providing instant feedback and exerting subtle influence on the audiences. As the 2005 *BBC Editorial Guidelines* too notes: 'Interactivity allows our audiences to engage with us in many different ways, from choosing which game to watch at Wimbledon and voting for a Personality of the Year, to taking part in our competitions and contributing to radio phone-ins' (p.138). According to the guidelines, the editorial principles of interactivity are, among others, to ensure that it 'adds public value and enhances our output in a way which fits our public service remit', and significantly too it should have 'a clear editorial purpose' (BBC Guidelines, 2005, p.138). The corporation therefore has a well-defined procedure and purposes of pursuing interactive programming. The new delivery technologies have enhanced the strategy, and the corporation appears keen in exploring their potentials to extract maximum benefits from the new approach. In the following comments, both the executive editor for African region and BBC Abuja bureau

editor explain how the BBC has been integrating greater interactivity in its programming and how this is widening its engagement with audiences:

> In terms of engagement, the only sort of engagement we used to have was actually in the form of listeners' question-and-answer slots; and there wasn't anything like 'Have Your Say' (the special interactive programme) with people setting the agenda. Whereas now, even in language services, say in Hausa or Kiswahili or in Somali, you find out that our listeners now tend to react almost instantly. Sometimes while programmes are on air listeners are able to give feedback. And in fact, some services do have their own Facebook so that listeners who have access to the Internet can actually talk about all sort of issues, including those that are not on news and current affairs programmes (*Executive editor, African region*).

> Officially, we come to realise that the audiences are trying now to sort of drive the BBC agenda on a daily basis because to a greater extent some of our…outputs come from user-generated contents. This we establish through bringing radio closer to the people. Remember the Hausa Service undertook a village road show last year (2009), and with that we cultivated a number of listeners and they keep calling even at odd hours of the day, contributing stories or ideas… You find out that the amount of text messages, that is SMS, and the request you get from people who say they want to be on air to say something…is just growing by the day (*Abuja bureau editor*).

The notion of audiences themselves—and not the BBC—setting the agenda, emphasised in these responses, is the official line of the corporation to stress its off-hand no-interest attitude in order to establish the aura of an impartial platform that merely conveys audiences' worldviews. This makes the audiences less suspicious of the intent of the contents (after all it is ostensibly their products not BBC's), and therefore more likely to be influenced by them. In reality, though, what is presented as user-generated content has in it many trappings of the BBC. As noted earlier in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter, it is the BBC that selects the topic for discussion (though there are instances when even the topics are suggested by the audiences), decides the trend of the debate, and shapes its outcome. But even more significantly, the idea of expanding interactive programming in the World Service is essentially to achieve the BBC's 'global conversation' objective (BBC, 2008) which is linked to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 'digital diplomacy initiatives' (Sreberny *et al*., 2010b, p.280; Hill and Alshaer, 2010). The argument is that mediating the 'global debate' (BBC, 2008) may generate the outcome that the corporation and its funding body desire.

Engagement with new distribution technologies

The driving engines of interactive programming are the new communications technologies that allow instant communications in digital quality through several easily accessible devices. The Internet and mobile telephony have enabled people living in some of the remotest parts of the world to link up with the media located in the most cosmopolitan regions of the world and air their views. 'With cable and satellite have come the fierce engine of multichannel competition and the rise of niche audiences,' Price *et al*. (2008, p.156) note. 'With the Internet and broadband has come the culture of interaction and user-originated content'. But even more than these, the new communications technologies have facilitated the distribution of media contents to areas never envisaged before and transformed the mode of media consumption among diverse audiences. The BBC has always been quick in recognising the potentials of new technologies and in deploying them for its services. It is in line with this tradition that the corporation effectively engages these technologies to enhance its engagement with its audiences in delivering its products to them, in receiving feedback from them, and in enhancing its own efficiencies—as revealed by its own personnel. This comment from African region's executive editor illustrates the kind of changes BBC's engagement with new technologies is bringing:

> In the past we used to wait for our reporters to send in their scripts or cassette which you know would have to take sometimes a week before it arrived here for us to use... But now with very good (Internet) connectivity and telephone lines—and in fact mobile phones in particular—you find that we put out the very latest as quickly and as regularly as we could (*Executive editor, African region*).

In this instance he outlined the nature of changes communications technologies have brought in speeding up the process of sending reports by the BBC language services' reporters from their regional bases to the metropolitan headquarters of the corporation. A report that can take a week to reach London from Nigeria, for instance—and risk becoming stale—can now be sent instantly. This has not only saved time and energy; it has also brought efficiency to both the reporters' work and the corporation's performance. In the subsequent explanation below, he has highlighted how the Internet was originally seen as a threat to the old broadcast

media before it was harnessed and turned into another platform for the delivery of BBC products:

> [T]he Internet (was) certainly a threat to radio and television because if you have a platform where you could go any minute, anytime, anywhere, and access almost everything, anything you want, then, of course, the possibility of people in the target areas to make an appointment to wait until a certain time to listen to a 30-minute or one-hour programme is under intense pressure… (But now with adoption of new technologies), I think, the Hausa Service would go from strength to strength because we try to be as close to the audiences as possible. We try to adapt to changing media environment by introducing new things and making sure that we don't miss out on any platform (*Executive editor, African region*).

From being a threat to becoming an opportunity, the Internet is turned into an additional platform for the BBC Hausa Service which traditionally transmits its programmes at fixed times to radio listeners in the target areas. Now, in addition to the four fixed transmissions (in the morning, afternoon and evening), it streams its content in the Internet which is accessible to audiences anytime anywhere—where Internet connectivity exists. The listeners need not to make appointments at the fixed transmission times to tune in to the station and listen to the programmes; they can access them on the Internet at their convenient time. And it is not only the audio contents that they can get from the BBC Hausa website (bbchausa.com); they can also access the text, the pictorial and sometimes video contents—in addition to the opportunity offered for them to air their own views (Tangaza, 2009, 2010). This has not only enhanced delivery, it has also facilitated interactivity, as stated earlier. The harnessing of social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, has widened the interactivity and made both delivery and instant feedback possible, which have in turn brought improvement in broadcasting, as noted in this comment by the senior correspondent/producer:

> Well, I think (the new technologies) have (enhanced broadcasting)… In the past you (were) just making programmes, airing them, sometimes you (didn't) even know who listened. But here you get a feedback, people telling you the inputs; they react to what you do; even if you don't see them or feel them, at least you read what they say. So this will encourage you to improve on what you are doing (*Senior correspondent/producer*).

The integration of the new media into the services of the old media, as these responses indicate, has been transforming the pattern of broadcasting and media-audience relationship. As Price *et al.* (2008) argue, 'new technologies means far

more than reaching more people, reaching faster, penetrating through greater barriers…new technologies beget a new media environment' (p.156). The convergence allowed by both the Internet and mobile telephony, for instance, has brought many changes in the BBC Hausa Service's broadcasting, and in its engagement with the audiences—as the Abuja bureau editor explains in detail:

> Although (the integration of new media) is new with the Hausa Service now, compared to other services of the BBC, you find that the Hausa Service gets more hits every day than most of the websites across the BBC. There is…the BBC Hausa Facebook (through which) we send out a particular burning or topical issue online, and the amount of response and the debate among people who visit that site is just interesting… Now the BBC has started getting content on to mobile phones, podcast and stuff like that. And this which started a few weeks ago (in 2010) is generating a lot of interest. A lot of people are coming in and saying, look, this is a new development. I had one listener with an old telephone handset (who came) and said: 'Look, you guys said I can get whatever I want with this, show me how I can get such content'. I told him no, look, your telephone is not a web-enabled phone, so you can't get it on this. Believe me, the next day, the man came back with a web-enabled phone and asked me to show him how to do it (*Abuja bureau editor*).

Delivering Hausa Service contents through various platforms—on radio, online and on phone—and interacting with the audiences through these platforms as well as getting them absorbed in debates and discussions through both the radio interactive programmes and social media indicate the station's determination to widen its reach and increase its audiences. Harnessing different platforms ensures that it does not miss out on any useful platform. For instance, the distribution of contents through mobile telephony, as the head of Hausa Service notes (Tangaza, 2009), holds great potentials in Nigeria which in 2009 had been identified as the fastest growing mobile phone market in the world, with over 70 million subscribers and an annual growth of 8.5 million subscribers (Okonji, 2009).

Recent BBC surveys indicate that accessing the BBC contents through mobile phone, especially by youths in Nigeria, is on the increase (BBC Global News, 2010), confirming the BBC management's 'wisdom' of employing 'multimedia strategy' in content delivery and in engagement with the audiences (Hiller, 2010a, p.2). 'The invocation of new technologies,' Price *et al*. (2008) observe, 'is an obvious and appealing call to modernize, to come to grips with necessities and

opportunities' (p.150). Media institutions, they further argue, do adjust to accommodate new distribution technologies—and the BBC tends to be ahead of many in doing this, as this study reveals.

Perceptions on BBC's public diplomacy role

International broadcasting has always been linked to public diplomacy (Browne, 1982) and the BBC World Service, being funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is liable to being associated with British public diplomacy. Effective from 2014, though, the funding will come from the BBC licence fees; but the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will still maintain its role of deciding the target areas and the language services to be run by the World Service (Robinson and Sweney, 2010). How the planned change will play out is a subject for future studies, but the existing relationship of the two bodies has for long been subjected to academic and diplomatic scrutiny. As cited earlier, Sreberny *et al.* (2010b) have argued that the BBC and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have a complex engagement, ranging from a 'tighter relationship of propagandistic direction' to 'looser relationship of mutual understanding as to the BBC's role as "public diplomat"' (p.279). Similarly, in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter this study has analysed how the BBC World Service's institutional structure and editorial framework mould it into an organ that both provides international news service and promotes British public diplomacy.

The classification in the 2004 Spending Review of the BBC World Service as a 'partner' in British public diplomacy by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was a major turning point in the relationship between the two establishments (FCO, 2005; Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b). The reinforcement of that position by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee in 2011 (FACOM, 2011) describing the corporation as an important 'soft power' resource for Britain strengthens the claim of its public diplomacy role. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, though, has always been quick to emphasise that the editorial independence of the corporation, guaranteed by the Royal Charter, guards against outside interference in the BBC's operations. The corporation, which prides itself as a provider of impartial international news and analysis, resents being described as an instrument of British public diplomacy. But beyond these

arguments, how does this complex relationship play out in the actual BBC functionality as seen by its managerial and production personnel? The following conversation with the BBC's executive editor for African region provides some insights into the personnel's perspective on that relationship:

Who decides what BBC broadcasts?
> Well, as you know, we are a public service broadcaster, the BBC World Service, and we are paid for by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through grant-in-aid. They decide what languages or target areas we should be covering, but they have no say in the contents and contributors of any given programme in any given language service or target area.

Don't you think that they, being the financiers of the entire organisation, would that not affect the contents the organisation produces?
> No, as long as you are transparent, you're straight and you say exactly what you stand for and you stick to what you stand for, I don't think the BBC has at any given time wavered on (its) core values: impartiality, independence, (providing) balanced and credible information free from any interference.

So you don't think that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office interferes in the actual running and production of broadcast materials.
> No, I have been here with the BBC for more than 20 years and I cannot recall any instance where FCO actually asked us to cover this or not to cover that (*Executive editor, African region*).

From his comments, it appears that the interference is at the policy level not at the operational level which is left for the managerial and operational staff to handle in accordance with the corporation's guidelines. The claim of operational non-interference is further reinforced by the following comment from World Service correspondent who cited his experience as a correspondent in Lagos:

> Virtually no interference at all from the Foreign Office or the High Commission (in Nigeria); I mean, the extent of our conversation with the High Commission tended to be in confirming certain events in relations to British nationals, say someone got kidnapped, then we can call them up to say 'can you confirm', that sort of thing (*World Service correspondent*).

So in his own case neither the Foreign and Commonwealth Office nor the British High Commission in Nigeria tried to interfere in his work. Direct interference in daily editorial decisions and day-to-day running of the BBC World Service would have created major frictions between the two, as the case of Suez Canal crisis (Browne, 1982; Goodwin, 2005), for instance, revealed. However, this does not mean that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not exert significant influence on the World Service. After all, as the executive editor admits, it is responsible for the funding of the organisation and selection of language services

and of the target areas. Many argue that this is enough to make the World Service look like, and actually act as, a British 'public diplomat' (Sreberny *et al.* 2010b, p.279). Among those working for the corporation on the field, the suggestion that the World Service is an instrument of British public diplomacy generates mixed reactions:

> Before I joined the BBC such rumour has been going round and I happened to be one of those who believed in it (but) throughout my stay in the BBC at no point was I given specific instruction as to pursue either British foreign policy or to portray Britain in a particular light. I have not gotten such instructions (*Senior correspondent/producer*).

> I think sometimes one gets the feeling that maybe there is some kind of agenda, let's say in the coverage of Zimbabwe. That is where you can say that the BBC is going out of its way, the way it was covering Zimbabwe. To be honest, as someone who had worked in the BBC, I tend to ask myself 'why are they going to the extent they are going and asking questions which they aren't asking about other countries which may be in similar situation?' But, apart from those cases, I think, on a general note I would say that the BBC is trying to be an alternative voice for people— especially for the World Service—in societies where there is maybe no variety of opinions and news affecting people (*Ex-senior reporter-cum-producer*).

The perception of non-interference in the daily editorial decisions reduces the chance of some of the producers themselves perceiving the BBC as a British 'public diplomat', but it does not remove entirely the feeling that it is one. Its aggressive coverage of Zimbabwe, as cited by the former senior producer, may not be the result of any direct instruction from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to do so, but it may be seen as such, or at the corporation's own volition in solidarity with the British policy towards the southern African nation. The broadcaster's public diplomacy function is not just restricted to a positive portrayal of the owner-country and its friends, and denunciation of its opponents; it extends to the audiences' perception of the media itself. The perception of the BBC as a credible broadcaster itself is of immense benefit to the British public diplomacy efforts, as Lord Carter Public Diplomacy Review Team notes (FCO, 2005). But this could sometimes be eroded when people come face-to-face with the reality of relating with Britain—something that tends to be problematic for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as the World Service correspondent notes:

Well, I think, that is the main interesting problem for Foreign Office because a lot of Nigerians' encounter with official Britain—their first encounter is trying to get a visa, and that is never a pleasant experience for a Nigerian. So they may listen to the BBC and expect liberal, relatively liberal open-minded persons, quite interested in local culture in Nigeria… [T]hen they come across people at the British embassy, stamping and rejecting visas. I think that's the first divergence; and I think the divergence happens more the more they interact with Britain proper, if you like. Ah, but at least people have a better impression of Britain and so on because of the BBC; it is the British Broadcasting Corporation and people know it is the British Broadcasting Corporation (*World Service correspondent*).

In essence, as this perspective reveals, the effectiveness of using media for public diplomacy lies in matching words with action. Nigerian audiences' perception of BBC as a credible medium and a liberal institution—which is a positive image for Britain—makes them to expect liberal behaviours from Britain in an actual encounter; and when that does not happen, they feel disappointed. Similarly, if the BBC portrays Britain in a positive light, that image would stick as long as what is said is backed by concrete evidence. But it would disappear when facts present the opposite. Words not matched with deeds, as his comment indicates, may have only ephemeral effects.

The general consensus among the respondents suggests that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not interfere in the day-to-day running of the BBC World Service—something that they feel guarantees the service's editorial independence. This, however, does not mean that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not influence the production of the BBC goods; it does as seen in its roles as the funding body, as the decider of which language services to operate and target areas to focus on, and perhaps even through some conscious or unconscious efforts by managers to try to reflect the prevailing views of the funding body and so on. The open non-interference policy is clearly beneficial to the two bodies. It even enhances the corporation's effectiveness in playing the public diplomacy role because, as the last respondent suggests, even the mere perception of BBC as a credible organisation is beneficial to Britain's international standing.

Of manager-producer-reporter relationship

The complex relationship between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the World Service, as noted above, ensures that the former still exerts its influence on the latter without overt interference in its operations. There were, of course, cases of conflicts and disagreements as noted earlier, but the relationship has been more of 'mutual understanding' (Sreberny *et al*., 2010b, p.279) rather than of continuous dispute. If this is what marked the relationship between the two establishments, then it is important here to also examine whether such kind of atmosphere is equally extended to the relationship between the BBC managers on one hand, and its reporters and programme producers on the other hand. This is because the dynamics of the internal relationship within an organisation tends to have some effects on its output.

As discussed in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter, programme making in the BBC is guided by the stated objectives of the corporation, its editorial policies and guidelines and the programme templates designed by its various services. These elements also serve as the main guides in the relationship between the management and staff of the corporation. But stated objectives, written editorial policies and guidelines and programme templates apart, how much influence do managers exert in programme making? On the surface, the managers do not seem to interfere in what the producers and reporters do, but on deeper reflection it emerges that they do influence their work, though not in a direct way. This comment from World Service correspondent offers insights into what goes on:

> In terms of the actual editorial content, I don't think there was any dictate from anyone on how and what should or shouldn't be covered. I think they didn't really know what was going on in Nigeria so they couldn't really influence it one way or the other. I mean, other than coming from a much more slightly lower level—programme editors and so on—saying we would like to have more of this or that, or we liked this thing you did… That is the only sort of interference you had. It wasn't really interference, I mean, we're talking just about cooperation and collaboration, saying you've worked really well or we've got a sequence coming up, you know, economy coming up, we would like to have much more voices from Nigeria of so-so things. And that's just an editorial collaboration on a day-to-day basis (*World Service correspondent*).

He prefers to call it 'editorial collaboration' rather than subtle influence or interference because the relationship is such that the atmosphere creates a sense of

collaboration between the reporters and their editors or managers, not a feeling of receiving direct orders or military-like commands on what to do or not to do. It is this feeling of non-interference, of relative freedom to do what you think is right, that gives reporters and producers the sense of independence. This makes them to feel that they are in charge of their work and in control of their products; and even when something comes from the top it is not seen as a top-down order that must be obeyed, but as a wise counsel from above that follows a request from below. It is that sort of feeling that marks the reaction of the next respondent when asked: 'Do you think that there is any pressure from the top in the BBC on how to select materials for broadcast?'

> Well, even if there is, it is not obvious. It is not made open at least for the producer, or the editor or reporter. These things are not things that are written in black-and-white, that this is what you should do and these are things that you should not do. What is specific is that: don't be biased and don't report things you are not sure about. When you're in doubt, make contact. If you're a producer or you're a reporter, if in doubt on something, contact your editor; and if the editor is in doubt, he will relate with the top. These are the kind of instructions we get (*Senior correspondent/producer*).

The chain-of-command structure of the relationship is raised in the senior correspondent's response, and it does play a role both in the written and the un-written rules of engagement in the corporation. If a reporter or producer is unsure about an issue, they should contact their editor; 'and if the editor is in doubt, he will relate with the top'. It is a clear structure that forms part of the framework of the relationship. One other significant thing also raised here is the issue of 'instructions' given on the kind of behaviours expected from different categories of staff. It is this issue of clear instructions of what the BBC personnel are expected to do that the managers tend to stress when explaining the nature of both their engagement with external bodies and their relationship with producers and reporters—as the executive editor explains:

> It is quite clear for any person working for the BBC that our core values are there to be implemented, to be adhered to. And any new person would have to live with that. We have what we call producers' guidelines, we have our editorial standard, we do our own reviews, (and) we think of context that is appropriate for any programme (*Executive editor, African region*).

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Although the editorial guidelines, the bureaucratic structure of the organisation and other administrative instruments clearly spell out the chain of command and other basic structures of the manager-producer-reporter relationship, the apparent atmosphere of relative freedom creates a sense of independence among the producers and reporters. Sometimes the reporters on the field tend to feel even much freer to carry out their work than those who had risen to higher posts at the headquarters. The relative independence accorded the reporters tends to encourage creativity, they note, while suppressing such independence tends to negatively affect the quality of their reports. This is disclosed by the former senior reporter, who had worked for the Hausa Service for about 13 years, when asked: 'What was your relationship with the BBC management, have they been giving you instructions on what kind of material you should select for the audiences?'

> Not exactly; I think, if I may start from when I was a stringer, actually what I love for that period was that I really was determining the kind of story I was doing and usually my producers agreed to what I presented. There were occasions when they would tell me probably go for this, this is also important or this is the big story of the day. But lots of time I happened to be on top of the big story of the day, and I'd do it for them. But later I did notice that the BBC was sort of changing, that is, the guy sitting in London, very removed from the reality of the story down here, sometimes dictate to the reporter who is on the beat which story to do and which story not to do, sometimes. And that tends to affect the quality of stories the BBC was doing at that particular time (*Ex-senior reporter-cum-producer*).

From editorial collaboration to dictating what stories to do or not to do, the manager-producer-reporter relationship in the BBC World Service—as the range of responses show—is complex and dynamic. The written rules and guidelines are not the only determining factors of this relationship, personal touch and changing circumstances also come into play. While the World Service correspondent emphasised the collaborative nature of the relationship (which the other respondents did also admit in varying degrees), the senior correspondent appeared to stress the chain-of-command aspect of the engagement; but the former senior reporter did raise the issue of dictatorial tendency—sometimes—'that tends to affect the quality' of the products. Perhaps their respective backgrounds and the pattern of their engagement with their managers all play a role in moulding their perceptions of the relationship. The first respondent, being a full-time World

Service correspondent well-integrated into the BBC system and sent from London to cover Nigeria for the service, might have internalised the corporation's editorial policies and processes better and be offered a freer hand to operate. The former senior reporter, who began the job first as a stringer for the Hausa Service playing a marginal role, equally got a freer hand to operate; but as his role grew bigger and perhaps under an apparently changing management style, he noticed a creeping dictatorial tendency with 'the guy sitting in London' dictating what should—and what should not—be reported. In-between these two extremes lies the response of the senior correspondent (who has been working for the BBC Hausa Service for about 18 years both in London as a producer and in Nigeria as a senior correspondent) which offers a moderate position that suggests that interference or non-interference depends on the prevailing situation, since the personal touch of the relationship is 'not written in black-and-white'. This says much on how open to the vagaries of changing circumstances the relationship between the managers and other personnel of the corporation could be. The producers and reporters could have as much free-hand as they wish, provided they abide by the set editorial guidelines and policies (as the executive editor insists), while the managers and editors could be as intrusive as circumstances may allow to the extent of dictating what stories the reporters should—or should not—cover (as the former senior reporter maintained). So in reality, the manager-producer-reporter relationship in terms of content selection and production is complex and dynamic; and it is affected both by the set editorial guidelines and administrative policies of the corporation and by the personal dispositions of the personnel involved.

Treating audiences' complaints

Media-audience engagement is an activity facilitated by media production and distribution technologies. The ongoing changes and advancement in these technologies, as repeatedly stated, have made such engagement more of a two-way process; with the media simultaneously distributing content and receiving feedback while the audiences being both receivers and producers of media content. This has apparently strengthened the relationship and reduced areas of frictions and misunderstanding. Instant feedback mechanisms enable the media to get audiences' complaints and redress them, while interactivity offers audiences

opportunity to produce their own content and even have some insights into the media production processes. All these, however, do not bring to an end some audiences' feeling of alleged media misrepresentation and misreporting of events. The domestic audiences often have readily available avenues—apart from the channels provided by the offending media—to table their complaints and seek redress. Media regulatory bodies and ombudsman in different countries take charge of this role and protect audiences' interests.

The transnational audiences, however, do not have such luxuries. They have, of course, the power to boycott the media that offend them; but they have little or no power to punish the media that they think misrepresent them or portray them in a negative light. The Northern Nigerian audiences, in the previous chapter, do complain of BBC's negative portrayal of Islam and of Africa. Such complaints do sometimes reach the station through its feedback mechanisms: interactive programmes, listeners' letters and formal letters of complaints. BBC journalists on the field do also learn about such complaints through interpersonal interactions with the audiences in Northern Nigeria. Media organisations that are keen on maintaining the loyalty of their audiences tend to device a way of knowing their grievances and addressing them. The BBC has devised its own system for that. How does this play out in the BBC's relations with its Northern Nigerian audiences? The following responses generated from the question 'What would you say on the audiences' complaint that the BBC has been unfair in its coverage of Africa and of Islam?' offer some insights:

> Well, we really get such complaints from the audience, especially people from different parts of Nigeria. But in Northern Nigeria I can tell you that, despite the fact that BBC stands in the middle in broadcasting religion, culture and whatever, you find that there is little doubt as to the credibility of the BBC. However, allegations or accusations we get most times is more like we, the BBC, are pursuing a Western agenda. But then, they come to realise that sometimes or most of the times that, look, even if a story affects the BBC or the prime minister of Britain, the BBC would simply go ahead and say it (*Abuja bureau editor*).

> Well, if such belief is there, it is there because people are not opportune to have access to the way and manner Western media operate. The BBC operates a very open policy to the best of my knowledge within the limit of my understanding of the system. Ah, they try to be objective, to be fair and to portray things in their true nature, unlike what's obtained in Africa or in some parts of Africa where dictatorship is the norm (and where)

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reports or news are censored; they're doctored to suite the interest of the government in power. Now, if you do anything to the contrary, people say 'you're agent of the West; you're an agent of Britain or you're this or that' (*Senior correspondent/producer*).

Both the bureau chief and the senior correspondent did admit that there are such complaints from some of the audiences, and that they arise because of the audiences' conception of the BBC as a Western medium. However, both are defensive, arguing that the complaints are unfounded and that the BBC does try to maintain its credibility by being accurate and impartial. The senior correspondent added another perspective to the issue: audiences' experience with their domestic media colours their conception of the BBC. Because of their experience with the government-controlled domestic media that tend to parrot only government's views, according to this perspective, the audiences automatically assume that the BBC World Service, as a government-funded outlet, also does the same. It is a perspective the World Service correspondent also stresses, with even an additional twist to it:

I think there is another interesting thing that people do see, those who know (that the BBC) is government-funded have two different views, I mean, you do meet Nigerians who say 'well you're just a government stooge', because they can't believe—because of the nature of state-funded radio in parts of Africa and particularly in Nigeria—they can't believe that the BBC is not just voicing the views of the British government; and there is an expectation that we are, well (laugh), exactly that: a state radio station in some ways… But I think there are those who thought the BBC is just part of another Western media outlet; they only report the bad news about Africa (*World Service correspondent*).

All the above respondents, having worked—or are still working—in Nigeria and having had direct personal interactions with some of the audiences in the field, were able to gather those views and perspectives directly from the audiences. There is uniformity in their observation of the audiences' conception of BBC as a Western media outlet that pursues 'Western agenda'. However, the managers at the headquarters, who do not have as much direct interactions with the audiences as those in the field, tend to have a slightly different perspective of what the audiences feel. They do, of course, get the audiences' complaints through the formal feedback mechanisms of interactivity, listeners' letters and complaints' letters, and sometimes even through visits to Nigeria where they do meet with

some audiences; but they do not have the kind of direct interpersonal interactions those in the field have with the audiences. And as such their perspective seems to differ from that of those in the field. They do not want to place emphasis on the audiences' complaints—even though they admit that they do exist—but tend to be more defensive by stressing the efforts made to ensure that there would be no grounds for such complaints. The following conversation with the executive editor for African region illustrates this perspective:

What would you say on the audiences' complaint that the BBC has been unfair in its coverage of Africa and of Islam?'

> Well, probably people are thinking of many, many years ago. And you know stigma is a very difficult thing to erase. But all I can say is let people judge us by what we do now or the efforts we have been (putting) to try and widen the agenda. And, in fact, if something is happening to Muslims all over the world, the Hausa Service will be there definitely to cover it and they are not going to shy away from covering difficult stories. What we offer here is not just breaking news and reflecting Africa to the world and the world to Africa, but trying to analyse, ah, put things in context and then let listeners or online users make up their minds.

So you don't think there was unfairness in the coverage of Africa or Islamic world by the BBC?

