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The Politics of the New Media and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (2000 - 2022)

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Global Development Studies

DECLARATION

I, Daniel Nwachukwu, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for the award of any type of academic degree.

Signature………………………………….

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian anti-poverty schemes have had mixed success since 2000. In general, poverty levels have decreased over the past two decades, although this has not been uniform across the country. The federal government has implemented a number of initiatives and programs to address poverty, including the introduction of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001 to the launch of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in 2016. These schemes have provided financial and material support to millions of Nigerians living in poverty, helping to reduce poverty levels and improve the quality of life for many. However, poverty remains a persistent problem in Nigeria, with large regional disparities in access to government services and programs. Despite the government's efforts, the majority of Nigerians still live in poverty, and there is still a great deal of work to be done in order to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for all Nigerians. In recent years, new media companies have started using technology to help track the progress of these schemes and measure the impact of the programs on poverty levels. These companies are also engaging with local communities to ensure that the programs are reaching those in need. However, there are still significant gaps in the implementation of these programs, and many of the most vulnerable people in the country remain unable to access them. In addition, there is a lack of enforcement of anti-poverty policies, leading to little improvement in poverty levels. Nigerian social media has been increasingly used to spread awareness of anti-poverty efforts and has played a role in mobilizing support for poverty alleviation initiatives. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, have seen a surge in activism, with many Nigerians using these platforms to highlight the urgent need for action on poverty. Social media has also been used to spread information about poverty-reduction initiatives and to encourage citizens to demand better policies from the government.This has enabled the government to better understand the challenges facing communities and provide more targeted support. This paper examines the role of the media and government in poverty reduction in Nigeria. It focuses on the relationship between the government and media in the fight against poverty, their respective contributions to poverty reduction, and the challenges faced in achieving this goal. The paper is based on a review of the literature, interviews with key stakeholders, and a survey of the media's coverage of poverty reduction in Nigeria. It finds that the media and government have been largely successful in their respective roles in poverty reduction and that their cooperation is essential for the success of poverty reduction initiatives.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Specifically, the purpose of the thesis is to investigate the political implications of the use of new media in reducing poverty in Nigeria. There has been a shift in the Nigerian media industry over the past few years from old media to digital media, which has contributed to new media becoming a part of the mainstream. It redefined information distribution and paved the way for higher engagement between the media community and its audience (Zayani, 2020). Internet access, management, commenting, and sharing of information have become more popular in Nigeria thanks to the internet and its increasing popularity via the internet. The new media platforms offer a two-way flow of information, in contrast to traditional media platforms that only allow one-way communication (Sarangi & Jha, 2014). As new media develops, sometimes in unpredictable, ways, democratic governance and politics are affected dramatically, transforming both the media landscape and media structures. The advent of new media has resulted in many changes in the way government institutions operate, how political leaders communicate, how government programmes are run, and the way the public is more involved, as a result of the shift from traditional media to new media. Through the new media, Nigerian democracy has taken on a whole new dimension where many voices can now be heard from many directions, rather than just a few. Democracy requires equal access to information and equal opportunity to participate in public debates that ultimately lead to political decisions. The Nigerian audience now has more access to social media, blogging, and news websites than ever before. Nigeria has over 113.8 internet users as of January 2019, according to the Nigerian Communication Commission (Leadership, 2022). New media's role and consequences in political life will also be explored briefly in this project and also the role and consequences of new media towards poverty issues will be examined in greater detail.

Aside from that, it was no longer only the media companies that disseminate information, but the audience as well, which is conceptualized as gatewatchers (Bruns, 2003). Through new

media, the concept of gatewatching dislodged the old notion known as gatekeeping. It was once the case that every piece of media that was released was filtered by gatekeepers before the internet came along. In traditional journalism, gatekeeping is an important part of the process. An editor must be consulted before a journalist can publish a piece of content. McQuail (2010) defines gatekeeping as 'the process by which decisions are made in media work, especially whether or not to admit a particular news story to pass through the gates of a news outlet into its channels.' An editor's job is to be a gatekeeper, determining what is newsworthy and factual, and ensuring that both are accurate. Despite this, there were some loopholes in this process that will be discussed in more detail during the course of this project.

However, Nigerians have participated in politics to greater extents since new media platforms like the internet has become more affordable and accessible. Nigerians are becoming more aware of the government's political agendas through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The new media has changed how people interact with each other and the government. It has created an environment where citizens feel that they have more power than ever before. As a result of these reasons, the government has begun to view digital media critically, especially social media platforms, which they view as a threat to political stability. Nevertheless, government officials also use social media platforms to inform the public about their plans. The new media era has also changed how we do politics. Politicians are now able to connect directly with their constituents through social media. As far as the new media is concerned, it seems to serve both ends. There is, therefore, a dilemma.

As a general rule, the new media has played a vital role in Nigerian elections and politics. Political campaigning, ideological cheerleading, and political mobilization are all possible through its participatory nature (Adenle, 2020). We are living in a world where democracy and politics are heavily influenced by the new media. Even though, people can express themselves on the internet, whether it is positive or negative, and have a voice. It is also true that this new media can also be used as an instrument for manipulating the public by

governments and political influencers. In the 21st century, campaigns can be won or lost on social media. Those politicians who have strong social media presence are more likely to win elections since they are able to reach a wider audience than their opponents. During and after the election, the Buhari administration, for instance, utilized social media platforms to reach out to Nigerians to reiterate its commitment to reducing poverty. There are two slogans that have dominated the headlines of his first and second administration campaigns, 'change' and 'next level', respectively, which have flooded social media platforms and won the hearts of voters. At a time when the poverty rate has risen to about 71.5% (NBS, 2011), Nigerian citizens were eager for a change. In spite of this, there is a worrying trend of using social media for the purpose of manipulating citizens' moods, especially in the area of poverty, which is one of Nigeria's greatest challenges.

In Nigeria, poverty challenges have been an age-old problem. According to the World Bank and other global financial institutions, Nigeria is one of the 40 most impoverished countries in the world (Katayama & Wadhwa, 2019). Nigeria has been battling extreme poverty for more than three decades. A major contributor to the poor's plight is the lack of access to basic public services. There is no doubt that education and healthcare are important routes out of poverty for families who are vulnerable. Research revealed that poor citizens are more likely to benefit from aid when they participate physically and digitally in government-run poverty reduction initiatives (Guillaumont & Wagner, 2014). A great deal of concern exists regarding the reduction of poverty in conflict-affected areas of Nigeria's northern region. To determine the causes of poverty in the part of the country, a report by the World Bank placed blame on insurgency, a lack of infrastructure, a poor educational system, and poor delivery of social services as some of its causes (IPSOS, 2019). Considering that there are religious elements in these areas and that freedom of speech is limited in these areas, it is hard to get regular updates on poverty reduction through media intervention.

There has been an array of initiatives undertaken on both an international and domestic level to achieve this objective. Numerous attempts have been made by Nigerian presidents to alleviate poverty conditions in the country. General Ibrahim Babangida created the

Directorate of Food, Roads, Power, and Sanitation (DFRIS) in 1986 to improve the road infrastructure, build toilets, and provide drinking water to rural communities. It is estimated that approximately 80 billion dollars were spent on this project without any benefits being realized by the Nigerian people. In 1993, Abacha and his wife launched the Family Support and Family Economic Welfare program to assist the poor. Through taxes, the Family Support Program procured 10 billion (and used most of it) for private benefit. Obasanjo (1999-2007) also launched, like his predecessors, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). A number of Obasanjo's ideas have been put in place to improve the financial conditions of the poor, but his initiatives have been unable to be implemented due to incompetent organization. The late President Yar'adua's 7-point agenda (2007-2010), which focused on poverty alleviation in microeconomic management and monetary policy areas, was too ambiguous and confused Nigeria's development goals. Nigeria's president Jonathan (2010-2015) created a five-year development strategy to combat inflation, create jobs, and alleviate poverty, but half the country lives in poverty today. More than half of the Nigerian population remains trapped in poverty despite all these efforts (Dapel, 2018).

According to the "2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria" report, 40 percent of Nigeria's population, or almost 83 million people, live below the poverty line of 137,430 Naira ($381.75) per year. A condition of poverty in this sense is one that is defined by insufficient resources and incomes, as well as, in its most extreme form, the absence of basic human needs such as shelter, clean water, nutritious foods, clothing, and health care services. As part of the current Buhari administration's efforts to deal with poverty and hunger, the National Social Investment Programme was instigated in 2016. The N-Power program is a part of the Nigerian Social Inclusion Program (NSIP) that is designed to assist unemployed persons between the ages of 18 and 35 in acquiring life-long skills along with a stipend per month worth N30,000 ($73). As well as that, Conditional Cash Transfers are designed to support those within the poorest bracket of society by providing them with N5000 ($12) every month. A recent report on poverty indicates that it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of these programs solely based on the administration's subjective accolades, but rather whether they are helping Nigerians escape poverty or pushing them further into it (Tamir, 2019). Pew

Research estimates that more than half of Nigerians still perceive the economy as bad. Considering the increasing number of poor people in the country, it would be fair to conclude that Buhari's promises have not been kept. Due to this failure, the citizens have resorted to pointing out the government's incompetence in reducing poverty through digital media, particularly through social media, in order to call out its incompetence.

In the Nigerian government's opinion, most of the information about poverty conditions from social media is false or is a product of hate speech. In part, because of the open, anonymous, and collaborative framework of social media, it serves as an incredibly powerful tool to adapt and spread hate speech and fake news in a wide variety of ways. An individual can define hate speech in a number of different ways, and it can mean a kind of language that implies disrespect towards people who have authority over them. There has been a long history of fake news and common misconceptions in politics, but the spread of misinformation and hate speech on social media has caused widespread concern over the past few years (Flynn, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2017). It should be noted, however, that there is a distinction between free speech and hate speech. A faultfinding exercise and the reporting of factual information can often be misinterpreted as hate speech and fake news, respectively, especially when they appear to be threats to the government as a whole. Oftentimes we see examples of repressive governments using social media platforms and apps to repress their own citizens, manipulate elections, create a climate of dissent, and clamp down on freedom of expression on the internet. It was announced on November 5, 2019, that the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has introduced the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulations Bill 2019 which is widely known as Anti-Social Media Bill in order to make it illegal to spread false information on social media through those platforms (Olaniyan & Akpojivi, 2020). It targets social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, online blogs, and other digital media platforms, which are reportedly overgrowing among Nigerians, especially the youth and social critics.

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The bill provides, among other things:

"Where any person in order to circumvent this law makes any allegation and or publishes any statement, petition in any paper, radio, or any medium of whatever description, with malicious intent to discredit or set the public against any person or group of persons, institutions of government, he shall be guilty of an offense and upon conviction, shall be liable to an imprisonment term of two years or a fine of N4 million....where any person, through text message, tweets, WhatsApp or through any social media, posts any abusive statement knowing same to be false, with intent to set the public against any person and group of persons, he shall be liable to an imprisonment for two years or a fine of N2 million or both."
- Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulations Bill 2019

However, the anti-social bill contradicts Section 39 of the Nigerian Constitution 1999, which is straightforward in its provision that: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold opinions, and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference." The anti-social bill, otherwise known as the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulations Bill 2019, empowers law enforcement to arrest those found guilty of disseminating false information online. Digital media users, including journalists, social commentators, online newspapers, and even internet service providers, are at risk. Law enforcement agencies would also be able to order internet service providers to disable net access if they choose to do so under this bill. This type of censorship entails the beginning of the end of internet freedom. There is now a new battleground opening up between governments that are attempting to restrict online content and freedom of expression, and the people who see digital media as a medium to voice out their poor living conditions (Nunziato et al., 2014).

The media is crucial to liberal democracy, but some governments try to stifle it by passing hostile legislation or intimidating them. It is this situation that is present with Nigeria's Anti-Social Media bill. In the event that this bill is passed into law, people who post critical comments about politicians or government institutions via text messages, Facebook posts, tweets, blogs, WhatsApp messages, or any other digital media platform will be jailed, fined, or both (Amnesty International, 2019). It is the current President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, who has heavily relied on the influence of social media and hate speech against its opponents in order to win the 2015 and 2019 elections, who now wants social media regulations and censorship in place. It is therefore likely that the media and poverty reduction are also influenced by elites. Or so to say. Some Nigerian digital media users are even amplifying pro-government content and suppressing the voices of average Nigerians as the government has been subjected to an upsurge of criticism from Internet users about the poor living conditions in Nigeria (Page, 2021). This maybe due to fear of government retribution and the desire to protect themselves from being labeled as agents of dissent. Furthermore, there is a lack of public trust in the government, which has caused many to become disillusioned with their government and opt to not share their opinions online. It is well known that history casts long shadows on the Nigerian poor, which are often misunderstood or ignored by the governing authorities. Despite the different regimes and administrations in Nigeria, why do they produce the same development outcomes? In the new media era, there should be an understanding of how power is played between elites and the broader community.

Nevertheless, cases like these were evident throughout the pre-election campaign and most prominently during the #EndSARS protests on October 20, 2020. Several social networking sites were prominent in the #EndSARS protests by young Nigerians calling for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad also known as SARS (an infamous police unit). There was also a call for government reforms that would be inclusive of all citizens. The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was formed in 1992 to combat vehicle thefts, rustling, and armed robberies. SARS was, however, highly criticized over the years due to allegations of extortion, torture, human trafficking, invasion of privacy, rape, genital

mutilation, and other violent crimes (Malumfashi, 2020). On October 20, 2020, a protest was held and targeted at ending police brutality in Nigeria. The purpose of that protest was to end police brutality in Nigeria. Instead, the protest changed into a call for holistic government reforms through the implementation of a five-point agenda known as the #EndSARS Movement. It was a movement that demanded a solution to the country's unemployment crisis, poor infrastructure development, and bad governance while also calling for an end to the brutality of the police.

It is also important to note that, as a result of the size and persistence of the #EndSARS movement on social media, there has also been an upsurge of pro-government online campaigns that would prove beneficial to President Buhari and his administration . Despite the fact that there was no direct confirmation linking President Buhari's administration with these campaigns, the content being published and shared on social media platforms heavily supported him. Through their social media accounts, so-called social media influencers share their pro-government views with their followers (the majority of whom have little understanding of political issues). In other cases, the media companies may choose to side with the authorities due to fear of the direction of the owner or senior management (Loo, 2003). In some cases, the opinions that emerge from social media influencers and inline news websites may not be entirely true or arise from patriotism or goodwill, but rather for the purpose of propagating a particular group's political interests as a whole. Media bias, particularly in relation to poverty as well as other matters in general, has become an integral part of the media criticism process over the years, due to the increasing number of people who have voiced their complaints, reflected in the deepening partisan divisions in society at large and the need for more balance in the media as a whole. In my opinion, this kind of statement would not accurately reflect the realities of journalism, considering that we are witnessing the transition from print advertising to digital advertising in the publishing industry, which is focused on growing readers and their numbers. As it pertains to marketing as well as competition for readers' attention, this is more of a matter of compromising political loyalty than anything else. The reporting of poverty can be complicated in many instances, especially when there is a two-sided story to tell.

In the case of poverty reduction, there is also a problem due to the government's poorly coordinated, highly exclusive top-down distribution system. Unconditional cash transfers and credit loan schemes all had a vague selection process, and the conditions for receiving welfare were either vague or unnecessarily secretive. Also, there is a lack of full and timely disclosure of information, particularly regarding anti-poverty programs, by citizens and governments. Asamoah argues that transparency in government and the public sphere is something that should be encouraged and encouraged (Asamoah, 2019). Despite the fact that a one-way information approach is likely to be insufficient in order to stimulate interaction and understanding between citizens and the government, e-transparency must be supplemented to this effect (Welch & Hinnant, 2003).

Due to the advent of digital media and the Internet, government programs are now much more likely to utilize the advantages of information and communication technologies to ensure improved transparency and citizen engagement in government programs, which has been greatly enhanced by the advent of digital media and the Internet. Using technology and social media, this method could be extended in a more comprehensive way in order to track and monitor beneficiaries and their achievements, by integrating technology and social media. It is possible to determine the effectiveness of the government's efforts to reduce poverty by using the information that is available in real-time. There are many arguments that are raised when it comes to misinformation and fake news on the internet. One of the main arguments has to do with who is spreading the information in the first place and why.