> Certainly not, because whenever we get serious complaint, for example, about some of the things you mentioned, we are bound, as editorial leaders, to investigate to find out exactly what happened and then we would get back to anyone who complained to say 'look, this is the outcome of our investigation. If you are not happy, this is where you need to go and appeal'. And we have been doing this for many years (*Executive editor, African region*).

As can be seen, the executive editor's emphasis here is on both the 'widening' of the BBC agenda to provide a variety of content that could help reduce audiences' complaints and the effectiveness of the mechanism of receiving and addressing the complaints. The issue of an established mechanism of receiving and treating complaints—and its apparent operational success for 'many years'—were also brought to the fore here. The respondent's administrative background and familiarity with the formal complaints' channels and processes seem to have prompted the emphasis on the bureaucratic approach to the issue. The BBC's formal complaint and redress system is well stated in its editorial guidelines. 'Our commitment to our audiences is to ensure that complaints and enquiries are dealt with quickly, courteously and with respect,' the corporation states (BBC Guidelines, 2005, p.159). It publishes online complaints received and actions

taken to redress them. Complaints could be lodged with the department that produces the offending content or sent to the BBC information unit. If the complainants are dissatisfied, it says, they can appeal to 'Editorial Complaints Unit to investigate the issue independently' (BBC Guidelines, 2005, p.159). Further appeals could reach up to the Governors' Programme Complaints Committee, which is the highest adjudication body in the corporation; and if a serious complaint is upheld, 'an apology or correction from the BBC may be published online or on air' (p.159).

The complaint-and-redress system, though, appears to be tailored towards dealing with complaints from individuals on specific—often domestic—programmes. Although it is open to treating even complaints from groups and communities against international programmes in the World Service, it is hard to see how the allegations of persistent negative portrayal of Islam and Africa raised by Northern Nigerian audiences, for example, could be addressed through this programme-specific-individual-oriented system. The best approach in handling this is perhaps through the feedback mechanisms employed by the corporation that help it to notice persistent complaints and readjust programmes to meet audiences' aspirations and expectations, as the executive editor himself notes. The corporation does stress it too: 'Audience feedback is invaluable to us and helps to improve programme quality' (Editorial Guidelines, 2005, p.159). It is apparently more through this approach that the corporation manages to gauge the feelings of its audiences and strive to address some of their concerns, if not for anything, at least to maintain their loyalty. The persistence of the complaints, as seen in the preceding chapter, however, suggests that the approach has not been as effective as the corporation would have wanted it to be.

Perceived influence on audiences

Assessing media influence, as noted earlier, is a subject of intense controversy; and both producers and consumers of media content do have their respective perspectives on this issue. The literature review section of this study which deals with the issue extensively shows that even in the early studies the diversity of media influence theories ranges from the media effects model (Adorno and

Horkheimer, 1944/1979) that stresses the potency of media to the gratifications theory (Blumler and Katz, 1974) that emphasises what audiences do with the media rather than what it does to them. The limited effects theories, as advanced by Klapper (1960), and the issue of what Sonia Livingstone (2007, p.1) calls 'active and interpretative audiences' and their ability to interpret media texts in their own terms (Liebes, 2005), and the contention of how much power they have to do so (Morley, 2006; Fiske, 1987; Ang, 1996) have all been dealt with clearly in the review of the literature. The empirical evidence emerging from this study indicates that the consensus among the audiences is that the media does influence their perceptions of events. The BBC audiences in Northern Nigeria (as discussed in the preceding chapter and will be seen in the subsequent one) believe that the BBC does influence their comprehension of international affairs, although they say it does not change their long-held beliefs. The BBC itself tends to be cautious about the subject, preferring instead to talk of 'impact' in terms of audience figures, programmes' popularity and performance index obtained from audience surveys. The BBC's previous surveys, analysed in the 'Contents and Quantification' chapter above, deal with this extensively. But then, do the BBC personnel believe that the broadcaster exerts significant influence on its Northern Nigerian audiences?

> I have no doubt (that it does)—not influence but impact I would say— because of the history of the BBC Hausa Service. And the fact that there is a very strong oral culture in Nigeria, particularly in Northern Nigeria, because I know many people, including myself when I was growing up in our family where our parents used to listen to Hausa Service and we did actually join them in listening, so BBC Hausa Service has been part and parcel of the Hausa culture, not only in Nigeria actually but across countries where there are significant numbers of Hausa communities. And so definitely the level of current affairs, in terms of knowing what is going on in the world and who is doing what and when, you know; diplomatic development, you know, political development, economic affairs, sporting activities and so on and so on. The Hausas, I think, are in a very good position of hearing, or at least updating on, what is going on around the world, definitely, more than people who rely only on local radio wherever they are (*Executive editor, African region*).

As a member of the management team and in line with the BBC's preferred term, the executive editor believes that the corporation has 'impact' on Northern Nigerian audiences. The BBC Hausa Service, in his view, has now become 'part

and parcel of the Hausa culture'; and its Hausa audiences are likely to be more informed about international affairs, and about diplomatic, political and economic developments and even sporting activities around the world than those relying only on local radio stations. A combination of BBC's long presence in the region and the people's oral tradition help in securing this 'impact'. Similarly, the Abuja bureau chief too believes that the BBC wields influence on its Northern Nigerian audiences:

> [T]here's a survey conducted a few years ago which shows that Nigerians, especially Northern Nigerians, believe what comes from the BBC (more) than what they hear from their leaders. The relationship between the audience and the BBC in particular has been so good because of: one, the medium has proved itself to be reliable, very accurate and non-speculative, so people can pin their hope and can bet their last kobo on every single story that comes out of the BBC, believing that it is the truth and nothing but the truth. This has helped in sort of deepening the confidence of the local people, I mean people in Northern Nigeria, in the BBC and what it does (*Abuja bureau editor*).

The BBC's ability to influence its audiences was, according to Abuja editor, derived from the reputation it built as a 'reliable, very accurate and non-speculative medium'. This made the audiences to believe its stories and deepen their confidence in it, he feels. If people trust the BBC more than they trust their leaders, as he says one survey has claimed, than it is obvious that the influence it exerts on them can be quite significant. The senior correspondent too shares some of the above views with even stronger passion, providing explanations of when the influence could be great and when certain factors could hinder it, as revealed in the following conversation:

Do you think that listening to the BBC influences people's opinion about certain events?
> Of course, it does; it does, of course. And I believe that is one of the objectives of the BBC: to mould opinion or to mould minds or to colonise the minds of the listeners. Of course, when you listen to the BBC and you compare it—not because I work for the BBC—if you listen to the BBC and listen to other media channels the difference is quite clear. I feel the BBC is the peak of broadcasting; journalism at its peak… So listening to the BBC is definitely likely to mould or influence your thinking and acting and reasoning.

But the fact that Northern Nigerians listen to it and still seem to be generally anti-West, don't you think that in this respect it has failed to achieve such objectives?

Well, you see, people's opinions, especially when it comes to religion, there are cases of extremism, where people are fanatical. So, ah, if you are fanatical or you're totally completely supportive of a particular goal, whatever any medium would do to influence or change your mind about that is not likely to have any effect… Not that the BBC has failed, it is just that there is no way the BBC can influence them to change their thinking, their faith, and the way they hold their religion (*Senior correspondent/producer*).

Despite its perceived potency to mould the 'thinking and (action) and reasoning' of its audiences, the BBC, even the senior correspondent agrees, has limitations when faced with people's faith. Media's influence becomes insignificant when confronted with long-held views (Klapper, 1960). The senior correspondent argues that people who hold extreme views or who have fanatical beliefs in their religion could not be persuaded by media to change such views. He is actually restating what has been said before. 'In matters of the most profound importance to the individual—say, religion—I doubt that…anyone else could sway a single soul a single inch,' declares former *New York Herald Tribune* television critic John Crosby (cited in Klapper, 1960, p.44). The evidence from this study (see chapters VII and IX) shows that audiences do not even have to hold extreme views or fanatical beliefs before resisting the influence of media on issues that do not conform with their prevailing views: they simply reject media content that contradicts their religious beliefs. This is not different from what was obtained elsewhere. Sreberny (2000) argues that, although exposure to transnational media tends to affect leisure patterns, it does not lead to change of beliefs. The senior correspondent, though, was quick to note that the BBC has not totally failed in this respect since its objective was not to change its audiences' religious beliefs, but 'to mould' their opinions and 'minds' about worldly things, which in his view it has been succeeding in doing. It is not just influence in general terms that the BBC personnel believe the broadcaster exerts on its audiences; some of them feel that it does specifically influence audiences' perceptions of Britain. This view emerges in response to the question: 'Do you think the BBC's broadcast to Nigeria has any influence in terms of enhancing favourable perception of Britain in Nigeria?'

I think it does, certainly; I mean, the people do generally listen. I think the BBC, particularly on its legacy during the military days and even in the early days of (former President Olusegun) Obasanjo (regime), is seen as the voice you can rely on and trust to get things right. This is the Hausa

Service in particular, and to an extent the English service and Focus on Africa were seen as being honest and telling the truth. If people associate the honesty, the independence and integrity of the BBC as being British, then that is something to be welcomed, if you're British. And certainly, I mean, Nigerians know about Britain anyway…you know, when you say the BBC, people know what it means. And it has got respect and that can only benefit Britain as a whole (*World Service correspondent*).

Apparently well versed in assessing the BBC's public diplomacy role, the World Service correspondent is convinced of its effectiveness in playing that role. Not just in its ability to portray Britain in a favourable light but also in presenting itself as an honest and independent medium whose mere association with Britain alone generates goodwill for the country, the BBC does indeed serve as a British public diplomat (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010b). The respondent's position as a World Service correspondent, with apparent in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of the corporation and of its roles, makes this assessment relevant here. It reflects the expectations the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has of the BBC when it places it, along with the British Council, under the public diplomacy category in the 2004 Spending Review Settlement (FCO, 2005). Lord Carter Public Diplomacy Review Team, as stated earlier, stresses that too when it speaks of the 'benefits' Britain gets from the 'valuable role' the two institutions play (FCO, 2005, p.4). The positive global image of the BBC, the team reiterates almost in the same term as the last respondent, is an asset for Britain. 'Public diplomacy is arguably not the primary objective of the World Service,' the team says, 'but it is inevitable that in providing an internationally renowned and highly valued service that there will be positive public diplomacy gains for the country associated with that brand' (FCO, 2005, p.25). In essence, even by attaining its primary objective of providing international news and analysis, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office reckons, the BBC World Service would be achieving its secondary objective of promoting British public diplomacy. And since the respondents feel that it does this—along with expanding its audiences' knowledge of international affairs and influencing their views on global issues and so on—then it clearly has influence on these audiences.

Summary

This chapter attempts to provide a full picture of the dynamics and complexity of media content production from the perspective of the BBC World Service personnel. From managers and editors and producers at its headquarters in London and Abuja bureau in Nigeria to reporters on the field in Nigeria, the contents' producers offered their perspectives on wide-ranging issues—content selection, interactive programming, engagement with new communications technologies, relations with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, relations among staff, treatment of audiences' complaints and the corporation's impact on its Northern Nigerian audiences. Although their number is small, the personnel were carefully selected to represent various angles of the production process. Significantly, they were also well-placed to offer authoritative assessments of the subject, and the interviews were in-depth and rigorous enough to probe all the key areas of contention and to generate relevant information.

They reveal that content selection in the BBC World Service is a rigorous and complex issue that is guided by the corporation's objectives, editorial policy and guidelines as well as the personal inputs of the reporters, producers, editors and managers. It is a well-organised systematic process that involves different layers of personnel making conscious and deliberate decisions guided by a well-thought out framework and established rules and regulations of the corporation. The personnel also believe that the BBC made a conscious decision to introduce, and focus much attention to, interactive programming to derive the benefits such an approach could offer. They feel that interactive programming enables the corporation to engage more effectively with its audiences, generate content from them, infuse variety in the programmes and get instant feedback from them to improve the quality of its programmes. Interactive programming, they all agree, is being driven by new technologies, which they say the BBC has quickly recognised and deftly deployed for its services. New technologies have not only enhanced BBC's engagement with audiences, both in delivering its products to them and in receiving feedback from them, but they have also brought corporate efficiency and efficiencies among its personnel.

The general feeling among the BBC's personnel is that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, despite being the funding body of the World Service and the main determinant of which language services to operate and which target areas to focus on, does not interfere in the daily editorial decisions and day-to-day running of the organisation—something that they believe guarantees the service's editorial independence. This, however, does not mean that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not influence the production of the BBC goods. Being the funding body and decider of language services and target areas is enough influence to point to the management which areas of coverage to focus on. Similarly, it appears, the open non-interference policy is beneficial to both the World Service and its paymasters. It enhances the corporation's effectiveness in playing the role the Foreign and Commonwealth Office wishes it to play since even the mere perception of BBC as a credible organisation is of benefit to British public diplomacy, as they too observe. This chapter also reveals that the relationship between the BBC managers, editors, producers and reporters is complex but dynamic in terms of their respective roles in the various processes of content production and presentation. It is a relationship influenced both by the formally-defined rules set in the editorial guidelines and administrative policies of the corporation and by the personal dispositions of the personnel involved.

IX
Results and Analysis III
(Focus Groups)

Introduction

This is the final results and analysis chapter and it is produced from the largest chunk of the primary data gathered from transnational audiences during the fieldwork in Nigeria. It reveals the pattern and consequences of Northern Nigerians' consumption of international media within the context of the cultural, socio-psychological, ideological and other extra-communication factors that affect media-audience relationship. The data was obtained through focus group interviews conducted in all the three geopolitical zones of Northern Nigeria: Northeast, Northwest and North-central. As explained in the 'Methodology' chapter, the groups engaged range from peasants in the remote village of Njoboli close to the Nigeria's eastern border with Cameroon Republic and urban lower middle class and working class in the city of Yola to local officials in the ancient but now modernising city of Katsina near Nigeria's northern border with Niger Republic, students in the university town of Gwagwalada and experienced journalists in the booming city of Abuja, Nigeria's political capital, located in the central region of the country.

The samples reflect the demographic features of the BBC audiences in Northern Nigeria, as revealed by its previous surveys (BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), comprising both rural and urban populations from a wide range of socio-economic settings and age groups as well as different occupational and professional backgrounds. There is a preponderance of middle-aged male participants, though, (which to some extent also reflects the demographic characteristics of BBC audiences in the region)—and so the results should be seen from that perspective. This chapter specifically reveals the patterns and particularities of the consumption of international media products by these groups; their perceptions of international media; their conception of the West; and the apparent mediating roles their cultural, religious, ideological, professional, personal and socio-economic backgrounds play in their international media consumption.

Yola Group I

The lower middle class: consumption amid contestation

This was the first of the main focus group discussions done for this study. It was conducted in the northeastern city of Yola with a group of mainly independent small scale entrepreneurs whose socio-economic background was roughly adjudged to be that of the urban lower middle class. The group is made up of six persons (five males and a female, aged 33-60) who are regular consumers of international media, have good Islamic education and most of them have above secondary school level of Western education. They comprise of a small-scale businessman who is also a local director of the Islamic sect *Izala* group (see 'Methodology' chapter), a mason who runs a small construction firm, a female restaurant owner, a tailoring business owner, a politician who is also the local chairman of retirees' union and a businessman who owns a shop in the city. They apparently share middle of the left political ideology, supported opposition parties and tend to be critical of Nigeria's government.

The pattern of consumption of international media products is generally the same among all members of this group. They all listen to the Hausa services of the BBC, Voice of America (VOA), Germany's Radio *Deutsche Welle* and Radio France International (RFI). Most of them also watch global television broadcasters CNN, BBC World News and *Al-Jazeera*. But it is the BBC products that they said they consume mostly and trust the most. The following response reflects the general view of the group:

> The radio stations I listen to are the BBC, America (VOA), Germany (*Deutsche Welle*) and France (RFI). But the one I enjoy most is the BBC because if I spend a day without listening to the BBC, I feel uncomfortable. This is why wherever I am—either in a vehicle or walking—I have my radio set, day and night, so as to monitor the BBC. I don't want to get the news from a second-hand source; I prefer to get it directly from the BBC because whatever happens around the world and in Nigeria, if I don't get it from the BBC, I don't feel comfortable (*Shop owner*).

Although the rest of them did not say they moved around with their radio sets 'day and night' like the shop owner, they did share similar commitment to international media consumption and significantly in giving preference to the BBC, in trusting

its products and in using it as the benchmark against which the credibility of other news sources were assessed—as the response of another participant to the fellow-up question shows:

…When you listen to BBC reports, do you believe them?

> Very well, because even if I listen to other radio stations and get reports from them, I still wait to hear what the BBC would say. If its report differs with that of the other stations, I won't believe the other stations' report until it is confirmed by the BBC—that is the final. Once I listen to the BBC, it removes my doubts (*Tailoring business owner*).

Their views correspond with those generally expressed by other consumers of international broadcast media products reflected in the results obtained from the individual interviews contained in the 'Results and Analysis I' chapter—both of which confirm the results of the BBC's audience surveys in Nigeria that reveal that the Nigerian audiences consistently rate the station as the most credible broadcaster (BBC World Service, 2005, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). Similarly, this group's focus on the radio as one of its two key platforms of accessing international media goods has great significance here too, with all the members clearly stating their reliance on the radio to source for news and information. They do use television and marginally newspapers too, but it is the radio that takes the prime position.

The use of radio is wide spread in Yola, and many adults, like the shop owner, use it 'day and night'. Their emphasis on its utility does not contradict the BBC's audience surveys that reiterate its dominance in Nigeria's media landscape. 'Radio remains dominant and is listened to by 82% of adults weekly, whilst TV is viewed by 48%,' says the 2004/05 survey report. 'Radio is the most used source for news and information' (BBC World Service, 2005). Even five years later the reduction in the percentage of people listening to radio was not really significant. 'Radio is the most popular media in Nigeria with 79% listening weekly,' according to the 2009/10 survey report (BBC Global News, 2010). Radio's portability, ease of use, affordability and availability make it a preferred option for most Nigerians, as it has also been for many others in several African countries. 'In Zambia, the consumption of radio includes the culturally-specific ways that people attune themselves to (or attenuate themselves from) the radio machine, its technology, its

portability, its commodity status and the fact that it produces unique sounds which can travel through communities' (Spitulnik, 2000, p.160). And in Zambia's neighbour Zimbabwe, Mano (2004, p.2) notes, 'radio appears to have an unrivalled status as the country's "true" mass medium'.

The style and the level of global media consumption among the members of Yola urban lower middle class group are also virtually uniform. There is near unanimity as regards the way they listen to radio and watch television, the sameness of the broadcasters they access, the one they prefer and trust most, the main timing of their engagements with them (usually mornings and evenings) and the regularity of such engagements. What is in contention, though, is the nature of their perceptions of such media's role and the nature of the apparent impact the consumption of their products might have had on them. It is the lack of uniformity in these areas that reveals the split within the group. The two most elderly persons in the group, who appeared to have held passionate views on the respective positions they held, led each of the two "camps" that emerged—one seeing the BBC as a Western propaganda tool and the other seeing it as an impartial international broadcaster—although after passionate debate there appears to be a sort of convergence of opinions between the two camps in which they seem to agree that the broadcaster plays dual though contradictory roles: as a propagandist and as an unbiased broadcaster, a position that corresponds with many others' (Rampal and Adams, 1990; Nye, 2004a; Sreberny *et al*., 2010a, 2010b). The propaganda-tool argument was spearheaded by the director of the Islamic sect *Izala*, a small scale businessman whose fiery statements during the discussion tended to reveal more of his religious conviction than the diplomatic tones of his business skills. His main argument against the BBC is based on what he sees as its unfairness to Muslims and Islamic world:

> When America invaded Iraq, the first news report I got was from the BBC. I recorded it, it was the sound of gunfire only—whoever listens to it would hear the gunfire. The problem with the BBC is that it would never report something positive that happened. All the reports from Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and all the reporters here in Nigeria do not report something positive about Islam. They won't report that today Muslims have met and done something that promotes Islam (*Director Izala sect*).

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His perception of BBC's bias against his religion, he says, made him sceptical about its credibility on matters relating to Islam and Muslims, though he still believes BBC's reports on those issues that are unrelated to his religion:

> If BBC reports a thing that is unrelated to my religion, I make use of it. But things concerning my religion I don't because my religion has its own scripture and it is necessary to believe what the scripture says. Foreign propaganda will not help me. In this respect I won't believe BBC… I reject anything that contradicts my religious belief (*Director Izala sect*).

Here he is not just subordinating the BBC to the superior position of the religious scriptures, he is clearly dismissing the BBC as a foreign propagandist injurious to his religious persuasion—although he did not deny the station's utility in reporting worldly affairs. In his camp was the restaurant owner, a local politician in the city, who is the only woman in the group:

> Oh, yes, those issues that do not contradict your religion, if they (BBC) report it—and you have confirmation that it indeed happened—you believe them. But any thing that affects your religion—if they report things contrary to your belief, you have to check with your religious book. But if it is something about worldly affairs—if BBC reports it, that is it, because they hardly report things that did not happen (*Female restaurant owner*).

Further reinforcements of their views came from two other members of the group, thereby making their position more dominant in the group. Their reference points, like those obtained in the individual interviews contained in the 'Results and Analysis I' chapter, are the Western media's coverage of American-led invasion of Iraq and the coverage of the West's war on terror:

> Things like America's invasion of Iraq, you would find that the reports are contradictory. The contradiction is especially because it is the issue of Islam (*Tailoring business owner*).

> Well, in my understanding, I think they exaggerate things when it comes to Islam because some of the terror attacks (being reported), the Muslims would not carry out such attacks… I think there are fabrications…because they are dealing with Islamic nations (*Shop owner*).

Here they are not just accusing the BBC—and indeed other Western media—of being unfair to Muslims and Islam, and questioning its credibility, they are accusing it of fabrications perhaps to perform its 'propaganda' role. Their

accusations of 'fabrications' and 'contradiction' in BBC's reports concerning Islam, though, may appear to have exposed contradiction in their position too. They are the same people who were earlier rating the BBC as the most credible broadcaster, and are now accusing it of fabrications. Their defence is that in reporting issues unrelated to Muslims and Islam, the station is the most credible broadcaster—and they believe what it reports on such issues. In reporting Muslims and Islam, however, it is not a credible medium—and so they do not believe its reports on them. In this respect it is not only their rejection of those BBC's reports that do not conform to their prevailing religious or ideological views that come into light, but it is also the issue of selective perception and the mediating role being played by their religion/ideology and culture in prompting the selectivity.

This camp's position represents the dominant view in the group; but it was not unchallenged. Spearheading the challenge is the mason who regarded BBC as an unbiased international broadcaster that was not really out to demonise Muslims and Islam:

> Religiously, it is said that "seeing is believing"… And as regards to the BBC, it is hard to get reports that are in conflict with the truth, though people have different ways of understanding things. Someone will listen to a report but will not understand what is said… In the media, if it is a cleric that says something, you can't reject it since he would be quoting what God has said and what the prophet has said. You would accept them. In that respect, the BBC too has said the truth, so it should be trying on that. Not just here in Nigeria and Northern Nigeria but the whole world is proud of the BBC, especially we, Northern Nigerians, because the people we hear talking are Northerners, Muslims, who would not do things that will offend Islam (*Mason*).

The mason is not only expressing his opposition to the group's dominant view that dismisses BBC as a propaganda tool; he is also defending the station and blaming its critics for their inability to comprehend its reports. 'Someone will listen to a report but will not understand what is said'. He has opened his argument with a religious saying that has wide resonance among Hausa speakers who even have a proverb for it "*Gani ya kori ji*" (seeing is believing) to present the view that the BBC's reports are hardly 'in conflict with the truth'. His further explanations were that the BBC does also offer clerics chance to state their religion's position, and even more significantly the BBC reporters themselves, at least the Hausa Service

reporters, are mainly 'Northerners, Muslims, who would not do things that will offend Islam'. In this respect the BBC's use of diasporic capital (Sreberny *et al*., 2010a, 2010b) and glocalisation strategy (Robertson, 1992) have both worked well for the station's credibility. The mason also took up the *Izala* sect director on the allegation that the BBC did not report positive works being undertaken by religious groups:

> On the issue of religion that my elder brother has raised, here I am not challenging him, but I would defend the BBC. It is the fault of the religious leaders if their positive work is not reported because if they invite the BBC to cover their activities, the BBC would do so (*Mason*).

In the mason's camp is the local chairman of retirees' union who was so vehemently opposed to the *Izala* director's view about the BBC that he nearly personalised the issue and described the director as a city cleric whom he insinuated should not be regarded as a credible cleric:

> If the BBC wants to get honest views about religion, it should go to traditional clerics who stay in the village and talk to them. But city clerics are fake (*Chairman of retirees' union*).

He too restated the "seeing-is-believing" argument about the BBC reporting things based on facts, blaming those he regards as non-transparent Nigerian leaders for attempting to suppress the station's effort to expose their wrong deeds:

> On what the BBC reports, quite all right, anytime I listen to any media, I won't be satisfied until I listen to the BBC because they report the truth. They go to every corner and report what they see; but our leaders do not like it, particularly in Nigeria. Nigerian leaders do not like to see a journalist exposing what they do…because they want to suppress the masses (*Chairman of retirees' union*).

His criticism of Nigerian leaders was unanimously endorsed by all the members of the group (who nodded their heads in unison); but his total endorsement of all BBC's reports was only shared by the mason with whom he held a minority view in the group. Their minority view did not withstand the pressure from the majority of the members; it gave in before the end of the session because after a long debate in the group, they (mason and retirees' chairman) too came to the conclusion that it was not all the BBC's reports that were accurate but that some of them were tilted to defend Western interests. The other group too did soften their original hard stand against the BBC to reflect this position. It is a convergence of opinions

of the members of the group and of the two original opposing views that had split the group into two camps. The view expressed below by the mason, leader of the BBC-as-unbiased-broadcaster camp, illustrates not only the climb down of his camp, but it also reflects the view of the other camp too after they had tuned down their rhetoric:

> The BBC's reports about happenings in the West: you can reject some and accept some. Sometimes they do things to impress; sometimes they do it for the benefit of humanity, sometimes for their personal interests. So we weigh up things to find out which ones did they do for the benefit of the humanity, and which ones do they do for their own interests? Those that they do for humanity we accept them, the ones they do to deceive people, we listen to them, but reject them (*Mason*).

With the moderation of his original view, the mason came to a new conclusion that not all BBC reports should be accepted hook, line and sinker: 'we weigh up things to find out which ones did they do for the benefit of the humanity, and which ones did they do for their own interests?' Those done for 'humanity' would be accepted while the ones considered deceptive would be rejected. It was a major shift of his camp's position, and it was the foundation upon which the whole group arrived at a sort of consensus, now that his camp had agreed that not all BBC's reports were trustworthy and that some of them were put out 'to deceive people'. The principle of selective believability, noted among the other members of the group and in the individual interviews revealed in the preceding 'Results and Analysis I' chapter, becomes applicable here too.

Significant too was the emergence of the practical workings of group dynamics in focus group discussion. Morrison (1998) has identified group dynamics as the key ingredient that particularly distinguishes focus group from other research methods. 'It is the dynamic exchange between the individuals in the group that gives focus groups their special characteristic and strength as a research method' (Morrison, 1998, p.168). Such dynamism was clearly exhibited in this group, as indeed in the other groups subsequently discussed here—though neither in such a graphic manner nor in such detail. The healthy group discussion held by these participants fits well into Greenbaum's (2000) conception of the ideal focus group atmosphere that encourages participants 'who share one point of view to try to convince those who have the opposing perspective, and vice versa' (p.11). The way the members

of this group that first began their discussion with a solidly united voice, then split into two camps with two opposing views critical of each other before finally reuniting to come out with a sort of consensus on the main issue of their divergence—all within a space of less than one hour—confirms the viability of focus group as a very effective audience research method.

Yola Group II

The working class: global media as repositories of knowledge

The second focus group in Yola is made up of six participants (all male, aged 27-56) whose educational, occupational and general socio-economic status fall within the circle of the working class category. They comprise of a primary school teacher, an electricity worker, a panel beater, a motorcycle mechanic, a student-teacher and an aide to the state governor whose qualification for the job emanated from his working class status rather than any professional skills or political influence (and his salary was also within that range). Their working class status notwithstanding, this group members appear to hold conservative right-of-the-centre political view—unlike the left-leaning Yola lower middle class group—and are supportive of the ruling party (a position unconnected with the governor's aide presence in the session). The discussion, conducted in the inner city of Jimeta-Yola where all of them live, was held on 11 January 2010, barely two weeks after the alleged attempted bombing of an American airline by a young Nigerian, Umar Faruk Mutallab, on Christmas Eve (Childress, 2009). Expectedly, some of the respondents made reference to this incident during the session.

The pattern of their consumption of international media products is somehow similar to that of the members of Yola Group I (the lower middle class group), except that most members of the working class group appear to have a lower level of access to global television broadcasters such as CNN, BBC World News and *Al-Jazeera* than that of the lower middle class group, thus missing part of that exposure (two members of the working class group, though, have much familiarity with both the BBC World News and *Al-Jazeera* television channels). Generally, the Yola Group II members mainly consume the products of international radio broadcasters BBC, Voice of America, Radio *Deutsche Welle* and Radio France

International, all of which broadcast in both Hausa and English languages. They listen to them day and night, but mostly in the morning before leaving home for work and in the night when they return home, and sometimes in the afternoon at their places of work. The more ardent listeners among them said that they move about with their radio sets all the time—consistent with the assertion of Piepe *et al.* (1978) that members of the working class tend to be high consumers of broadcast products. But perhaps the most remarkable part of this group's engagement with the international radio broadcasters is their perception of them as not just sources of news and information and entertainment, but as repositories of knowledge. The following comment captures it well:

> Actually, I am a very keen radio listener; I would like to even show you that where I'm sitting now I'm holding a radio set (he brandished it). I listen to international broadcasters serially. After listening to Germany (Radio *Deutsche Welle*), I listen to the BBC, I listen to America (Voice of America), I listen to France (Radio France International). I don't leave out any one because I already believe that it is through the international media that we get accurate and timely reports—as soon as things happen we get the reports. Radio to me is more than an object of entertainment; it is a school. This radio (brandishing his radio set again) is my library; it is my record keeper; it is like half of my brain (*Governor's aide*).

The group nodded in agreement with his statement. It was a resounding reinforcement of radio's utility argument, as already noted with the earlier group and as espoused by some of the works cited in the literature review section of this study (Hendy, 2000; Spitulnik, 2000; Mano, 2004; Larkin, 2008). Clearly, for this participant radio 'is more than an object of entertainment; it is a school', a library, a record keeper and half of his brain—and so he needs to keep it with him constantly for constant consultation. Other members of the group did not come to the discussion with their radio sets; but they did not object to his description of its utility. And when their turn to speak came, some of them went on to specifically mention the BBC as the international broadcaster that played the strongest role in making radio this important to them. The youngest member of the group, a student-teacher, puts it this way:

> Sometimes what I get from the BBC is like what I get from school. That is a progress for me, and a progress for a teacher is a progress for the nation. So I am really happy with the radio station that does this to me (*Student-teacher*).

This positive perception of the international media, particularly the BBC, helps enhance their credibility among these people. Consistent with what was noted in the previous group and BBC audience surveys (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010), members of this group too find BBC's reports to be accurate and credible. They indicate that those are among the reasons why they believe them, as this electricity worker stresses:

> Yes, I do believe them. My reason for doing so is that in most cases a BBC reporter reports exactly what he sees; there is no question of exaggeration (*Electricity worker*).

The BBC's vast network of reporters—perhaps the most effective of all international broadcasters—and the corporation's ability to draw them together and 'leverage' them for its different services (Price *et al*., 2008; Horrocks, 2009) present a picture of a broadcaster whose reporters are everywhere reporting events as they happen. It had a lasting impression on this participant and persuaded him to accept the accuracy of its reports because 'a BBC reporter reports exactly what he sees; there is no question of exaggeration'. The perception of international broadcasters' credibility made the audiences to be more reliant on them—to the detriment of the local media:

> Honestly, whatever I hear in this country, I regard it as a rumour as long as I do not hear it from the international media because in many cases I would hear reports that something happened, but I won't believe them until I listen to the BBC or America (VOA) or the rest of the international media (*Panel beater*).

> They (international broadcasters) are good because some of the things that are happening in Africa which we don't know and those that we know, which we don't get from local radio stations, we get them from there (*Motorcycle mechanic*).

The audiences' reliance on the international broadcasters for credible news stories and information creates the possibility of these media to have impact and perhaps significant influence on the lives of these audiences—and they said so, particularly in regard to the BBC, which they said has indeed been influencing their lives:

> Yes, honestly, it does because when I get additional information from the BBC on something I previously know little about I do gradually moderate my opinion about it based on the new knowledge I get from the BBC (*Primary school teacher*).

His comment does not only try to indicate the kind of influence the BBC might have on his person, it also hints on the kind of power the media could have on an individual—a tilt towards the media effects thesis (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979/1944). The respondent was not only stressing the fact that he did believe BBC reports, but he was also stating clearly that the station did indeed make him change his mind because of 'the new knowledge' it offered him. Looking at his claim on the surface would resurrect the 'powerful' media theory noted above. However, deep into the session, something came up (from the same man) that seriously challenged this conception. It was on the debate among the participants on whether the BBC was fair in its coverage of Muslims and Islam—of which the majority in the group said it had not been fair. He was among them. The issue the group members here cited—as did other respondents before—was the American and British involvements in Iraqi war; and this is his lengthy comment:

> Well, definitely there is a problem on America and Britain. America has arrogated to herself all things. And I would explain that there are things that the BBC doesn't report fully. I say this because during the Iraqi war, it would report things, but we would find out that the reports from other media were more comprehensive than theirs. This is why we said BBC under reports things. For example, when we watched *Al-Jazeera*, we would find out that what (the BBC) reported was inadequate, and found out that *Al-Jazeera*—we watched it on TV—did far better than the BBC. Like in the case of reporting death figures, if (former Iraqi leader) Saddam (Hussein's) troops killed many, and America killed too, the BBC would not report that of Saddam well; why? ... I was annoyed. At that time I stopped listening to it completely because it annoyed me on anything that affected Muslims. By God, whenever I listened to them saying Saddam did this and did that, I got annoyed. I would say why wouldn't they report his side fairly? At that time I reduced listening to the BBC and shifted to *Al-Jazeera*.

Between Al-Jazeera and the BBC, which one do you trust more?
> On issues that relate to Islam, I trust *Al-Jazeera* more; but on those issues which are not related to Islam, I trust the BBC more (*Primary school teacher*).

What a radical shift one could make: the same man who had, just a few minutes earlier, revealed that he trusted the BBC so much it even influenced his change of attitude, has now said that he became so annoyed with its reporting of Iraq that he at a time even 'stopped listening to it completely' or 'reduced listening to (it) and shifted to *Al-Jazeera*'. His case, though, is not exceptional; it is typical of those who find themselves in a similar situation. It in a way reflects the case of selective

exposure (Klapper, 1960)—people deliberately avoiding unpleasant messages (more on this in the next chapter)—and also re-echoes the case of people who had trust in a particular medium and later withdrew the trust when they found out that its reports now challenge their long held views or beliefs, as seen in the 'Results and Analysis I' chapter of this study. And it is this scenario, among others, that cautions against a quick rush to judgment on the supposed power of the media.

The media do indeed have the power to produce and present their products; but the power of selecting, processing and interpreting the products belongs to the audiences (Morley, 1980; Liebes, 2005; Livingstone, 2007). It may not be as strong as the 'enduring structural or institutional' power of the media as Ang (1996, p.139) and Morley (2006) and even Fiske (1987) note, but it is their power. Ang has argued that it 'is the power not to change or overturn imposed structures, but to negotiate the potentially oppressive effects of those structures where they cannot be overthrown, where they have to be lived with' (p.8). However, as the case of this participant indicates, the audiences' power goes beyond this range; they do possess the power to switch to another medium—although, of course, they still have to negotiate how to handle the effects of the new medium too. Still, it is because of the audiences' power to change medium that Paddy Scannell (1996) argues that the power here, 'in the first and last instance', rests more with the audiences than with the media. 'If listeners and viewers don't like what they find they can simply switch over or switch off' (Scannell, 1996, p.12). The school teacher did the former: he switched over to *Al-Jazeera*. But because the case is even more complicated than simply 'switching over or switching off', a different scenario emerges. The school teacher decided to retain both stations—and many more—and selects from each of them which aspects of the products to believe and which ones to reject. It is a classic case of selective believability (more on this too in the next chapter).

Not unlike what was obtained in the previous group, there is no dispute among the members of this group with regard to the uniformity in the pattern of their consumption of international media products; the area of contention is in the nature of their perception of the West (America and Britain in particular), the West's attitudes towards Muslims and Islamic world, and the BBC's coverage of

them. The overwhelming views in the group, after a thorough debate, are that the West is not fair to the Islamic world; and that the BBC's coverage of Muslims and Islam-related issues is negative. The following comments reveal their feelings:

> Ah, honestly, the things they (America and Britain) do are good in some cases, but some are bad. Their relationship with Islam is not good. They suppress Islam far more than imagined. This is why we Muslims dislike them; they suppress us; they are not fair to us (*Motorcycle mechanic*).

> Well, America causes problems for the world as a whole on one particular thing: their policy on Israel-Palestinians' relations. The world is as much as possible trying to ensure peaceful co-existence; but if America doesn't change her foreign policies on Israel-Palestinians' relations, there would never be peace because it is obvious that America backs Israel to humiliate Palestinian Muslims. And wherever you humiliate a single Muslim, you humiliate the whole Muslims, be it in Palestine or Afghanistan or in Koma (a remote tiny village on Adamawa's high hills in Nigeria) (*Governor's aide*).

It was within this part of the discussion that the issue of Umar Faruk Mutallab, the young Nigerian suspected of attempting to bomb US airline on the 2009 Christmas Eve, came up. None of the participants expressed any support for him, but they said that the US—or its media—was using his case to demonise Muslims:

> Honestly, America, in our view as Muslims, is not fair to us because when one man commits certain offence, even if he is not a Muslim or (he is) merely a nominal Muslim, they would twist it and link it to good Muslims. Take the example of the case of this boy (Umar Farouk Mutallab) who is alleged to have put a bomb in an American plane. I saw on CNN the background they put to his picture; it was an Islamic flag with the Islamic inscription "There is no God but Allah". It is possible that that boy didn't even have adequate knowledge of Islam, but they picked him and linked him with it, saying that Nigeria is becoming a terrorists' country… This is why I think that America is not good (*Panel beater*).

These were the tones and trends of their comments expressing discomfort towards what they perceive to be the West's, or specifically America's, attitude towards Muslims and the Islamic world. They tend to view the whole situation broadly in Huntington's concept of clash of civilizations, with the West battling to impose its will on the Muslims; and the counter 'rejection of Western culture' by the Muslims (Huntington, 1996, p.110). The West, as one of them put it, suppresses 'Islam far more than imagined'. They cited series of instances, whether it was the invasion of Iraq or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the war on terror or the specific case of the Nigerian terrorist suspect in the last example, to back their

arguments of the West's alleged unfairness to the Muslims and Islamic world. This is the dominant view in the group.

There is a lone opposition voice, though. One of the group members, the electricity worker, had throughout the discussion been expressing views in strong support of the West, America and Britain specifically, and the way the Western media, particularly the BBC, report events. Even on the issue of war on terror and its coverage—both of which the majority of the group members express strong reservations on—this participant backs the West. He is clearly supportive of America on its decision to launch the war, and of the BBC on its coverage of it:

> First, those who commit terrorism in the name of Islam are not doing it for the religion because there is no religion that instructs you to go and kill a human being. So those who claim to be fighting in the name of religion are not telling the truth, they are fighting for their own interest. The way the BBC does its reports is accurate; I support them 100 per cent (*Electricity worker*).

For him the blame should go to the suspected terrorists not to the US in particular, or the West in general, which he feels was merely reacting to the alleged terrorists' action; and not to the BBC which he believes was reporting the events accurately. He maintained his pro-West position throughout the session without any of the discussants showing any contempt for it. He too did not express any disrespect towards theirs. As in the previous group, here too it was a passionate but healthy debate with people expressing opposing views but maintaining mutual respect for one another. And as stated in the 'Methodology' chapter, despite the wide age gap among the members of this group—the eldest was approximately 56 and the youngest about 27—and the well-known culture of deference (by the young towards older persons) among Hausa-Fulani people, the discussion was quite smooth with each participant putting out their arguments forcefully, unhindered by contrary views expressed by older participants. No one attempted to dominate the discussion and none tried to impose his views on others. Again, here too, as in the previous group, the dynamism of the focus group (Morrison, 1998; Greenbaum, 2000) was in full operation.

Njoboli Group

The peasant group: consumption with conviction

The Njoboli focus group is a peasant farmers' group with all its members living in the Fulani Muslim-dominated village of Njoboli near Nigeria's eastern border with Cameroon Republic. Rain-fed farming and animal rearing are their main sources of livelihood, but since crop cultivation is seasonal in this area (usually from May to November), they do complement their income with other trades. There are eight participants in this group—all male, aged 25 to 53—comprising of a farmer-shop keeper, a farmer-student, a farmer-petty trader, a herdsman, a farmer-teacher, a farmer-cattle herder, a farmer-day labourer and a farmer-tailor. The majority have some knowledge of Islamic education and three of them possess secondary school level of Western education (the farmer-teacher has college education). They are all listeners of international radio broadcasters, and majority of them turn out to have a greater knowledge of happenings around the world than initially assumed, apparently because of their regular interactions with international broadcasters. The discussion took place on 27 February 2011 amid growing uprisings in many Arab nations; and the discussants, without any prompting from the moderator, did make references to them in expressing their views. The session was held in front of the house of the person who assisted in organising it at the centre of the village (see 'Methodology' chapter).

The pattern of consumption of international media products by these peasants appears to be markedly different from that of the city dwellers highlighted in the last two group discussions. While the peasants rely exclusively on radio for international media consumption, the city dwelling groups do complement theirs with international television consumption, with the lower middle class group having higher level of it than the working class group. For this peasant group the radio is virtually the sole source of international media products (two members did mention television in passing but not really as a significant source of international broadcasts to them). Even the farmer-teacher who appears to be the most ardent consumer of international media goods among them relies solely on radio. '*I do not use any platform other than the radio,*' he said. And no member of this group has ever accessed media products from the Internet, with one of them stating

clearly that this was '*because honestly we have no Internet here; and I do not go out and spend my time to look for Internet to search for BBC'* (herdsman). The statistics and the existing infrastructural reality in the country do not dispute their remarks. First, although Internet penetration is increasing rapidly in Nigeria, it has not gone far enough to reach many remote areas. According to the BBC 2009/10 survey, about 'a fifth of Nigerians have access to the Internet, though only 5% go online weekly (and less than) 3% have Internet access at home' (BBC Global News, 2010)—the general access figure, though, has since risen from the 20 per cent in that survey to 28 per cent (Internet World Stats, 2011). Similarly, lack of regular supply of electricity and inadequate income to afford power-generating sets mean that access to television is severally limited even to the most prosperous of rural dwellers; and non-existence of Internet connection in remote areas means a complete lack of access to the Internet service. The residents of Njoboli village, almost like the people of *Ait Nuh* in rural Morocco described by Tarik Sabry in his *Cultural Encounters in the Arab World* (2010), lack most of the 'new technologies of comfort' (p.119), and have to make do with what is available to them.

Radio is one of the few technological devices available to Njoboli dwellers; and through it they consume—mainly in the mornings, but also in the afternoons and evenings—a variety of products from a range of international broadcasters, with the BBC (as in the case of the two groups discussed earlier) getting the priority. Ironically, although members of this group (like the city dwelling lower middle class group) tend to be critical of Nigeria's ruling elite, they seem to (unlike the other groups) hold positive views about the West and its media—as was the case with many young *Ait Nuhians* in rural Morocco (Sabry, 2010). One other thing noted about Njoboli dwellers is that, although they are not Islamist by orientation, they tend to begin their statements with the Islamic way of greeting: *Salamu alaikum* (Peace be upon you)—as a conventional Hausa-Fulani Muslims' way of salutation and showing respect to one another rather than as a marker of ideological persuasion. Some members of the other groups too do use it frequently, though not as frequently as the Njoboli peasants.

Despite relying virtually on a single platform for access to international media, the Njoboli group members show remarkable ability to express their views about

international affairs. Apparently, because of their positive perception of the West and because they rely heavily on international radio broadcasters for news and a variety of other things, they tend to attribute wide range of functions to these media. None of them describes this in as graphic detail as the farmer-teacher who appears to be the most eloquent of them all:

> Peace be upon you, I do listen to many international broadcasters: BBC, Germany (Radio *Deutsche Welle*), France (Radio France International) and America (Voice of America); I do listen to them all, including Libyan Radio (Libyan *Jamahiriya* Broadcasting Corporation, LJBC) and Cairo Radio. Listening to them has helped me; it gives me a lot of things; it shows me how to secure my rights from the government, how to deal with other people; it enlightens me of other religions and where they have strongholds. This is why I listen to radio daily. I learn from them that some governments are fairer than others. Like here in Nigeria, if the government has been listening to what we, the masses, have been saying or what we want them to do and they are doing them, then nothing would have gone bad. What is happening in the country now is regrettable. But if they do not change—I am not the only one listening to the radio, many people do—if they (Nigerian leaders) do not take measures to redress things, what is happening in the Arab world may happen in Nigeria too (*Farmer-teacher*).

The international broadcasters are seen here as far more than purveyors of news and information; they are equally regarded as agents of enlightenment for people to know what transpires among other peoples and to know their rights, and as instruments of mobilisation of public opinions. They are also expected to be seen by governments as the tools of gauging people's feelings to help provide good governance. For this respondent what he views as the absence of good governance in Nigeria is the consequence of the government's refusal to listen to people's concerns and effect changes—a similar situation that he feels has led to the uprisings in the Arab world which he predicts 'may happen in Nigeria too', if its leaders 'do not change' their attitude. In his perception, the media are so powerful that they are capable of mobilising people to effect major changes. When asked whether it was solely the media influence that led to the changes taking place in the Arab world or it was the people's own decision to effect the changes, regardless of media's influence, his answer is as follows:

> It is the result of the two factors: the media had helped them—some of them were enlightened by the media to know their rights; and as the result of that, they came out and demanded for their rights from their governments. Some understood the issue on their own and realised that they needed to liberate themselves. So they teamed up with those that

were enlightened by the media and campaigned for their rights; and the international community supported them; and they succeeded. In Egypt they deposed Hosni Mubarak, in Tunisia Ben Ali had gone, in Algeria they want (Abdelaziz) Bouteflika to go, and in Libya they are fighting (*Farmer-teacher*).

From this response it is clear that the farmer-teacher is familiar with international current affairs; and his belief on the potency of the media is also glaring. It is a belief shared by the other members of the group, who seem to have also agreed that the media should serve as the voice of the people. It is perhaps because members of this group have so much cherished the idea of allowing people to air their views for the government to act on them that even their choice of favourite programmes illustrates this sentiment. The most popular programme among them is the BBC Hausa Service's interactive programme '*Ra'ayi Riga*' (Have Your Say), the variant of the main BBC's 'World Have Your Say', in which listeners are given a chance to air their views on selected subjects of interest. Every member of this group mentioned this programme, which is transmitted every Friday evening by the BBC Hausa Service (see 'Integration of interactivity' section of the 'Content and Quantification' chapter), as one of his favourite programmes—often along with listeners' letters programme, another interactive programme of the station. The following response gives a general view of the programmes they enjoy:

The morning and afternoon programmes (of the BBC Hausa Service); we listen also to *Ra'ayi Riga* (Have Your Say) and listeners' letters programmes… These enlighten us about what is going on in the world and shape our views about the world; how our governments run their affairs, how we would realise our rights and so on (*Farmer-shop keeper*).

This group, more than any other group mentioned above or to be mentioned below, expresses greater trust in the reports of international broadcasters, particularly the BBC's. Almost all its members, without any significant reservation, say they do trust the BBC and regard its reports as credible, devoid of falsehood or deliberate exaggeration:

As the other speakers say, I do trust the BBC, not only BBC but journalists in general. A journalist goes to difficult places, even in war zones, to get stories, so I wouldn't say they exaggerate because they sacrifice their lives to get the stories. Although there are conventions that say journalists should not be killed even in war zones, in some places we do hear reports of molestation of journalists. They do really suffer. So I

wouldn't say they tell lies. The reports I hear from the BBC or Voice of America, I feel as if I was in the place where the events were happening (*Herdsman*).

I do not doubt all the reports I get from the BBC. Whatever I hear from them I trust it. Why? Because there is no media organisation that explains to us the way things are as the BBC does (*Farmer-student*).

I would not say they exaggerate their reports because a journalist can go to any place and get his reports… They go to different parts of the world and report things (*Farmer-petty trader*).

For this group the BBC is an impartial international broadcaster reporting news and analysis and offering a platform for people to air their views without any ideological connotation. Their favourite interactive programme 'Have Your Say', they feel, has no ideological motive beyond that of giving the listeners the opportunity to express their opinions. This short conversation with the farmer/day-labourer gives a hint of that feeling:

What do you think of* Ra'ayi Riga *(Have Your Say); is it the genuine views of the listeners or the views of the station?
    It is the listeners' views; I believe it is wholly true because before any
    view is aired the person's name is mentioned.
So you believe that it is truly the real views of the listeners that are presented to the public; they are not altered or manipulated to reflect a pre-determined position of the station?
    Well, the journalists do what they are there to do; they do not manipulate
    the interviewees' views (*Farmer-day labourer*).

The day labourer suspects no manipulation or any ideological motive in running 'Have Your Say' programme in BBC Hausa Service: it is a neutral platform offered to listeners to express their views, he believes. His view runs counter to Hill and Alshaer's (2010) argument that asserts that the BBC's interactive programming has ideological motives, and that it (at least the BBC Arabic TV's one) 'encouraged the form of questioning and debate (that) accords with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's public diplomacy objectives' (p.152). The day labourer has not seen such motives in the BBC Hausa Service's *Ra'ayi Riga* perhaps due to limited exposure to variety of sources of information or constraints of critical faculty or due to other factors. Similarly, unlike any other group, the peasant group does not view the BBC as being deliberately unfair to Muslims or Islamic world. They do not feel that there is any ulterior motive in setting up

international broadcasters. They believe that the West set up their international broadcasters for altruistic reasons—as this comment reveals:

> They are doing it for the benefit of the countries around the world, not because of the owner countries; because the wind of change is blowing now and democracy is popular anywhere in the world. Everywhere in the world people want democracy; not repressive regimes. This is why the reports we get from the media enlighten us on many things (*Farmer-teacher*).

With each comment coming from them, members of this group express views that clearly show their positive conception of the West and positive perception of its media. The last comment probably offers the best possible description the owners of the international broadcasters in the West would have loved to hear. 'They are doing it for the benefit of the countries around the world'; not for their own interests—as the two previous groups have maintained (and as the subsequent ones would insist). To give it a theoretical perspective, this group's consumption of international media texts presents a case of 'preferred reading' (Hall, 1980). The intended meaning of the products' producers is what they seem to take—in conformity with Hall's encoding/decoding model which, as discussed in the preceding chapters, also speaks of 'negotiated' and 'oppositional' readings of media texts to indicate the nature of audiences' interactions with them. Since they appear to have accepted the producers' intended meanings of the texts, the Njoboli peasants' prevailing 'decoding practices' (Morley, 1980) reveal preferred reading of the texts. There is no case of oppositional reading here; there is—as would be seen shortly—a certain level of negotiated reading in some respects; but the prevailing position tilts heavily on the side of the preferred reading (Hall, 1980). The dominant ideology theory (Gramsci, 1971; Althusser, 1971) appears to hold sway here, though with some elements of modification.

The case of negotiated reading observed here is in the few cases where they express some discomfort over the BBC's handling of reports about the Muslim-Christian conflict in the central Nigerian city of Jos where persistent sectarian violence claimed several lives. It was when making reference to the Jos conflict's reporting that some of the respondents mentioned the word 'doubts' about BBC's reports:

Well, I do have some doubts on some reports because the programme presenters themselves do sometimes say 'perhaps' to indicate lack of certainty. This shows us that they too have not confirmed those reports. This does happen. We do enjoy what they tell us. If not for them, we would not have gotten reports of what is happening in Jos (*Farmer-shop keeper*).

The amount of care taken by this participant to explain the circumstances of the 'doubts' gives a hint of the complex processes that goes through the listener's mind in negotiating the meanings of such kind of media texts. He was careful to state that indeed he did doubt some reports because the BBC presenters too did 'say "perhaps" to indicate lack of certainty'; but at the same time he showered praise on the media. 'We do enjoy what they tell us. If not for them, we would not have gotten reports of what is happening in Jos'. It is a similar pattern adopted in the following comment:

There is no report that I really trust like that of the BBC. If you really want to get accurate report, listen to the BBC; it is the ultimate in the world. One thing I don't like, though, is the report about the killing of Muslims...in Jos (*Farmer-tailor*).

The tailor is not blaming the BBC on the way it carries its reports; he is even praising the station. His dislike was on 'the report about the killing of Muslims'. He is apparently blaming the people who did the killing, not really the media that reported the killing; although in a way he had also wished that it had not brought the sad news to him. He did not say that openly, though. It was the subsequent respondent who came out openly to blame the BBC for its handling of the reports about the conflict. His concern is that when an incident of killing takes place, the station would be keen to report it; but, he alleges, it would not follow up the story to its logical conclusion:

Well, they do work; but there is lack of fairness of a sort. Just like they report the beginning of the incident, they should follow up and investigate how the suspects are prosecuted and what happens to them. For those of us in a village we would like to know what happens to the suspects (*Farmer-cattle herder*).

In his opinion, after the station reports an incident of the killing of Muslims (or perhaps any other killing), it is mandatory for it to follow up the story and tell its listeners what happens next: who are the suspects and how are they punished. Failing to do so, in his view, amounts to 'lack of fairness'. It is essentially on Jos conflict issue alone that the members of this group raise question about the BBC's

reporting style, not on the overall handling of reports about Muslims and Islamic world—on which the two previous groups and the respondents in the 'Results and Analysis I' chapter clearly accused the BBC of being unfair. For the Njoboli group it was only on the Jos issue that the question of lack of fairness was raised; even on that they did not pursue it vigorously. It is in this case that the concept of 'negotiated reading' (Hall, 1980) appears applicable. The Njoboli BBC listeners were apparently not comfortable with the reports on Jos conflict, but they had neither rejected them totally nor had they accepted them wholesale. They struggled with the texts, and perhaps with other competing forces in their minds, to negotiate and make 'sense' of what they heard from the broadcaster (Hall in Morley, 1986, p.8).

Katsina Group

The local politicians: strong exposure and high selectivity

This group is mainly a collection of local council officials in Katsina city, the capital of Katsina State, which is located less than one-hour drive to Nigeria's northern border with Niger Republic. It is the smallest of all groups: containing only five persons compared to the largest group that has nine members. The participants are all male, aged 34-50, and seem to be enjoying their new socio-economic status as emerging local officials in the city. They comprise of the secretary of Katsina local government council, its supervisory councillor in charge of education and social services, supervisory councillor in charge of agriculture, an elected councillor and a former bank worker-turned-politician. They all have at least a college level Western education, are well versed in Islamic education and well exposed to local politics. They are among the 'young' politicians in the city whose prosperity is reflected by the new houses they are erecting in the new-rich neighbourhood, which is an extension of the highbrow Government Reservation Area (GRA) in the suburb of the city, where the discussion was held.