There have been several cases of journalists and social commentators arrested, detained, or missing when they criticize how the government administers its anti-poverty programs. The threat of violence still exists for journalists in Nigeria after two decades of transitioning from military rule to democracy. This issue of poverty reporting is a complex one that connects to other diverse issues such as corruption, human rights abuse, and mismanagement of funds. A new report published by Amnesty International details attacks on the Nigerian media since 2015. The new report claims that at least 19 journalists and media workers have been

targeted between January and September of 2021 in Nigeria. If public stories about poverty reduction are promoted through the media as well, then it raises further questions about the relevance of poverty reduction. Especially in the case of national budgets, journalists and citizens should emphasize the importance of critical aspects of the policymaking process associated with poverty reduction.

1.1 Research Objectives

Throughout the course of this study, the main focus will be on exploring how politics affect the way the media covers poverty issues, especially in digital media. There has been a lot of interest generated over the last few years regarding the role of digital platforms, such as social media, in politics and development issues, such as poverty. Thus, we are now able to gain a greater understanding of the many ties that exist between social media, poverty reduction, and the science of politics as a whole. The purpose of this study is to identify whether the use of digital media can be an effective means of reducing poverty as a result of its use. In particular, I am interested in the way the Internet is becoming increasingly interconnected and how it is facilitating the participation of citizens in politics through the use of social media. It is intended that this study will examine how information flows influence social and political participation in a variety of areas, especially when it comes to poverty issues. It is also crucial to state that the structure and policies of social media usage are no less important as a consequence of economic progress or government action.

As a final part of this study, we will demonstrate how information dissemination affects poverty by focusing on fake news, misinformation, campaigning, and mobilization via digital media platforms. It is imperative to determine how digital media users use poverty stories to achieve specific objectives as well as the democratization of digital media operations when it comes to developmental topics like poverty in Nigeria.

Despite the researcher's cultural experiences and views on poverty in which digital media played a significant role in the research, it will provide a better understanding of the realities

of poverty reporting from the perspectives of journalists, citizens, the government, and political entanglements.

The study's general objective is to examine the role of media and the politics involved in poverty reduction in Nigeria.

The research has the following objectives:

1.   To provide a comprehensive examination of current and previous digital media contents on poverty issues in Nigeria;

i.   How do the Nigerian digital media report poverty issues, and how do their various standpoints influence poverty reduction in Nigeria?

ii.   To what extent has politics interfered in the digital media reporting of poverty issues in Nigeria?

2.   To critically review the distinct ways of understanding the role of digital media, at the same time differentiate the roles of the different media technologies and the machinations involved in poverty reporting;

i.   What diverse roles have different digital media technologies played in reporting poverty issues or promoting poverty reduction in Nigeria?

1.2 Outline of the Thesis

There are four chapters in the thesis outline, each of which includes several sub-sections. A brief introduction to the topic will be provided in Chapter 1, followed by a brief description of the background of the research project and an overview of its objectives will follow. This study sought to find out what its objectives were, and what was the motivation behind the researcher's effort. A description of the research design will be given in Chapter 2, along with the methods used to acquire the data and the analysis methods that were used to locate the data. It is intended that the research study will employ a qualitative methodology, which emphasizes a logical approach to the theoretical concepts in order to prove its validity.

Further information will be provided on the reliability, validity, triangulation, and limitations of this study.

The third chapter presents the Public Sphere theory and includes an overview of the major works of reference that have been cited as examples of the theory and discuss the critiques of Habermasian public sphere theory. As part of the first part of this presentation, I will briefly summarize key elements of the public sphere perspective, and I will underline three main levels of the public sphere introduced by Dahlgren (2005): the structural, the representational, and the interactive dimensions. Furthermore, there is also a focus on a few key points in the second part of the text, namely poverty reduction as well as the challenges posed by the use of new media in Nigeria, based on the public sphere perspective. To conclude, this chapter examines how the public nature of new media can be beneficial to Nigerian citizens, as well as the Nigerian government, in relation to the use of new media in light of the public sphere theory.

In Chapter 4, several points are going to be discussed. To begin with, a brief background description of the case study will be provided, highlighting the controversies that surround both the current and previous poverty reduction programs in Nigeria that have existed since the 1980s. The chapter aims to explain why there has been no success in reducing poverty in Nigeria despite many efforts. A discussion will be held regarding the current political games that are being played between governments and new media users, specifically regarding issues related to poverty reduction. There has been continuous criticism of the government's anti-poverty programs on digital media by users who are keen on solving Nigeria's poverty problem. It is then discussed how digital platforms, including social media like Facebook and Twitter, as well as news websites and blogs, have played a crucial role in disseminating information pertaining to poverty and the politics involved in the process. Also, we will be discussing the application of practices and concepts of the new media, how communication messages are created, the choice of a specific medium for communication with the audience, the audience's active involvement, and the provisions that determine which medium is used and which is not used to gain the audience's attention on issues like poverty.

As part of the final part, a study of the findings is based on the content collected from various sources that relate to Nigeria's poverty context. This includes blog posts, tweets, and Facebook posts from individuals with respect to the subject matter. In addition, it summarizes the outcomes of the analysis of the collected data in order to draw conclusions. A discussion of their potential implications is provided as well as reflections on how to use new media as a political and social tool in order to address Nigeria's poverty challenges.

CHAPTER 2: Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of qualitative research methods, emphasizing their benefits and limitations. It then provides an example of a qualitative research project, focusing on the analysis of interview data. This chapter aims to give an overview of qualitative research methods, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of using this type of research (André Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). It will also provide an example of a qualitative research project, with a particular focus on how to analyze interview data. Qualitative research is a type of research that involves collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data in the form of words, images, or sounds. It is often used to explore complex social phenomena, such as people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. One of the main benefits of qualitative research is that it allows researchers to gain a deep, rich, and nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of their research participants (André Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). However, it can also have some limitations, such as the difficulty of generalizing findings to a broader population and the subjectivity of the researcher's interpretation of the data. By understanding these benefits and limitations, researchers can make informed decisions about whether qualitative research is the appropriate method for their particular research question (Williams, 2007).

Qualitative research methodology is a type of research method used to gather and analyze non-numerical data, such as words, images, and observations. This type of research is often used to explore and understand people's experiences, perceptions, motivations, and behaviors. The qualitative research approach is useful for understanding the deeper meaning behind complex social phenomena. Its focus on words and meanings allows researchers to gain insights into the lived experiences of individuals and explore the nuances of ideas, thoughts, and feelings (André Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). Qualitative research can be used to explore topics such as beliefs and values, motivations, decision-making, and behavior. It is also useful for uncovering the complexities of social processes, relationships, and structures. Qualitative research can be used to identify patterns and trends, as well as to understand the meanings and implications of those patterns and trends. By using interviews,

focus groups, observational studies, and other methods, qualitative researchers can gain a deep understanding of the topics they are studying (Williams, 2007).

It is based on the understanding that reality is constructed from the interactions between people and their environment. Qualitative research ontology suggests that reality is made up of individual perspectives and is unique to each person (Williams, 2007). It is based on the idea that each person's experiences are unique and that these experiences cannot be fully understood by any one individual. Qualitative research ontology recognizes that individuals create their own realities and that it is through their interactions with each other and their environment that these realities are formed (Seale, 2004). Qualitative research ontology also suggests that knowledge is created through the process of dialogue and negotiation between individuals and that a holistic understanding of reality can only be achieved by allowing individuals to express their perspectives and experiences.

Triangulation is a technique used in qualitative research to increase the validity and reliability of the findings. It involves using multiple methods or sources of data to study a phenomenon, with the aim of generating more complete and accurate insights (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). For example, a researcher studying the experiences of the poor population in relation to the media and the government setting may use triangulation by collecting data from interviews with media personnel, and Nigerian citizens, observations of the media companies, and analysis of media reports. By combining these different sources of data, the researcher can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). Triangulation can help to validate the findings of a study by providing multiple perspectives on the same issue and by detecting any inconsistencies or discrepancies in the data.

The following factors contributed to my decision to use a qualitative approach:

1. Qualitative research methods provide a more in-depth and detailed understanding of a phenomenon, allowing for a richer and more nuanced analysis.

2. These methods allow researchers to explore complex and multi-faceted issues, such as attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, in their natural contexts.

3. Qualitative research methods are well-suited to studying minority or marginalized groups, who may not be adequately represented in large-scale quantitative studies.

4. These methods can provide valuable insights into the underlying meanings and motivations behind people's actions and behaviors.

5. Qualitative research methods are flexible and adaptable, allowing researchers to modify their approach and methods as the study progresses. This can be particularly useful in studies where the research question or focus may evolve over time.

2.2 Desk Research

Desk research, also known as secondary research, is a method of collecting data by reviewing existing sources rather than collecting new data through primary research methods. Desk research techniques include scanning through existing resources such as books, magazines, newspapers, websites, and databases to collect data (Hoover Green & Cohen, 2020). It also includes analyzing the data collected from existing sources to draw meaningful conclusions and insights. The researcher must be well-versed in the research methodology and possess the ability to identify the right sources for the required data. Furthermore, the researcher must also be able to interpret the data to draw meaningful insights. Finally, the researcher must be able to put the collected data into a report or presentation format (Hoover Green & Cohen, 2020).

To use desk research to collect data on poverty issues in Nigeria, you can begin by identifying relevant sources of information, such as government reports, academic studies, news articles, and other published materials. You can then review these sources and extract relevant data on poverty in Nigeria, such as statistics on poverty rates, causes of poverty, and efforts to combat poverty. You can also use desk research to gather information on poverty-related policies and programs in Nigeria, as well as the perspectives and experiences of individuals and communities affected by poverty (Mebawondu, Mebawondu, Atsanan, & Suleiman, 2012). By carefully reviewing and synthesizing this information, you can gain a better understanding of the poverty situation in Nigeria.

2.3 Observational Studies

This is another common method of qualitative research. These involve observing participants in their natural environment in order to gain insight into their behaviors and experiences. Observational studies can be conducted in a variety of settings, such as in homes, classrooms, or workplaces. Observational studies are useful for exploring complex social dynamics and gaining an in-depth understanding of how people interact with each other and their environment (Rosenbaum, 2010). Observational studies involve observing and recording the behavior and actions of individuals or groups in their natural environments. To use observational studies to identify the media politics in Nigeria, you can begin by identifying a sample of media outlets, such as newspapers, television networks, and online platforms, to observe. You can then use various observation techniques, such as participant observation, structured observation, or content analysis, to collect data on the media in Nigeria. For example, you could observe and record the types of stories and news coverage that are provided by the media outlets, the perspectives and opinions that are expressed, and the ways in which the media outlets interact with government officials and other political actors (Rosenbaum, 2010). By carefully analyzing my observations, you can gain a better understanding of media politics in Nigeria and identify any trends or patterns in the way that the media covers political issues.

2.4 Document Analysis

Finally, document analysis is a qualitative research method involving the analysis of written documents such as reports, diaries, and other sources of written information (Bowen, 2009). This method can be used to gain an understanding of how people communicate, how policies are formulated, and how organizations operate. Document analysis is a useful method for exploring the historical context of a particular phenomenon and understanding the motivations and influences behind people's behavior. Document analysis is a method of collecting data by reviewing written or printed materials, such as reports, documents, or other published sources (Bowen, 2009). To use document analysis to collect data on media politics and poverty reduction reports in Nigeria, you can begin by identifying relevant sources of information, such as government reports on poverty reduction efforts, media reports on political issues, and academic studies on the relationship between media and poverty in Nigeria. You can then carefully review these sources and extract relevant data, such as statistics on poverty rates, information on poverty reduction programs and policies, and analyses of media coverage of poverty-related issues. By synthesizing this information, you can gain a better understanding of the role of the media in poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria and identify any trends or patterns in the way that the media covers these issues.

Glenn Bowen's Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method is a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the use of document analysis as a qualitative research method. Bowen argues that document analysis is an invaluable research tool for qualitative researchers, as it can provide them with access to a wide range of data that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. He also outlines the various techniques that can be used to analyze documents, and how these techniques can be used to uncover valuable insights about a particular subject or topic. In addition, Bowen provides a number of practical examples of how to document analysis has been used in various research contexts. Ultimately, this book provides a comprehensive overview of the use of document analysis as a qualitative research

method and is an essential resource for researchers interested in exploring this research method.

I followed these steps to collect data using document analysis, especially in the complex Nigerian media politics and poverty reduction reports landscape. From Glenn Bowen's journal, Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method.

1. Define the scope of the analysis: Before beginning the document analysis, it is important to define the scope of the analysis. For example, this could include defining the type of documents to be analyzed (e.g. media reports, poverty reduction reports, government documents, etc.), the time period of the documents to be analyzed, and the geographic area in Nigeria to be included in the analysis.

2. Identify and gather relevant documents: Once the scope has been defined, the next step is to identify and collect relevant documents for the analysis. This may involve searching online databases, contacting relevant organizations, or conducting fieldwork to obtain documents that are not easily accessible online.

3. Categorize the documents: After gathering the documents, they should be categorized in order to begin the analysis. This could be done by using predetermined categories, or by creating categories based on the content of the documents.

4. Analyze the documents: The next step is to analyze the documents. This could involve looking for patterns or trends in the data, or exploring how different actors are portrayed in the documents.

5. Present the findings: Once the analysis has been completed, the findings should be presented in a clear and concise manner. This could involve creating tables, graphs, or other visual aids to make the data easier to understand.

In conclusion, qualitative research is an invaluable tool for gaining insight into the complexities of human behavior and experiences. Qualitative research methods provide an in-depth understanding of topics that cannot be measured quantitatively and can be used to explore the underlying causes and meanings of behavior or experiences (Bowen, 2009).

This chapter has discussed the different types of qualitative research methods and their advantages over traditional quantitative methods. However, qualitative research also has some limitations. It can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, and the results may not be generalizable to the broader population. Additionally, the subjective nature of qualitative data can make it difficult to draw concrete conclusions or make definitive statements.

Despite these limitations, qualitative research methodology remains an important and valuable tool for researchers. By providing a deeper understanding of people's experiences and perspectives, it can help researchers to develop new insights and theories, and to inform policy and practice.

2.5 Limitations of Qualitative Research in this study

First, qualitative research can be time-consuming and expensive. Qualitative research is often more costly and time-consuming than quantitative research (André Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). It requires more resources to gather published in-depth interviews, analyze data, and interpret results. Additionally, qualitative research often involves multiple rounds of data collection, which can add to the time and expense. Qualitative research can also be more labor-intensive than quantitative research, as it often requires more involved interviews and analysis (although no interviews were conducted in this study). Despite the increased cost and time involved, qualitative research can provide invaluable insights into the underlying motivations, behaviors, and values of consumers, making it a critical component of any successful research strategy. Gathering secondary data for the poverty crisis in Nigeria can be time-consuming for a number of reasons. One reason is that there may be a lack of readily available data on the issue.

In order to gather the necessary data, researchers may need to search through multiple sources, including government reports, academic studies, and media articles (Bowen, 2009. This can be a lengthy process, especially if the data is not easily accessible or organized in a way that makes it easy to find. Another reason that gathering secondary data for the poverty crisis in Nigeria may be time-consuming is that the data may be outdated or incomplete. It is important to ensure that the data being used is accurate and relevant to the current situation, which may require verifying the sources and checking for updates. Finally, analyzing and interpreting the data can also be time-consuming, as it may require sorting through large amounts of information and identifying trends and patterns (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2020). Overall, while gathering secondary data can be an important aspect of understanding and addressing the poverty crisis in Nigeria, it can be a time-consuming process due to the various challenges involved in finding and analyzing the data.

Second, qualitative research is often based on small samples, which can limit the generalizability of the results (Payne & Williams, 2005). The challenge of generalizability, as the findings from qualitative studies, are typically based on small, non-representative samples and may not be applicable to the broader population. Qualitative research is often based on small models because the research is highly focused on understanding the experiences, perspectives, and behaviors of individuals within a particular context. This type of research is often used to gain a deeper understanding of a particular issue, and it relies on the researcher's ability to draw out meaningful information from the participants (Payne & Williams, 2005). The small sample size limits the generalizability of the results to the broader population, but it can still provide valuable insights into the Nigerian poor population as represented by the media. Additionally, qualitative research can provide more detailed information on a particular topic than quantitative research, which is often based on larger samples but can be less helpful in understanding the complexities of a specific context. In the context of finding data between the media and the poverty crisis in Nigerian society, using small samples in qualitative research may limit the generalizability of the results. It is

important to consider this limitation when interpreting the findings and to be cautious about applying the results to the larger population.

While the results may be useful in exploring the particular relationship between media and poverty, the data gathered from a small sample may not accurately represent the larger population of Nigerian citizens. As such, the findings may be limited in terms of providing a comprehensive understanding of the issue. It is important to note that in order to gain a better understanding of the media and poverty crisis in Nigerian society, a larger and more diverse sample size should be used in order to represent the different socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of Nigerian citizens.

One way to address this limitation is to try to maximize the diversity of my sample by including a range of participants with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. This can help to ensure that my findings are more representative of the larger population (Payne & Williams, 2005). Another option is to triangulate my data by using multiple data sources or methods. For example, you might combine in-depth interviews with media analysis or participant observation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between media and poverty.

Overall, it's important to be transparent about the limitations of my study and to carefully consider how they may affect the validity and generalizability of my findings. Additionally, quantitative research methods such as surveys and experiments may be useful in gathering more comprehensive data on the issue.

Third, qualitative data can be difficult to interpret and analyze (André Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). The subjectivity of the data, as qualitative research is often based on subjective experiences and interpretations, which can be difficult to verify or replicate. It may be difficult to accurately and objectively analyze large amounts of qualitative data. These limitations can make it challenging to draw definitive conclusions or make reliable predictions based on the findings of qualitative research on poverty in Nigeria. Qualitative

research is often subjective and open to researcher bias. Qualitative research relies heavily on the researcher's interpretation of the data, which can be influenced by the researcher's prior knowledge, experiences, and personal biases. This can be especially true in Nigerian politics and poverty reduction reports by the media, where the researcher's own cultural, political, and economic background can influence their interpretation of the data.

A researcher's subjectivity affects research in many ways, including personal experience, perspectives, and biases. Research questions, data collection, analysis, and interpretation may be influenced by the researcher's values and beliefs (Brink, 1993). Cultural, political, and economic backgrounds may also influence a researcher's interpretation of the data and their understanding of the issues. It is important to be aware of the potential for subjectivity in research and to try to minimize its impact as much as possible. This can be done by engaging in the reflexive practice, which involves reflecting on your own values, beliefs, and assumptions and how they may influence your research. It can also be helpful to involve multiple researchers in the analysis process and to use a range of data sources and methods in order to triangulate the data and reduce the potential for subjectivity.

Furthermore, the subjective nature of qualitative research makes it more difficult to draw concrete conclusions and ensure accuracy and objectivity. Additionally, the lack of clear, standardized procedures and methods in qualitative research can also lead to researcher bias. This means that the data collected on the topic is based on the perspective and experiences of the people involved, and is likely to be biased and open to interpretation (Brink, 1993). In other words, the data is likely to be subjective and not necessarily reflective of the 'real' situation. Moreover, since the media is one of the main sources of information on the topic, the data is likely to be heavily influenced by the media's interpretation of the issue. As a result, the data may not reflect the true nature of the poverty situation in Nigeria.

Fourth, it can be difficult to establish the reliability and validity of qualitative data (Brink, 1993). The reliability and validity of Nigerian articles and social media reports for academic research are generally low. This is due to a number of factors, such as a lack of quality

control and peer review, an absence of checks to ensure accuracy, and a lack of oversight and regulation of the sources used. Additionally, the lack of reliable data on poverty, the poor access to education and health services, the limited access to financial services, and the limited access to reliable sources of income make it difficult to accurately measure poverty in Nigeria. Furthermore, the lack of reliable poverty statistics at the local level, as well as the lack of data on the social and economic impact of poverty on individuals and communities, make it difficult to accurately assess the extent and depth of poverty in Nigeria. As a result, any research based on these sources should be treated with extreme caution and should be verified with other sources and studies.

Ultimately, the lack of reliable data on poverty in Nigeria makes it difficult to effectively target poverty-alleviation policies and measure the effectiveness of such policies. In order to improve the accuracy of poverty measurements in Nigeria, there must be improved data collection and analysis, better quality control and peer review, and more effective regulation of the sources used in poverty studies.

It is important to be aware of potential bias and contextual issues that could influence the results. To ensure the reliability and validity of these sources, I must take the time to review the sources for accuracy and bias. Identifying the authority of a source is the first step for researchers. Does the author have a reputation as an expert in the field? Can they be trusted as sources of information? Is it a report of facts or an opinion? The information presented should also be assessed for accuracy. Do other reliable sources support the information cited? Can you confirm that the facts are correct and up-to-date? Researchers should also consider whether the source may be biased. Is there a vested interest in the results of the research? Is there a potential conflict of interest with the source? Taking the time to review articles and social media reports for accuracy, authority, and potential bias will help researchers ensure the validity and reliability of their findings.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

Despite the fact that many ethical considerations apply to all forms of research, including desk research, there are some specific ethical concerns that may arise. Data sets and published materials are among the ethical considerations of desk research (Roberts, 2015). For researchers to use these materials ethically and responsibly, they must obtain permission to use them responsibly. It may involve obtaining permission from the original authors or publishers, respecting intellectual property rights, and properly citing sources. Desk research also involves the potential for bias or misrepresentation of information in the sources being reviewed. In order to accurately represent the information in these sources, researchers must avoid cherry-picking data or selectively interpreting the information to support their own biases.

Including references in my thesis is an important way to acknowledge the work of others, support my arguments and claims, and provide evidence for my ideas. Following Roberts (2015), I took a few key steps to ensure that I effectively used references in my thesis.

- Identify the sources I need: Before I started writing, it's important to identify the sources I will need to support my arguments and claims. This might include academic papers, books, reports, and other types of materials.

- Cite my sources in the text: As I write my thesis, make sure to include in-text citations whenever I refer to or quote from a source. These citations should include the author's name and the year of publication and should be placed within the text of my document.

- Create a reference list: At the end of my thesis, create a list of all the sources I have cited in my work. This list should be organized alphabetically by author's last name and should include all the information necessary to locate the source.

- Use a citation style guide: There are many different citation styles that I can use in my theses, such as APA, MLA, and Chicago. Make sure to choose a style guide and follow it consistently throughout my thesis to ensure that my references are formatted correctly.

- By following these steps, I can effectively use references in my thesis to support my arguments, acknowledge the work of others, and provide evidence for my ideas.

2.7 Summary

In conclusion, qualitative research is a valuable method for exploring complex social issues like poverty and media interest in poverty in Nigeria. Qualitative research can provide a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of people living in poverty, their motivations, and the challenges they face. This can help to identify the underlying causes of poverty and inform the development of strategies to address it. Qualitative research can also provide insight into how media coverage of poverty in Nigeria impacts public opinion, and how it can be used to drive public policy. Qualitative research can also provide an in-depth understanding of how poverty is experienced differently in different parts of the country and how it is linked to broader social, economic, and political dynamics.

Through qualitative research, we can identify patterns, trends, and insights that can help us better understand the complex dynamics of poverty and media coverage of poverty in Nigeria. By considering the voices and experiences of people living in poverty and those who report on it, we can gain a more nuanced and complete understanding of these issues and work towards more effective and just solutions. Qualitative research can help us understand how poverty is experienced and perceived in Nigeria, including how it is represented in media coverage. We can analyze media reports to identify the ways in which poverty is framed, the types of voices that are included or excluded, and the types of stories that are told. We can also use interviews to gather detailed information about the lived experiences of people in poverty, including their perspectives on media coverage. By

engaging with people in poverty, we can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges they face, how media coverage may be perpetuating stereotypes and stigma, and how we can work to create more equitable and just solutions.

In conclusion, qualitative research has the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of poverty and media coverage of poverty in Nigeria and can help inform policy and practice that aims to address these important social issues. So, it is an important method for understanding and addressing poverty and media interest in poverty in Nigeria. This chapter provided an overview of qualitative research methods, including the benefits and limitations of qualitative research. An example qualitative research project was presented, along with a discussion of some of the ethical considerations of conducting qualitative research.

CHAPTER 3 - Public Sphere Theory

In this chapter, we examine the idea of new media as a public sphere in the context of poverty discourse. As a public sphere, new media provide a platform for sharing information, expressing different points of view, and challenging the government. In the context of the new media, the public sphere may be viewed as, as a metaphor, a space where citizens can come together, exchange their views on issues facing society, debate, and ultimately, form public opinions about these issues. Our society today is dominated by digital media, which plays a significant role in all aspects of our lives. In contemporary society, however, the public sphere is no longer defined by one single place but rather consists of a variety of places. It is a synthesis of a mix of physical places and online media (Benyon, 2014). It is important to point out that even though there is no fixed place or space in which the concept of the public sphere can be cited, the new media are clearly a crucial element in it even if it does not mean referring to a certain location. It can be said that there is a unified ecology of the new media known as the public sphere, and that includes places like online news and social media sites, as well as the blogging space. It is not an exaggeration to state that the media plays a vital role in shaping public opinion, and that, at times, it also plays a significant role in shaping political policy as well.

However, the public sphere is not static; it has been modified and redefined over time in response to changes in society. For example, the rise of the mass media in the 20th century led to a redefinition of the public sphere, as the media became a space where the public could come together to discuss and debate issues (Castells, 2008). Habermas' public sphere is analyzed, along with its critique based on a number of ideologies that are applicable to contemporary life, as well as its central themes. Having presented a variety of criticisms leveled at his work, a focus on the theoretical connections between the Public Sphere and some critical ideologies, including Marxism, Capitalism, and Feminist Theory. Different perspectives and modifications of the public sphere can be viewed through the lens of these ideologies. The public sphere can also be viewed through the lens of different ideologies. For example, Marxist theory sees the public sphere as a site of class struggle, while liberal theory

sees it as a space where reason and debate can lead to progress (Jessop & Calhoun, 1993). According to revisionist scholarly studies, Habermas' public sphere is more idealized than actual (Eley, 1992).

3.1 The Habermasian Public Sphere

Jürgen Habermas, a German social theorist, is the most renowned proponent of a normative framework for the public sphere. Historically, Jergen Habermas's work, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, has been the basis for developing a radically democratic society that is based on the concept of the public sphere. Habermas described the public sphere as a virtual community that has no fixed physical location. He noted that Public Sphere is "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state". Coffee houses, literary societies, and the development of the press helped to create a public sphere during the 18th century. It is believed that the concept of a public sphere emerged during the Renaissance in Western Europe, in which people could engage in discussions and debates concerning public issues. Habermas theorizes that there were two manifestations of the "public" or "public sphere" during the Ancien Régime. When monarchies began to take over power from feudal lords during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this change first became evident. This political shift, according to Habermas, led to a new distinction between the "public" and "private" domains. The concept of "public" has become synonymous with "state" which is monopolistic and bureaucratic. Conversely, "private" served as a sphere for those without official positions and were therefore excluded from certain power structures. Habermas argues that a second "public sphere" emerged in the late 17th century amidst the clash between state and society. Both France and Britain underwent a transition from feudal to bourgeois societies, and from feudal to bourgeois liberal constitutional systems. Habermas argues that the bourgeois public sphere enabled bourgeois values previously encapsulated in the private realm to be articulated in the public sphere.

Because public and private spheres have varying meanings in different social contexts, they are generally called "public/private dichotomies" (Condren 2009). The division between

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public and private in Greek philosophy illustrates the two spheres of society. The polis, according to Habermas (1962, 1989: 3), was strictly separated from the oikos. polis is described as a public sphere in which free individuals interact openly; oikos refers to hidden action between free individuals (see Habermas [1962] 1989:3). In other words, oikos refers to the household or domestic sphere, which is associated with private life, family, and personal relationships. Polis refers to the city or community, which is associated with public life, politics, and social organization. These terms are often used to describe the relationship between the private and public spheres in the context of the public sphere. The oikos is seen as the realm of the personal and the intimate, while the polis is seen as the realm of the public and the political. The two spheres are seen as interconnected and interdependent, and they are thought to influence each other in various ways.

Domestic and social spheres can also be considered private and public spheres within society. It is possible that this type of separation is contentious and supports male-dominated views. Feminist theories depict this type of separation as restricting women to domestic spheres. This chapter will discuss some of these ideologies.

He noted:

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason.

3.2 Habermas Definition of the Public Sphere: A Critical Examination

The Habermasian public sphere has been critically critiqued in a variety of ways (for example, Garnham (1992), Calhoun (1992a), Kellner (2000), Johnson (2001), Susen (2011),

and Ziolkowski-Trzak (2013)). However, some writers tend to focus on a single aspect of it, which we will discuss here. Plunder, gender inequality, the degeneration of the public sphere, and the replacement of argument and rationality with rhetoric have all been criticized as factors contributing to its degeneration. (Habermas, 1984, 1992 &, 2006; Susen, 2010; Thompson, 1995). The plundering of natural resources, privatization of public services, and the commodification of public goods are all seen as factors contributing to the degeneration of the public sphere. It has been argued in particular that these are related to the rise of corporate power and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals. Citizens' access to resources and services has been particularly damaged by the privatization of public services, while the commodification of public goods has eroded the public good. Rather than being treated as collective resources to be shared, goods and services are increasingly treated as commodities (Feng, 2001).

Habermas is often credited with idealizing the bourgeois public sphere when it was deeply exclusionary and participation was limited. Habermas acknowledges in his writing that he presents a "stylized picture of liberal elements of bourgeois public life" (Habermas 1989a, p. xix). In his 1992 work, Habermas clarified that he was establishing what he called an "ideal type" rather than a normative ideal. Habermas's ideal type of the public sphere is based on two main principles. First, the public sphere is a domain of our social life where such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Second, access to the public sphere is open to all citizens. Habermas argues that the public sphere is "a realm of our social life where such a thing as public opinion can be formed... [and]... a domain where citizens deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; where they can freely assemble and express and publicize their opinions."

Moreover, contemporary scholars have criticized the idea of idealizing the Habermasian Public Sphere. Many scholars have criticized Habermas' public sphere for its views on contemporary communication, democratic politics, and socio-cultural life (notably in this age of digitalization). It is one of the major assumptions of the public sphere model that public discourse should be rational, impartial, and objective in nature. Consequently, emotions,

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partiality, passions, and subjectivity are unwelcome in this process. Especially in light of the increased use of digital and social media in recent years, these rigid boundaries have been challenged in an unprecedented way. A more emotional and social media-centric approach can now be taken in order to address the role of subjectivity in the expression of the common good as well as challenging Habermas' rational-critical assumptions and the role that subjectivity plays in articulating the common good.

Historically, this transition has been referred to as the "emotional turn". It is crucial to understand the public sphere in the media system from the standpoint of the "emotional turn.". The "emotional turn" refers to the shift in the public sphere towards a greater emphasis on emotions and personal experiences. This transition has been influenced by the rise of social media and other digital technologies, which have allowed individuals to share their personal stories and emotions more easily and widely. In Wahl-Jorgensen's view, social media participation and public debates are often characterized by emotional responses, such as attachment, hope, anger, and hatred (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). These emotional responses can be used to articulate collective grievances and to effect social change, such as reducing poverty.

Alexander (2006) challenges Habermas' assumptions that speaking, deliberating, or performing in the public sphere leads to idealizing principles of rational discussion and deliberation. Habermas sees the public sphere as a space for rational debate, whereas Alexander views it as a space for social performance. Alexander (2006) argues that a civil public sphere is best characterized by solidarity and respect for others, rather than by rationality. He sees the public sphere as a place where individuals can share their experiences and emotions, and where social bonds can be strengthened through solidarity and mutual respect.

A second argument is that Habermas assumes the possibility of free and transparent discourse, which leads to an idealization of public opinion. In addition to this, it forms a critical point of view in terms of both critical social theory and a truly democratic political

practice that places a high value on the public sphere. Communication conditions in public spheres are rarely idyllic, neither are they balanced spaces for debate nor competitive environments (Morley & Robins, 1997). To challenge digital communication, bureaucracy, and dominant ideologies, public spheres may engage both informal/spontaneous and formal/structured mechanisms at the same time. Social media sites facilitate the sharing of influence in a similar way.

By reading Habermas's discussion of democratizing the public sphere and civil society, one can engage in a sufficient discussion of the public sphere and democracy. People interact face-to-face or through mass media to reach a consensus in public spheres. As a result of our versatile and heavily networked cultures, social media networks have become an essential part of the public sphere (Cela, 2015). On the contrary, the Internet offers a diverse range of conversational norms, as in other domains such as mass media and face-to-face engagement (Kapoor et al., 2017). Therefore, the Internet as a public space does not make any sense (Barns, 2017).

Public Opinion is used in this study to demonstrate how Habermas' revised public domain framework facilitates freedom of expression, a fundamental right in a democracy. They contribute to the success of present society's democratic goals (economic and social rights), including the right to health, adequate housing, food, safe drinking water, and education. Livingstone & Lunt (2013) argue that the public sphere facilitates citizen involvement in politics by engaging citizens in rational discourse about societal issues. In today's ever-expanding world, public sovereignty relies on communication. In other words, it signifies a new era of sovereignty. Without a public sphere that allows democratic oversight, the state cannot effectively mediate with society. It may seem naive to assume that democracy can consolidate power.