Their international media consumption pattern differs from any of the three groups discussed earlier. They have the highest exposure to international television broadcasts among all the groups, perhaps due to their comfortable level of income that affords them the opportunity to own satellite television and electric power-

generating sets to maintain them. Although access to satellite television is expanding in Nigeria, many Nigerians cannot afford it. The BBC's 2009/10 audience survey reveals that 'over a quarter of Nigerians have access to cable and satellite (television), but less than half of these (12%) have access in their household' (BBC Global News, 2010). Members of this group are among the 12 per cent with access at home. Like all the three previous groups, they do also listen to the Hausa language international radio broadcasters, particularly the BBC Hausa Service; but from the discussion it is clear that they pay more attention to the English-language global television broadcasts than to the Hausa language ones. Morning listening of radio and evening watching of television were regularly stated in the discussion, confirming BBC audience surveys' findings on such pattern (BBC World Service, 2007). The Hausa language international radio broadcasters BBC, Voice of America and Radio France International as well as the television broadcasters BBC World News and *Al-Jazeera* are the stations frequently mentioned in the discussion:

> I do listen to many international broadcast media. First, it depends on time: I listen to BBC in the morning and the Voice of America, also in the morning; I also listen to the France's radio station (Radio France International)…all these are Hausa language broadcasters. For television stations, I watch *Al-Jazeera*, BBC World and an Italian television station RAI (*Radiotelevisione Italiana*)... All the television programmes I watch are broadcast in English language (*Local council secretary*).

> I pay more attention to English language broadcasters because in many cases I do not have time in the morning to listen to Hausa language broadcasts, so I listen to English broadcast in the evenings. I pay more attention to the BBC World to know about international affairs (*Bank worker-turned-politician*).

> I listen to the BBC and VOA on the radio. On television, I watch BBC World and *Al-Jazeera* (*Supervisory councillor for education*).

The concentration on television instead of radio (though the radio too has not been discarded) and the apparent preference to English language programmes ahead of the Hausa programming reveal not only a major media consumption variation between this group and the others, but they also give a hint of socio-economic status as a factor in media consumption. Although neither the sample used here nor the one used in any of the groups is large enough to provide grounds for any definite claim, a pattern is emerging here that indicates that socio-economic

variable is possibly a strong factor in global media consumption pattern among Northern Nigerians. High income, urban residency and choice of lifestyle afford this group—and to some extent the Yola lower middle class group—adequate access to global television broadcasters and differentiate their media consumption from that of Njoboli peasants who lack such luxuries. One other remarkable thing here is that the high television consumption noted with the Katsina group contrast sharply with Piepe *et al.*'s (1978) findings that reveal low consumption of television products by the middle class.

Again, the difference between Katsina group and the others is not limited to media consumption alone; it extends to the aspects of perception of media influence, conception of the West and its media and the impact they feel such media have on their lives. Even the rating of the BBC as the most credible and most influential international media almost unanimously agreed by all the three previous groups does not receive the same level of unanimity and depth of endorsement by the members of this group. The majority do regard the BBC as the most credible broadcaster; but some of them feel that *Al-Jazeera* is also one of the most influential and credible broadcasters:

> In my opinion, *Al-Jazeera* is now one of the most influential television stations that play an important role in the world, especially in political and social lives around the world. This is one of the things I think people have now turned their attention to, considering the contributions this station has been giving. Of course, radio has greater penetration; people have more access to it, with N10 you can buy a battery and listen to your radio; and it is not everyone that has access to *Al-Jazeera*. But for those who watch television, *Al-Jazeera* is among the leading stations that bring news of the events happening around the world (*Supervisory councillor for education*).

He did not categorically say that *Al-Jazeera* was better than BBC, but it is clear that he has a great reverence for *Al-Jazeera* and the 'contributions' it is making to 'political and social lives around the world'. His comment captures what most members in the group apparently believe. The next respondent is more specific in his rating of the two stations:

> [W]hen it comes to general news, I consider BBC more credible… In terms of the Arab world, because *Al-Jazeera* is closer to them, their reports would be more credible and more important (*Supervisory councillor for agriculture*).

This respondent used proximity and perhaps specialisation factors to support his assessment of the two broadcasters. It is a similar logic some respondents have offered to explain similar arguments. Within this group, the only respondent who offers clear support for the BBC in this respect is the one who, from the very beginning of the session, had said that it was the BBC that he accessed most of the time; and midway into the session he did not hide his feeling about how much he trusts the station:

> I don't believe what I get from other media until I confirm it by listening to the BBC. It is the station I trust most. It is their reporters who would go to places and get stories; some of them are my Hausa-speaking brothers, who would go and get the stories, facts about the European nations, and broadcast to us; so I must trust them because they would not go and do things contrary to what they are supposed to do (*Bank worker-turned-politician*).

The BBC's glocalisation strategy (Robertson, 1992) and use of diasporic capital (Sreberny *et al.*, 2010a, 2010b), as observed in the case of another participant (mason) in the Yola lower middle-class group, have served it well here too. The ex-bank worker, like the mason, feels that his 'Hausa-speaking brothers' who gather stories and 'facts about the European nations' and broadcast in BBC Hausa Service would not be part of any scheme to manipulate facts and misinform the audiences; and as such their reports are credible and the station trustworthy. But even from him the trust for the BBC is not in absolute terms; it is only within the premise of comparing it with other broadcasters. In the overall categorisation, he agrees with the other members of the group that all international broadcasters are organs of propaganda—though he feels that they were more so before than they are now:

> I used to hold that view (that international broadcasters are propaganda organs), but recently things have been happening in the world that make me think that even if they do carry propaganda, it is not as much as we thought… So even if they do spread propaganda—I used to think that they did; I thought that 80 per cent of their news stories were propaganda for the advancement of their nations' interests—but I later realise that even if there is propaganda, 60 per cent of what they broadcast is the truth (*Bank worker-turned-politician*).

Although he went to the extent of assigning percentages of the level of propaganda he feels they peddle, his view within the group is apparently moderate. The

strongest proponent of the media-as-propaganda-organs claim is the council's secretary who puts out a lengthy argument in support of his position:

> Any media organisation is essentially a propaganda organ; you would find them defending certain interests which certain part of the world believes in. For example, during the World War I and II international broadcasters sprung up in the world not for anything but to challenge Hitler's move and Stalin's and others like Mussolini's… The media organisations I had earlier mentioned such as *Al-Jazeera* and BBC World and Hausa service broadcasters—all of them—have now concentrated in spreading propaganda about democracy. The problem is that they look at democracy in Western perspective. What I mean here, for example, is that there was once a democratic election in Algeria, and at the time it was conducted—since democracy is said to be the decision of the majority—and when the international media, including the BBC and others, realised that the Islamist party FIS (*Front Islamique du Salut* "Islamic Salvation Front") was about to form a government, a government based on democratic election they talk about; but because of the ideological position of the FIS party was Islamist in nature, they blatantly turned the propaganda against them (*Local council secretary*).

This participant is keen to use historical events and instances to drive home his argument that the international broadcasters are essentially organs of propaganda. He combined both the First and Second World Wars (though the names he mentioned were actually those of the key figures in the Second World War in particular) to cite as the events that gave impetus for the rise of international media and their propaganda role. The circumstances prompting them to play the propaganda role, he notes, are not limited to those of war; but to any interests of the owner countries, which he feels is now the propagation of Western democracy. This is why, he notes, the Algerian Islamists' brand of democracy was rejected by the Western media in favour of the Western brand of democracy. In a sense he—and generally the members of his group—argue that the international broadcasters are agent of ideological warfare. It is a view that is not far away from Price *et al.*'s (2008) statement that all global media organisations 'are in some measure missionaries of ideological and cultural hegemony' (p.153). It is a position that appears to fall in line with Gramsci's (1971) hegemony thesis and Althusser's (1971) concept of media as 'ideological state apparatuses' (p.143), and equally corresponds to Herman and Chomsky's (1994) propaganda model.

However, although the members of this group express their conception of media in the context the media hegemony and dominant ideology theorists (Gramsci, 1971;

Althusser, 1971; Hall, 1980) explain them, they do not 'decode' global media texts (Morley, 1980) in the context the cultural or media imperialism theorists (Schiller, 1969; Boyd-Barrett, 1977) have assumed. Selectivity is clearly evident in their media 'decoding practices' (Morley, 1980, p.29). Apparently, the suspicion the group members have of media's propaganda intention makes them to be selective in their consumption of media texts, regardless of the high credibility rating they give to both the BBC and *Al-Jazeera*. They clearly state their selectivity in their reading of media texts as the following comment shows:

> I honestly select what to believe because there is no radio or television station that has no agenda and I know that all of them are built based upon their interests. Although there are claims of independence by British and American media, they have their limits… So I assure you that we are selective, to avoid becoming victims of their propaganda. Of course, yes, they do try and bring things that, because of the nature of African leaders, our media would not broadcast... But the media in America or Britain or *Al-Jazeera* would come and broadcast things that happen here. This helps a lot (*Supervisory councillor for education*).

The concept of selectivity in the context it appears in respect of these participants—as indeed with the previous ones—does not seem to be a simple and straightforward activity; it is a complex audience activity influenced by layers of extraneous factors. In the comment above, for instance, the participant said that the realisation that the media have their own ideological agenda make them (audiences) to be selective in the consumption of media products 'to avoid becoming victims of their propaganda'. But the comments by other participants below reveal that their selectivity is far beyond these reasons alone; it is also guided by personal and religious and ideological factors. The following comment outlines the religious-cum-ideological factors:

> For the followers of Islam they have their doctrine that guides their lives; and whatever Muslims listen to they would judge it based on Islamic injunctions to see if it is righteous or not… This is why a Muslim or the Muslim nations are admonished to stand firm on their religious tenets and judge things based on them; and take those that are righteous and reject those that are not (*Elected councillor*).

For this respondent the religious-cum-ideological factors play a primary role in the selection of which media content to believe, and it is most likely that such content that runs counter to his religious doctrine would not get a space in his mind. He, like many participants in the Yola lower-middle class group too, would listen to it

and then reject it. The fact that he introduced the issue of righteousness into the discussion reveals the extent to which he could go to stress the level of his selectivity. The following participant also insists on the issue of selectivity, and indicates that he would reject those media messages that he considers harmful to him or to his religious belief:

> Surely, if one radio station broadcasts something, another broadcasts its own, and you listen to them all, you can manage to get what you can pick, where the propaganda was not too much, and make your judgement; and take the ones that would not be too harmful to you… I listen to many stations so that I would be able to balance whatever I get from each of them. Each has provided its side. This station broadcasts its propaganda, that station broadcasts hers; France has hers, Germany has her own, BBC, owned by Britain, which runs a parliamentary democracy, does hers. So from these you listen to them all and pick the ones among them and form your opinions, the ones that do not harm your religious belief (*Local council secretary*).

So clearly, selectivity is a complex endeavour; not only is it undertaken within a single medium, but it is also done across a range of media to select different bits and 'balance' the overall contents selected. Previous audience studies (Klapper, 1960; Piepe *et al.*, 1978; Morley, 1980) have noted the issue of selective perception among media audiences and offered their perspectives; but none of them has revealed as much dynamism connected with this concept as is emerging here. For instance, as noted in the literature review, Piepe, Crouch and Emerson (1978) have argued that the middle class consumption of media is characterised by 'selective perception' while that of the working class is marked by 'blanket perception' (p.46). But Morley (1980) has dismissed this as 'too crude' and maintained that his own *Nationwide* research 'shows plenty of examples of selective perception, rejection of dissonant messages and a distinctively cognitive orientation to the medium on the part of working class groups, with an equally complex set of responses and interpretations on the part of the middle class groups' (p.29). The empirical evidence provided in this research is significantly in agreement with Morley's (1980) findings that 'selective perception' and 'rejection of dissonant messages' are applicable to different classes with their 'equally complex set of responses and interpretations'. What the emerging evidence here further shows, however, is that the complexity involved is actually far beyond even the one described by Morley; it shows that extraneous factors such as

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religious, ideological and cultural orientations play significant role in determining selectivity; and that it occurs not just within a single programme but both within a medium and across a range of media.

Abuja Group I (journalists)

The middle class: heavy consumption with subtle resistance

This group is made up entirely of professional journalists who are all based in the Nigeria's federal capital, Abuja. They are six in number, all male, comprised of a deputy daily newspaper editor, a political editor, a sports editor, a business editor, a deputy news editor and a deputy political editor. They are well-educated and have extensive experience in journalism (ten years of practice is the average in the group). Their educational and professional backgrounds and general socio-economic status place them in the conventional middle class category. They are busy professionals who seem to be juggling between working on their laptops and BlackBerry sets and trying to beat production deadlines or attend to appointments. The discussion was held in the line editors' office of the Media Trust Limited, one of Nigeria's fast expanding media organisations, at its headquarters in Abuja.

The members of this group are heavy consumers of international media goods, professional users of them and producers of local media products. They are obviously media savvy and could easily be distinguished from the other groups because of those factors. The media consumption pattern of this group is like no other among the entire focus groups. To start with, they regularly access a wider range of international media products than any of the other groups does. From the discussion with them it emerged that the international media they regularly access range from the English and Hausa services of BBC, VOA, Radio *Deutsche Welle* and Radio France International to the global television stations BBC World News, CNN, *Al-Jazeera* and Iranian Press TV as well as the international news agency Reuters. Similarly, members of this group access media through more platforms than the ones members of the other groups access. They use both the old media (newspapers, radio and television) and the new media (Internet and mobile telephony) platforms to access and consume media goods. But even more significantly, this is the only group that relies mostly on the Internet for their

media consumption. They do, like most of the groups, also use traditional radio and television sets regularly; but the dominant platform they said they rely on is the Internet. They use Internet not just for the consumption of new media products, but also for the consumption of old media goods delivered through the Internet. For instance, they do not only consume the BBC's online reports on the Internet and mobile devices, but they also listen to its radio broadcasts and watch its television programmes on the Internet—in addition to using conventional radio and television sets in consuming its products. The following comments from each member of this group illustrate the scenario:

> Most of the information I source is from the Internet. Of course, I do watch TV and listen to physical radio… But majority of it is on the Internet: newspapers, news agencies' reports, TV stations, radio stations. I listen to them or read them mostly on the Internet… (For radio) I listen to the BBC more than the others, but once in a while I listen to Voice of America, Radio *Deutsche Welle* and Radio France International (*Deputy editor*).

> I use the Internet most of the time. I also listen to radio and watch television… I listen to BBC regularly in the morning… Sometimes I watch satellite television, the BBC World News and *Al-Jazeera* television (*Sports editor*).

> It is the Internet; the Internet is my major platform (*Deputy political editor*).

> I listen to the BBC very often; I also watch CNN and then *Al-Jazeera*… The Internet really (is the major platform) (*Political editor*).

> I think in a day I spend between 10 and 14 hours on the Internet; so most of the stories I get come from the Internet (*Deputy news editor*).

> I think because of my work I always get it through the Internet. I browse BBC, *Al-Jazeera* and Reuters… I (also) listen to radio, the Hausa service and the English service (and watch) *Al-Jazeera* and Press TV (*Business editor*).

The dominance of the Internet as the key means of accessing international media by members of this group is indisputable. They read written reports and listen to radio broadcasts and watch television images all on the Internet. One of them tried to quantify the time he spends daily on it: 'between 10 and 14 hours'. Another attributed his over reliance on it to the nature of his 'work'. Internet consumption is part of their work. Compare the members of this group with the Njoboli peasants who admitted that they had never accessed media through the Internet,

and the difference could only be imagined. But then, for members of this group, media consumption is not only for news and information and entertainment; it is also for earning a living. Little wonder then that their pattern of consumption differs markedly from that of other groups—each group, though, has its own distinctive pattern; the key issue here being that the difference between this group and any other is clearly more pronounced. During the discussion, all members of this group said that they use the Internet—and the traditional media too—as part of their work. They consume media products for both personal and professional reasons. Many non-media people also do, but again the key difference here being that members of this group consume media products as part of their function of producing media products for others to consume.

Another aspect of their marked difference with the other groups in this study is their tendency to be participatory consumers of global media products—not in the sense of they being professional producers of media products but in the sense of being voluntary consumers-cum-producers. Many of them do participate in interactive programmes in which audiences are offered chance to express their views or produce their products:

> Well, I use Twitter, I use Facebook—more Facebook than Twitter—and whenever I come across article in the Internet, I look at the way where I can express my views (*Deputy news editor*).

> I do regularly (participate through) Facebook. Whenever there is a topic I have interest in I offer my own contribution (*Political editor*).

> I participated in one BBC programme during the World Cup and another one with Radio *Deutsche Welle* (*Sports editor*).

None of the groups discussed earlier in this study exhibits this tendency. Although the Njoboli peasant group has expressed strong love for the BBC Hausa Service's participatory programme *Ra'ayi Riga* (Have Your Say), none of them has ever participated in the programme. They probably would have wanted to, but technical and technological deficiencies would not allow them. Professional skills, easy access to technology and knowledge of relevant subject of discussion enable the journalists to participate in the interactive programmes with ease.

However, the gulf between the journalist group and others began to narrow as the issues of rating of international media and assessment of their roles and perception of the West were raised. The position of the journalists was not different from that of the other groups when they picked out BBC as the media they listen to mostly (as their responses cited earlier showed and the subsequent ones would further indicate)—nor did they differ with others in generally rating the BBC as the most credible international broadcaster. Although few of the journalists also rated *Al-Jazeera* very high—one of them said it was more credible than the BBC—the rating was not really different from the one obtained from some of the Katsina group members who had also given positive rating to *Al-Jazeera*. The journalist who is more definite about *Al-Jazeera*'s credibility is, like the case of the Katsina group members too, keen to also speak positively about the BBC, though his loyalty to *Al-Jazeera* is unflinching:

> *Al-Jazeera* to me is more credible than the BBC because *Al-Jazeera* gives more, kind of, alternative news than the BBC. Though the BBC balances stories, I think, I'd rather go for *Al-Jazeera*… But I want to say that if I want to get business stories I prefer BBC to *Al-Jazeera*; that's business, because business deals with facts and details and data (*Business editor*).

He is specific on the areas he places greater trusts to each of the two broadcasters. His position is not far different from that of the participant in Katsina focus group (supervisory councillor for agriculture) who said that, due to proximity factor, he preferred *Al-Jazeera* for stories of the Arab world—and BBC for general stories. Others in the journalist group are more categorical in their preference for the BBC and the influence they believe it has in their comprehension of global events and even in their career choice and development—as these two explain:

> Well, on the international scene, I listen mostly to the BBC and the Cable News Network (CNN)…the BBC in terms of its content and reportage of events. It influences me in understanding mostly international events and within the sub-region, that's Africa down to West Africa (*Deputy political editor*).

> I personally developed interest in sports (through) listening to radio way back in early 1980s. I listened to BBC World Service's sports world… I developed a lot of interest in sports through the BBC World Service (*Sports editor*).

For the last respondent listening to BBC's sport programmes propelled his interest in sports and guided his career choice, as the result of which he eventually

becomes sports editor. This is an additional angle to the kind of role international media play in people's lives, and even more significantly for those working in the media.

However, despite their heavy consumption of international media products and their admission of their influence in their personal and professional lives, and the favourable ratings they gave them, particularly the BBC and *Al-Jazeera*, the media practitioners too have their own reservations about the international media. They believe that the interests of the media-owning countries or their ideological orientations determine the editorial policies and programmes of their media. Although they are less critical of the BBC, they believe that it is still a typical Western media with Western bias:

> I see it as a classic Western media pursuing the interest of the West (*Business editor*).

> I think maybe Western media…typical Western media but with some of the strengths that I mentioned: less cynical, less skewed—they made a lot of efforts to balance reports to be accurate and everything—but Western media (*Deputy editor*).

The business editor was categorical; the deputy editor was a bit cautious but he too concluded that the BBC is a 'typical Western media'. This is not a derogatory view per se but it is a subtle way of saying that it does manipulate things to advance Western ideological interests. It is not the image that the corporation wants to project to the world, but that is what these audiences who actually have favourable view of the broadcaster believe it is. The BBC executives want the audiences to see the station as an impartial international broadcaster offering news and analysis from an 'international perspective' (Pfaffner, 2008; BBC Guidelines, 2010). The audiences, however, judge it based on their perception of its products. The journalist group as a whole feels that it is essentially a Western medium.

Generally, this group shares the view held by most of the other groups, particularly the Katsina group, that all international media are agents of ideological warfare—in conformity with Gramsci's (1971) and Althusser's (1971) conception of media as state ideological apparatuses. The main difference between the journalist group and others regarding this issue is that the journalists do not put it as strongly and as

forcefully as any of those groups. Their comments appear to be more carefully crafted and more measured than the others'—as these two reveal:

> I think all the international media we've mentioned here, the way they present their news and programmes is slanted towards some ideological thing that they pursue—whatever interest—all of them (*Deputy editor*).

> You know, the media houses usually have interests and I certainly believe that these international media come with their own interests, especially the Western media, and sometimes their reportage is slanted or tilted in a way that they can achieve certain interests (*Political editor*).

The group believes that the international media have their respective ideological leanings and that these leanings colour their programming. But as their comments show, they are more subtle and less judgmental on the issue, using softer language in making their description, than the ones used by other groups. They, for instance, avoided using words like 'propaganda agents', 'unfair', 'dislike' and similar terms that were frequently used by the other groups. They seem to prefer using words such as 'slanted' and 'interests' to express their feelings on the issue. Even where lengthy explanation and specific examples are offered there appears to be a tendency to exhibit a measure of detachment over whatever position the Western media are alleged to have taken. The following comment gives a good example:

> By reviewing events that had happened in the past, most especially during the Cold War, we have the Western media reporting events relating to ideological leanings—capitalism and socialism—and you can easily pick their stand on these issues. But towards the end of 1980s the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the key issue of where they stand changed completely towards something else. Issues like globalisation came in; issues like terrorism, you know. So when you listen to the Western media you hear some of the perspectives concerning these issues, you can pinpoint where they stand. Sometimes it is brazen, you can easily understand whether it is being slanted or not by the way they present them—the news and the perspectives—so it is easy for one to detect (*Sports editor*).

The sports editor's observation of geopolitical changes and Western media's changing roles convinced him of their ideological commitment, just as the other groups' members too made their own observations about the Western and non-Western media's commitments. But he did not follow it with open support or condemnation as some participants in the preceding groups tend to do; he simply expressed his disagreement in a subtle way. The slanting of stories and analyses—sometimes 'brazen'—by the international media to suit their ideological interests

as he and other members of his group allege means that the group has reservations about the contents produced. Their comments confirm these reservations; and the following responses reveal the kind of approach some of them adopt to contend with such kind of contents in their interactions with international media:

> My understanding of the media generally is that when I want to have information regarding the West I go to news channels like Press TV, *Al-Jazeera* and things like that. And when I want to read about the Arab nations, I go for the BBC and CNN because I understand that they both have interests which they want to realise, and that means giving you the news from their own perspectives. So rather than just listen to their own side of the story, I tend to go to other ones like Press TV which is controlled by Iran or *Al-Jazeera* which is less Western (*Deputy news editor*).

> Yes, I think (he) is right… To know about the West, I think, it is better to go to other stations like *Al-Jazeera* and Press TV (*Business editor*).

The Qatari-owned *Al-Jazeera* (Miles, 2005) and Iran's Press TV are seen here as the alternative media—though *Al-Jazeera,* as would be seen in the next group discussion, is seen by some as becoming actually Westernised. The Press TV, a 24-hour English language television network launched in 2007, is part of Iran's growing international broadcasting efforts to reach out to the rest of the world and offer alternative voice (Press TV, 2011; Wikia, 2011). The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) which has been expanding since the 1979 Islamic Revolution has a world service, broadcasting in 30 foreign languages (including Hausa language service) in the country's drive to use its soft power resource to advance its foreign policy objectives (Dehshiri and Majidi, 2009; IRIB, 2011; Wikia, 2011). It appears from this discussion, and in some of the individual interviews discussed earlier, that the Press TV is gaining popularity in Nigeria. In this discussion, the deputy news editor and business editor feel that monitoring both the Middle-Eastern media (Press TV and *Al-Jazeera*) and Western media to get the opposing sides would cancel each other's 'slanting' and provide balanced views of both the West and the Middle-East. It is a contrary view to that of the supervisory councillor for agriculture (in Katsina group) who felt that *Al-Jazeera*'s Arab background gave it a better edge to tell the stories of the Arab world. In both cases, aspects of inter-media selectivity have clearly set in. They both select which media to consult for which content. The following comment by the deputy editor

differs from both perspectives, but it still reinforces the concept of inter-media selectivity:

> I listen and watch BBC more (because) I think the BBC has wider reach than *Al-Jazeera* and CNN, and is also less slanted. All of them are slanted, but the BBC is less slanted than CNN, for instance, or compared to *Al-Jazeera* (*Deputy editor*).

His perception of BBC as having 'wider reach' and being 'less slanted' persuades him to consume its products more than the others'. Perception of credibility serves as a factor here in inter-media selectivity. The BBC's perceived credibility, in his view, makes it a preferred choice ahead of CNN and *Al-Jazeera*. But selectivity among the journalist group does not stop at the inter-media level alone; it goes down to the level of a single medium, as the following comment shows:

> When you listen to any medium and the message that it has given out, you tend to select, based on your ideological conviction or your interest. As a person, when I listen to a medium of communication, I don't tend to accept things hook, line and sinker… My field of experience and my personal conviction give me the opportunity to select—that's selective influence. So I consume media messages based on those (factors) (*Deputy political editor*).

This participant makes it clear that work experience and ideological and personal convictions are factors that play roles in his selective perception of media messages. These factors appear to play important roles in media consumption among many participants in this, and other, groups. The journalist group, perhaps because of their media savvy-ness, appear to have high level of selectivity, not just because of religious and ideological convictions as seem to be primarily the case of Katsina and Yola groups (though it might also be a primary factor here), but also because of their professional background.

Abuja Group II (youths)

The university students: the bastion of resistance

This is a group of undergraduate students of Abuja University, located in Gwagwalada town, about one hour drive from the Nigeria's capital Abuja. It contains nine students—eight males and one female—seven in their 20s and two in their early-30s. They are in their final year, except one who is a year behind. The participants include some executive members of the political science students'

association, led by its president. Unlike all the other groups that are composed of almost entirely Muslims, this group contains both Muslims and Christians. They were drawn mainly to represent the views of students and youths who are regular consumers of international media products. Although they are from different socio-economic backgrounds, the majority have a middle class background. They did not indicate support for any particular political party in Nigeria, but they appear to generally hold radical political views critical of the establishment. With nine participants, this is the largest of all the focus groups in this research, and has the longest of all the sessions. The session was held at a noisy club directly opposite the temporary campus of the university in the centre of the town (we could not get a place inside the congested campus). The discussion took place at a time when the uprisings in the Arab world, particularly the Libyan one, were dominating news headlines and they repeatedly cited the Libyan case to support some of their arguments.

What came out of the discussion reveals a pattern of international media consumption somewhat similar to that of the Yola lower middle class group. It is mainly a combination of radio listening and television watching, with the major difference being that the students also access international media through the Internet and mobile telephone devices (though marginally) and consume more of English programming than the Hausa programming (unlike the Yola groups that consume more of Hausa programming). The international radio broadcasters the students said they regularly interact with are the BBC and VOA while the global television they watch are CNN, BBC World News, *Al-Jazeera*, Iran's Press TV and American television network Fox News Channel. Two foreign newspapers, the *International Herald Tribune* and *The Guardian* of London, were also mentioned among the media they said they are conversant with. The following short extracts from their responses reveal the range of the international media they regularly access:

> I usually listen to the BBC, CNN and VOA… I watch them on satellite television… I (also) access them on the Internet and my handset (though) not regularly (*Female student*).

> I am conversant with the BBC, CNN and international papers like *The Guardian* (UK) (*Iliya*).

> The international media I do access include BBC, *Al-Jazeera*, CNN, Press TV and the *International Herald Tribune* (*Students' union executive*).

> Basically I access BBC, CNN and mostly *Al-Jazeera* (*Alfa*).