Are Habermas' definitions applicable to internet communication? By eroding democracy, the public sphere, integrity, social responsibility, money, and power are Habermas's "dominant media." Media power includes controlling content and trying to influence public opinion.

There is an argument that asymmetric power relations (social, economic, political, and media power) distort public communication dynamics. According to Castells (2009), power is not in the hands of the media per se, but in the hands of the media's power brokers. Media cannot exert power alone, as they also rely heavily on powerful communities for support. Power dynamics play out in media. Friedland, Hove, and Rojas (2014) argue that Habermas' public sphere concept has been drastically altered by new economic, social, and technological innovations. Globalization and network society have led to a new social organization (Castells 2008, 79).

Using modern technology, we can now connect and establish bonds with many more people than we ever could in the past. It remains likely that social media networks will lead to misinformation and manipulation because of their multiple divisions. Concerns arise that the internet may not fulfill the public sphere's essential functions. A Habermas view of the Internet is that it divides a consolidated audience further into distinct groups, each focusing on a particular issue (Rasmussen, 2009). Although this may be true, we can also debate their validity. In Habermas' view, the Internet merely fragments specific audiences into isolated issue public. Wendelin & Meyen (2009) suggest Habermas simply did not understand the multitude of discourses available online today.

Digital media have created questions about the vitality of the public sphere in the digital age. As shown in Janssen and Kies (2005) and Rasmussen (2009), some scholars believe that public sphere theory still needs finer tuning in order to be truly effective. Due to the possibility of an online network society, they developed a revised concept of the public sphere, which revolves around networks with the proliferation of information technology. Various ideas resulted from this focus, including the Networked Public Sphere (NPS) and the Virtual Public Sphere (Papacharissi 2002). NPSs (Networked Public Spheres) are emerging as an alternative medium with tremendous potential

Using information to mediate collective action. Digital media are increasingly influencing Nigerian politics. Although new technologies can serve as a public sphere, they can also

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constrain public opinion. Inequities exist in access to data and the ability to use technology in a way that compromises the performance of the virtual world. The Internet has enabled communication between people around the world, but it can also lead to political controversies. It includes false news, inaccurate claims, and associated ideas.

Digital propaganda is more recent than classical propaganda. In addition to objective truth, an argument is largely judged by its emotional appeal. In general, fake news involves misinformation, fabrication, or omission. It can be classified as fake news if it contains propaganda, satire, parodies, press releases, and photoshopped images. Due to the ambiguity of the term fake news, the European Commission has refused to use it in its reports. Instead, it uses the term disinformation (House of Commons, 2019). History is filled with fake news. The practice of information manipulation has been around longer than social media and modern journalism.

As technology can be gradually integrated into existing cultures, rather than creating new ones. However, whether the internet creates genuine public opinion is beyond its control. In Further Reflections, Habermas argues that non-profit organizations, trade unions, social movements, and churches can counter or change government messages. This prevented the state from exercising its power illegally. You can control the state through the power of public opinion and through the control of official elections. Government should not be allowed to sway public opinion or influence it in any way. Online discussions are less beneficial than in-person discussions. According to Habermas, media lacks equal, face-to-face interaction and reciprocity between speakers and recipients.

To achieve maximum impact, mass communication relies on the self-regulatory media system, which can choose and polarize information selectively. In Nigerian society, poverty and illiteracy are extreme factors that make the majority of people insignificant and disempower them. The populace is unaware of their role in public debates, making participation in state policymaking difficult. Many scholars have attempted to understand the

influence of public opinion on public policy regarding financial equality, but they have not been successful (Obo et al, 2014).

In a democratic society, this topic is crucial. Because citizens have little influence over government policy decisions. Many citizens are unaware of their right to participate in public policy decisions (Milton, 2011; Stimson, 2014), and those who are aware perceive it as irrelevant (Obo and Obo, 2013). Consequently, a lot of government policies were not reflecting the views of the people, so the government could not deliver the outcomes it was expected to. Considering the Internet's advantages and disadvantages in the public sphere, it is extremely important to analyze both.

Dahlgren (2005) argues that the internet broadens perspectives and participation, but it complicates the understanding of political public spheres. Individualism and societal culture have melted with the new media, according to Habermas. In other words, as the state and society merged, the private sphere also disintegrated. Powerful media outlets can undermine society's critical nature, reducing most of us to passive listeners or consumers. Literature, salons, and cafes are no longer venues for rational-critical discussions, as they once were. It is closely aligned with participatory democracy, according to Habermas, which constitutes a democratic principle. Herbamas never addressed the social contract of Emmanuel Kant in his writings, which provides the reasoning behind this. According to Herbamas, public opinion is not a form of participatory democracy. Despite Habermas' theories of bourgeois public life, democratic politics never thrived (Apostolopoulou, 2019). Public issues are consumed, discussed, and reacted to constantly. The general public opinion has not changed with these new developments. Online political participation has also grown in popularity over the past few years due to the internet. In addition, they are affecting the traditional Public Sphere in an unprecedented way. In the past and today, the public sphere has been exclusively dependent on communication. A public sphere is generally considered to be a place where opinions can be expressed, issues can be discussed, and solutions can be developed through communication.

Roberts, Farris, and Benjamin shed light on the changing public sphere and how right-wing media is becoming more vigilant about disinformation and publicity (Benkler, Farris, and Roberts 2018, 8). It was found that social media present an entirely new kind of public space, marked by diversity, overproduction of information, and a reductive approach to politics (Bayer et al., 2019:59-60).

3.3 Liberal, Capitalist, Marxist & Feminist Viewpoints on Public Sphere

3.3.1 Liberal View

Generally, liberal theories conceive of the public sphere as a place where individuals may freely act, so long as the action does not hinder others from participating in public discourse. Jürgen Habermas supports this viewpoint. A number of brilliant theoretical and empirical works have been produced by Habermas on the public sphere in contemporary society (De Angelis, 2021). Inequality has increased exponentially, along with the expansion of elite power as a result of liberal democracy being heavily repressed and stripped of its promises. Even though it is becoming increasingly apparent that citizens feel increasingly away from the decisions that affect their lives, the global capitalist system is continuing to flourish and now has even more of an impact on politics than it has ever had before (Milner, 2021). Besides all of this, there has been an explosion of information in the digital age as well as unprecedented levels of connectivity over the last numerous years, and this is expected to continue for quite some time.

A liberal view of the public sphere emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and democracy in shaping public discourse and decision-making. Liberals argue that the public sphere, which is traditionally seen as a space for political and social discourse, is a crucial component of a free and democratic society. It allows individuals to express their opinions and engage in debate and deliberation, which helps to inform and shape public policy (Häussler, 2017). The #BringBackOurGirls campaign was actively promoted by Nigerian media outlets in 2014, following the abduction of over 200 schoolgirls by the terrorist group,

Boko Haram (Shearlaw, 2015). The campaign was used to rally support for the release of the girls and to put pressure on the Nigerian government to take action.

Liberals believe that the public sphere should be open, inclusive, and diverse and that all individuals should have an equal opportunity to participate in public discourse. They also argue that the public sphere should be protected from interference or control by the state or other powerful institutions, in order to ensure that it remains a space for free and open debate. The #NotTooYoungToRun campaign was pushed out by the Nigerian media in 2016 to advocate for the reduction of the age limit for political office from 40 years to 35 years. This campaign led to the successful passage of the Not Too Young To Run Bill by the Nigerian Senate in July 2018 (Africa Portal, 2017).

However, there is a significant difference between liberal and conservative views, namely that liberals believe the public sphere is a homogenous and normative space where people can put aside their prejudices and biases (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002). Communication via mass media is often a means used by the public sphere to educate itself. In these scenarios, there is no doubt that there is the influence of the media, including television, radio, and newspapers, on the beliefs of people. According to many scholars, a public sphere can be understood as a place where diverse voices can be heard in public debates and where a variety of active citizenship practices can be promoted in society at large, both of which are often in conflict with each other (Adut, 2012). In Habermas' view, the mass media have been mutated into dominant capitalist organizations as a result of their mutual exploitation, which explains the emergence of dominant media (Häussler, 2017). It has fallen upon the media to play a more and more important role in influencing public opinion rather than only disseminating accurate news and information as is done in the past.

Though disputable, Habermas's work on the public sphere is founded on the liberal view that civil society must be legitimized by the state. Liberals had an ambivalent notion of what constitutes the public sphere. Liberals had an ambivalent notion of what constitutes the public sphere (Haas, 2004). Through a historical framework, bourgeois perception

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rationalized the power of the state in the eighteenth century. It has been suggested that there might be a rational basis for the public sphere by liberals (Wendelin & Meyen, 2009). As a result of several revolts, the public sphere was reshaped in an entirely new way. There has been a rise in the public sphere as consensus has waned.

A liberal view of the public sphere emphasizes the importance of individual freedom, democracy, and equality in shaping public discourse and decision-making. It advocates for the protection of the public sphere from state and institutional interference, in order to ensure that it remains a space for open and inclusive debate (Adut, 2012).

There are, however, some who may be inclined to advocate a theory of fictitious public engagement (fake public), and may even believe that everyone in the public sphere is a member of a counterpublic. Fraser (2012) who criticizes this approach believes that it denies the existence of multiple voices in the public discourse that reflect diversity rather than uniformity. Power structures are undermined by contrapublics. This is done by encouraging the growth of opposition groups in the country. For these reasons, counterpublics have been appealing to radical activists, progressives, and Marxists alike for a long time. There are a number of theories in Nancy Fraser's work that are well known, including the counterpublic theory (Fraser, 2012). The #OurMumuDonDo campaign protested against the deteriorating state of the Nigerian economy and the lack of action taken by the government to fix the situation . This campaign was successful in drawing the attention of the government and led to the implementation of several economic reforms .

As Netaji Bose: "freedom is not given but freedom is taken". He argued that freedom is not just given but it must be taken because it can be lost once gained if not adequately protected by those who enjoy such freedoms (Financial Express, 2021). It implies that liberty is not granted by a higher authority, but instead must be actively pursued and defended. This is a core tenet of liberalism, which emphasizes individual rights and freedoms, and the responsibility of individuals to protect those rights. As long as people are not responsible for their actions, they cannot be expected to care about their liberties. In order to be responsible

citizens, Nigerians need to be better educated on their rights and responsibilities toward themselves, other citizens, and society as a whole. The journalist informs, enlightens, shapes public opinion, creates public awareness, stimulates debate, stimulates curiosity, holds authorities accountable, and monitors performance (Oyebola 2006:1). These are essential elements of a successful democracy. The journalists, however, have been accused of failing Nigerians for not fulfilling some or most of these roles, particularly with regard to corruption and the poverty debate; others argue that the government has failed Nigerians too because successive governments have not ensured adequate protection for press freedom since independence despite constitutional guarantees (Uwakwe 2010:9-10).

3.3.2 Capitalist View

A capitalist view of the public sphere emphasizes the role of the market in shaping public discourse and decision-making. Capitalists argue that the public sphere, which is traditionally seen as a space for political and social discourse, is influenced by economic and market forces (Papacharissi, 2002). These forces drive the flow of information and shape public opinion, and they are essential for the functioning of a market-based economy. The new media outlets in Nigeria are dominated by capitalist interests. Business moguls, politicians, and other individuals with access to substantial financial resources often use their wealth to control the narrative perpetuated by Nigerian media.

However, some capitalists believe that the public sphere should be open but competitive and that individuals and institutions should be able to freely express their opinions and engage in debate and deliberation (Papacharissi, 2002). They also argue that the public sphere should be subject to market forces, such as supply and demand, in order to ensure that it remains dynamic and responsive to the needs and preferences of consumers. Nigerian digital media often prioritize stories that align with the interests of their wealthy sponsors. This has resulted in a lack of balanced coverage of issues, with stories that favor the interests of the powerful often taking precedence over those that focus on the needs of the general public.

One example of capitalism in the public sphere is the influence of advertising and consumer culture on public discourse and decision-making (Papacharissi, 2002). In a market-based economy, companies and corporations use advertising to promote their products and services and to shape public opinion and consumer behavior. This can influence the topics and issues that are discussed in the public sphere, and the way that they are perceived and debated. Nigerian media outlets are heavily dependent on advertising revenue and often prioritize stories that will attract the attention of wealthy sponsors. This often results in a lack of coverage of important issues facing the country.

Companies may use advertising to create buzz around a new product or service, which can generate public interest and debate. This can lead to the emergence of new trends and fads, and to the popularity of certain ideas and perspectives. Advertising can also be used to shape public opinion on controversial issues, such as climate change or immigration, by presenting a particular perspective or argument in a compelling way. Broadly speaking, a capitalist view of the public sphere emphasizes the role of the market in shaping public discourse and decision-making. It advocates for the openness and competitiveness of the public sphere, and the influence of market forces on its functioning (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002).

Frazer offers several commendable strategies for conceptualizing the public sphere in a capitalist society, but she fails to adequately incorporate its most abstract ideological form within her theoretical framework (Jessop & Calhoun, 1993). In Young's view, counterpublics are essential. In contrast to Habermas' homogeneous view of the public sphere, Young (1990) advocates a heterogeneous one in which one expects to encounter others with different perspectives, loyalties, and experiences.

Thus, notions are being created in the public sphere at a rapid pace. Social media, in particular, enable us to enter social and political spaces like those found in sports, music, film, and politics, but it also serves as a fetish covering over impotence and allowing us to understand ourselves as just data. Digital capitalism also involves the use of data and

algorithms to extract value from the online behavior and interactions of individuals and organizations. This can include the use of data mining and analytics to target advertisements, the use of machine learning to automate decision-making, and the use of digital platforms to facilitate the exchange of goods and services (Rivera, 2020).

The Nigerian government has used data to manipulate and control the Nigerian people in a number of ways. For example, the government has used data to target certain groups of people. This includes the use of data to identify individuals who are considered to be at risk of being involved in civil protests and then target them with surveillance and proactive policing. Additionally, the government has used data to influence public opinion, by manipulating the media and social media platforms to spread messages in support of the government's agenda (Horrigan & Rainie, 2015). Furthermore, the government has used data to monitor and control the population, by collecting information on citizens and using it to identify potential threats to national security

3.3.3 Marxist View

A Marxist view of the public sphere emphasizes the role of economic and class-based power in shaping public discourse and decision-making. Marxists argue that the public sphere, which is traditionally seen as a space for political and social discourse, is dominated by the ruling class, who use their economic and political power to control the flow of information and shape public opinion (Haas, 2004). This allows them to maintain their dominance and prevent the emergence of alternative perspectives and voices.

Marxists argue that the public sphere is not a neutral or democratic space, but rather a site of struggle and conflict between different classes and interests (Roberts, 2017). They advocate for the empowerment of the working class and marginalized groups, who they believe have the potential to challenge the dominance of the ruling class and create a more equitable and just society.

Despite its failure to explain the most abstract and simple ideological properties of capitalism on a universal level, Marxist theories do believe they have a role to play in understanding global commodities. The study by Roberts (2017) sheds light on a theoretically derived public sphere under capitalism, where at least two commodities owners possess distinct personalities that are also driven by the need to possess commodities. Their focus centered only on how the public sphere has shifted over the last decade in the twenty-first century, rather than how these insights described more abstract and contradictory aspects of the capitalist public sphere.

Without understanding these conceptual and superficially incompatible properties, one cannot understand how certain inherent contradictions of capitalism manifest themselves in concrete and everyday public spheres. In this regard, it will deduce some of the main abstract and ideological themes of the capitalist public sphere in order to understand its meaning (Roberts, 2017). Marxists view the commodity form as the starting point of their analysis of capitalism from an abstract and simplistic perspective. In all of Marx's writings, he highlights the importance of specifying an initial subject of the commodity that encompasses both the issues of cultural reproduction and change (Haas, 2004). It is nevertheless important to acknowledge Marx's metaphorical notion of the capitalist public sphere as a commodity. However, Kant, Hegel, and Marx were omitted from the original manuscript of the Structural Transformation. According to some sources, Habermas had a complex and ambivalent relationship with Marxism. He acknowledged Marx's influence on his own theory, but also criticized Marx's shortcomings and limitations. He also distanced himself from orthodox Marxism and its political implications

In Habermas' revised thesis, the discussion was added as a part of the revised thesis for publication. It is possible to apply the same analysis to all aspects of life experience which are liable to be commercialized in the future. Accordingly, it is altogether reasonable for Marxists to abstract from the world of commodities the main contradictions that can be found in public life in a capitalist society.

Marxism is a political and economic theory that proposes that society is divided into two classes: the bourgeoisie, or the capitalists who own the means of production, and the proletariat, or the working class who sell their labor for wages. According to Marxist theory, the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat, creating a cycle of poverty and inequality.

Karl Marx criticized the bourgeois state in his works (Jessop, 2012). Criticizing not just its origin and class basis, but also the economic conditions that made it possible. He exposed the public sphere as bourgeois fabrication. As Marx argued, property owners exploit and deform the people around them. In order to solve these economic and social problems, Marx came up with the concept of the communist state. It was determined that the communist system would rewrite every aspect of socioeconomic life.

There is a presence of Marxism between the Nigerian media and the government. The media is often critical of the government and its policies, which is a result of Marxist ideology that seeks to challenge the status quo and promote radical change. In addition, the media has been used to spread Marxist ideas and challenge the existing system of power (Mayer, 2020). This has resulted in tension between the government and the media, as the government views the media as a threat to its power and control. Furthermore, the media has been used to spread awareness of the struggles of the working class and to raise awareness of inequality and injustice in Nigerian society.

On the other hand, Marxist influence by the media owners and the public in Nigeria has been evident in recent years. The media owners have used their influence to shape public opinions and attitudes, particularly in relation to the country's political and economic structure. They have sought to promote a Marxist-inspired approach to development, particularly in terms of the redistribution of wealth and the promotion of social justice. This has been seen in a number of ways, including the creation of a media landscape that is dominated by leftist media outlets and the promotion of Marxist-inspired policies by major political parties.

At the same time, the public in Nigeria has also become increasingly influenced by Marxist ideas. This is evidenced by the growing popularity of socialist and Marxist-inspired movements, such as the Occupy Nigeria and ENDSARS campaigns, which have seen their support base expand significantly in recent years. Additionally, Marxist ideas have also become increasingly popular among young people, who have been exposed to Marxist-inspired rhetoric through the media, social media, and various other channels. This has resulted in a growing number of people in Nigeria who are sympathetic to the ideas of Marxism and socialism.

Overall, Marxist influence by the media owners and the public in Nigeria is an important factor in the country's politics and development. It has helped to shape public discourse and has had a significant impact on the way the country is governed and the policies that are pursued. As such, it is likely to remain a major force in Nigerian society for the foreseeable future (Mayer, 2020).

Theoretically, a Marxist view of the public sphere emphasizes the importance of class struggle and economic power in shaping public discourse and decision-making. It advocates for the empowerment of marginalized groups and the creation of a more democratic and inclusive public sphere.

3.3.4 Feminist View

Gender inequality is seen as another factor contributing to the degeneration of the public sphere (Jessop & Calhoun, 1993). This can be seen in the way that women are often excluded from public life and denied access to public resources and services. This has been linked to the patriarchal structure of society, which has traditionally placed men in positions of power and authority. The replacement of argument and rationality with rhetoric is also seen as a factor contributing to the degeneration of the public sphere. This has been linked to the rise of populist politics and the rhetoric of fear and division that has become commonplace in public discourse. This has led to a decrease in meaningful dialogue and a greater focus on emotional appeals rather than rational arguments.

A feminist view on the public sphere emphasizes the importance of gender equality and women's participation in public life. Feminists argue that the public sphere, which is traditionally seen as a space for political and social discourse, has been dominated by men and has excluded the perspectives and voices of women (McLaughlin, 2020). This has resulted in a lack of representation and inclusion of women in decision-making and public policy. Feminists argue that the public sphere needs to be more inclusive and diverse and that women's voices and perspectives need to be heard and valued. They also advocate for the inclusion of marginalized voices and perspectives, such as those of racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ individuals, and people with disabilities.

As Simone (2014) points out, Habermas failed to include the non-liberal, non-bourgeois public as well as the competing public and follows the old precedent of excluding women from bourgeois public life by not including them. According to Herbamas' case, a number of counter-publics such as feminist movements were ignored. For many years, women have been oppressed in politics, the economy, and society. As a result of this, Godfrey and Berman (2019) stated that women in the United Kingdom and the United States have spent much of their time attempting to convince the world, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, that women's rights go beyond their roles as mothers and wives. In addition to new ideas generated by the feminist movement, new ideas weres also sparked in the public sphere during the early 19th century (1910-1950). Feminists focused on women's suffrage during that period. In addition to improving the political development of the country, their participation in public affairs will also improve public behaviors (Rampton, 2015). Nowadays, social media platforms allow women to participate in feminist conversations online, which is changing the public's perspective of feminism and promoting gender equality. As a great example of the digital public sphere, Twitter, Quora, and Reddit serve as great examples. Users from all over the world can interact with the website and answer questions posted. An issue brings society together in a similar way to a traditional public sphere. Various religious, cultural, economic, and educational factors influence attitudes toward women in Nigeria. The right to vote was granted to women in the south in 1960, but

in the north not until 1979. Islam is often blamed, however socioeconomic factors also contribute (British Council Nigeria, 2012).

Throughout his work, Habermas maintains that the existence of universal values is the only way to escape a constant struggle for selfish interests and a temporary equilibrium between interests (Habermas, 1989). In contrast, Fraser is a person who believes that identity is a crucial issue. He believes that particularistic values have no place in the general world. Habermas, however, embraces universality. Several reasons should be cited for why feminist social identities cannot be regarded as variations from universality, principally because the identity contrast between universalism and particularism does not hold up (Fraser, 1989). It is not that these different interests can be universalized in Habermas's sense which makes them legitimate bases for objections, but that the social struggle is about empowering all kinds of individuals in accordance with their own needs. Fraser defines a public sphere as a grouping of multiple publics that fall into several categories based on various criteria, including gender, power, class, gender, and occupation. It is important to recognize that different publics can have hegemonic relationships and that disadvantaged groups have developed subaltern counterpublics to counter this dominance. As feminists saw justice as a struggle for recognition, they found it invaluable within the public sphere notions. Fraser (2012) contends that the feminist argument is that men dominate the public sphere in disproportionate numbers, whereas women are marginalized and left out. In comparison to issues that dominate the public sphere, reproductive rights and equal pay rarely receive the same attention. Women have been excluded from the public sphere since the inception of feminist movements. Despite the fact that even the most liberal theorists hastily constructed their own justifications, women's struggle for public legitimacy required an understanding of how power and violence influenced secrecy.

Eventually, women were able to stop being invisible as a result of the ideals of the Public Sphere. The concept of the public sphere paved the way for a radical change in society where women had been denied equal rights for centuries Fraser (2012). The feminist perspective insists on recognizing gender as a central category and empowering feminists to engage in

political debates and utilize political agency. As a result, feminists became a part of public life rather than a part of it behind the scenes. Therefore, feminist theory offers a framework for resolving emancipation problems through purely concrete means. Aside from putting women's interests first, feminism also seeks to protect the interests of all women within a community. Women can find themselves and cope with ethical dilemmas through feminism, but this is not universal Fraser (2012). Through the exchange of ideas between Habermas and feminist theory, a more integrated approach to deliberative democracy and the public sphere has been developed. Overall, a feminist view on the public sphere emphasizes the need for greater gender equality and inclusion in public life, and the importance of ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.

Finally, there is the problem of patriarchy (Uchendu .E., 2022). Even though Nigeria has made some progress in terms of gender equality, the patriarchal system of power and privilege continues to exist in many areas of life. This is a major obstacle to the advancement of women's rights and the realization of gender equality.

In the present day, cyber-violence and hate speech is becoming increasingly common against women online, occurring across multiple platforms such as social media, messaging services, blogs, and the comment sections of news websites. The ideology of feminism has an impact on cyber violence targeting women. Even some political leaders utilize internet trolls as a means of demonizing political rivals, criticizing feminism, and suppressing women's rights (Wihbey, 2015). While digital spaces are rife with potential dangers, women continue to use them as public spaces across the region to express their concerns.

The Nigerian media has started to slowly recognizing the importance of covering women's issues more extensively. There has been a minimal discussion of issues such as gender-based violence and the need for greater economic empowerment of women. Nigerian women have been making few gains in terms of political representation. In 2015, the country elected its first female governor and a record number of women have been elected to the National Assembly (Simwa, 2017b). There has been a rise in the number of women in leadership

positions and on the boards of political parties. In addition, the country has seen an increase in the number of women running for office in the 2019 elections. The Nigerian media and civil space are also taking steps to ensure gender equality in the workplace. This includes promoting equal pay for equal work, protecting women from discrimination, and ensuring that women have access to resources and opportunities.

3.4 Conclusion

The new media has therefore contributed to the divagation of the public sphere regarding issues, perspectives, and personalities involved. Anonymous communication and virtuality can contribute to the diversity of conversation on the Internet and the variety of communication formats can lead to extremists insulting others, spreading fake news, and making threats. In addition to being resistant to censorship, the internet complements the mass media. A global network of communication can promote some public interests, influencing domestic and global politics. Some scholars argue that the Internet has contributed to the fragmentation and diversification of the public sphere. The public sphere, which is traditionally seen as a space for political and social discourse, has traditionally been dominated by a few key institutions, such as the media and political parties. However, the rise of the Internet has allowed for the emergence of new platforms and voices, such as social media, blogs, and online forums, which have expanded the range of perspectives and opinions in the public sphere.

This has led to a more diverse and dynamic public sphere, with a wider range of issues and perspectives being discussed and debated. However, it has also led to fragmentation and the rise of echo chambers, where individuals are only exposed to perspectives that align with their own beliefs and values (Garrett, 2009). This can lead to the polarization of public opinion and the marginalization of certain voices and perspectives.

Overall, the new media has contributed to both the diversification and fragmentation of the public sphere, and the impact of these changes depends on how individuals and institutions

use and engage with online platforms. Therefore, Emirbayer and Sheller propose the internet of public spheres as an open-ended platform for socially distant participants to share collective perspectives, build relationships, and cultivate emotional attachments that allow speakers to influence issues of common issues (Emirbayer & Sheller, 1998). It is also a place where debates and confrontations take place. Though it will never be quite the same as Habermas' coffeehouse ideals, the public sphere still exists today. Communication is now moderated through digital media. Virtuality is always at the heart of the public sphere. Despite Habermas' long-standing concept of public spheres, powerful forces have always threatened it - in the past and the present. By limiting, maiming, and controlling individuals in any way necessary. Regardless, using digital communications technology, individuals and groups may be able to accomplish change.

CHAPTER 4: Exploring the Poverty Crisis in Nigeria

There is no denying that poverty in Nigeria is a serious issue. Since 1999, Nigeria has been one of the poorest countries in the world. This has necessitated the introduction of several poverty relief programs by the government. As poverty is often measured using different indicators and methodologies, it is difficult to rank Nigeria on poverty in the world accurately. Nevertheless, according to data from the World Bank, Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world, with over 40% of its population living in extreme poverty (defined as living on less than $1.90 per day). Poverty is a state or condition in which an individual or group lacks the financial resources and/or necessary social support to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare. Poverty is often associated with a lack of access to education, clean water, and other essential services, as well as social and economic marginalization (Omotola, 2008). It can result from various factors, including economic inequality, natural disasters, conflict, and government policies. Poverty can have severe negative impacts on an individual's 908physical and mental health, as well as on their overall quality of life. Nigeria is considered to have one of the highest poverty rates in the world as a result of this fact.

Over 87 million Nigerians are estimated to live in extreme poverty according to the World Poverty Clock. A harsh reality has emerged that Nigeria has become one of the world's poorest nations, a status that is very undesirable. As a result, no Nigerian government can survive without adopting some form of poverty reduction strategy. Despite such efforts, Nigeria is still among the world's 25 poorest countries (World Bank, 2021). It is inevitable that a new government will end or abandon the poverty-relief initiatives of previous governments, no matter what the results were. Nigeria has established policies and implemented programs over the years, but poverty persists (Okonjo-Iweala & Osafo-Kwaako, 2007). Nigeria is no exception to the need for developing and implementing programs that fight poverty.

In fact, many policies for reducing poverty have been marred by political unrest and the lack of patriotic leaders and managers to implement them effectively (Omotola, 2008). Nigeria is a country located in West Africa. There are over 200 million people living on its 1,080,000 square kilometers of land. The country has a large coastline on the Gulf of Guinea and is bordered by Cameroon, Niger, and Benin. Nigeria is divided into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. It is home to over 200 ethnic groups and languages. The official language is English, but over 100 languages are spoken in the country. The country is rich in natural resources, but the majority of the population lives in poverty, and over sixty percent of children are stunted as a result of malnutrition. Nigeria has been ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world and has a history of political instability.

One of the key factors that have helped Nigeria to reduce poverty is the growth of digital media. Digital media has played a significant role in promoting democracy and good governance in the country. It has been a powerful tool for fighting corruption in Nigeria and promoting transparency and accountability. Shola (2010) opines that the new media has also helped to raise awareness about the problems of poverty and the need for economic reform. It has also contributed to social inclusion and empowerment of the poor. Nigerians have also been able to raise their voices through digital media. They have been able to share their stories and experiences through it. Moreover, it has helped create a platform for dialogue and debate on poverty and economic development. The people of Nigeria were able to feel a sense of solidarity (Tayo, Thompson, & Thompson, 2015).

Nigeria is an extremely populous country. With such a large population, Nigeria is a natural hotspot for digital media. Nigeria is the largest market for digital media in Africa and one of the largest in the world. The country's large and young population, combined with increasing internet penetration, has made it an attractive market for digital media companies. In recent years, there has been significant growth in digital media usage in Nigeria. This includes the use of social media platforms, online video platforms, and streaming services. Many Nigerian consumers also use their mobile devices to access online content, including news, entertainment, and other types of information. Digital media has also played a role in the

growth of e-commerce in Nigeria, with more and more people shopping online for a wide range of products and services .

This is due to Nigeria's high internet penetration rate, as well as the country's large population of smartphone users. Nigeria is one of the most active and engaged digital media countries in the world. From the year 2000, Nigeria had experienced a successful internet penetration rate. According World Bank (2020), Nigeria's internet penetration rate was around 12% in 2010. However, by 2020, the country's internet penetration rate had reached over 36%, indicating a significant increase in the number of people with access to the internet in Nigeria (World bank, 2020). In 2020, there was a 52.32% increase in internet users in Nigeria.

There are several factors that have contributed to the growth in internet penetration in Nigeria. One of the main factors has been the proliferation of mobile devices, which has made it easier for people to access the internet. In addition, the expansion of broadband infrastructure, including the deployment of fiber optic cables, has also played a role in increasing internet access in the country (Nwachukwu & Onyenankeya, 2017). Finally, the development of e-commerce and other online services has also contributed to the growth in internet usage in Nigeria (Gabriel, Ogbuigwe, & Ahiauzu, 2016). Additionally, the presence of local ISPs and a growing number of mobile users have helped to drive the growth of internet access in Nigeria (Nwachukwu & Onyenankeya, 2017). Nigerians have been able to access the internet at an increasing rate since the emergence of new smartphones that are more affordable and the building of fiber optic infrastructure. This high penetration rate means that a large number of Nigerians have access to digital media.

Among Nigeria's mobile internet providers, MTN is the main provider. In Nigeria, MTN has over 65 million internet subscribers (Akintaro, 2022). MTN has recently been licensed to operate mobile payments by the Central Bank of Nigeria. Another leading mobile provider is Globacom, based in Lagos, Nigeria's 9mobile, and Airtel. Out of over 190 countries, Nigeria

is among the 60 nations that have the cheapest and most expensive mobile data rates. African nations rank Nigeria among the lowest for mobile data costs (Solène Benhaddou, 2021).

4.1 The Rise of Social media users in Nigeria

Nigeria has some of the largest smartphone ownership rates, meaning social media could be profitable. Approximately 33 million Nigerians use social media (Jacob, 2021). WhatsApp and Facebook are the most popular. Afterward, Instagram and Messenger. Social media usage is high among young adults in Nigeria. Approximately 33 million Nigerians (of any age bracket) had used one or more social media platforms since 2021 (Sasu, 2022).

It is interesting to note the gender disparity in internet usage in the country. All age groups show the male audience share is higher than the female audience share. At that time, 41.7 percent of Nigeria's social media users were female, while 58.3 percent were male (Sasu, 2022). Social media has become an important platform for expressing opinions and engaging in public discourse, and the fact that more males are using social media could be a contributing factor to their higher level of engagement in social and political issues.