> The international media have become a household name in the sense that as long as you have your (mobile phone) handset, you can access them easily. I access many of them—CNN, BBC, *Al-Jazeera*, VOA (*Political science students' association president*).

This was the representative sample of their comments about the international media they usually interact with. And from further comments and explanations during the session it is quite evident that they are conversant with international affairs at the level that could have only been possible through engagement with the international media. But they are not heavy consumers like the journalist group or even above average consumers such as the Katsina group. They are more of moderate consumers whose consumption and comprehension of global news is apparently complemented by their university studies. Some of their comments appear to be based more on some theoretical generalisations than on specific details drawn from long-term familiarity with the international media; others are a combination of sweeping generalisations and specific instances.

Like all the previous groups, this group too exhibits its preference to the consumption of BBC products: every one of them does regularly listen to the BBC, and most of them said they do listen to it more often than the other international broadcasters. However, what this group did not do—and it is one of the most remarkable thing that distinguishes them from the other groups—was to single out BBC as being a more credible broadcaster than any other. They simply lumped BBC among the Western media and gave all of them a blanket condemnation—another trait that sets this group apart from the rest. This group generally has a very negative perception of the West and its media. For most of them all the Western media are one and the same thing, with one common objective: to help subjugate the weaker part of the world for the benefit of the West. One after the other, these students articulated this theme and used different situations and trends of argument to support their position. For instance, this participant cites alleged Western media's negative depiction of the Third World nations and positive portrayal of Europe to back his claim:

In my opinion, the Western media in particular are kind of biased media, considering the fact that they present to us one-sided analysis of issues. When they present issues concerning Nigeria, Africa and other Third World countries, the analysis is always one of crises, troubles, anarchy, economic troubles, crimes and everything. When they give us their analysis of maybe European countries, they divert you from what is really existing in their areas…sometimes hiding the real story. For instance, recently during the economic recession, Greece virtually collapsed as a nation. Nobody got to show us what led to the collapse of the Greece's economy… If it was an African nation, for instance, the whole story would have been different, but because Greece is a European nation, so many things were distorted; at the end there was a bailout from the European Union (*Oskar*).

The 'they-versus-us' format of argument used by some of the respondents in the 'Results and Analysis I' chapter is frequently employed by members of this group too. This participant began with the generalisation of the alleged Western media's negative depiction of 'Nigeria, Africa and other Third World countries' by over playing their own crises and down playing Europe's. He then went to the specific case of Greece's economic crisis, which he feels was not adequately and accurately covered by the Western media. Either he has not been keenly following the coverage of Greece's crisis to see the kind of details some of the Western media have been giving or he has followed it keenly but is not satisfied with it, his perception is that there is a cover up; and that the coverage would have been different, if it were an African country facing a similar crisis. And in any case, he notes, 'at the end there was a bailout from the European Union' because Europe had to save one of their own. Another student is even more forceful in his criticism of the West and its media, citing a different example and scenario, to advance his argument:

International media like Fox News, CNN, BBC, to me, are part of the cartel of Western system of governance; not primarily out to give information, but primarily out to design information as instructed by the Western governments. I'll use the experience of Africa as the case study, the most recent being that of Libya and other countries… Why should the coalition forces come to Libya, can't they leave us, Africans, to solve our problems… This is the plot of the Western world, and they have not perpetually achieved this plot primarily through the use of their military power, but through the use of their media, that is, with the instrument of propaganda (*Ayuba*).

The same style of opening the argument with generalisation and then narrowing to specific instance was used by this student too. As wide as the ideological leanings or editorial policies or ownership structures of the Fox News and CNN and BBC

might be, this participant perceives them as performing the same role. As far as he is concerned, they are simply 'part of the cartel of Western system of governance…primarily out to design information as instructed by the Western governments' to help perpetuate the West's domination of the world. He then gave the example of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) intervention in Libya's conflict where the government and the rebels battle for the control of the country as part of the wider uprisings in the Arab world (Bakr, 2011; Reuters, 2011). The focus group discussion was held just after the NATO forces—they are called coalition forces since the United Arab Emirate too offers contribution—had launched their first strike against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's forces in Libya following the United Nations' decision to impose a 'no-fly zone' in the country (UN, 2011). In the lengthy 740-word argument (in its pre-edited version the longest made by any of the participants), this participant actually cited a specific case of Western media's reporting of Colonel Gaddafi's allegation of NATO's attack killing civilians as well as NATO's denial and counter allegation that if Gaddafi had shown 'civilian bodies' to support his allegation, it must have been the bodies of the civilians he had killed. And, noted the participant, the media followed the report with an analysis that subtly said that it must have been Gaddafi who had killed the civilians. '*"Yes, Gaddafi is capable of doing such thing"*,' he quoted one of the Western commentators to have said. This, in his view, shows the extent to which the Western nations are using their media to dominate the weaker parts of the world which he said they did not achieve 'primarily through the use of their military power, but through the use of their media'.

His position is very popular among the students who are clearly sympathetic to Colonel Gaddafi. Although the Libyan leader had earned sharp negative criticisms in Nigeria in 2010 when he suggested that the country be split into two, along Muslim-Christian line, to end its frequent sectarian violence, he was generally a popular figure in the country for his earlier concept of African unity. The West's antagonism against him revives his popularity among many Nigerians; and these students repeatedly cited the attack on him as a clear case of Western double standards:

The fact remains that since Libyans, through their leader (Gaddafi), are not thinking in the Western mode, they are not thinking like America—not minding the fact that US and Britain are practising parallel democracy—but since they are not thinking like Americans, they are against the world; so the world would be against them. The world would only be against you, if the BBC is well funded, CNN is well motivated, *Al-Jazeera*—all of them—to give you a special image, to paint you to become the enemy of the world (*Political science students' association president*).

This respondent added *Al-Jazeera* to the list, perhaps because *Al-Jazeera* is generally believed to be among the anti-Gaddafi media, with its owners, the Qatari royal family, working actively against the Libyan leader (Reuters, 2011; Bakr, 2011). In this student's opinion, *Al-Jazeera* works alongside the BBC and CNN to 'paint' any country as an 'enemy of the world', as long as that country refuses to think like America. To most of these students, promotion of US hegemony goes beyond the Western media and extends to the media of their allies. The following comment too emphasises the issue of alleged Western domination and double standards, generalising on the case of Europe and Africa:

When you look at the international media critically, I can say they are an irony to what they preach to people. They bring out things that are not real to reorient people to make them instrument of the Western world to achieve the Western aims… The only thing that the West wants is a subjugated Africa, an Africa that can develop the European world like in the colonial days (*Students' union executive*).

Other arguments put forward by the students to portray their negative perception of the West and its media are the alleged promotion of Western culture and denigration of other cultures by these media—as these two comments reveal:

They (Western media) always see Europe and European culture as the best. They look at European technology, civilization, modernization and development of the polity as the best thing that any man should achieve in the world… And this is to ridicule every other culture in the world to show the supremacy and originality of their own culture (*Hamid*).

They (Western nations) know the power of the media; they are meant for propaganda; that is their major role. If they want show my country Nigeria now—they don't want to show Nigeria unless there is a plane crash… Have you ever watched where they show a philanthropist in Nigeria distributing food? No, they won't do that. They want to show you programmes designed for America so that they would tell you how they develop an aeroplane that can fly in certain seconds, they would show you how a building was constructed. There is no fairness. International media have been well-packaged to re-colonise Africa so that we remain subjugated (*Political science students' association president*).

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Both the cultural imperialism (Schiller, 1969) and media imperialism (Boyd-Barrett, 1977) perspectives were repeatedly explored by these students from their own conceptions of these terms and the prevailing situations to express their strong opposition to the West and its media. They have the most pessimistic perception of the West among all the focus groups in this study. Their antagonism to the West is similar to the one reflected by the Islamist group in Morocco, noted for their 'coherent rejection of Western modernness' (Tarik, 2010, p.134). The Moroccan Islamists expressed negative view of Western media, and 'perceived Western modernity as the culture of capitalism, imperialism and globalisation, a culture erected on the principles of greed and an unjust economic system' (Tarik, 2010, p.135). Although the Abuja student group is not an Islamist group in any form or shape (some of its members are not even Muslims, as stated earlier, and the rest are moderate Muslims), the majority of its members share the view of the Moroccan Islamists in their denunciation of the West. With their total opposition to Western media texts, the Abuja students' predominant decoding practices (Morley, 1980) appear to have fallen within the context of 'oppositional reading' (Hall, 1980) as they reject wholesale the meanings preferred by the contents' producers.

The negative perception of the West among these students is so overwhelming that even the two dissenting voices in the group that appear to be sympathetic to the West and its media seem to be careful in presenting such position. Incidentally, the first dissenting voice came from the only female participant in the discussion. She expresses her view in a general term and in non-confrontational tone:

> My own perception is that the international media are important but many Nigerians do not have access to all of them because they do not have the services of DSTV (Digital Satellite Television distribution firm)… These media are supposed to link up people with the rest of the world… Nigeria belongs to several international organisations and the media can facilitate understanding of this. Lack of access hinders their influence. If the media do not influence people to make them change their attitudes, most people would be acting anyhow. The media create good relationship between peoples; they are really trying, but they ought to do more. They are really important and do help in strengthening relationship between people across the nations… The media are diplomatic agencies (*Female student*).

It is clear here that her position is radically different from the views expressed by her colleagues. She chose to emphasise what she believes to be the positive roles the international media play in the world; and even expressed concern over lack of access to all of them among many Nigerians, thereby limiting their influence in changing people's attitude—something she also lamented. 'If the media do not influence people to make them change their attitudes, most people would be acting anyhow,' she said. This is a positive perception of the international media; and it is clearly away from the 'manipulative' and 'propaganda' roles the others believe they are playing. Although she did not cite specific examples—as others did—she has still succeeded in putting across her views, which others apparently respected but ignored.

The other participant who also holds some dissenting views adopted a different approach from that of the female student. He articulated his opinions by arguing in defence of his position, endorsing the aspects he shares with the majority in the group and justifying the minority viewpoints he holds. In the lengthy argument below, he looks at both the issue of cultural imperialism and propaganda role of the media, and offers his perspectives on each:

> For me basically, the media have been trying in the area of entertaining, educating and informing me. In fact, within 24 hours you'd be abreast of information wherever you go, and for that they have my vote. Secondly, leave it or take it, this cultural dichotomy of a thing, we have been the target of cultural imperialism. But then, it has come to stay, we call it cultural diffusion. As you can see me now, I am in an English wear, speaking English language. Leave it or take it, it is still part of me. But now down to international politics, I must confess that media in that context is used effectively to propagate foreign policies… BBC, as it is, is built to protect the kind of interests that help Britain's progress; CNN is fashioned to project its own kind of interest. I must say here that there is no media in the world that is absolutely free or absolutely independent. There is a kind of regulatory measures put in place regarding their operations and interests. They have the kind of mindset that they are working towards. Look at the American operation in Iraq, Afghanistan, their interest in Libya and the rest; it is a kind of economic and political interests. So these media are fashioned to pursue those interests internationally (*Iliya*).

This participant first highlighted what he believes to be the positive roles of the international media, and then went on to argue that even the negative roles are not necessarily as negative as portrayed by the other students. Although he shares

some aspects of their views that the propaganda role of the international media is negative, he is not as critical of it as they are. With regard to cultural imperialism claim which he admits non-Westerners are indeed being targeted, he leans on the optimistic side describing it as 'cultural diffusion'—which he accepts as a reality of life: 'As you can see me now, I am in an English wear, speaking English language. Leave it or take it, it is still part of me'. He views it in the context of what Ien Ang (1996) describes as cultural hybridity, 'a fluid diversity emanating from constant cultural traffic and interaction rather than from the persistence of original, rooted and traditional "identities"' (p.155). In this sense, he feels, the fear of perceived 'cultural imperialism' is unfounded. This is perhaps because 'global media do affect, but cannot control local meanings' (Ang, 1996, p.151).

The dilemma between his acceptance of 'cultural diffusion' and the other students' rejection of 'cultural imperialism' is similar to the scenario reported by Tarik (2010) regarding Moroccan socialist youth group's negotiation with 'Western modernness' (pp.129-134). In Morocco's case a 24-year-old student, Adil, was quoted to have voiced their dilemma when he said: 'We either lose our identity completely by becoming French, or we remain Moroccan… We have never been to France yet we have French habits' (pp.129-130). It is, as Tarik (2010) notes, the 'problem of cultural identity…a complex cultural space where two cultural identities, each with a different temporality, coexist within the same cultural spatiality: the mind of the post-colonised' (p.130). In the case of some of the students in this focus group, they are actually wrestling with multiple cultural identities: that of the former colonial master Britain, the American one on the television screens, the dominant Hausa-Fulani Muslim culture in Northern Nigeria and their own 'original' ethnic identities. It is indeed a very complex and competitive cultural space.

Summary

This chapter has teased out the pattern and particularities of the consumption of global media goods by a wide range of groups in the three geopolitical zones of Northern Nigeria: the urban lower middle class, working class and peasant groups in the Northeast; local officials in the Northwest; and journalists/middle class and

university students/youth groups in North-central zone. It reveals that the groups do regularly interact with a variety of international media (about 15 of them) and consume their products—particularly the BBC products—although their level and pattern of consumption and the platforms they use for the consumption do differ in some respects.

The members of the urban lower middle class group appear to be above average consumers of international media products, relying on radio and television to access mainly Hausa but also English programmes. Their engagement with global media seems to provide a case of consumption amid contestation, revealing a largely negative conception of the West but somewhat positive perception of the BBC, though still rejecting some of its products due to apparent mediating roles of religious, ideological and other factors. The working class group are above average consumers of global media products, relaying mainly on radio but marginally combining it with television. They show a negative perception of the West but positive conception of its media which they regard as repository of knowledge—though they are still selective in consuming their products. The peasant group's pattern of consumption of international radio products is markedly different from that of any group in this study, as they are the only group that rely exclusively on radio for such consumption. They are moderate consumers with high level of believability, showing very positive disposition towards the West and its media, though they still display some level of selectivity apparently primarily influenced by religious factors.

The members of Katsina group have, among all the groups, the highest level of exposure to international television broadcasts, which they complement with radio listening, consuming both English and Hausa programmes. They hold negative views about the West but share positive perceptions of the BBC and *Al-Jazeera*. They are highly selective in their consumption of global media products perhaps mainly due to religious, ideological, cultural, personal and other mediating factors. The Abuja journalist group members are the heaviest consumers of global media products and the most media savvy of all the groups. They are the only group that rely primarily on the Internet to access the global media goods, using traditional platforms only marginally. They show a subtle but mild negative perception of the

West and positive perception of the BBC and *Al-Jazeera*, and exhibit a high level of selective believability apparently influenced by professional, personal, religious and ideological factors. The university students/youth group's consumption of international media appears to be moderate, combining mainly radio listening with television watching and marginal use of Internet and mobile telephony. They present a classic case of predominantly oppositional reading of media texts, with the majority of them expressing views that reveal total rejection of the West and its media. They exhibit aspects of selective believability that seem to be influenced by ideological, cultural and other extra-communication factors.

The highlights of the findings are that Northern Nigerians do have active interactions with international media which play important roles in their everyday life, enhancing their comprehension of both national and international affairs and apparently influencing their cultural, personal and professional lives. They generally have negative perceptions of the West but positive perceptions of the BBC which they regard as a credible international broadcaster, although retaining what they consider to be Western bias against the Islamic world and Africa. The collective verdict of the groups on the BBC is that it is an institution that plays the contradictory roles of being a propagandist and, to some degree, an impartial broadcaster. All the groups' patterns of media consumption exhibit some forms of selectivity, picking which messages to believe and which to reject or reinterpret, both within a medium and across a range of media, influenced by their predispositions and other extra-communication factors. Selective believability, as discovered here, is not a simple straightforward audience activity; it is a highly complex audience activity influenced by layers of extraneous factors. There is a clear evidence of selective believability among all the groups apparently influenced by religious, ideological, cultural, professional and personal factors—with Islam (being a religious, cultural and ideological force among most of them) possibly playing the primary mediating role in their international news consumption.

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Discussion, Implications and Conclusions

Introduction

The deluge of historical, statistical and empirical data brought together and analysed in this study has pointed to a string of conceptual and theoretical strands that were largely ignored or unnoticed by previous studies. Systematically synchronised and carefully articulated, these strands may provide solid ground for constructing coherent concepts and sound theories in reception research and media and cultural studies. This chapter attempts to explore those prospects as it recapitulates the key findings of this research; and highlights the areas of these findings' divergence from, and consistency with, those of the previous studies; the conceptual and theoretical strands explored; and their potentials of yielding new methodological and theoretical perspectives in media and communications studies. It also unfolds the implications of the findings to communications scholars, media practitioners, global broadcasters and public diplomacy executives and operators. The general conclusions that could be drawn from the work and the areas that require further examinations are also laid out in this chapter.

Discussing the key findings

Since the details of all the specific findings of this study were all presented and analysed in their respective areas in the preceding chapters, it is only the key findings that are brought forward here for further discussion and contextualisation. Starting with the more generalised findings before moving to those that are more specific, a key general finding that has been clearly established from all the angles of this study is that the BBC has a long and complex relationship with its Northern Nigerian audiences—a relationship that is still being shaped and transformed by the changing dynamics of global geopolitics and advancement of delivery technologies. From both the BBC producers' and the audiences' perspectives it was found to be a deep and complicated engagement marked by what Sabry (2010) calls the dynamics of temporality and spatiality. Northern Nigeria itself is a vast multi-cultural and multi-lingual region whose long historical and cultural

interactions with North African Muslims produced a predominantly Islamic culture with the indigenous Hausa language serving as the lingua franca. British colonialism and subsequent postcolonial engagements with the region added to the multiplicity of the cultural encounters; and the massive distribution of cultural goods by the global media has widened the scope of such interactions to an unprecedented level. This general finding is not just an echo of Larkin's (2008) conception of Northern Nigerians' encounter with the media and modern technology, it is both a confirmation of that and a revelation of new trends produced by the encounter, especially with the expanding global media scope and rapidly changing technologies.

The pattern of Northern Nigerians' consumption of international media products and the nature of their engagement with the distribution technologies, as revealed by this study, are so complex and striking that they could hardly be understood without comparing the level of the variability among the audiences themselves. The peasant group, for instance, who have never accessed media products from the Internet and have to rely exclusively on radio for their global media consumption, present a sharp contrast to the middle class journalist group, who use multiple platforms but predominantly Internet for their media consumption. The following comments from a member in each of the two groups illustrate the contrasting situations. While the herdsman in Njoboli village's peasant group declared that '*honestly we have no Internet here; and I do not go out and spend my time to look for Internet to search for BBC*', the deputy news editor of a newspaper in Abuja in the journalist group said: '*I think in a day I spend between 10 and 14 hours on the Internet; so most of the stories I get come from the Internet*'. These two respondents represent an approximation of their respective groups' experience. Lumping together people with such a wide disparity of experience in interactions with media and technology and making a general statement about them is undoubtedly daunting. Using the term 'complex' is often a safer way of making the description, but that does not really describe the whole situation. It needs a specific example, such as the one above, to bring out the real picture. The consolation in the particular case of these two groups, though, is that despite the sharp contrast in their consumption pattern and engagement with distribution technologies, there are many areas of commonality such as their high consumption

of BBC products, their perception of its credibility and their selective believability (more on these later) that are open to making safe generalisations.

The BBC World Service has since 1957 been specifically targeting the Hausa-speaking Northern Nigerians through the Hausa language service with Western cultural goods which constitute a large chunk of their global media diet. This study reveals that Northern Nigerians do have regular interactions with a wide range of international media and that the BBC is the one they have the highest level of interactions with. This is consistent with the findings of the BBC's own annual surveys in Nigeria (BBC World Service, 2007, 2008; BBC Global News, 2009, 2010). Also consistent with the results of these surveys is the finding by this study that Northern Nigerian audiences regard BBC as the most credible broadcaster. One by one, as individuals or as groups, the vast majority of the respondents rated the BBC as the most credible and trustworthy broadcaster. The criteria they used in making their assessments are also vast and varied: accuracy, timeliness, use of diasporic personnel with whom they share cultural affinity, and depth and impartiality of BBC's coverage of global and national news stories. These positive perceptions set the tone for the enduring engagement and its consequences, although the negative perceptions too and their accompanying effects are equally part of the overall relationship, as this study clearly shows.

Northern Nigerians' engagement with the BBC has not prevented them from interacting vigorously with other global broadcasters, as stated earlier; the BBC just happens to be their preferred broadcaster for the reasons noted above. The cumulative impact of Northern Nigerians' interactions with global broadcasters, though, is hard to measure because, as many researchers (Klapper, 1960; Liu and Johnson, 2011, p. 4) have rightly pointed out, assessing media impact is a very 'difficult task for empirical research' due to the existence of intervening variables; and even more so because 'proving effects is so difficult' (Liebes and Katz, 1993, p.8). In any case, exhaustive assessment of media influence on their audiences is usually beyond the realm of a single study. Still, though with some caution, it is clear from the results of this study that international media do exert significant influence on the lives of Northern Nigerians. There is near unanimity by all the respondents that the global media they interact with do exercise different forms of

influence on their lives. Whether in the more general form of affecting their everyday life through the basic media functions of informing, educating and entertaining them, or in the more specific form of enhancing their comprehension of international and national affairs, raising their awareness of their civic rights and responsibilities and influencing specific personal decisions and professional endeavours (particularly in the case of journalists), the audiences have given accounts of how useful their engagements with these media have been. They do, however, express their concerns over the propaganda role of the global broadcasters, their perceived penchant for the protection of their owners' interests and their alleged capacity to influence local cultural values—all of which also point to their perceptions that the media do indeed have influence. The fact that the audiences themselves said they prefer BBC to other broadcasters and that they consume its products more than others' suggest that the BBC probably exerts more influence on their lives than the other international broadcasters do.

However, there are significant cautions that one must exercise in relation to both the credibility rating of the BBC and the issue of influence. The findings of this study suggest that the Northern Nigerians' favourable ratings of the BBC are not absolute; they are limited to the comparison of the station with other broadcasters. For instance, the audiences do have reservations about the BBC's coverage of the Islamic world and, to some extent, of Africa. They regard BBC as a classic Western medium that portrays the West positively and the Muslim world and Africa negatively. These complaints are rampant in the narratives of the respondents, whether as individuals or as groups and whether they use strong language or a subtle one to highlight them. It ranges from the description of BBC as a '*typical Western media*' (by the deputy editor in the journalist group)—a subtle way of accusing it of showing pro-Western bias—to outright accusations of being '*partisan and in some ways even anti-Muslims or anti-Arabs*' (as claimed by the female ex-editor); or even a more blanket accusation as shown in this claim by the director of *Izala* Islamic sect in the Yola lower middle class group: '*The problem with the BBC is that it would…not report something positive about Islam*'. Significantly, these people are among the respondents who believe that the BBC is the most credible international broadcaster. Since their reverence to BBC

has not removed their reservation of its coverage of the stated areas, their views on less respected broadcasters are even more critical.

Most of the respondents have indeed accused other Western broadcasters of being far worse culprits in the alleged negative portrayal of non-Western entities. Even the non-Western media *Al-Jazeera*, which some of them had praised for being an alternative medium prior to the eruption of Libyan crisis, was later condemned by some respondents as being part of Western conspiracy against Africa because of its perceived anti-Muammar Gaddafi coverage [its owners, the Qataris, support anti-Gaddafi rebels in Libya (Reuters, 2011; Bakr, 2011)]. The student group who appear to be the strongest critics of global broadcasters over alleged negative portrayal of Africa, for example, grouped *Al-Jazeera* in the Western media category due to what they see as its hostility towards Gaddafi. '*The world would only be against you, if the BBC is well funded, CNN is well motivated,* Al-Jazeera—*all of them—to give you a special image, to paint you to become the enemy of the world*,' claimed the political science students' association president. So the negative perception is neither restricted to one set of global broadcasters nor is it exclusive to a particular segment of the respondents.

Closely related to this, and possibly the precursor of it, is the Northern Nigerians' negative conception of the West. Again, one by one and group after group, passionately or with considerable measure of restraints, the vast majority of the respondents expressed views that clearly reveal unfavourable disposition towards the West. There are elements of ambivalence—slightly differential but largely negative views of the West among some individual respondents (*I respect them, but I don't love them that much*, said the local publisher)—or even positive perceptions as noticed in the peasant group, but the predominant position is that the Northern Nigerians' conception of the West is negative. This finding is not really different from other findings elsewhere. Many studies (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004; Pew Center, 2004, 2006; Pintak, 2006) have shown mutually negative perceptions between Muslims and the United States in particular. In their study, based on data from a survey of over 10,000 respondents in nine mainly Muslim nations and responses from Americans, Gentzkow and Shapiro (2004) found mutual negative perceptions between Muslims and Americans. 'Moreover,

this antagonism is not only driven by opposed interests… It also reflects radically different, and often distorted, perceptions of the facts themselves' (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004, p. 117). 'At its root lies an essential truth: each side sees the world through a very different prism,' noted Pintak (2006, p.188).

From the responses in this study the Northern Nigerians' negative perception of the West was apparently prompted by what they perceive to be the West's antagonism towards Islam and the West's domination of Africa. A recap of few comments from both the individual and focus group interviews highlights their perspectives. '*They* (the West) *suppress Islam far more than imagined. This is why we, Muslims, dislike them,*' said the motorcycle mechanic in the Yola working class group. '*We're not too happy with the way they* (Britain) *ganged up with the US, and they're all for the Gulf invasion, regardless of the laws,*' declared the female ex-editor. '*The only thing that the West wants is a subjugated Africa, an Africa that can develop the European world like in the colonial days,*' alleged a students' union executive in the student group. The respondents cited several instances such as the 1991 Gulf war, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the NATO's bombings of Libya and the war on terror to illustrate what they believe to be the West's double standards and antagonism towards the Islamic world. The alleged pro-Western coverage of those issues by Western media, including the BBC, and their alleged negative reports about Africa are what they regularly cite as evidence of unfairness of the Western media to Muslims and Africans. They simply believe that the Western media are the extension of the West, and despite admission by many of them that these media do exhibit remarkable level of independence, the common feeling is that these media would not do anything that could radically harm the interests of the West.

Despite their negative—or ambivalent—perceptions of the West due to what they perceive to be the West's unfairness to Muslims and Africans, Northern Nigerians' complex mediated encounter with the West can hardly be described only in terms such as rejection of the West or acceptance of the West or even negotiating with the West—as Sabry (2010) discovered in the case of Moroccans' experience or as Hall (1980) and Morley (1980) theorise about audiences' engagement with the media—it is probably a more deeply complicated and contested issue. The

complexity could be seen even within a response of an individual (as in the case of the school teacher in the Yola working class group who in one breath was talking about BBC being a credible broadcaster that influenced his life and in another said he stopped listening to it because of its unfairness to Saddam Hussein, and switched to *Al-Jazeera* which he felt was fairer) and among the individuals and groups with the level of fluidity of their responses during the discussions. For instance, some respondents would begin their discussion with praises for the West only to quickly switch to its condemnation when making reference to its relations with Islam or Africa. The antagonism is mainly towards the United States—which incidentally did not even have a history of colonial domination of Nigeria but has difficult relations with Muslims—and, to a lesser degree, Britain (which has both a history of colonial domination of Nigeria and difficult relations with Muslims—its inclusion seems to be more due to its close ties with the United States than of the colonial link, though that too could not be completely ruled out), hardly do they mention any other Western nation. To almost all of them, as explained in chapter VII, the 'West' is simply the United States and Britain, though they know it is far beyond that. The other component parts of the West do not seem to matter to them much.