It is important to note, however, that this does not mean that females in Nigeria are not interested in or engaged in social and political issues. It may simply mean that they are not as visible or vocal on social media platforms or in other public forums as much as their male counterparts. Gender inequality and discrimination against women are still major issues in Nigeria, and it is important to work towards creating more opportunities and platforms for women to voice their opinions and participate in public discourse.

Economic growth and poverty reduction have been challenges for Nigeria, like many other developing countries. The adoption of new technologies and innovative approaches can help reduce poverty and corruption by addressing issues such as unemployment and inadequate infrastructure (Ighoshemu & Ogidiagba, 2022). By utilizing new media, this can be accomplished. As well as disseminating information, new media can promote democratic values. Furthermore, new media can help to create a more participatory society by

empowering citizens to share their views and experiences. Thus, new media can be a powerful tool for sustaining Nigeria's development. By using new media to engage citizens and promote transparency and accountability, Nigeria can create a more prosperous and democratic society.

4.2 Exploring the Relationship Between Nigerian Poverty and Media Intervention: Challenges and Opportunities.

The relationship between Nigerian poverty and media involvement has been difficult to analyze over the years. It is a challenging task to do so based on empirical or data considerations. There are no social and economic databases available for the analysis of this historical period. In addition to the measurement of poverty and the assessment of media intervention in Nigeria, these databases could also provide insights into the dynamics of poverty and the impact of media intervention on it. Taking into consideration the media scrutiny and program implementation patterns that are taking place, insights gained from this study may provide implications concerning the targeting of programs and sensitivity studies of poverty.

While it is clear that poverty is a serious issue in Nigeria, the role that media plays in perpetuating or alleviating poverty is less clear. On one hand, media can be a powerful tool for raising awareness about poverty and its causes, and can also be used to advocate for change (Suleiman & Ojomo, 2019). On the other hand, media can also be used to exploit and sensationalize poverty, which can ultimately lead to further marginalization of the poor (Van Duyn, 2020). In recent years, there has been a growing body of research on the role of media in poverty alleviation. While this research is still in its early stages, there are some clear trends emerging. First, it is becoming increasingly clear that media can play a significant role in poverty alleviation, particularly when it is used to raise awareness about the issue and to advocate for change. Second, while media can be a powerful tool for poverty

alleviation, it can also be used to exploit and sensationalize poverty, which can ultimately lead to further marginalization of the poor.

By utilizing new media as a public sphere, citizens may form differing views regarding their ability to influence political decisions as well as their interest in national issues like poverty. Media have long played an important role in shaping, expressing, and consuming public opinion (Halloran, 1970). How does Nigeria's digital media facilitate citizen debates around issues and hold the government accountable for ending poverty? Public debates on poverty issues and policies have greatly benefited from the use of digital media in Nigeria. Making public policy requires a complex decision-making process in a modern and democratic political system. Public policy is undoubtedly one of the most important aspects of governance, according to Jega (2003).

Public opinion often plays a significant role in policymaking. According to Ugumanim, Bassey, Obo, et al (2014) study, Nigeria's political system does not reflect the views of Nigerians. Nigerian politicians rarely take Nigerian citizens' opinions into consideration when making policy decisions (Obo & Obo, 2013). It is challenging for individuals to form rational critical opinions that can challenge established power structures because of the fragmentation caused by mass media, according to Habermas. In fact, mass media actually serve more as a platform for passive spectatorship, stale news, and publicity. New media enable citizens to actively participate in society. Despite Habermas's different view of how communication can take place if institutions are freed from restrictions that govern communication, they may promote the consensus that Habermas argues is necessary for democratic participation. Social media and the Internet have established a balanced public sphere.

Aside from this, the relationship between the media and the Nigerian government has remained complex and dynamic over time. In general, the media and the government work together to serve the public good (Rachel Pollack Ichou & Unesco, 2018). However, when they have political differences, the media is used by politicians as a platform for their

political agendas. In the course of performing these functions, they have opposing political views. When there are political disagreements between the government and the people, the media, is often used as a mouthpiece for the former. This is because both governments and media organizations have political interests; they are run by people with power who want to get their way in society. When working towards this end, both governments and media organizations will use facts to support their viewpoints - disregarding or dismissing facts that do not suit their purposes (Bennett & Livingston, 2018).

In order to maintain unity and stability in the nation, it is imperative that the media and government maintain a cordial relationship. Both institutions strive to provide information and entertainment to their citizens in their capacity as stakeholders in the development of their countries (Adenle, 2020). Their responsibilities also include law and order and public safety. This is why it's important for both sides to respect facts when negotiating with each other. Agreements cannot be reached if one side disrespects facts or refuses to cooperate with the other side's factual statements. Legislation becomes necessary when both sides disagree on facts. As a result, the conflict between the media and government is prevented rather than promoted. As an example, both parties press for laws that support their interests. Due to this, one party is favored over another, which adversely affects societal development. Legislation should protect all parties and allow them to pursue their interests without fear of reprisals from government authorities or private harassment by a few factions within society.

According to what has been written above, maintaining unity and stability between the media and government is difficult, but not impossible. Both institutions use news reporting as a platform to advance their own agendas when they have political disagreements- resulting in conflict rather than cooperation (Chibuwe, 2012). It is unfortunate that the media is at the center of the conflict between these two institutions. When they disagree politically, both institutions use news reporting to advance their own agendas. To avoid this, laws must be made that promote cooperation between government and media without favoring one party over another. Having mutual respect for facts makes cooperation between both institutions easier and results in better outcomes for society.

We explore factors related to media influence from the past to the present in order to better understand why poverty persists in Nigeria despite economic growth and decades of poverty alleviation programs. At certain historical moments, the media can have a pivotal impact on poverty dynamics and persistence. The reason for this is that these media channels influence the way institutions and actors interact within political, economic, and governance structures. It is necessary to examine the mechanisms that hold these past influences responsible for reproducing and affecting poverty dynamics over time. The concept of poverty has many dimensions in terms of the context in which it occurs. The poor are disadvantaged in terms of opportunity, empowerment, and security. In particular, they are vulnerable to diseases, violence, and other threats that are a result of pollution, climate change, and other factors that have a negative impact on their health (Dapel, 2018). In addition to being insecure, powerless, and excluded from society as a whole, having a poverty problem means being unable to contribute effectively to society. The media is not exempt either. It often occurs because the environment lacks adequate public services, such as access to information and the internet.

Digital media outlets in Nigeria have grown exponentially since 2000. Many offline newspapers have been transformed into big online publications such as The Guardian (Nigeria), Punch (Nigeria), The Nigerian Observer, The Nation Online, Premium Times, Naij.com, Sahara Reporters, and Legit.ng. These outlets provide local and international news coverage, along with features ranging from political commentary to sports, entertainment, and lifestyle. Most news websites aim to push the boundaries of investigative journalism and incisive journalism. Additionally, many of these outlets have embraced the use of social media, utilizing platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to reach a wider audience and interact with followers. In addition to news outlets, Nigeria is home to a growing number of digital media startups. These startups are harnessing technology to solve problems and create new opportunities for Nigerians. Examples include BudgIT, a platform that makes public budgets more transparent and accessible. A major role of the Nigerian new

media has been to act as a watchdog since its inception, holding power and government accountable for their actions.

4.3 Dilemma in Poverty Reduction

There is no denying that the government understands the power it has at its disposal. A number of different acts of repression have taken place against the media in the past few years, including intimidation, detention, and censorship. Nigerian new media can contribute to the growth of participatory politics in the country. In other words, new media, depending on the context in which they are used, are able to contribute to poverty reduction in various ways (Livingstone & Lunt, 2013). Over the past few years, there have been several stories about how digital technology can be a positive influence on our lives, but this illusion of directness is causing ineffective policymaking because it does not take into consideration the many challenges that this process has to overcome. Media participation is imperative in poverty alleviation programs in order to create the impression that these programs are working or not. Alternatively, it can also be used as a communication tool in order to inform the public about the detrimental effects of political influence on poverty reduction by using it as a channel to inform them of these challenges. Educating the public about poverty reduction can be done through the media.

Garcia, Kohl, Ruengsorn, and Zislin (2006) argue that overcoming poverty in Nigeria will be challenging due to a variety of factors, including poor management of anti-poverty programs, a lack of economic growth, and a lack of health and education resources. In their view, policies and programs that provide opportunities and improve the capabilities of the poor are one of the most critical components of growth. Education, health care, employment, and agricultural development are some of the most significant of these. In many studies it has been found that economic growth is an imperative factor for decreasing poverty in developing countries, however, Nigeria has a deviant case in that it has substantial economic growth that has not led to any decrease in poverty. According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, it is estimated that as of 2020, 40 percent of Nigerians are living in poverty

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(National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2019). Nigeria will not release its 2021 poverty profile until 2022, according to reports. It is estimated that 90 million Nigerians, or 45 percent of the country's population, live in poverty (World Bank Group, 2022). Even though there is a popular expectation that Nigerian democracy will be successful, poverty levels seem to be increasing rather than decreasing in the country. There have been various ways in which successive governments in Nigeria have dealt with the issue of poverty since the return of democracy in 1999.

The fourth republic was launched on 29 May 1999 with a new constitution. In addition to electing a president, Nigeria's population was called upon to elect state governors and members of state Houses of Assembly. A significant role was played by the new media during this period, as it had done during the current regime. Between 1999 and 2003, the media played a crucial role in exposing corruption, human rights abuses, electoral malpractices, etc., which led to the government cracking down on them. This was because "the new media had become an important player for civil society" (Uwakwe 2010:5). As a result of this study, the role of new media in poverty issues has been examined under democratic rule since 1999. This will help us understand how journalists, bloggers, and commentators covered poverty topics under democracy using the new media.

There have been several promises regarding press freedom since independence, but these promises have never been fulfilled (Oyebola 2006:11) - showing that press freedom has been more unsuccessful than successful (Uwakwe 2010:10). The news industry seems to be in a state of flux, however, due to developments like the proliferation of online publications across the country, particularly Lagos - where over 5000 articles are published every day, suggesting an increase in competition among journalists (Oyebola 2006:4). Alternative sources of information include controversial internet news websites such as Sahara Reporters, Premium Times, Leadership, PUNCH, etc. - giving readers access to information never before possible (Oyebola 2006:12). In spite of this development, journalists in Nigeria still face several challenges that limit their freedom. There are many challenges to this profession, such as lack of self-government, corruption, political and economic dominance,

lack of protection for journalists and other media workers, threats to free speech, etc. (Uwakwe 2010:11). For example, in 1999, the Obasanjo administration threatened Nigerian digital media companies. Government officials were concerned about the content of the journalism produced by these companies. According to Dataphyte, a media research organization, there were over 179 recorded incidents of violence against journalists and media workers in Nigeria between 1997 and 2020, resulting in 78 deaths (Abdullah, 2020). These abuses included physical assault by the police, destruction of equipment, harassment, intimidation, and obstruction. In November 2002, the premises of three independent newspapers were invaded by the police, and several journalists were arrested for publishing stories critical of the Rivers state government (Uzuegbunam, 2012). In June 2003, officials of the National Sports Commission attempted to buy up all copies of Tell magazine before it was released, due to the magazine containing an article about corruption in the All African Games (Tertsakian, 2003).

In April 2012, the This Day office in Abuja was destroyed by a bomb planted by Boko Haram, highlighting the ongoing danger journalists face in Nigeria (Brock, 2012). The internet provocateurs may have believed that the Nigerian government has used the Boko Haram militant group as a tool to intimidate and threaten the media. According to them, the government is targeting journalists who report negative news about the government or its policies through the group. There has been a history of Boko Haram attacking media outlets and abducting journalists in order to prevent them from disseminating certain types of news. In addition, online critics believe that the government has used the threat of Boko Haram to suppress criticism of its policies and to discourage independent reporting.

According to Keita (2013), Boko Haram accounted for only one-fifth of attacks against the press in Nigeria in 2012–most were committed by government forces and officials, according to CPJ research–but the group's brutal tactics caused much greater fear. Further in his article Keita (2013), pinpointed an email to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) from Daily Trust investigative editor Nuruddeen Abdallah who further expressed his views; "Generally, there is a shift on the part of the media from blaming all attacks and killings on the group

unless it claims responsibility. So, you now find the media using 'gunmen' and 'attackers' to describe suspects of attacks that are without clear signatures of the insurgents. We are now being more careful with all the information," including "the usual security agencies' spins on their 'successes' in tackling the militant group." (Keita, 2013)

It is important to note that the use of Boko Haram to intimidate and threaten the media is not a confirmed fact, but rather an allegation made by some individuals and organizations. While it is true that Boko Haram has attacked media outlets and abducted journalists, it is not clear if the Nigerian government has directly or indirectly used the group for these purposes (Demarest, Godefroidt, & Langer, 2020). It is also worth noting that the Nigerian government has condemned the actions of Boko Haram and has made efforts to combat the group and protect the safety of journalists. It is important for the media to continue reporting on the situation in Nigeria objectively and accurately, without fear of intimidation or threats.

In a similar fashion, numerous other Nigerian laws contain secrecy clauses that forbid the disclosure of information in the public interest. In many cases, courts cannot compel the disclosure of such information. It is possible to find such secrecy clauses in the Evidence Act, Section 168, Section 2 of the Federal Commissions (Privileges and Immunities) Act, Cap 130, LFN, 1990: Section 10(2) of the Public Complaints Commission Act; and Section 13 of the Statistics Act.

Historically, Nigeria's government has been creating multiple institutions and agencies to combat poverty. These institutions and agencies include the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Operation Feed the Nation, the People's Bank, Rural Banking, Universal Basic Education (UBE), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), among others. However, none of the above initiatives have had a significant impact on the poverty rate in Nigeria. In addition to coordination issues, insufficient implementation of sustainable strategies, vague policies on poverty eradication, setting unachievable goals, and insufficient monitoring were among the

challenges identified by think tanks. As a result of the lack of effective coordination and collaboration between government agencies, unnecessary rivalry resulted.

YEAR	PROGRAMS	OBJECTIVE	RESULTS
1976	Operation Feed The Nation (OFN)	Boost Nigerian food and cash crop production	Oil revenue surged, causing Nigerians to migrate to the city, leaving agricultural opportunities.
1980	Green Revolution Programme	To ensure self-sufficiency in food production with modern tech.	A shortage of food is caused by farmers' unwillingness to adopt new technologies
1986	Structural Adjustment Programme(SAP)	Reducing poverty and checking economic crises	Manufacturing sector underperformed due to poor implementation
1986	National Directorate of Employment(NDE)	Promoting skills acquisition and entrepreneurship	Training Nigerian youths on different skills showed limited success.
1987	Better life for Rural Women	The purpose is to encourage self-help and development for rural women.	It was a small achievement for women's rights and their awareness of becoming self-sufficient
1994	Family Support Programme (FSP)	Specifically for rural dwellers	Monitoring and supervision were lacking
1994	The Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF)	Rehabilitation and provision of basic facilities	The contract has been criticized for fraud and nepotism
1997	Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)	Providing credit facilities to help rural areas develop cottage industries.	It failed because of corruption, poor supervision, and poor management.

2000	Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)	To provide employment	Poor management
2000	Bank of Industry	Financing SMEs and accelerating industrial growth	It is difficult for the bank to operate due to poor outreach performance and politics
2001	National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)	Development of rural infrastructure, and health care, and education.	It performs poorly because of poor management and corruption.
2004	National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS)	The provision of social amenities	Failed because 70% of the country's population was still poor.
2012	Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)	Nigerian citizens can benefit directly from critical infrastructure projects and social safety net programs	Government officials diverted funds set aside to finance the program.
2016	Need for Power Program (N-POWER Programme)	Increasing employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills among youth	Youths without connections are rarely trained to work in temporary jobs.
2016	Conditional Cash Transfer Program (CCT)	Long-term cash transfers to the most vulnerable households	Challenges like reaching eligible beneficiaries and ensuring that funds are used correctly.
2016	Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSF)	Enrolling primary school children and reducing dropouts with free lunches.	Poorly prepared food and not enough for the pupils.

4.4 President Olusegun Obasanjo's Era

During the Olusegun Obasanjo era, 70 percent of Nigerians lived below the poverty line (George, 2021). Based on these evaluations, several presidential panels were formed to study past poverty alleviation schemes and improve them.

These findings and recommendations were used to implement the National Poverty Alleviation Programme in 2001. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo implemented several policies and initiatives aimed at reducing poverty.

To resolve this problem, new legislation was enacted by the federal government. Poverty was addressed by the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) in 2000. According to NAPEP, which follows the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), core poverty (extreme poverty) will be eradicated by 2010. The plan includes the following points:

- Coordinate all federal poverty eradication efforts;
- Tracking and monitoring all federal poverty eradication activities;
- Keeping a comprehensive and detailed database of all Nigerian poverty-eradication activities;
- To assess the impact of all poverty eradication efforts in Nigeria and recommend the necessary revisions and policies for better effectiveness; and;
- Directly implementing scaled key priority projects in key sectors. (NAPEP Today; 2007).

Among NAPEP's missions were the eradication of poverty, reforming anti-poverty institutions, and facilitating and overseeing government programs and schemes. The Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) aims to reduce poverty. Program goals are to develop capacity, provide attachments, improve production, provide credit, and promote youth enterprises. Rural Infrastructure Development (RIDS) focuses on energy and power supply as part of the scheme. A top priority of the NAPEP objectives is also the Social Welfare Services Scheme, which provides children and young adults with education and healthcare, microcredit and rural telecommunications facilities, public transportation, and maintenance

services. As part of the National Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS), agricultural, mineral, and other natural resource development is promoted, along with land conservation for the benefit of businesses (NAPEP Today; 2007). Five key areas are the focus of the program: education, health care, rural infrastructure, urban development, and food security. Five key areas are the focus of the program: education, health care, rural infrastructure, urban development, and food security.

Thus, NAPEP was set up to offer a holistic approach to solving Nigeria's poverty problems. Although ambitious, it does not seem to be doing any better than its predecessors (Omotola, 2008). A take-off grant of N6 billion was approved to establish poverty eradication projects in all 50 states, the Federal Capital Territory, and 774 local governments (George, 2021). Despite this, little progress has been made. There was little difference in poverty-eradication outcomes despite the involvement of different ministries. Researchers found duplication of efforts had little effect. Despite training 130,000 youths and engaging 216,000 people through the program, a majority of the beneficiaries were still poor according to the 2008 study (Iwuoha & Obi, 2012).

The privatization of state-owned enterprises, as well as the liberalization of trade, were also introduced by the Obasanjo administration to stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty. The poverty rate in Nigeria remained high while Obasanjo was president, and the country remained one of the poorest countries in the world. Most critics used the media outlets to criticize Obasanjo for privatizing state-owned enterprises in 2000, arguing that the move would only benefit a small number of people (the elites) and lead to increased corruption (VOA, 2009). Some media outlets also accused Obasanjo of nepotism, arguing that cronies and friends of the president bought many of the companies that were sold off (Tume Ahemba, 2007). The Nigerian media has criticized President Olusegun Obasanjo for his role in the privatization of the country's power sector. In an editorial, the Daily Trust said that "it is now obvious that the process was flawed from the start" and that "the president must take responsibility for the mess." The newspaper also accused Obasanjo of "arrogance" and "insensitivity" in the way he handled the issue (Daily Trust, 2007). The Vanguard (2011)

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reported that "the manner in which the power sector was privatized was fraught with so many irregularities that it calls for a thorough investigation." The newspaper also accused Obasanjo of "blatant disregard" for the National Assembly and called on him to "come clean" on the issue.

In the article published online by Vanguard (2011), Ishaq Modibbo Kawu solely criticizes the idea of privatization as ideological garbage;

" Our ruling class is actually a group of glorified thieves, and privatization became effusively embraced, because it allowed them to pretend that they were doing something more noble than theft, by privatizing national assets, while spewing the ideological garbage that 'government has no business with business'; 'only the private-sector can profitably run enterprises', and such utter tosh! In truth, what was being done was to uproot Nigeria as we knew it, especially from the 1970s, when import-substitution industrialization at least created jobs, around Nigeria. The process of privatization which the Obasanjo years foisted on Nigeria, has led to the cheap sales of many strategic national assets; stripping of valuables from these assets; de-industrialization and the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs; and the entrenchment in the economy and political space of Nigeria, of the worst specimens of humans without patriotism, but an obscene gluttony and greed for theft and more theft!" (Vanguard, 2011)

As a result of the failure of privatization, the global media became interested. The Guardian of the United Kingdom noted the move was "largely seen as a political maneuver aimed at benefiting Obasanjo's cronies and weakening his opponents". In a report made in Reuters, many Nigerians said Mr. Obasanjo privatized the company to reward allies (Tume Ahemba, 2007). Between 1999 and 2003, Nigeria had the most corrupt political system in the world (Silva, 2013). According to an article published by BBC, Nigeria is widely seen as the most corrupt place on Earth (Orjinmo, 2022).

4.4.1 Expectations unmet after privatization

As a result of privatizing the electricity sector, electricity prices have increased, electricity supplies have become unreliable, and the government is unable to regulate the sector. Stakeholders have expressed doubt over the viability of the privatization of the distribution and generation arms of the industry for over eight years ago. In November 2013, the Federal Government privatized six successor power generation companies and 11 distribution firms (NERC, 2013). $469mn was paid by investors for a higher percentage stake (Vanguard, 2013). Eight years after the unbundling of the PHCN, the nation has not registered significant milestones in the power sector, according to Vanguard. According to Statista (2022), a 36.15 percent increase in the cost of electricity meters, in addition, the crisis rocking Nigeria's power sector seems to be expanding annually despite efforts by the Federal Government and the private sector in managing it.

Privatization is a key aspect of capitalism because it involves the transfer of ownership and control of businesses and other assets from the public sector to the private sector. This shift in ownership and control allows for market forces, such as supply and demand, to determine the allocation of resources, rather than the government. In this way, privatization can be seen as a way of advancing the principles of capitalism by increasing competition, efficiency, and profitability.

Additionally, privatization can also be seen as a form of deregulation, as it often involves the removal of government regulations and controls over the private sector. This can create a more flexible and dynamic economy, but it can also lead to increased inequality and other social and economic problems. In general, privatization is an important aspect of capitalism and has both positive and negative effects on society (Adams & Mengistu, 2008).

There has been media coverage of how privatization has increased inequality in Nigeria, as private companies may prioritize profit over providing affordable services to low-income individuals and communities. This has resulted in poorer communities suffering from inadequate access to basic services such as healthcare, education, housing, and

transportation, while wealthier individuals and companies have access to better services. This has further widened the gap between the rich and the poor and has led to increased poverty and social unrest throughout the country. Furthermore, the lack of regulation and oversight of private companies has resulted in increased corruption, as the companies have the potential to exploit the system for their own gain. This has caused Nigeria to fall behind in terms of economic and social development, as resources are not being evenly distributed among the population.

Privatization led to job loss in the Nigerian labor market, as private companies may operate more efficiently and reduce their workforce in order to increase profits. This can lead to increased unemployment and a negative impact on the economy. Privatization in Nigeria led to job losses in the labor market for several reasons. Firstly, private companies are driven by the need to maximize profits, which necessitates reducing overhead costs. Therefore, one of the ways to achieve this is to reduce their workforce. This is done through layoffs, early retirement, and other restructuring measures (Adams & Mengistu, 2008). Secondly, the influx of foreign companies in the Nigerian market has increased competition, forcing local firms to lower their costs in order to remain competitive. This often means cutting back on the number of employees. Lastly, the privatization of state-run enterprises has resulted in the displacement of many public-sector workers who have been unable to find new jobs in the private sector. This has exacerbated the already high unemployment rate in the country.

Privatization of Nigerian public enterprises created opportunities for corruption, as private companies influence government decisions in order to gain a competitive advantage or secure contracts. This can be seen in the Nigerian oil industry, where private companies have lobbied to gain access to lucrative contracts, and in the telecom industry, where private companies have benefited from government decisions. It has also been seen in the privatization of banks, where private companies have been accused of using their influence to secure government loans. In addition, privatization has led to the creation of monopolies, which have been used to manipulate prices and limit competition (Adams & Mengistu, 2008).

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The privatization of Nigerian public enterprises has also led to a lack of accountability and transparency, as private companies are not subject to the same levels of scrutiny as public entities. This has allowed companies to take advantage of their positions and engage in unethical practices.

There were mixtures of viewpoints from the media especially the news websites and social media on how privatization led to a decrease in the quality of services provided, as private companies prioritized profit over investing in the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure or services. Some argued that privatization leads to a decrease in quality due to the profit motive of private companies, which causes them to cut corners and invest less in infrastructure or services than public companies would (Stephen, Omokhudu, & Anthony, 2016). They argued that public companies are better able to provide consistent and reliable services due to the fact that they are not driven by the same profit motives and are incentivized to invest in the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure and services (Adams & Mengistu, 2008).

On the other hand, some argued that privatization can actually lead to an increase in the quality of services provided, as private companies have more efficient management and are able to use innovative methods to maximize efficiency and reduce costs (Premium Times, 2018). They argued that private companies are better able to respond to customer needs and requirements than public companies, and are better able to innovate and invest in new technologies and services.

Approximately 65% of Facebook users in Nigeria criticized the government as of 2011 for privatizing Nigerian public enterprises (Etieyibo, 2011). As a result, companies have been able to control essential resources and services, which has contributed to income inequality in Nigeria. As a result, many public enterprises have been closed or restructured, resulting in job losses.

As Obasanjo's administration had strained relations with Nigerian media over frequent criticism of NAPEP activities. Obasanjo was accused of stifling the media and suppressing dissent. His government harassed journalists and censored the media. Media outlets critical of his leadership were regularly threatened during his two terms. Nigerian Broadcasting Commission Act of 1999, which revokes media licenses, was also passed by his government (NBC, 2004). There was also a rise in defamation and libel penalties. The measures were viewed as Obasanjo's attempt to control the media. Many critics argue that NBC has too much power to regulate and censor content, limiting media diversity. The Act is also insufficient in addressing issues of media ownership and concentration, which could result in the dominance of a few large corporations. Diverse and independent information sources can be restricted.

For example, armed State Security Service agents seized documents, equipment, and money at Insider Weekly's Lagos offices on September 4. They seized the entire print run of the September 5 edition, sealed off the offices, and replaced the locks (Refworld, 2005). Several employees went into hiding. As a result of the raid, many private newspapers published editorials criticizing the administration; the SSS harassed the media widely within the media industry.

In their long but fruitless lobbying effort for the Freedom of Information Act, local journalists continued to push for greater access to government information and whistleblower protection. Several civil society groups introduced the bill more than five years ago, but it has stagnated. The Freedom of Information Act was later passed by the House on May 28, 2011, but was yet to be ratified by the Senate and Obasanjo's predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan (Simwa, 2017).

The House of Senate demanded where the N12 billion poverty reduction fund was found after a few media investigations into NAPEP operations (Vanguard, 2013). Investigations revealed that while N10 billion was locked up in failed financial institutions, N150 million was paid to a contractor for work that was not completed on NAPEP's tricycle project. Also,

the Senate Public Accounts Committee found evidence that the agency paid customs duties on undeliverable spare parts. Furthermore, N1.4 billion was paid to unchecked projects that were not verified by the Auditor General of the Federation (AGF) in order to avoid audit risks (Vanguard, 2013).

In order to alleviate poverty in Nigeria, the government has made a number of efforts. According to Hussaini (2014), poor implementation processes always result in program setbacks. Influential cliques monopolize benefits. The main beneficiaries in microcredit applications are supposed to be cooperatives or women groups, but they are often replaced by their families, friends, or followers. In the wake of the Poverty Alleviation Programme's failure, the Federal Government began to say that the 10 billion Naira allocated for the program was wasted.

In light of repeated failures of such government interventions, it is evident that the current strategy needs to be reworked. Identifying the problem is the first step to ensuring success. Identifying the problem is the first step to ensuring success. Often, beneficiaries are regarded as members of the ruling party when it should be unemployed Nigerians, regardless of their politics. It is crucial that politicians do not hijack such projects for their own purposes. In addition, monitoring the activities of officials implementing poverty alleviation programs is crucial. The success of such sensitive projects on a national scale depends on those overseeing them being trustworthy and dedicated. NAPEP's project monitoring committee also failed to oversee the project adequately. This has unavoidable consequences. Programs designed to alleviate poverty have been plagued by corruption and mismanagement.

4.5 Yar'Adua's Era

During Yar'Adua's presidency, he designed a seven-point agenda intended to tackle poverty. The media criticized President Yar'Adua for not alleviating poverty in Nigeria with his leadership style. Human Rights Watch, Reuters, and Voice of America contributed many media reports. Meanwhile, domestic media outlets were also exerting pressure on the

government. It is undeniable that the Yar'Adua administration tolerated mainstream media criticism the most. Yar'Adua blames the previous administration for Nigeria's failures, but social commentators blame him for it. Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua, who served as president from 2007 to 2010, is difficult to evaluate in terms of poverty reduction (Ashby, 2007). However, Yar'Adua implemented several policies and initiatives to tackle poverty and improve Nigerian living standards. In the oil-rich Niger Delta region, where poverty rates are particularly high, the Ministry of Niger Delta provided development and social services. The country remained one of the poorest in the world during Yar'Adua's presidency. Under Yar'Adua's leadership, Nigeria's economy was challenged by the global economic downturn, which likely limited the impact of his efforts to reduce poverty.

However, Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua has declared the country's energy crisis a national emergency, but media groups have called for him to also declare a state of emergency in the health service. Yar'Adua has said that rehabilitating the transport and electricity sectors is a priority, but has not commented on how he will provide basic services to the poor (Olufemi, 2023). Media community and aid workers were shocked when Yar'Adua announced he would suspend a project initiated by President Obasanjo to construct a modern health center in each of the country's 774 local council districts (BBC, 2007). According to BBC (2007), the project was worth 18 billion naira ($145 million) and was given to a company believed to be owned by a former aide to Obasanjo

Umaru Musa Yar'Adua had silent conflicts with the media during his tenure. Some journalists and media outlets did criticize Yar'Adua's administration for its handling of the economy, corruption, and other issues, but it is not clear that there was a concerted effort by the media to go against his administration. Yar'Adua was known for his quiet and reserved demeanor, and he was not as confrontational or authoritarian as some of his predecessors. Overall, Yar'Adua's relationship with the media in Nigeria was relatively peaceful compared to some of his predecessors, but there were still instances of government attempts to suppress critical voices and limit freedom of expression.In the context of his illness, which resulted in

a delay in the administration's goals, it was finally accepted by Nigerian citizens that the light is still a long way from the Nigerian people.

The press in Nigeria has been accused of acting in a "cowardly, unpatriotic manner" by failing to report on the state of President Umaru Yar'Adua's health in a timely manner (Whiteman, 2010). The media houses have been called an "accomplice to the bad governance in Nigeria" for their failure to provide needed public information in a timely manner (Whiteman, 2010). It is suggested that the media should review itself and take steps to reinforce the trust it has previously earned. its collective failure to provide needed public information at the right time makes it an accomplice to the bad governance in Nigeria. The online community argues that the media should have sent reporters to Saudi Arabia to provide up-to-date reports on the president's health, and calls for self-evaluation by the news media. It is time for the media to separate itself from the political leadership and lecture the ownership about journalistic duties to the society (News Wires, 2010). In short, the relative freedom enjoyed now must be used to strengthen our democracy, not to weaken it. In short, the relative freedom enjoyed now must be used to strengthen our democracy, not to weaken it. Media is the last hope for the common man. Nigeria will not be safe if it is hijacked by selfish and greedy political and retired military elites.

The media is a powerful tool for informing the public and holding governments accountable for their actions. It is paramount that it is handled with the highest level of integrity and professionalism. Nigerian media owners who mill around the seat of power need to understand that their presence there may be seen as a conflict of interest. It is therefore better that they focus on their original business activities such as exporting sugar or rice and leave the media to those who can manage it with the highest level of integrity.

The press in Nigeria has the responsibility to report on important public matters, including the health of government officials. However, the media in Nigeria has been facing challenges, including threats of violence and legal suits, that have made it difficult for

journalists to do their job. In addition, government censorship and the lack of access to public information have also been major impediments.

In response to these challenges, Nigerian media outlets have been putting in place measures to protect journalists and ensure they can do their job without fear of repercussion. These measures include the adoption of a code of conduct for journalists, the establishment of a media council to monitor and enforce ethical standards, and the development of an online platform for whistleblowers.

However, the press in Nigeria failed to serve its duty of providing the public with accurate and timely information about the state of President Yar'Adua's health. (Pindiga & Taylor, 2018) argues that from the start of his illness, the press only reported vague, filtered information that was provided by the government. This lack of access to information led to a lack of trust in the government and created an environment of suspicion and uncertainty. Furthermore, the press was accused of being complicit in covering up the real state of the president's health and was accused of spreading false information. This lack of trust in the press, as well as its inability to provide the public with accurate and timely information, has had a damaging effect on the public's perception of the government and its ability to govern.