Similarly, although the collective unfavourable disposition towards the West is not in doubt, it is not collectively marked with anger or intense antagonism. It is to some extent a polite disapproval. 'Negotiation' looks close to capturing it, though it is not necessarily a conscious and deliberate negotiation. The majority of respondents appear to prefer living a parallel life with that of the West without disrespecting each other's culture; but they also seem ready to share common norms and cultural values with the West, especially those that are universal to humanity. They have positive perceptions of the West, for instance, on issues of good governance, transparency and human rights which they feel Western governments have good records of, at least in their domestic affairs. So it is not really a simple case of 'rejection' or 'acceptance'; it is far more complicated than either. But then, as Sabry (2010) argues, cultural encounter is never a straightforward matter. '*Encounters* are cultural phenomena par excellence, and culture is nothing other than an amalgamation of different *encounters* and the dynamics they produce' (Sabry, 2010, p. 10, emphasis original).

In whatever context this dynamism is viewed, the Northern Nigerians' engagement with international media produced neither the scenario Daniel Lerner (1958) had envisaged about the Middle Eastern Muslims' encounter with the media nor the one painted by Siegfried Kracauer (1952, cited in Larkin, 2008) on a similar situation. As discussed extensively in the literature review, Lerner and Kracauer have given two sharply contrasting accounts of the impact, or possible impact, of Western media on the Muslim Middle East. Lerner (1958) had a vision of a Middle East that would be modernized along the Western model, having been exposed to Western media and Western civilization. 'What the West is,' he writes, 'the Middle East seeks to become' (p. 47). The empirical evidence from this study shows that Northern Nigerian Muslims do not seem to like that path. Nor do they really do what Kracauer said the Arabs had done. Kracauer had painted a Middle East that had 'an ingrained aversion, strongest in rural areas,' to Western modernity. 'The Bedouins reject whole-sale the infidels and their devilish inventions' (Kracauer, 1952, cited in Larkin, 2008, p. 114). The Hausas do not totally reject the West, but they do reject wholesale 'their devilish intentions' (to use Larkin's words, p. 114).

The difference did not end there. Unlike Kracauer's observation that the strongest aversion of Western modernization was witnessed in the rural Middle East, this research found that the strongest denunciation of the West came from the urban university students. The key caution here, though, is that these students have a clear view of the difference between Westernization and modernisation, and their stance on each is equally clear. They are favourably disposed to modernity but ideologically opposed to the West. In fact, in this research the rural dwellers, the Njoboli peasant group, are the ones who hold the most favourable views on the West. Their case is the one that is almost consistent with Daniel Lerner's later work. In his 1963 essay, Lerner has argued that the diffusion of information 'stimulates the peasant to want to be a free holding farmer…the farmer's wife to want to stop bearing children, the farmer's daughter to wear a dress and to do her hair' (p. 348). The Njoboli peasant group in this study exhibits a tendency that almost fits into this frame. '*Listening to* (international broadcasters) *shows me how to secure my rights from the government, how to deal with other people; it enlightens me of other religions and where they have strongholds,*' said the

farmer-teacher in Njoboli peasant group. His words seem to reinforce what Lerner claimed virtually five decades before. But that is perhaps where the similarity ends, at least with regard to this issue.

Another important finding worth recapitulating here is the one that reveals the resilience of radio as a viable medium in Northern Nigeria, despite the spread of new distribution technologies and multiplication of platforms. There was never a doubt about radio's utility particularly in Nigeria or in Africa as a whole (Spitulnik, 2000; Mano, 2004; Larkin, 2008), but what this research has found significant is its ability to remain relevant in the face of rapid technological revolution that has transformed the way many people interact with the media. This study did, of course, find evidence of radio losing parts of its ground to television and Internet (at least one group relies mainly on the Internet to access media and another uses more of television than radio), but the medium has not been discarded—most of the groups rely mainly on radio to access international media and all the groups mentioned it as one of their platforms. Significant also is the profound nature of radio's utility in the everyday lives of Northern Nigerians, as the testimonies of some of the respondents reveal. For instance, the governor's aide in the Yola working class group said: '*Radio to me is more than an object of entertainment; it is a school. This radio* (brandishing his radio set) *is my library; it is my record keeper; it is like half of my brain*'. The shop owner in the Yola lower middle class group stated that '*wherever I am—either in a vehicle or walking—I have my radio set, day and night, so as to monitor the BBC*'. These were their own descriptions of the magnitude of space they feel radio occupies in their daily lives.

Mytton and Forrester (1988) have predicted that radio's resilience would linger for long, and the evidence here seems to confirm it. 'In a world of rapidly changing electronic media technology one of the oldest, and in some ways crudest, means of delivery seems likely to continue to prevail,' they assert. 'It continues to have the advantages of simplicity, ease of access, and lack of susceptibility to governmental interference—all advantages not possessed by any of the alternatives' (Mytton and Forrester, 1988, p. 479). Some of the mobile telephony devices do possess almost all of these advantages—and a lot more—but they have not yet dislodged radio, though they may have the potential of doing so in the future. The BBC Hausa

Service too has recognised this potential and moved in quickly to capitalise on it by distributing contents through mobile telephony (Tangaza, 2009). Their concern is that despite radio's resilience, the Internet and mobile telephony do indeed present a real threat to it, and the best strategy of addressing it is to harness their potentials too. '*We try to adapt to changing media environment by introducing new things and making sure that we don't miss out on any platform,*' the BBC's executive editor for African region declared. This is part of the rationale of the BBC's decision to adopt a 'multimedia strategy' in content delivery and participatory programming (Hiller, 2010a, p.2). And, as this study reveals, it is one of the strategies that has helped the corporation to maintain its edge over other broadcasters.

The conception of the BBC as an organ of British public diplomacy is another area that presents an interesting scenario for this study. With international broadcasting essentially regarded as being part of public diplomacy effort or 'soft power' resource (Browne, 1982; Rampal and Adams, 1990; Nye, 2004a, p. 5) and the BBC World Service being funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, it was obvious from the onset that the BBC would always be seen as an 'instrument of British public diplomacy' (Sreberny *et al*., 2010a, p. 130). But the corporation's claim of being an impartial broadcaster—and an open attempt to be so, coupled with the belief by many that it is so—produced a complex picture. Another twist was added when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the 2004 spending review classified BBC as one of the 'partners' in British public diplomacy (FCO, 2005, p.4)—though both sides have insisted that its editorial independence remains untouched. With all these permutations, it became vital to examine the claims from the perspectives of both the producers of BBC contents and its consumers.

Respondents from both the production and reception sides offered divergent perspectives on the issue, but the aggregate views reveal that the BBC does indeed serve as an organ of British public diplomacy, despite its claim of being just an impartial international broadcaster. They noted that it plays the dual but contradictory role of being both a provider of impartial international news and a promoter of British public diplomacy—as previously observed by others (Rampal

and Adams, 1990; Nye, 2004a, 2004b; Sreberny *et al*., 2010a, 2010b). However, the finding is not as simplistic as it appears on the surface. First, from the reception side the overwhelming feeling is that, although the BBC does provide credible news and analysis, it still acts as a propagandist—even if in a subtle way. The most serious issue thrown up by this perspective is that the audiences tend to reject those messages that they suspect to be part of the 'propaganda' or public diplomacy role of the station. The following two comments illustrate such tendency among the audiences. '*Those* (BBC programmes) *that they do for humanity, we accept them; the ones they do to deceive people, we listen to them, but reject them,*' remarked the mason in the Yola lower middle class group. Another member of the group, the director of *Izala* Islamic sect, was equally emphatic on what he would do with those BBC reports that he feels are not impartial: '*Foreign propaganda will not help me. In this respect I won't believe the BBC*'. And in that respect the public diplomacy objectives—if the propaganda or 'the slanting' of stories was meant to achieve them—face defeat.

But then, it is not all the audiences that constantly engage in 'guerrilla warfare' with the media (Eco, 1972, cited in Morley, 2006, p. 102) to repeatedly reject offensive texts (and accept only the favourable ones); there are many who do not necessarily do this regularly or who may sometimes let their guards slip. The Njoboli peasant group, for instance, do not regard international broadcasters as propaganda tools; they believe that they were established for altruistic reasons. In their case, the public diplomacy objectives might have been achieved, or at least seem to be achievable easily. The trouble, though, is that the peasants are the lesser target of the foreign policy makers; and although the BBC World Service would obviously be pleased to have huge audiences and to be believed by any segment of them (if not all), the preference is probably on the influential groups. After all, they were the original target of at least its most influential language service, the Arabic Service, when it was introduced in 1938 aiming at 'the executive class' not 'the man under the palm tree', as the programme organiser S. H. Perowne put it (cited in Briggs, 1985, p. 143). Of course, much has changed since then—and more will—as the power of the men under the palm trees becomes more evident, as the Arab uprisings indicate. But with the changes too, so would emerge the relevance of a new 'executive class'.

There is the producers' perspective too on the BBC's role in public diplomacy. Their unanimous view is that the BBC's image as a credible organisation serves as a source of goodwill for Britain—which is also part of what Lord Carter Public Diplomacy Review Committee (FCO, 2005) at least expects—an ideal soft power resource (Nye, 2004a, 2004b; Jisi and Nye, 2009). To start with, the respondents from the BBC side generally reject the audiences' claim that the BBC does engage in deliberate 'propaganda' or packaging for Britain and the West. They did not admit claims of any interference in their daily operations from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). '*I have been here with the BBC for more than 20 years and I cannot recall any instance where FCO actually asked us to cover this or not to cover that,*' insisted the BBC executive editor for African region to echo what other personnel have declared about editorial non-interference. What they did admit, though, was the existence of a subtle but fundamental interference in the sense that it is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that decides for the World Service which language services they should operate and where their target areas should be. This is how the executive editor for African region puts it: '*we are paid for by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through grant-in-aid. They decide what languages or target areas we should be covering, but they have no say in the contents and contributors of any given programme in any given language service or target area*'. In this case the public diplomacy role is clearly expected even if it is not automatically guaranteed.

As a broadcasting body, the BBC resents being seen as an instrument of public diplomacy and all the personnel interviewed rejected suggestions that they were working to serve that interest. What they did not resent was the idea of BBC's credibility being seen as a source of goodwill for Britain. Former BBC World Service correspondent in Lagos who has become producer at its headquarters in London asserted that '*people have a better impression of Britain and so on because of the BBC; it is the British Broadcasting Corporation and people know it is the British Broadcasting Corporation.*' This is one of the benefits Lord Carter Committee (FCO, 2005) said the BBC brings to Britain. And it is one public diplomacy objective that many people believe is being achieved, though that too has to be backed with concrete action for it to be long lasting because, as the last respondent equally noted, the good impression gained through the BBC's good

image tends to disappear when a real encounter with Britain reveals that it is not as good as the impression created. '*I think the divergence happens more the more they interact with Britain proper*,' he noted. This shows that for the gains to be sustained, the good image created needs to be backed by concrete action. The clearest picture produced by both perspectives is that the long-term effectiveness of the BBC's public diplomacy role appears to depend more on its ability to be an impartial provider of news and analysis than on any attempt to deviate from that.

Conceptualisation and theorisation

The data gathered for this research produced a variety of results, some of which challenge few established thoughts and point to new perspectives and postulations not seen in previous studies. Perhaps the analyses and discussion of the results done here, and in the previous chapters, have collectively provided adequate explanations and clarifications for full understanding of various aspects of this study. Deeper reflections, however, further indicate that some of its significant findings do possess the potential of providing new conceptual and theoretical perspectives in audience research and media studies. Three significant areas identified by this study (selective believability, the concept of primary mediator and the dynamics of credibility and believability)—all of which would be discussed below under their respective headings—have such potentials. Consistent patterns and relationships noticed with remarkable regularity among the findings suggest far bigger significance than ordinarily thought. There is, for instance, a near unanimity among the audiences in rating the BBC as the most credible broadcaster at the very time they were rejecting, with remarkable consistency, its messages that do not conform to their prevailing beliefs. At first, this pattern of consumption was thought to have fallen within the realms of selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention, as identified in previous works (Klapper, 1960; Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974; Piepe *et al.*, 1978; Morley, 1980; Mutz, 1998; Liu and Johnson, 2011). But closer examination indicates that it goes far beyond that. There are indeed elements of both selective exposure and selective perception in connection with the Northern Nigerians' consumption of global media messages, but what emerged here appears to be far more complex than both.

In the first place, it would not have been merely a case of selective exposure and selective perception, or even selective retention, because from the onset the methodological approach adopted for this study is different from the methodological strategies often employed to examine those phenomena—which tend to be fundamentally psychological or socio-psychological in nature—though the approach here does not totally exclude the possibility of noticing them, as it eventually appears to have done so. Unlike the tradition of exposing the audiences to specified media texts and examining their responses to them shortly afterwards [(Klapper (1960) admits that such studies mainly examine short-term consumption], this study looked at their long-term consumption of media messages and the possible cumulative impact the long-term exposure could have on them. And unlike the strategy of seeking their responses to the restricted media texts shown to them, this study employed an approach that offered them ample opportunities to supply unrestricted responses that were not limited by content constraints, temporality and spatiality. With this leverage, they poured out their own testimonies, in their own words, based on their own individual and group experiences and using both their retentive and cognitive capabilities to cite examples that range from those media reports of events that happened on the day of the interview to those that the elderly among them could remember to have happened two or even three decades earlier. So since the study was not strictly designed to reveal only those audience activities dealing with selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention alone, it succeeded in generating massive data that reveals far more audiences' activities in their interactions with global media than those originally thought. Consequently, they reveal audiences' activities that appear to have gone beyond the realm of the three selective processes listed above. It is an unexpected finding, with its resultant conceptual difficulties. Since none of the three known selective processes is adequate enough to accurately describe it, an appropriate concept that can adequately capture it needs to be found. This is what brings in the concept of 'selective believability'.

Selective believability

This is a highly complex cognitive activity marked by both the audiences' predispositions and the apparent contradictory nature of their consumption of

media messages. It does contain some elements of the psychological mechanisms of selective exposure and selective perception (Klapper, 1960; Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974; Piepe *et al.*, 1978; Mutz, 1998; Liu and Johnson, 2011) that appear to work in concert with other cultural, religious, ideological and social factors that affect audiences' consumption of media products. The phenomenon was unexpectedly noticed in the course of this research during both the individual and group interviews when respondents, apparently unconsciously, shift their views, often radically, from one opposing position to the other—and when reminded of such radical shift, they almost always offer identical answers to justify their decisions. It was usually in the case of their assessment of media and the messages they consume. For instance, often at the beginning of the interview they would unequivocally affirm their confidence in the credibility of the BBC, stressing its trustworthiness, how much they rely on it to judge the accuracy of other media reports and so on; but midway into the interview, when issues related to the coverage of the Muslim world came in, they would suddenly, at their own volition, shift their position and accuse the BBC of being unfair in its coverage of such issues. Instantly, the trust that they said they have of the station would vanish from their discussion, and its reports on such issues would be dismissed as untrustworthy.

This happened with remarkable regularity and consistency across almost all range of the respondents. Take the case of this tailoring business owner in the Yola lower middle class group who had at the early part of the focus group discussion said he trusted the BBC '*very well, because even if I listen to other radio stations and get reports from them, I still wait to hear what the BBC would say. If its report differs with that of the other stations, I won't believe the other stations' report until it is confirmed by the BBC—that is the final. Once I listen to the BBC, it removes my doubts*'. However, midway into the discussion, when one of the participants brought up the issue of BBC's coverage of Islamic nations, the tailoring business owner made a dramatic U-turn and said the BBC had been less than honest in that respect. '*Things like America's invasion of Iraq, you would find that the* (BBC's) *reports are contradictory. The contradiction is especially because it is the issue of Islam,*' he alleged. Suddenly, the image of BBC being the medium that serves as a benchmark upon which he judges the credibility of other

media disappeared along with its trademark of finality and ability to erase 'doubts'. It was replaced by that of a media that carries 'contradictory' reports.

His case was even less dramatic than that of the shop owner (in the same group) who said he always moved around with his radio set '*so as to monitor the BBC. I don't want get the news from a second-hand source; I prefer to get it directly from the BBC because whatever happens around the world and in Nigeria, if I don't get it from the BBC, I don't feel comfortable*'. But when the same issue of BBC's coverage of the Islamic world came up, his perspective changed radically: '*Well, in my understanding, I think they* (the BBC) *exaggerate things when it comes to Islam because some of the terror attacks* (being reported)*, the Muslims would not carry such attacks… I think there are fabrications…because they are dealing with Islamic nations*'. The same medium he said he did not feel comfortable without constantly monitoring is the one he swiftly accused of engaging in 'fabrications'. There was also the case of the school teacher in the Yola working class group (illustrated in a different case before) who had earlier said that he trusted the BBC so much it influenced his change of attitude but later stated that he became so annoyed with its 'unfair' reporting of Saddam Hussein that he at one time even '*stopped listening to it completely*' and later '*reduced listening to* (it) *and shifted to Al-Jazeera*'. His case appears to exhibit significant elements of selective exposure while theirs tilt more towards selective perception (Klapper, 1960; Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974). But, as would be seen later, the phenomenon is more complex than both selective exposure and selective perception.

In the individual interviews category too cases of selectivity are rampant. The female school administrator who had originally expressed total affirmation on the media she believed to be the most credible ('*The BBC, of course…their news has been genuine…they give us first hand information*') quickly shifted her position when the issue of BBC's coverage of the Islamic world came up and now said the station was '*not very accurate*'. Similarly, the local publisher, who had initially said: '*I trust the BBC most because we believe that it is not censored. They find the way of telling the truth*', changed his position within the same interview and said: '*Truly speaking, I think, over 60 or 70 per cent of their programmes are based on their policies... They would tell you what you're supposed to know from their own*

perspective'. From the medium he trusted most because it was not 'censored' to the one whose programmes were at least 60 per cent based on her owner's policies and which tells 'you what you are supposed to know' from its own 'perspective', the shift is quite dramatic. These cases, as stated above, are all over the data generated. And the respondents insisted that they were not contradicting themselves; that they only expressed exactly what they believe; and that although they believe the BBC's reports more than they believe other media's, they still reject many of its reports on the Muslims and Islamic world.

The issue of selectivity in this case was brought out by the audiences themselves; they made it clear that they do select what they want to believe—though sometimes the selectivity appears to be an unconscious act. And apparently the audiences do the selection based on how they assess the content of the media, and guided by their predispositions and other extra-communication factors. Many audiences, as stated earlier, do distinguish between the roles of the international broadcasters as news providers and as propagandists; and they tend to reject those messages they view as propaganda. The comment from the education supervisory councillor in the Katsina group provides a classic example here: '*I honestly select what to believe because there is no radio or television station that has no agenda… So I assure you that we are selective, to avoid becoming victims of their propaganda'*. While for him, and his group, selectivity serves as a defence mechanism to guard against 'becoming victims of propaganda'—as noted in previous cases of selective perception (Klapper, 1960; Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974)—for some the selection is done for 'uses and gratifications' purposes (Blumler and Katz, 1974), as the case of the deputy political editor in the Abuja journalist group seems to show: '*When you listen to any medium and the message that it has given out, you tend to select based on your ideological conviction or your interest'*. The affirmation of audience selectivity is indeed consistent with that of other audience studies too (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955/2006; Morley, 1980). And in some cases it is even overstated, as this comment by Connell (1979) suggests: 'Any reading is never simply consumptive… Any reading is also, and always, interrogative' (cited in Morley, 1980, p. 150). Perhaps not always, especially if the message is congenial with the audiences' existing beliefs; but there is little doubt that interrogation is an integral part of media consumption.

It is not only in the various forms stated above that the phenomenon of selectivity is exhibited by audiences in their media consumption; it is also identified in other forms. The preceding discussion on the findings that reveal high consumption of BBC and other Western media products and the subsequent findings which show that the same audiences still have negative perceptions of the West—despite its positive portrayal by the same media—expose a major contradiction between consumption and perception, and show that the audiences do indeed select what they want to believe, regardless of the credibility rating they award to the media. It seems that even the combined forces of high consumption of Western media and positive credibility rating of these media have not been able to make the audiences embrace the West; nor have they been able to erase their power of selecting what they want to believe. This element of resilience—this ability to withstand other forces that the three known selectivity processes (selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention) cannot withstand—is perhaps the most striking element that sets the concept of selective believability apart.

There are other distinguishing features too. The consumption of wide range of media messages (including dissonant messages) which is evident in the case of selective believability contrasts sharply with the concept of selective exposure, which is the tendency of the audiences to expose themselves to only those messages that 'accord with their existing attitudes and interests' (Klapper, 1960, p. 19; Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974). Although there are elements of selective exposure exhibited by some of the audiences here—as in the case of the school teacher who suspended listening to BBC because of its Iraq's reporting and switched to *Al-Jazeera*, for instance—careful observation shows that they are not exclusively selective exposure. The same man, for instance, when asked which medium he trusted more between the BBC and *Al-Jazeera*, said: '*On issues that relate to Islam, I trust the Al-Jazeera more; but on those issues which are not related to Islam, I trust the BBC more*'. His case turned out to be a case of inter-media selectivity (which is here considered to be part of selective believability) rather than that of selective exposure.

Another distinguishing attribute of selective believability is that it does not seem to have obvious link with selective retention, even though it may have an element

of it. The key feature of selective retention is the tendency of the audiences to forget unsympathetic messages 'more readily than they forget sympathetic' ones (Klapper, 1960, p. 19). Sometimes the phenomenon of selective retention overlaps with that of selective perception, as Klapper (1960) noted, but the former is more identified with forgetfulness. Although no test was conducted in this study to find out which of the messages the respondents retain more, the respondents do not appear to be forgetful of unpleasant messages. They seem able to remember dissonant messages as accurately as they do congenial ones. They were, for instance, able to recall unsympathetic messages of yesteryears. Some of them were recalling unpleasant media reports of 20 years—as the case of the former female editor who cited instances of alleged biased BBC reporting of the first Gulf War of 1991 shows.

Of the three previously identified selective processes (selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention), what selective believability appears to have more in common with is selective perception—the tendency of audiences to reject 'unsympathetic material…or to recast and interpret it to fit their existing views' (Klapper, 1960, p. 19; Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974; Liu and Johnson, 2011). There are elements of this tendency among many of the audiences who exhibit selective believability trait in their consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global broadcasters. They were probably exhibiting that tendency when they, for instance, perceive the West negatively, even though the media they consume portray the West positively. They were also possibly displaying that trait when they shift their view of praising BBC for its 'credibility' in its coverage of general subjects to that of condemning it in its 'unfair' coverage of the Islamic world. And, of course, all the selective processes (including selective exposure and selective retention) are cognitive activities that deal with handling messages based on previous experiences and personal idiosyncrasies. Selective believability just appears to be a more complex cognitive activity with perhaps stronger involvement of extraneous forces of beliefs, cultural values and attitudes.

The concepts of selectivity and active audience are, of course, not without their own controversies even among the scholars who in principle accept their relevance in audience studies (as discussed in both the 'Literature Review' and 'Results and

Analysis III' chapters). Ang (1996), for instance, has warned that 'audiences may be active in myriad ways in using and interpreting media, but it would be utterly out of perspective to cheerfully equate "active" with "powerful", in the sense of "taking control" at an enduring structural or institutional level' (p. 139). Similarly, Morley (2006), whose earlier work *The 'Nationwide' Audience* (1980) had reiterated the concept of selective perception, later questions audience work that 'exaggerated, and wrongly romanticized the supposed power and freedoms of media consumers', arguing that it is wrong to assume that audiences are in constant struggle with the media, 'in which they constantly produce oppositional readings of its products' (p. 102). And there are even others who feel that selectivity is class-related. Piepe *et al.* (1978), as noted earlier, have identified the middle class pattern of media consumption with 'selective perception' and that of the working class with 'blanket perception' (p. 46). But, as repeatedly cited, Morley (1980, p. 29) has dismissed this as 'too crude', contending that his own research 'shows plenty of examples of selective perception' on the part of both working class and middle class groups.

The findings of this study serve as both the reinforcement of the concept of selectivity and the revelation of its current dynamics in the face of the changing media landscape resulting from the ongoing revolution in communications technologies. They clearly show that audiences do actively select and interpret media messages in 'myriad ways'. They also reveal that selectivity can take different forms and that selective believability—which this study identifies— appears to be a complex and comprehensive form of selectivity that combines both the elements of selective exposure and selective perception on one hand, and the stronger involvement of extraneous forces such as beliefs, cultural values and attitudes on the other. This is neither an exaggeration of the concept nor an attempt to discount the viability of other factors that come into play in the complex activity of media consumption. It is merely an attempt to put it into its proper context as dictated by the empirical evidence, and to reflect the dynamism of its current form. This is particularly significant in the face of the new euphoria about 'the power' of the new media, especially with the role they are playing in the uprisings across the Arab world (Basu *et al.,* 2011; Beaumont, 2011; Pintak, 2011; Tisdall, 2011).

The primary mediator

As clearly noted in the preceding discussion, and in the results and analysis chapters, several extra-communication factors do come into play in the audiences' engagement with the media. That in itself is not surprising. Previous studies are replete with reports of how psychological, sociological, cultural and a range of other factors affect audiences' consumption of media messages. Lazarsfeld *et al.* (1948) and Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2006) have reported extensively on the role of interpersonal influence in mediated communications; Klapper (1960) listed many factors ranging from predispositions to inter-personal influence and group norms; Morley (1980) talked about cultural, ideological and social factors; and many more spoke of selective exposure and selective perception (Klapper, 1960; Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974; D'Allessio and Allen, 2007; Liu and Johnson, 2011). So the issue of extraneous forces mediating media consumption is neither new nor unusual. What is striking about the findings of this study, however, is the role religion—Islam in particular—seems to play in Muslim Northern Nigerians' interactions with global broadcasters. The phenomenon of selectivity itself, as explained above, is influenced by extraneous forces of beliefs, cultural values, personal attitudes and so on. And Islam in the case of Muslim Northern Nigerians appears to be the most potent factor of them all.

Going through the bulk of the data gathered, it is clear that the narratives of most of the respondents repeatedly rated Islam as the strongest factor that affects the level at which they accept or reject the products of global broadcasters. Either as individuals or in groups the respondents repeatedly explained that they regularly reject messages that are in conflict with their religious beliefs. They repeatedly questioned reports that they consider to have portrayed Islam or Muslims in a negative light. They repeatedly accused Western media of negative portrayal of the Muslim world. Islam, it is clear, plays a prominent role in their everyday life, and that role appears to have been extended down to their media consumption. There are, of course, other factors such as cultural values (which for them are also part of—or closely linked to—their religion), social group membership, ideology (which they also link with their religion), professional calling and personal attitudes and so on, all of which play different mediating roles, but it is Islam that

is more regularly mentioned (or more clearly noted) as being the principal factor in mediating their consumption of news and current affairs programmes of international broadcasters. Series of examples used in the preceding passages and chapters to illuminate some points have equally illustrated the prominence they give to religion. Aspects such as the respondents' allegations of Western media's unfair coverage of Muslims and Islamic world and their rejection of reports that they felt were biased against Muslims were well illustrated above—and deserve no regurgitation here.

Instances where the respondents specifically mentioned Islam as being the primary factor that guided them in selecting which media messages to believe, and which to ignore, were also cited in some of the preceding passages. A few similar examples, though, can provide further illustration here. Perhaps the clearest of them was offered by the elected councillor in the Katsina focus group when he said: '*For the followers of Islam they have their doctrine that guides their lives; and whatever Muslims listen to they would judge it based on Islamic injunctions to see if it is righteous or not…and take those that are righteous and reject those that are not*'. Another member of the group, the secretary of the local council, concurred: '*Surely, if one radio station broadcasts something, another broadcasts its own…you'll listen to them all and pick the ones among them and form your opinions, the ones that do not harm your religious belief*'. Others, such as the director of *Izala* Islamic sect in the Yola lower middle class group, are perhaps the obvious promoters of such notion, but his perspective is still worth restating here: '*If BBC reports a thing that is unrelated to my religion, I make use of it. But things concerning my religion I don't because my religion has its own scripture and it is necessary to believe what the scripture says… I reject anything that contradicts my religious belief*'. The centrality of religion in the lives of these people can hardly be overemphasised. The conception that religion plays such a strong role in their media consumption essentially emanated from their own narratives and from the inferences one makes when they make reference to related issues.

A glaring case of inferential evidence of Islam mediating Muslim Northern Nigerians' global media consumption is the finding that reveals the respondents' negative perception of the West. The reasons they supplied for their negative

disposition towards the West were well explained and need no repeating here too, but it is significant to recall that they mainly focused on the alleged Western antagonism against Islam. Of course, some of the respondents do also indicate other reasons, such as colonial, socio-economic, cultural and ideological factors; but the most mentioned reason was the perceived conflict the West has with Islam. They feel that the West, particularly the United States, has not been fair to the Islamic world, and as such they too have no reason to particularly like the West. Since most of them have no experience of a direct physical contact with the West, it is obvious that their knowledge of the West is essentially a mediated one—both through the mass media and through interpersonal interaction, but largely through the media. The bulk of the media products they said they consume are Western media products. The inferences are therefore easily drawn: that they consume Western media products and still view the West negatively indicate that there are other mediating forces affecting such consumption; and that they frequently cite Islam as the main reason of their discomfort with the West shows that Islam is the strongest mediating factor in this case.

It is not quite clear why Islam becomes the major mediator but it is easy to locate the indicators. One obvious reason is that Islam, as mentioned earlier, does play a significant role in the lives of Muslim Northern Nigerians; it is not confined to religious rituals alone. As extensively discussed in the 'Historical Context' chapter, Islam was well ingrained in the political, socio-economic, ideological and cultural life of the entity that later became Northern Nigeria long before the arrival of Europeans in the region (Stewart, 1986; Dorward, 1986; Last, 1989; Batran, 1989). British colonialism did significantly influence the system but it did not alter the core values of the dominant groups in the region. Many Northern Nigeria Muslims regard Islam as a complete way of life that goes beyond daily religious rituals to much wider social, ideological, cultural and political spheres. And it seems that the influence of Islam in their everyday life extends to their consumption of international media products.

Another reason that might have made Islam the factor in this case could be the over concentration by international media on the coverage of stories and issues that are directly related to Muslims and Islamic world—ranging from numerous

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Middle East conflicts and Afghan and Iraqi invasions to war on terror and Arab uprisings and even sectarian conflicts in Nigeria. It is possible that the way the international media contents have for long been dominated by Islam-related issues has unconsciously prompted the audiences' immune systems to deploy their Islamic guards. Most likely it is a combination of both—the strong influence of Islam in their lives and the daily diets of unpleasant stories about the Muslim world—and perhaps other factors as well. The main focus here, though, is to stress the fact that Islam does play a primary mediating role in these audiences' consumption of news and current affairs programmes of international media. It is possible that in other places it is a different factor—say, political ideology or culture or any strongly-held view—that serves as the primary mediator; but among Northern Nigerian Muslims this study has discovered that it is Islam that holds such a prime position.

It is also significant to note that the Islam's mediating role has not pushed them away from the Western media to the media owned by Muslims such as the Qataris' *Al-Jazeera* and Iran's Press TV. Far from that; it apparently only widens their choice. Although there is evidence of growing consumption of these media too among the Northern Nigerian audiences (and even few of them say they trust *Al-Jazeera* more than they trust BBC, at least when it comes to Islam-related and Arab-related stories, for instance), the dominant global media products they consume are the Western media products. Even the lone respondent who said he at one time stopped listening to BBC and switched to *Al-Jazeera* said he later resumed his BBC listening (in addition to retaining *Al-Jazeera* too). Like the selective believability phenomenon, discussed earlier, the Islam's mediating role does not curtail inter-media consumption; it appears to even facilitate it.

Many may argue that there is nothing remarkable about the findings that show that religion can play a strong mediating role in media consumption since it is always known to be an influential and emotive phenomenon in many societies. Past studies have long noted the strong resistance to reception of media messages among people with strongly-held views (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1948; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955/2006; Klapper, 1960; Morley, 1980; Liebes and Katz, 1993). Klapper, for instance, argues that 'the more intensely an attitude is held, the less

likely it is to be changed by persuasive communication' (p. 46). Similarly, a claim (cited earlier) by former *New York Herald Tribune* television critic John Crosby that 'the more important the subject is, the less influence the guy with the mike has' provides further illustration. 'In matters of the most profound importance to the individual—say, religion—I doubt that…anyone else could sway a single soul a single inch,' he asserts (cited in Klapper, 1960, p. 44). Klapper concurs, but with a caution: 'Communication researchers have come to similar though by no means so absolute conclusions' (Klapper 1960, p. 44). That seems to be right. But then, there is even a fundamental difference between some of those past cases and the issue being discussed here—though both have touched on media influence and audiences' immune systems. Some of the previous cases were talking about media's ability, or inability, to change people's beliefs. This study is in no way broaching any idea of media influencing people to change their religion—nor are the media in question interested in anything of a sort.

The focus in this particular case is the mediating role religion is found to be playing in the Muslim Northern Nigerians' consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global broadcasters. And the findings here have not only shown religion to be playing such role, they have actually shown that it does serve as the primary player of that role. Islam is found here to be the most formidable fortress shielding its adherents against alien ideas. This is a resolute repudiation of Daniel Lerner's notion of Islam's vulnerability to Western cultural penetration. Lerner (1958) has argued that Islam's resistance to Western cultural influence was unsustainable. 'The symbols of race and ritual fade into irrelevance when they impede living desires for bread and enlightenment' (Lerner, 1958, p. 405). It is not yet clear what they would do 'for bread'; but the evidence available here indicates that such symbols in Northern Nigeria have not yet done so for Western 'enlightenment'. The findings here have not only debunked Lerner's assertion, but they have also contradicted one of the key scholars he copiously cited to advance his thesis. Quoting G. E. von Grunebaum's 1955 work, Lerner spoke of the efficacy of Western '"rationalist and positivist spirit" against which "Islam is absolutely defenceless"' (Lerner, 1958, p. 45). Ironically, in the case of Northern Nigerian Muslims, as this study shows, Islam emerges as the most formidable fortress against which Western influence appears to be almost hapless. They do

not embrace the West. But, as noted earlier, they do not also do what Kracauer (cited in Larkin, 2008) said the Bedouins did: reject the West wholesale. They do 'negotiate' with the West, perhaps pick what they want from them and apparently reject what they dislike. And Islam appears to be one of the factors—indeed the primary factor—that influence such negotiation.

The dynamics of credibility and believability

The final significant segment of the findings deserving conceptual and theoretical consideration is the dynamics of relations between credibility and believability. This is inter-twined with the issues of selective believability and mediating role of religion discussed above. As pointed out earlier, this study has found that audiences do select which media messages they wish to believe, and that several factors do influence their selectivity and consumption of the news and current affairs programmes of international broadcasters. These are abstract phenomena that are outside the control of both the broadcasters and their products. However, the quality of the media and the contents they produce do also appear to have their own bearing on the audiences' engagement with them. The reputation of a broadcaster, its orientation, operation, strength and staffing; and the nature of its contents, the language it uses and the way the contents are delivered all have their impact on the way its contents are received by the audiences.

The findings in this study do show that audiences are conscious of the quality of the media and contents they consume. If they perceive the media and its contents to be credible, they tend to engage more with that media and believe much of its products. The bulk of the respondents reveal that they interact with the BBC and consume its products more than they do with any other foreign media because they perceive the BBC to be a more credible and relatively more independent media that produces accurate, timely, balanced and relevant news and current affairs programmes. It is not surprising that audiences tend to believe the products of credible media more than they do those of the media with lesser credibility (Rampal and Adams, 1990). It is also clear that credibility is particularly important with regard to news and current affairs programmes; and it is a major factor affecting 'the effectiveness' of international broadcasters (p. 94). Rampal and

Adams (1990) have argued that 'credibility in an international station's news and public affairs programming is a prerequisite to any success the station can achieve in aiding the foreign policy objectives of the broadcasting country' (p. 94). International stations with high credibility rating such as the BBC appear to be more effective in achieving those objectives because the target audiences tend to believe them.

The real surprise comes up when audiences decide to reject the contents of the media they regard as credible. It has been sufficiently discussed here that although the Northern Nigerian audiences adjudge the BBC to be the most credible medium, they still reject some of its products. The combined forces of regular and cumulative consumption of BBC and its positive credibility rating, as stated before, have been unable to surmount the audiences' power to select what they wish to believe. It is part of the contradictory nature of media consumption which the audiences themselves admit and explain. Credibility, many of the respondents insist, does not automatically translate into believability. Other variables do sometimes come into play. It is important to note here, though, that in most cases, the BBC reports that the audiences tend to reject are the reports on Muslims and the Islamic world about which their rating of the station is not really great. A recall of the comment made by one of the respondents, the local newspaper publisher, illustrates the whole scenario: '*There is a difference between being credible and being able to influence my decisions. You see…I look at Islam as a peaceful religion; they look at Islam as a kind of religion that propagates fights, terrorism and what have you. So…anytime they mention Muslims, I know where to draw my own line. But I know for sure that credibility is not the same as being sincere*'. He has offered a justification for rejecting the messages of the media he had earlier rated as credible by arguing that the rejection was prompted by the media's own bias. In a way he is also challenging the credibility of the station; but he does not seem keen on pursuing that line of argument because on aspects that do not touch on his religion, he had virtually no doubt of the station's credibility. That is why he is keen to stress that credibility is not enough an attribute to make all its contents truly believable. It is easier for him to locate the factor from the media's side than to situate it within his own predispositions.

His case was even more measured; there are others who made blanket generalisation (as noted in some of the examples provided in the preceding passages) that they would reject any media message that contradicts their religious belief. '*I reject anything that contradicts my religious belief,*' said the director of *Izala* Islamic sect in the Yola lower middle class group. The female restaurant owner in the same group gave her condition for believing BBC reports thus: '*those issues that do not contradict your religion, if they* (BBC) *report it—and you have confirmation that it indeed happened—you believe them. But anything that affects your religion—if they report things contrary to your belief, you have to check with your religious book*'. Despite the trust she has of the BBC, she is effectively saying that she would still not believe its reports that contradict her religious belief. These kinds of comments are rampant across the data gathered. And they do highlight the existence of a gap between credibility and believability.

In essence, it appears that credibility, as crucial as it is to any media content, is not enough to make all contents believable; some of them may still need to conform to the audiences' predispositions, particularly their deeply-held beliefs, before they could be accepted. But it is significant to place the same caveat here, as was put in discussing selectivity above, that it is not in all cases of media reception that this kind of complex activity becomes its main characteristic. It seems to be linked more with media messages that are not compatible with audiences' prevailing views. In cases where messages are congenial with audiences' dominant beliefs, media consumption seems to be less complicated. In such situations the media play what Lazarsfeld and Katz (1955) call reinforcement function; they are merely reinforcing existing views. When media messages fall outside the premises of the audiences' dominant views, however, the audiences' defences become alert; and they are often mobilised into action. In such cases, it seems, the credibility of the media alone could not subdue the defences and make the messages acceptable to the audiences. The gap between credibility and believability may have to be filled by the mediating factors before the messages could be accepted—if at all. All these seem to suggest that in audiences' consumption of unpleasant media messages credibility is not the only condition for believability. Credibility is a *necessary* but *not sufficient* condition for believability.

Implications

This study has unveiled the pattern and consequences of consumption of Western media products by the mainly Muslim Northern Nigerians, focusing mainly on their consumption of the BBC World Service's news and current affairs programmes. It has offered insights into both the Northern Nigerians' long and complex engagement with the BBC and their cultural encounter with the West— the mode of their resistance to, or rejection of, some Western cultural goods as well as that of acceptance and assimilation of certain Western cultural values. In general terms, this study has widened the epistemological, theoretical and methodological scopes of media and cultural studies. First, the findings on the pattern of Northern Nigerians' media consumption, most particularly the identification of the concept of selective believability, the mediating role of religion and the dynamics of relations between credibility and believability, are significant conceptual and theoretical developments in media and communications studies. There is no claim here, though, that these are well-refined concepts and theories; but they do appear to possess the potential of being so, and they could really provide new direction in reception research and communications studies.

The unique methodological approach employed for this research has helped greatly in producing some of the significant and surprising findings noted above. For instance, combining individual interviews, focus group discussions and content analysis techniques to examine the production side of the media, the content itself and the reception side (the audiences) might have been quite tasking, but it has engendered a thorough interrogation of various angles and aspects of the subject and yielded comprehensive results. The decision to use qualitative methods to generate the primary data and supplement it with ample statistical data generated by the large scale BBC surveys proved very helpful in providing both the general insights and the specific details of audiences' engagement with the media. It has also confirmed the claim that quantitative and qualitative approaches are not playing conflicting roles; they complement each other (Morrison, 1998). The practical application of some of the qualitative methods here has helped in refining them. Harmonising individual interview and focus group methods, for example, offers a new approach of getting insights into both individual and group

consumption of media messages. And operationalisation of focus group technique in this research has not only confirmed the original assumption about the viability of the method in presenting group dynamics and generating rich materials (Morrison, 1998; Greenbaum, 2000), it has also shed new light on how the method works in audience research, particularly on its effectiveness in unveiling consensus-building strategies within the groups. All these collectively point to methodological improvements that can greatly enhance audience research.

The ramifications of several findings of this study are not confined to the academic circle of media and communications alone; they do extend to other disciplines and to different spheres of life. The assessment of BBC World Service's performance in general and its role in British public diplomacy in particular (even though limited to just a tiny part of the world) would be of interest to BBC personnel, public diplomacy operators and scholars. Of greater significance is the potential the findings have of being replicated at a wider scale. This study, for instance, has examined and found that the BBC does indeed play a dual but contradictory role of being both a provider of international news and analysis and a promoter of British public diplomacy—as others (Rampal and Adams, 1990; Nye, 2004a, 2004b; Sreberny *et al*., 2010b) have previously noted. But it has specifically identified areas which indicate that the effectiveness of BBC's public diplomacy role might have been exaggerated. Its effectiveness, this research shows, lies more on the BBC being seen, and actually working, as an impartial news provider not as a promoter of British public diplomacy because the audiences do make distinction between the two, and they tend to disapprove of the latter role. Even on the issue of its goodwill generation potential—people associating BBC's credibility with Britain—the findings indicate that its long-term effectiveness depends on concrete action on the ground. Many Northern Nigerian Muslims who love the BBC for its liberal and credible image, for instance, stopped associating that image with Britain as a country when Britain joined the United States to invade the Muslim-dominated nations of Afghanistan and Iraq. And they do that despite getting Britain's constant messages on the BBC that their action was only meant to fight terrorism, which they too disapprove of. The situation seems to have yielded adverse effect: instead of the BBC's credibility to help Britain, it was the Britain's action that harmed BBC as the audiences began to question its credibility.

Understanding these intricacies is essential in assessing the role of media in public diplomacy and in designing programmes with such intentions. The instance of Northern Nigeria cited here could offer a general trajectory on the impact of such role in relation to the Islamic world. This is significant, given the West's battle for the hearts and minds of the Muslims (Thussu, 2005, 2006), which appears to be failing, perhaps due to the same reasons noted above. It may even have greater resonance for Britain, when viewed from its public diplomacy effort and its high expectation on the BBC World Service's contribution towards it, being a public diplomacy partner that, for instance, got £225 million out of the £617 million public diplomacy funding for 2004/05 financial year (FCO, 2005, p. 6) and even higher amounts in the subsequent years (Hiller, 2010b), as stated earlier. The current government's spending cuts have, of course, started affecting the funding now (Robinson and Sweney, 2010; Foster, 2010), but there is a new effort to review that (Wynne-Jones, 2011). The significance of proper comprehension of this complexity is not only for the broadcasting and public diplomacy executives; it also has ramifications in the study of international relations, particularly on the role of media in public diplomacy, and in related disciplines. As cited in the 'Introduction' chapter, Sreberny (2010b, p. 28) captures it correctly when she argues that 'even bad public diplomacy is better than war, so we might do well as scholars of transnational media, communications, and politics to understand it better'.

Just as the findings show that the effectiveness of media in playing public diplomacy role depends on their ability to present accurate and impartial information, so is also their effectiveness in influencing other issues. This is more crucial now with the multiplication of communication channels and media outlets due to the advances in distribution technologies that are now making the control and suppression of information almost impossible. Although this equally creates rooms for propaganda and branding, in reality it lessens the effectiveness of propaganda and checks the long-term effects of branding. The Northern Nigerians' negative perception of the West was partly caused—even if marginally—by their ability to get media messages from alternative sources, such as *Al-Jazeera* and Iran's Press TV, and also partly informed by their feeling that the Western media do also serve as their countries' organs of public diplomacy. The days of sending

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one message to domestic audiences and another to international audiences may not have been over for politicians, but the new delivery technologies have terminated the benefits of such strategy. This research reveals that many Northern Nigerian audiences are able to access information from many sources and they do detect 'slanting' of reports or 'branding' by different media. For instance, the Western media's alleged 'slanting' of stories to demonise radical Islamists may be useful in persuading domestic audiences in the West to support governments' spending on war and reduce opposition to it due to loss of soldiers abroad, but it tends to repel those whose hearts and minds the West wants to win. The implication of this is like the one on public diplomacy issue: the effectiveness of media lies on its ability to tell the truth.

This study's findings on the BBC's strategies of effective deployment of delivery technologies could also be of great benefit to other media organisations. The findings, for example, show that the BBC's influence is not only the product of its perceived credibility, but it is also due to its effective utilisation of delivery technologies to reach many audiences through multiple platforms. The convergence of the old media and the new one, and the way they are being leveraged to deliver products to audiences are some of the most radical transformations taking place in the media and communications industries. The BBC's engagement with the new technologies is both part of its survival strategy and part of maintaining its competitive edge. It is, for instance, the new technologies that help drive its interactive programming which many Northern Nigerian audiences seem to enjoy. The findings reveal that these new technologies do not only enhance engagement with the audiences, both in delivering the products to them and in receiving feedback from them, but they also bring corporate efficiency and efficiencies among media personnel.

Another strategy that this study found to be working for the BBC (which others too could benefit from) is its employment of diasporic personnel with their 'transnational cultural capital' (Sreberny, 2010b, p. 282) to work in its language services. Sreberny noted that the ability of the diasporic figures to represent the targeted region and 'to portray British cultural activities and social life (usually in a positive light)' and the leveraging of the online services could serve as a key to

World Service's survival (p. 282). This study found that the strategy serves another purpose too: it enhances BBC's credibility. Some of the Hausa Service audiences, for instance, feel that the diasporic personnel, with whom they share cultural and religious values, are unlikely to put out contents that would be harmful to them. Incidentally, this strategy could also help to mitigate the difficulty of delivering dissonant messages to the more discerning audiences. Although the findings have not shown any evidence of this happening, they do suggest that combining this with careful selection of contents might deliver good results. The practical application of these specific findings could indeed go down to the level of guiding broadcasting executives and producers in content selection in their specific programme-making endeavours and general journalism practice. All these would have greater chance of working, though, when given a holistic treatment based on the conceptual and theoretical thrusts brought out by this study.

Conclusions

This study has outlined the complexity of transnational postcolonial audiences' engagement with international media at the time when the media landscape is undergoing radical transformation engendered by advances in communications technologies and dynamics of geopolitics. It has unpacked the pattern, particularities and consequences of the consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global broadcasters by the mainly Muslim Northern Nigerians. Although the research focused primarily on the BBC World Service's engagement with its audiences in Northern Nigeria, it did foray into adjoining areas to capture the big picture and put it in proper perspective. This yielded results with far-reaching ramifications for audience research, media and cultural studies and related disciplines. The findings show that the BBC has a long and complex relationship with its Northern Nigerian audiences; and that the relationship was shaped—and is still being shaped and transformed—by the dynamics of global geopolitics and advancement of delivery technologies.

The study reveals that Northern Nigerians, who have long historical links with both the Islamic world and the West, have been extending their cultural encounters with them through constant interactions with the international media. The

interactions have been impacting on their everyday life, enhancing their comprehension of international and national affairs, raising their awareness on civic rights and responsibilities and influencing specific personal decisions and professional endeavours, even though the audiences do raise concerns over the propaganda role of the global broadcasters. The BBC was found to be the most influential international broadcaster in Northern Nigeria mainly due to its perceived credibility and trustworthiness, although perceptions of alleged bias in its coverage of Muslims and Islamic world appear to be posing a threat to such influence. The study also found that the media do play public diplomacy role but their effectiveness in playing such a role depends more on their perceived impartiality than on indulgence in any clever branding devices.

The findings also reveal trends and consistent relationships worthy of conceptual and theoretical considerations. The media consumption pattern of transnational audiences was found to be a complicated and variable activity influenced by personal predispositions and religious, cultural, ideological and other extra-communication factors. Audiences' interaction with global media is sometimes characterised by the phenomenon of selective believability—a complex cognitive activity (influenced by extra-communication factors) dealing with the rejection (or sometimes recasting) of dissonant messages and acceptance of congenial ones—that is exercised in relation to consumption of messages both within a single medium and across a range of media. The phenomenon of selective believability tends to be high when audiences are confronted with unpleasant media messages. However, where the messages are compatible with the audiences' prevailing views, media consumption tends to be less complicated, with a near non-existence of the phenomenon. Audiences' dominant belief tends to be the primary mediator in their consumption of media messages. It could be the audiences' religious belief, ideological orientation, cultural value or any strongly-held view. In the case of Muslim Northern Nigerian audiences Islam—which for many serves as a religious, ideological and cultural force—plays the primary mediating role in their consumption of news and current affairs programmes of global broadcasters. The credibility of media is essential for the acceptability of its messages but there is often a gap between credibility and believability when the messages are not compatible with the audiences' prevailing views. The mediating variables tend to

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fill that gap. The findings also reveal that credibility is not the only condition for believability. Credibility is a *necessary* but *not sufficient* condition for believability in audiences' consumption of dissonant media messages.

These are tentative generalisations resulting from the empirical evidence in this study. They are open to rigorous probe and refinement, even as they have already indicated new directions for further studies. There is, for instance, the need for further research to refine the concept of selective believability, using large samples and employing comparative analysis models. What is specifically required here is a replication of this research with large samples, but simultaneously examining both the audiences' consumption of news and current affairs programmes on the one hand (as done here) and their consumption of leisure and entertainment products on the other. This will provide further evidence to both revalidate the existence of the selective believability phenomenon itself and establish whether it has a universal application to media consumption in general or it is just confined to the consumption of news and current affairs programmes. Similar endeavour could equally explore the viability of the primary mediator concept and see if it indeed exists in relation to the consumption of all genres and if it is consistent or variable in different genres.

On international broadcasting too this study throws up fresh challenges for further research. First, the BBC World Service—always an interesting subject for a variety of studies—is in particular need of further research in the specific areas resulting from the changes taking place within and outside the organisation. This study was conducted at the time when the station was—and still is—undergoing a number of changes mainly prompted by the government's spending cuts. Some of the effects of such decisions are already being seen in the cutting of the number of language services, reduction of some broadcasting services and staff and reorganisation of some departments and so on. These are immediate consequences; long-term effects may take time to manifest. It would be a viable area of research, for instance, to study the consequences of the spending cuts on the quality of BBC World Service's programming, the station's ability to engage with new communications technologies and its effectiveness in promoting British public diplomacy. On a wider scope too, this study has noted, though broadly, that global

broadcasting is often shaped by—but also helps in shaping—global geopolitics. With the kind of changes taking place in global politics due to the gradual shift of power and wealth from the West to Asia and the ongoing uprisings in the Arab world—a region that has for long been a major (if not the major) area of focus for international broadcasters—other viable areas for research (at least of exploratory nature) have also emerged. It would be interesting to find out how broadcasting is impacting on these changes and how they too have been altering the ecology of global broadcasting. Similarly, with the ongoing shift to audience-participatory programming, enhanced by new technologies, as this study reveals, it would equally be of great interest to investigate how interactive programming is affecting the role of media in public diplomacy.

Appendix I

BBC Hausa Service Programme

The translated BBC Hausa Service programme that was transmitted from London on 6 October 2008 at 1345 Greenwich Mean Time (2:45pm Nigerian local time)

Presenter: Londonnn is calling!

[GOTO: RMAN
NAME: C1-1-OPENING
NUMBER: OPENING SIG
DURATION: 0'25"]

Presenter: London's calling. You are listening to the Hausa Service of the BBC on 13 and 16 metre wave bands and on some FM stations in West Africa. Listeners, this is Aminu Abdulkadir welcoming you to our 1445 transmission (Nigeria's and Niger's time), which is 1345 GMT and Ghana's time.

[GOTO: RMAN
NAME: C1-5-NORMAL BED
NUMBER: MENU BED -Play for 10secs, Fade & Keep under narration.
DURATION: 0'10"]

Presenter: In this programme you will hear that:

1. The global financial markets have slumped today, despite efforts by world leaders at the weekend to bolster financial institutions.

2. In Accra, the capital city of Ghana, some influential Nigerian and Ghanaian businessmen are holding a meeting. What do they want to achieve?

Clip: Our hope is that the leaders of these two countries (Ghana and Nigeria) would agree to implement whatever is discussed and agreed upon (at this meeting).

3. And in Niger Republic, the government has announced next year's budget.

4. You would also hear that a conference has begun in Abuja aimed at boosting Northern Nigeria's economy.

[GOTO: RMAN
NAME: C2-4-MENU TAG
NUMBER: MENU BED TAG
DURATION: 0'04"]

Presenter: All these after you first listen to the news from Suwaiba Ahmad.

[GOTO: LIVE
NAME: NEWS FOR ABOUT 5 MINS]

Stock prices have fallen sharply in Europe and Asia, even after European governments spent the weekend trying to prop up the financial institutions to save them from collapse. Richard Jerram is an economist in Tokyo.

He said: 'It's clear that people are losing their money. They're worried about what's going on in the financial market. And their thinking is: what would the situation be next year?'

A BBC Europe business correspondent said that there is no coordination among European nations about this problem that is facing the world at the moment. The stock markets in London, Paris and Frankfurt have all fallen by 4 per cent.

Later today, European finance ministers would meet to discuss the financial crisis facing their countries. There is concern that the countries are taking individual actions to improve the situation. A BBC correspondent said that one of the measures attracting attention is the one taken by Germany of providing money to private banks to save them from collapse. The concern here is that it would be necessary for the other countries to take similar measures to prevent financial transactions among them.

One of the main insurance companies of China, Ping An, has said it has suffered an unprecedented loss of $5.2 billion. Zhang Xiang, a worker for the company, says that the announcement by the company has shed more light to the shareholders on how the market situation is.

He said: 'This announcement has brought to an end the uncertainty the people are in, and confirms that the shareholders have confidence in us'.

The company's announcement contrasts with what Prime Minister Wen Jiabao said on Sunday, that the country's banks are now more in a position to stand on their feet.

Pope Benedict has said the current international financial crisis demonstrates the folly of materialism and ambition.

A BBC correspondent said: "Speaking at the meeting of bishops from all over the world, the Pope said: 'We have seen the collapse of big banks and money is not something that lasts forever.'"

Pope Benedict said people should not hinge their hopes on any materialistic victory, or work or money. He said they should depend on the Creator.

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has called for renewed effort to arrest the leader of the rebel movement in Uganda, Joseph Koni, after soldiers loyal to him carried out series of attacks in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, has said that Mr Koni and other leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continue to commit criminal activities that terrorise the region. He said the LRA has used the talk with the Ugandan government to buy time to return to fighting.

Presenter: That was Suwaiba Ahmad with the news from the Hausa Service of the BBC.

Presenter: As you have heard in the news, stock prices have tumbled in Europe and Asia as international stock markets react to the agreements reached at the end of the week aimed at boosting the financial positions of European banks. The major stock markets in France, Germany and United Kingdom have all started trading 4 per cent lower than at the close of trading on Friday. The BBC's Europe business correspondent said that the market is responding to lack of clear position in Europe about the financial crisis facing the world. Nafisa Ahmad has compiled this report for us.

CLIP: The main reason why American Congress reached an agreement with President Bush to pump $700 billion into Wall Street is to stabilize the world's financial markets. But what follows from the markets of Europe and Asia was not good. The stock markets went down about 4 per cent in many countries, and bank stocks suffered more. In Tokyo an economic expert at the Macquarie Capital Securities, Richard Jerram, has said that shareholders are in a state of fear about what could happen next.
He said: "The situation is frightening. People are losing money. And they are worried about the future of the market. I think everybody is worried about what the market would be like next year as the prediction is that it would be difficult for all to be fine".
Politicians have spent the weekend trying to find a solution to the problem. The German government witnessed how the efforts of a private company that was trying to save one of the country's biggest banks came to naught. In the end it had to pump in $69 billion to save it.
The country has followed the example of the Irish Republic, and the government of Denmark is also giving guarantees to people with money in the banks. The President of Greylock Capital Management, Hans Hume, has said that it is possible for Europe to face the problem of saving other financial institutions.

He says: "I think the situation is worse than people realise. The thing here is that there are big markets in London that sell American assets. So I think the governments have to wade into the problem again".
As markets see no end to the current crisis, that would be another source of concern to the European governments.

Presenter: Nafisa Ahmed with the report she compiled for us.

Interactive Text Messages

Presenter: In his message to us, Hassan Alhaji Dauda, Mai Kanti Inusari, says, "I salute members of the Congress in America for resolving to help revive their country's economy."

However, Sulaiman Babban Rimi, Kagarko, in Kaduna State, Nigeria, says, "America and Europe, it is your capitalist system that has thrown you into the situation you find yourselves in now".

Presenter: In Abuja, Nigeria, a conference on boosting economy and increasing investment in the northern states has opened. Governors from the 19 northern states, experts and investors have come together to look into the reasons for the backwardness of Northern Nigeria compared to the rest of the country. Most manufacturing industries in the North have collapsed due to lack of funds and high cost of production. Our correspondent, Mohammed Abba, has attended the conference and our Abuja editor, Ahmed Idris, has contacted him for more details.
REPORT 2'25"
A: The conference concentrated more on the economy. As the speakers explained, the North is backward economically compared to the other parts of the country.
Q: Have they touched on manufacturing in the North or not?
A: They talked about manufacturing in the North and how they are deteriorating, but the way to revive them was to use what is produced in the North. And what the North mostly produces are crops. Therefore, if the agricultural sector is developed, more would be available to revive the manufacturing industry in Northern Nigeria.

Q: One thing that people are used to hearing is that after conferences like this, recommendations would be made, and after it everything would be dead and buried. Have they said, at this meeting, what definite steps the governors would take afterwards?

A: Well, as the chairman of this conference, Ibrahim Gambari, the UN official, said, meetings like this happen and end without finding anything concrete. And even if something concrete is found, implementation would be a different matter. He said that effort would be made at this time to ensure that whatever policy is arrived at during this conference, it would not be difficult to implement in Northern Nigeria.

Q: Have the governors themselves given any assurance that what would happen this time would be any different to what obtained in the past few years?

A: As only two governors were able to attend the conference – that of Bauchi and Zamfara…

Q: From the 19 governors?

A: From among the 19…it was only two who were able to attend the conference. And it was the Bauchi State governor who explained to me that they

talked about electricity supply, and that they would invite international investors who could provide other sources of energy, not necessarily hydro-electric.

Presenter: That was Mohammed Abba speaking with Ahmad Idris in Abuja.

Interactive Text Messages
Presenter: And now here are some of your messages.

"May Allah make the conference on the economy of Northern Nigeria currently taking place become useful to all states of the country". This was from Saidu Abbas Dansadau, Zamfara State, Nigeria.

"Northerners, we should have determination and contentment so as to be self-sufficient in economic and social matters," says Sa'ad Garba Kagarko.

Presenter: In Ghana's capital, Accra, it is another talk on business and industry. A three-day meeting begins today of big businessmen and industrialists of Nigeria and Ghana. The aim of the meeting is to boost business and investment in the West African countries. And more than 200 delegates are attending the meeting. Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, Chairman of the African business organisation, Africa Roundtable, one of the leaders of this conference, has explained to our correspondent in Accra, Iddi Ali, the significance of the gathering and the main topics on their agenda:

REPORT: 2'29"

A: What is happening is that trade among the ECOWAS-member states is not going on smoothly, while what should be the case is that all Chambers of Commerce within ECOWAS countries, should be trading among themselves. But mostly they are on what is called bilateral chambers, where each chamber could be working with a company in Europe, China or America, without interacting among themselves. This thing worries us. It brings inflation. It brings lack of understanding. It brings poverty and so on. Now is the time for them to unite and understand that they have the same goal, which is trade.

Q: So what are the things you are going to discuss about in order to resolve this problem?

A: We will unite all these into one organisation, by integrating Nigeria and Ghana Chambers of Commerce. These two countries constitute 60 per cent of the GDP of ECOWAS countries. So if the two countries – Ghana and Nigeria – unite, the other ECOWAS countries would follow suit. And that is what should be done.

Q: So what is the agenda you are going to work with?

A: Whatever is discussed and agreed upon, we hope the leaders of these two countries would agree to its implementation.

Q: What are the things?

A: There are a number of protocols of trading together. There is freedom of movement of people and freedom of movement of goods and services. They aren't working. It was only agreed upon and left lying there. It is now hoped that all these kinds of things would be implemented, because it is understood that implementation is the key to everything.

Q.   What do you hope to achieve after this conference?

A: It is the opening of the markets—not only between Ghana and Nigeria, but also among all ECOWAS countries.

Presenter: That was Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, the Chairman of the African business organisation, Africa Roundtable.

Presenter: In Niger Republic too, the government there is talking about money. In the Republic of Niger, the country's Finance Minister, Mahaman Lamine Zeine, has presented next year's budget to the parliament, at its resumption after the rainy season holiday. In the budget, the government intends to spend CFA 735 milliards to cater for the health, defence, education, food and other needs of the people. Last year's budget amounted to CFA 572 milliards. From Niamey, Idy Barou sends this report.

REPORT: 2'36"

This year's budget is higher than last year's by CFA162 milliards. Why is this year's larger than that of last year? This was the question I asked the Finance and Economy Minister of Niger Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine.

A: The increase is of about 162 milliards. It is due to the increase we got from petroleum revenues…it is called bonus. We put all of it in the budget for the benefit of all people in the rural areas and…(not very clear). The work would include building infrastructure, (improving the) health (sector) and fighting poverty. All these are what the money would be used for.

Q.   Minister, in your speech you touched on the problem Niger is facing in the northern part of the country, in Agades Province. Specifically, what do you mean? Is some money going to be earmarked to bring back peace (in the province) or is it for the purchase of arms?

A: Who wants war? Everybody wants peace. The prayers are for peace to return to the region. All the people of Niger to…(uncompleted sentence).

Q: What is the reaction of the opposition on this matter? Dr Sanusi Tambari Jaku is an economist and also the leader of PNA Al'umma party in Niger.

A: We would take about fifteen days looking into the budget, passing what we agree with and what we don't agree with…(uncompleted). There are ideas that we think are good, like the amount allocated for this year's elections.

Idy: I later (got) the opinion of an ordinary *Nigeriene* as follows:

A: We hope parliamentarians will forget all their political and other differences and think of the nation and serve the nation and all its people, especially people in the rural areas who work more than anyone else and are poorer than others.

Idy: Today's sitting was opened with some show of resentment from the opposition, especially the parliamentarians from the PNDS Tarayya party, who walked out for a short while. They were complaining about the delay by the Speaker, Alhaji Muhammane Usmane, in opening the session.
Idy Barou from Niamey, Niger Republic.

Presenter: The time now is almost 3'03.5" in Niger and Nigeria. We are presenting you this programme from the Hausa Service of the BBC. You can also listen to us on the Internet at bbchausa.com.

[GOTO: RMAN
NAME: C1-2-MID STING
NUMBER: MID NEWS SIG
DURATION: 0'04"]

Presenter: Next you will hear that teachers in Nigeria, like their colleagues in other parts of the world, are celebrating World Teachers' Day.

But let us first go back to Nigeria, where today Commonwealth countries have started a three-day conference on communication in Abuja. The meeting was organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation in collaboration with the country's Ministry of Communications and the Nigerian Communications Commission, where they invited experts and communication companies of the Commonwealth to find ways of improving communication in the African continent, especially in rural areas. Eleven African countries are attending the meeting, including non-Commonwealth members, such as Chad. One of the items on the agenda is having broadband Internet connection. Raliya Zubairu attended the opening ceremony and here is her report from Abuja.

REPORT: 3'15"

The theme of the conference which was organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation in collaboration with the country's Ministry of Communications and the Nigerian Communications Commission is: Providing a Better Means of Communication in the Rural Areas to Boost Africa's Economy. Dr Bashir Gwandu is a commissioner at the Nigerian Communications Commission, (NCC) and has explained to me what the aim of the conference is.

A: It is a forum where you have members of the Commonwealth. They are to discuss ways of improving means of communication in the rural areas and cities where there are no means of communication. These different countries would sit and share the ideas they had used to improve communications in their rural areas so that other could learn from them and do likewise in their own areas.

Q: In what ways could improvement in communications boost business in the rural areas in particular?

A: Investigation has shown that improvement in communications in the rural areas also improve business. Let me give you an example with a fish seller. If the fish caught is not sold that day, you may…(not clear) as there is neither refrigerator nor electricity. But if you have a phone you call an area near you and ask whether there is market or not. If there isn't, you can call somewhere else. Where there is market, you could go there and sell your fish. So also is tomato.

Raliya: At the moment Nigeria has almost 60 million telephone lines. And about 60 per cent of the cities in the country have telephone line connection. All the same, there are numerous problems telephone subscribers often face in their daily activities. An example is the abrupt cutting of line when one is speaking or sending a message. The Nigerian President too, has acknowledged this in his opening address, which was delivered on his behalf by the Secretary to Federal Government, Alhaji Yayale Ahmed.

YAYALE AHMED:
"These positive indices notwithstanding, the sector is still faced with very serious challenges."
        He added that he hoped the experts that were attending the conference would help Nigeria find ways to overcome these challenges.
        The conference would also deliberate on ways of providing African rural areas with better means of communication. These areas have remained behind despite the introduction of mobile phone technology.
        Dr Ikowo Payo Gabra (as heard) is the head of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, and has explained to me the challenge in this regard.
DR IKOWO
He said, "One of the most important inhibitors to rural penetration is the absence of power."
He explained that the communications machines depend on electricity and other fuels. And that most villages in Africa do not have electricity.
Eleven African countries attended the conference. They included Chad, which is not a member of the Commonwealth.
Raliya Zubairu, BBC Hausa in Abuja, Nigeria.

Presenter: Still in Nigeria. It is today that teachers in Nigeria joined their colleagues in other parts of the world to celebrate World Teachers' Day. It was the United Nations that designated the 5th of October as the day of looking into the importance of teaching to the community and the challenges facing teachers and schools. The theme of the day this year is "Matters Pertaining to Teaching." But teachers in Nigeria are celebrating the day at a time when they continue to complain about worsening state of education in the country and the lack of payment of their entitlements by the authorities. Yusuf Tijjani attended the celebrations in Abuja, and he sent this report.

REPORT: 2'45"

These were the dances performed by the Nigerian teachers to celebrate World Teachers' Day. Malam Husaini Zakari Tilde is the Publicity Officer of the Nigerian teachers' union, and has explained to me the importance of this day.

A: This is a happy day for all teachers around the world. In Nigeria, we have gathered here to tell the government and the people of this country the situation teachers find themselves in and the progress teaching profession has achieved.

Q: What situation have you found yourselves in?

A: The situation teachers have found themselves in is that salary and condition of service of teachers in Nigeria are not equal to what teachers are getting in other parts of the world. Teachers are among those with the lowest salary compared to other workers who are also professional.

Q: So are teachers celebrating this anniversary? Teacher, Awwalu Sallau, has told me that:

A: In reality, no one can tell you that teachers in Nigeria are happy. If you look at developed countries…all developed countries have developed because of education. Look at the salary of the teacher. A teacher in Nigeria is someone to be looked down upon. If you look at a teacher's salary, you would find that someone with a degree like you would be earning over a hundred and seventy thousand Naira, while you are earning just over eighteen thousand Naira. How can you say there is happiness?

YUSUF: While teachers are complaining, what is the federal government doing to improve the condition of teachers in the country? Hajiya A'ishatu Ibrahim Dukku is a minister in the Ministry of Education in Nigeria.

A: As you can see, money for teacher-training programme has been increased from 15 per cent of 70 per cent to 10 per cent (sic) of all the money we get from the federal government, that is, Consolidated Revenue Fund. And you can see what states are doing to improve the condition of teachers, because they know that without the help of teachers whatever type of class you build, whatever materials are provided, good education will not be obtained.

YUSUF: This year's celebration is happening months after the teachers strike in Nigeria over demand for better wages.
Yusuf Tijjani from Abuja in Nigeria.

Presenter: The European Union has this morning opened its first immigration centre outside Europe. The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, opened the centre today in Bamako, the capital of Mali. The EU hopes the new centre in Mali would help people get work legally in Europe and also curtail illegal immigration. Each year thousands of people from West Africa try to enter Europe illegally, and many die along the way. Our West Africa correspondent, Will Ross, sends this report.

REPORT: 1'45

It is the President of Mali, Amadou Toumani Toure, who commissioned the Centre for Immigration in the country. And he was the one who hosted the people who are worried by illegal immigration. Among them were ministers from France, Spain and the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Luis Michel.

A lot of Malians, who are desperately looking for work, hope this centre would find work for them. But the European Union has reiterated that there was no vacancy at the moment. The European countries might be able to employ people through their office in Bamako, something that Spain is doing in Senegal, where it employs hundreds of people from time to time every year to collect fruits. But because the need for work is widespread, getting employment depends on luck.

The European Union said that its Bamako office would be offering legal advice on travelling and training for work. It would also undertake an enlightenment campaign about the danger of travelling illegally.

Even last week, the Spanish coast guards had to rescue 230 young Africans from a ship, which was the biggest ship carrying illegal immigrants to have reached Spain.

Malians have now turned emigrating for work into a culture. That is why the country has a minister responsible for Malians outside the country because one third of the population is now outside the country.

High price of food and fuel have recently made living in the country more difficult, which is why a lot of people want to work in Europe.

Presenter: That was a translation of a report by Will Ross. And which marks the end of the reports we could bring you in this programme. But as we still have some time remaining, I think, Suwaiba, you have to read us at least one headline.

SUWAIBA: Okay, Aminu.

Stock prices have fallen sharply in Europe and Asia, after European governments spent the weekend trying to prop up financial institutions to prevent them from collapse.

Presenter: Okay, thank you very much Suwaiba. Listeners, this brings us to the end of this programme until 1930 GMT that is 8:30pm in Nigeria and Niger, when we would bring you a completely new programme, which would come to you on those metre wave bands, that is 15, 19 and 41. And you can always listen to us on the internet at bbchausa.com. On behalf of everybody and Elhadj Diori Coulibaly who produced the programme as you have heard it, I'm saying have a nice day from the Hausa Service of the BBC.

[GOTO: RMAN
NAME: C2-18-PREFADE
NUMBER: START AT 13'28 Keep Low until requested by Presenter]

Hausa (2008) Afternoon programme. *BBC Hausa Service*, 6 October, 1345 hours (translated by Suleiman Ibrahim).

Appendix II

Nigeria's Broadcasting Regulator

National Broadcasting Commission

(NBC)

The National Broadcasting Commission is a parastatal of the Federal Government of Nigeria, empowered to regulate the broadcasting industry by Act No. 38 of 1992 as amended by Act No. 55 of 1999. The Federal Government of Nigeria, in line with the recommendations of the Committee on National Mass Communications Policy, promulgated the enabling decree on August 24, 1992. This decree and its amendment have been adopted as Acts of the National Assembly numbers 38 and 55 in line with our present democratic status.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION HISTORY

The pioneer Director General, Dr. A. Tom Adaba, was appointed with a 10-man board, with Peter Enahoro as chairman and Bright Igbako as secretary to the commission. In July 1999, the second Director General, Mallam Nasir Danladi Bako, was appointed. He resigned his appointment in November 2002, and was succeeded by Dr. Silas Babajiya Yisa. Mr. M. 'Bayo Atoyebi came in next and held the post on acting capacity between August 2006 and March 2007. The present Director General is Engineer Yomi Bolarinwa (fsne). He was appointed in March 2007 on acting capacity, and (the then) President Umaru Musa Yar'adua confirmed his appointment with effect from February 17, 2009. With average staff strength of 301, the commission has the mandate to manage the broadcast industry and ensure that the people's right to quality broadcasting is assured.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIPS

Statutorily, the commission is composed of a chairman and nine members (later amended by law to 10), who are part-time members, and who shall hold office for three years, renewable for another three years only. The director general of the commission, who is the chief executive, is also a member of the commission, but he has tenure of five years in the first instance, and may be reappointed for such periods as the president may determine.

The pioneer board, which was inaugurated on October 6, 1992, was chaired by Mr. Peter Enahoro. It served till 1994. Other pioneer board members were Chief Ralph Okpara (mni), Prof Elo Amucheazi, Alhaji Hassan Sani Kontagora, Chief B. Akin Odunsi, Mr. T. J. Onomigbo Okpoko (SAN), Mr. Ede O. Dafinone, Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Ka'oje, Mrs. Modukpe Adeogun, Dr. Dotun Okubanjo and Alhaji Sidi H. Ali and Dr. A. Tom Adaba, the pioneer director general. Mr. Bright Igbako was the pioneer secretary to the commission.

The second board, chaired by Mr. Otu Robert Akpan, served from 2001 to 2003. Other members were Alhaji Kolawole Bidmus, Mrs Pamela Ezinwa Ukaku, Prince Godwin Atibile, Dr. John Akpeh, Hajiya A'ishatu Modibbo, Ms. Ade Adeniran Ogunsanya, Hon Benjamin Okoko, and Alhaji Umar Usman Lamido. Mal Nasir Danladi Bako was the second director general, having taken over from Dr. A. Tom Adaba in 1999 and served till 2002. He was succeeded by Dr. Silas Babajiya Yisa, who served from 2002 to 2006. Mr. Mudashiru Adebayo Atoyebi served as acting director general from August 2006 till March 2007, when Engineer Yomi Bolarinwa took over from him. The current board was inaugurated on Tuesday, July 28, 2009, with Alhaji Ibrahim Najume as chairman. Other members are Alhaji Abdullahi Kuda, Chief Peter Nwaboshi, Chief Doyin Ogungbe, Engineer Yakubu Rasheed, Chief Patrick Adaba, Yomi Ayorinde, Hon Barr Akhere Ugbesia, Hon Mike Mku, Engineer Yomi Bolarinwa, the Director General, and Mrs Odusote representing Federal Ministry of Information and Communications.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The commission's responsibilities include advising the federal government on the implementation of the National Mass Communication Policy, with particular reference to broadcasting, as well as licensing Cable, DTH and all terrestrial radio and television services. The commission is also responsible for undertaking research and development in the broadcast industry, upholding the principles of equity and fairness in broadcasting and establishing and disseminating a national broadcasting code while also setting standards with regards to the contents and quality of materials broadcast.

OUR MANDATE

The Act of the National Assembly empowers the commission to carry out a number of duties, some of which include, licensing, monitoring, regulating and conducting research in broadcasting in Nigeria. It is also the duty of the commission to ensure the development, in a dynamic manner, through the accreditation of the mass communication curricula in all the tertiary and other institutions related to broadcasting. The National Broadcasting Commission is mandated by Section 2 subsection (1) of Act No 38 of 1992 as amended by Act No 55 of 1999 to carry out the following functions:

(a) Advising the federal government on the implementation of the National Mass Communication Policy, with particular reference to broadcasting;

(b) Receiving, processing and considering applications for establishment, ownership or operation of radio and television stations including;

(i) Cable Television Services, Direct Satellite Broadcast and any other medium of broadcasting

(ii) Radio and television stations owned, established or operated by the federal, state and local governments

(iii) And stations run under private ownership.

(c) Recommending applications, through the minister of information and national orientation, to the President, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, for the grant of radio and television licences;

(d) Regulating and controlling the broadcast industry;

(e) Undertaking research and development in the broadcast industry;

(f) Receiving, considering and investigating complaints from individuals and corporate bodies, regarding the contents of a broadcasting station and the conduct of a broadcasting station;

(g) Upholding the principles of equity and fairness in broadcasting;

(h) Establishing and disseminating a national broadcasting code and setting standards with regards to the contents and quality of materials for broadcast;

(I) Promoting Nigerian indigenous cultures, moral and community life through broadcasting;

(j) Promoting authenticated radio and television audience measurement and penetration;

(k) Initiating and harmonizing government policies on trans-border direct transmission and reception in Nigeria;

(l) Regulating ethical standards and technical excellence in public, private and commercial broadcast stations in Nigeria.

(m) Monitoring broadcasting for harmful emission, interference and illegal broadcasting;

(n) Determining and applying sanctions, including revocation of licences of defaulting stations, which do not operate in accordance with the broadcast code and in the public interest;

(o) Approving the transmitter power, location of stations, areas of coverage as well as regulate types of broadcast equipment to be used;

(p) Ensuring qualitative manpower development in the broadcasting industry by accrediting curricula and programmes for all tertiary training institutions that offer mass communications in relation to broadcasting;

(q) Intervening and arbitrating in conflicts in the broadcast industry.

(r) Ensuring strict adherence to the national laws, rules and regulations relating to the participation of foreign capital, in relation to local capital in broadcasting;

(s) Serving as national consultant on any legislative or regulatory issues on the broadcasting industry;

(t) Guaranteeing and ensuring the liberty and protection of the broadcasting industry with due respect to the law and;

(u) Carrying out such other activities as are necessary or expedient for the full discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on it under, or pursuant to, this act.

<div align="center">HOW TO APPLY FOR A BROADCAST LICENCE</div>

1.   A prospective applicant must have a limited liability company registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Its article and memorandum of association must include broadcasting (*please note, however, that section 10 of the NBC Act No 38 of 1992 prohibits the issuance of a licence to a religious organisation or a political party).*

2.   The company will write to the commission seeking approval to purchase a set of application forms, indicating the kind of service (radio, TV, MMDS, etc) and location(s) intended.

3. Upon receiving approval, the company may then purchase a set of application forms at the cost of N50,000 only. The package will include a copy of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code and other publications that would provide an insight into broadcasting in Nigeria.

4. The set of forms purchased should then be completed and returned, along with a comprehensive feasibility study of, and business plan for, the proposed station, to the office of the Director General.

5. The application is processed by the commission, recommended to the board of the commission, for onward transmission, through the minister of information and communications, to the President. (*The President, by constitutional provision has the power to give the final approval for radio and television broadcast licences*).

6. On approval, the successful applicant is expected to pay the prescribed licence fee and sign a licence agreement with the secretary to the commission before being allocated an appropriate frequency.

7. Currently, the lifespan of a licence is five years. A licence lapses and stands revoked if not utilised within two years of issuance.

8. Licence fees are categorised A and B according to the economic viability of an area.

LOCAL PROGRAMME CONTENT

Every licensee is required to adhere to a minimum of **60** per cent local broadcast content for open television and **80** per cent local broadcast content for radio. The cable/satellite retransmission stations are mandated to reflect a minimum of **20** per cent local content in their programming.

RENEWAL OF A LICENCE

An application for the renewal of a licence shall be made to the commission within a period of **six months** before the expiration of the licence. For avoidance of doubt, the airwaves are held in trust for the public; therefore, the licensee is accountable to the public through the commission. Thus a public hearing may be organised, as part of the licensing renewal procedure, for the public assessment of (the) affected broadcast station.

In applying for the renewal of a licence, the applicant shall:

1.   Clear all outstanding financial and administrative obligations to the commission

2.   It shall submit to the Director-General, NBC, through the commission's zonal director in the area of operation, 15 copies of (the) application

3.   The application shall include:

•   A detailed report of the station's faithfulness to its statements of intent in the original application form for the expiring licence, in accordance with the second schedule of the NBC Decree No 38 of 1992

•   A report of its compliance with the following:

a.   The relevant provisions of the **3rd schedule of the NBC Act 38 of 1992** such as submissions of quarterly schedules accompanied by synopses of programme listed

b.   Keeping of daily station logbooks for transmitted programmes, transmitter output power and radiating frequencies

c.   Making available for inspection by the staff of the commission its broadcast facilities including equipment and station log book

d.   The Nigeria Broadcasting Code provisions:

•   Emphasizing national cohesion, national security, respect for human dignity and family values

•   Compelling accuracy, objectivity and fairness; Right of Reply, integrity, authenticity, good taste and decency; presentation of womanhood with respect and dignity; legal, decent and truthful advertisement; protection of children from X-rated programmes and harmful or deceitful adverts

•   (Prohibiting) inciting broadcasts, advertisement of magical cures, exploitation of children, sponsorship of newscast and monetization of political coverage etc

4.   Other rules and regulations issued from time to time by the NBC.

•   Statement of accounts for the period under review

•   Completed application forms for renewal of the licence accompanied by a feasibility report for the renewal period sought.

Source: National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). [online] Available from: <http://www.nbc.gov.ng/index.php> [Accessed 30 June 2011].

Appendix III

List of Participants*

Individual Interviews

Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with the following
BBC personnel in London and Abuja

- BBC's executive editor for African region (in London)

- BBC Abuja bureau editor (in Abuja, Nigeria)

- BBC World Service correspondent in Nigeria/later producer (in London)

- Former BBC Hausa Service's senior producer/senior reporter (in Abuja)

- BBC Hausa Service's senior correspondent/formerly producer (in London)

Face-to-face in-depth interviews with these listeners of international
broadcasters in the Northern Nigerian cities of Yola, Kano and Abuja

Former school administrator (female)	Former soldier/ex-parliamentarian
Former newspaper editor (female)	Local newspaper publisher
Postgraduate student	University lecturer
Television producer	Trade unionist
Factory worker	Petty trader

Focus Groups

Focus group interviews were conducted in three geopolitical zones of
Northern Nigeria: Northeast (Yola and Njoboli), Northwest (Katsina)
and North-central (Abuja and Gwagwalada)

Yola Group I: the lower middle class (six participants)

a) Middle-level businessman/local director of Islamic movement *Izala*

b) Politician who is also the local chairman of retirees' union

c) Mason who runs a small construction business

d) Owner of a small tailoring enterprise

e) Female restaurant owner

f) Shop owner

Yola Group II: the working class (six participants)

a) Primary school teacher   b) Aide to governor (has working class status)

c) Electricity worker   d) Motorcycle mechanic

e) Student-teacher   f) Panel beater

Njoboli Group: the peasant group (eight participants)

a) Farmer/day labourer   b) Farmer/shop keeper

c) Farmer/cattle herder   d) Farmer/petty trader

e) Farmer/teacher   f) Farmer/student

g) Farmer/tailor   h) Herdsman

Katsina Group: the local politicians (five participants)

a) Secretary of Katsina Local Government Council

b) Supervisory councillor in charge of social services

c) Supervisory councillor in charge of agriculture

d) Former bank worker-turned-politician

e) Elected councillor

Abuja Group I: the journalists (six participants)

a) Deputy daily newspaper editor   b) Political editor

c) Sports editor   d) Business editor

e) Deputy news editor   f) Deputy political editor

Abuja Group II: the university students (nine participants)

This is a group of nine undergraduate students (one of them female), in their 20s (two of them in their 30s), that could effectively be also described as a youth group. They are students of the University of Abuja; and, all but one, were in their final year at the time of the interview (March 2011)—the other student was a year behind the rest.

* To guarantee confidentiality (some respondents sought to remain anonymous), only the posts or job titles or job categories of the participants are listed here. Of course, those with prominent posts could easily be identified by those who know that they do, or did, hold such positions. But fortunately, those who hold, or held, the easily recognisable posts were not among those who had sought anonymity during the interviews. Still, all personal names are excluded here to ensure uniform application of the confidentiality code.

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