Yar'Adua died on May 6, 2010, after failing to achieve his goal of eliminating 'all forms of poverty in Nigeria' as he promised. Yar'Adua's death was a major blow to the nation, and his absence was felt by many of the country's citizens. Despite his best intentions, his economic policies and initiatives did not make a significant dent in Nigeria's poverty levels. His government did manage to implement a number of economic reforms, including the creation of a unified minimum wage, the reduction of import tariffs, and the regulation of oil prices. However, these reforms were not enough to bring about a reduction in poverty. According to the 2010 Harmonized Nigerian Living Standard Survey, 62.6% of Nigerians still lived in extreme poverty ("Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2008-2010 | GHDx," 2019).

On 29 May 2011, Goodluck Jonathan became President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, taking over from Yar'Adua. Accordingly, the implications are that despite ten years of democratic rule, Nigeria cannot enjoy good governance. Upon taking office in 2011, Goodluck Jonathan laid out a transformation agenda he called a roadmap from 2011 to 2015 to address the poverty challenges that Nigeria faces (Awojobi, 2015). It was part of his transformation agenda that the president placed an emphasis on the economy with the objective of increasing economic growth and improving citizen welfare. An important part of his agenda, which was geared towards modernizing the existing system, was to improve its performance. It is the government's intention to implement a new approach to economic management in order to rectify the irregularities that were noticeable in previous economic policies.

4.6 President Goodluck Jonathan's Era

Goodluck Jonathan, who served as President of Nigeria from 2010 to 2015, had a contentious relationship with the media in Nigeria. Jonathan was criticized for his handling of several major issues, including the Boko Haram insurgency, corruption, and the economy, and he faced criticism from journalists and media outlets for his lack of transparency and accountability. In 2011, Jonathan signed the Freedom of Information Act into law, which was intended to promote transparency and accountability in government, but its implementation was slow and inadequate (Vanguard, 2011). There were several instances of government repression of the media during Jonathan's presidency, including the arrest and detention of journalists and the shutdown of media outlets. Overall, the media's approach to covering Jonathan's administration was likely critical and skeptical, given the challenges and controversies facing his government.

As a result of the fact that 30% of the federal government's spending in 2011 was devoted to fuel subsidies, which represented about 118 percent of federal capital expenditures in 2011, policymakers argue that continuing to subsidize fuel consumption would not be economically feasible (Onuah, 2012). As a further argument in favor of eliminating or

reducing fuel subsidies, once again, it is argued that fuel subsidies have substantially reduced the oil price in the domestic market in order to maintain an artificially low domestic price, which has discouraged investments in the oil industry in the country. There is a solid consensus among many politicians that it would be better to remove or reduce fuel subsidies (VOA, 2011). The Nigerian economy is highly dependent on this sector for its development, and therefore, the current situation does not favor this sector either. There have been immediate impacts on the poor and vulnerable segments of the population as a result of petroleum subsidies. These impacts need to be mitigated as quickly as possible (Muhammad, 2020). During the time in which the petroleum subsidy was eliminated by the Jonathan administration in 2012, a program known as the Subsidy and Reinvestment Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) was devised in order to improve Nigeria's infrastructure and strengthen its social safety net programs shortly after .

Although media investigations have determined that the campaign coordinators who were in charge of the 2011 campaign of President Goodluck Jonathan have been involved in this scheme, it has been confirmed that this scheme was implemented as a result. As a result, these campaign coordinators were responsible for ensuring that the scheme worked properly in order to help Jonathan win the presidency in 2015 (Muhammad, 2020). The SURE-P maintain that they are not in the position to make decisions about awarding contracts, however, many of the projects they execute are related to cronyism.

A recommendation has been made that the savings that will be made by removing fuel subsidies should be invested in critical infrastructure projects and social safety net programs that will directly benefit the Nigerian people as a whole. Hopefully, this will make a difference. It was poorly received by Nigerians when this was announced. There is no doubt that Nigeria is among the top oil producers in the world, yet its flagship product is refined gasoline imported from abroad. There are nearly 1.8 million barrels of crude oil produced by the nation on a daily basis, which is exported to other countries to be refined (CEICdata, 2018). As a result of corruption in management, the refineries at home cannot function at a high level, which is unfortunate. It has been a tradition for the Nigerian government to

subsidize fuel imports in the past as a means of making them affordable for the Nigerian people. There is no tangible benefit that Nigerians perceive as derived from the state other than the availability of cheap petrol. Because of the aforementioned reasons, the removal of the subsidies added to the suffering of Nigeria's poor (Moyo & Songwe, 2012). This is because the prices of transportation, food, and living items would have to go up without the subsidies.

However, fuel subsidies were temporarily reinstated by the Federal Government on January 3, 2012, after widespread protests. This resulted in a spike in the budget by N161 billion to accommodate the subsidy (Houeland, 2020). All in all, this led to the emergence of a revolutionary type of protest: the "Occupy Nigeria" movement. There has been a great deal of attention paid to how the media influences social movements in recent years. This has been a result of Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring. It was on Monday, January 2, 2012, that "Occupy Nigeria" began an ideological protest movement in Nigeria (Houeland, 2020). Several protests were held across the country in major cities such as Abuja, Kano, Lagos, Abuja, and others. In many states across the country, residents set fires on highways as a form of protest (Busari, 2012). With the help of social media, the protest soon spread to Washington, Brussels, and the Nigerian High Commission in London as well. As a result of these protests, there have been extensive online activism, strikes, and demonstrations have taken place. It has been extensively used by a number of social media services, such as Twitter and Facebook, to carry out the campaign (Mark, 2012). Whatever the case, ironically, in 2015 M. Buhari, his successor, raised fuel prices by 150%, but at that time, there were no tangible protests by the Occupy Nigeria movement. How did things actually pan out? What is the reason for the media's silence on the same issue they fought over during the administration of Jonathan? There are several aspects of media-driven protests that are discussed in this chapter, including the politics of those protests and the reasons why analysts place more emphasis on the political motivation of those protests than on social issues driving Occupy Nigeria in 2012 (Houeland, 2020).

According to scholars, removing subsidies from the economy was not the solution to the problem (Moyo & Songwe, 2012). Instead, they put a lot of emphasis on strengthening the currency of the country. To help reduce domestic fuel prices and eliminate subsidy programs, it is therefore important to ask how the naira can be strengthened in order to allow domestic fuel prices to be reduced. It is expected that the PMS price will stay at $1/litre as long as the naira exchange rate remains at N200 = $1 and the international price remains at $1/litre. There is a possibility that the current domestic fuel price of N97/liter if left unchanged, will rise to N200/liter, as well as subsidy payments exceeding N4 billion (NBC, 2019). Also, from feedback received on social media, it is equally evident that low-income families oppose fuel price increases, which they consider unfair to them, as can also be seen from the comments they leave on the page. Through the media, the learned and the poor have a common voice to express their concerns regarding the subsidy and what it means for their standard of living.

In the argument posed by the federal government, the removal of the subsidy will result in higher fuel prices for the people, however, they say they will be reinvesting the revenue in order to benefit the people. It is the intention of SURE-P to use the subsidy money for youth empowerment initiatives such as employment, vocational skills, and youth infrastructure. There will be some 25,000 graduates benefitting from the program, and over 6,000 establishments throughout the country will be participating in the program as well (David, 2021).

In spite of the fact that the idea of reinvesting subsidy capital into youth empowerment has been discussed, no meaningful progress has been made toward alleviating youth unemployment in Nigeria. The number of people living below the poverty line among the population was estimated in 2013 to be more than 70 percent, but the situation is still worrying (Sasu, 2022a). A few government officials would later be charged with looting funds from SURE-P by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). A law enforcement agency in Nigeria called the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is tasked with investigating financial crimes like advance fee fraud (419 fraud) and

money laundering. Clement Onubuogo, the then Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, is suspected to have diverted N664 million from the SURE-P scheme during his tenure as Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment during the Jonathan administration (Jonathan, 2017). Gabriel Suswam, the former governor of Benue state, was charged separately by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for the alleged misappropriation of N9.79 billion from the SURE-P project (Sesan, 2017). There has been a constant plague of graft and corruption in Nigerian governments throughout its history, crippling the nation's development and prosperity at every turn. Therefore, in the case where the administrators of the policies view their role as a way to enrich themselves unethically, the consequences will be disastrous.

The World Bank reported that Nigeria still had high poverty levels despite the SURE-P scheme and previous attempts at poverty alleviation (World Bank Group, 2022). SURE P faces numerous challenges, including the fact that it is not compliant with the sustainability standards set forth by the National Assembly, which is one of them (World Bank Group, 2022). As a waste of funds, the National Assembly deemed SURE P to be an ineffective program. As an observation by the National Assembly, road construction by SURE P is the same as what is being done by the Federal Ministry of Works when it comes to building roads around the country. These duplicate projects may raise concerns about funding.

In the same way that Ricardo (2013) argues, the twin events of the Boko Haram bombings and the limitations placed on SURE-P have once again placed the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan in an uncomfortable position. The Boko Haram Islamic militant group has been blamed for a series of violent attacks that have led to dozens of deaths, mostly Christians, throughout Nigeria's largely Muslim north. Many people are concerned that the attacks may spark a civil war based on the belief that violence stems from religion. While in office, Jonathan's administration attempted to diffuse the terrorist group through a variety of efforts. There has been a great deal of difficulty solving the nation's security problems over the past number of years as a result of the guerrilla style of terrorism and top-level corruption on the part of the Nigerian government. Despite this, Nigeria's economy continues to deteriorate and the move to remove fuel subsidies has sparked a nationwide strike protesting the move.

The new media believes that SURE-P was in a sorry state of decay due to corruption, marginalization, and division among members of the National Assembly, all of which contributed to its downfall. According to the Premium Times, there is a widespread belief that the government's program is only intended for members of the government and their families. In spite of the fact that the majority of the projects carried out by SURE-P were awarded to other ministries before its formation, obtaining funds for the organization's programs is a problem, making the empowerment of Nigerian youth virtually impossible due to the lack of funding. At the time Jonathan stepped down from office in 2015, the poverty rate was reported to be 90.8 percent (World Bank, 2016) .

4.7 President Muhammadu Buhari's Era

The relationship between President Muhammadu Buhari and the media in Nigeria has been fraught with tension and conflict. Buhari, who has been in office since 2015, has been criticized for his authoritarian leadership style and his tendency to suppress dissent and criticism. He has been accused of using the state security forces to intimidate and harass journalists, and several media outlets have been shut down during his tenure. In July 2021, the DSS raided the offices of the Daily Trust newspaper and arrested two journalists for publishing a report on the activities of Boko Haram militants in the northeast1. They were later released without charges. Buhari's government has also faced criticism for its handling of the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency and the rise of insecurity and violence in the country. The media in Nigeria often reports on these issues and has been critical of Buhari's administration (Soyombo, 2021). In response, Buhari and his supporters have accused the media of bias and spreading fake news (Yusuf, 2023). Overall, the relationship between Buhari and the media in Nigeria is marked by tension and mistrust.

On February 26, 2015, M. Buhari gave a speech at Chatham House titled "Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in Africa: Nigeria's Transition." He was the Presidential Candidate of the All Progressives Congress in Nigeria before beating out former President Goodluck Jonathan on May 29th same year:

"...the fall in prices of oil has brought our economic and social stress into full relief. After the rebasing exercise in April 2014, Nigeria overtook South Africa as Africa's largest economy. Our GDP is now valued at $510 billion and our economy is rated 26th in the world. Also on the bright side, inflation has been kept at single digits for a while and our economy has grown at an average of 7 percent for about a decade. But it is more of paper growth, a growth that, on account of mismanagement, profligacy, and corruption, has not translated into human development or shared prosperity. A development economist once said three questions should be asked about a country's development: One, what is happening to poverty? Two, what is happening to unemployment? And three, what is happening to inequality? The answers to these questions in Nigeria show that the current administration has created two economies in one country, a sorry tale of two nations: one economy for a few who have so much in their tiny island of prosperity; and the other economy for the many who have so little in their vast ocean of misery."
(Chatham House, 2015)

Buhari's speech pointed out the failings of Jonathan's administration while degrading the progress made by the administration. Buhari promised that he would improve Nigerians' lives as well as end corruption and terrorism. Nigerians were hopeful, just as they were with the previous government. He had such a good speech that one could be convinced that he was the salvation of the nation. In addition, his manifestos and campaign materials for the party were made available to the media and public at the time (Ikechukwu-Ibe, Aboh, & Agbedo, 2021). The campaign messages of this party were centered on the motto "CHANGE," delivered via social media in an intense, sweet-toned, and propaganda-like manner. He further noted in his Chatham speech;

In the face of dwindling revenues, a good place to start the repositioning of Nigeria's economy is to swiftly tackle two ills that have ballooned under the present administration: waste and corruption. And in doing this, I will, if elected, lead the way, with the force of personal example. On corruption, there will be no confusion as to where I stand. Corruption will have no place and the corrupt will not be appointed to my administration. First and

foremost, we will plug the holes in the budgetary process....revenues will be publicly disclosed and regularly audited. The institutions of the state dedicated to fighting corruption will be given independence and prosecutorial authority without political interference. But I must emphasize that any war waged on corruption should not be misconstrued as settling old scores or a witch hunt. I'm running for president to lead Nigeria to prosperity and not adversity. In reforming the economy, we will use savings that arise from blocking these leakages and the proceeds recovered from corruption to fund our party's social investments programs in education, health, and safety nets such as free school meals for children, emergency public works for unemployed youth and pensions for the elderly.

However, a number of social welfare interventions have been launched under Buhari's regime and the current administration since it assumed power in 2015. In 2016, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the National Social Investment Programs (NSIPs) to combat poverty and hunger throughout the country (Okino, 2020). A series of programs in the NSIP ensure that resources are distributed more fairly to vulnerable populations, including children, youth, and women. According to the organization's website, "these programs have supported more than 4 million beneficiaries country-wide through a fair and transparent process supported by the Ministry of Budget and National Planning (MBNP) as well as other notable MDAs with similar objectives."

In order to combat poverty and boost economic development, the organization offers four programs.

1. With N-Power (Nigeria), young Nigerians receive job training and education, as well as a monthly stipend of 30,000 Nigerian naira (USD $83.33).

2. Through the Conditional Cash Transfer program, the poorest can receive no-strings-attached cash, increasing consumption, reducing poverty, improving nutrition, and self-sustaining themselves.

3. The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP) is a microlending investment program aimed at young and female entrepreneurs. With the help of this program, start-up costs for businesses in Nigeria can be reduced because no interest is charged to its beneficiaries.

4. The Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSF) is a means of increasing school enrollment by providing meals to schoolchildren, particularly those living in poverty and food-insecure regions. Local farmers partner with the program, which empowers women to cook professionally, sustaining the community and fostering economic growth.

The HomeGrown School Feeding program probably took some inspiration from Thailand. Thailand developed a nutrition policy involving poverty alleviation and rural development, in addition to primary health care. Thus, its poverty rate dropped from 27 percent to 9 percent. During the same period, Thailand's rate of underweight children fell by nearly 10%. ("N-SIP - NATIONAL SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME," 2016)

On the other hand, there were controversies over the Modified Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Nigeria, which shares the same name as that of Thailand.

1. The vendors complained that the prices of food are too high, and they are not even being paid enough to cover the cost of the food (Awojobi, 2020).

2. During the Covid pandemic, there was a protest that Haji Sadiya Farouq, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, carried out a quirky feeding program when schools were closed, claiming that the Presidency directed her ministry to do so. According to her, she is responsible for providing feeding support to 3.5 million households rather than students (Odunsi, 2020).

3. Even though the feeding program is in effect during the COVID pandemic, according to the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related

Offences Commission (ICPC) reported that N2.67 billion meant for the feeding of school children during the lockdown were diverted to private accounts (News Agency Of Nigeria, 2020).

"2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria" reports that 40 percent of the total population lives below the poverty line of 137,430 naira ($381.75) per year (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Nigeria has the second-largest population living in extreme poverty (86 million people), India has the first with 218 million, and the Congo (DRC) is third with 55 million (Katayama & Wadhwa, 2019). Alhaji Lai Mohammed, Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, says the government is aware of the problem and is working on providing more than 500,000 new jobs to young people (Opejobi, 2016). In his remarks, Muhammad noted that the N-Power program has provided more than 200,000 young Nigerians with jobs in schools, clinics, and farming centers. N-Power was first launched on June 8, 2016, to reduce youth unemployment and increase social development. However, over 500,000 N-Power beneficiaries have been told that their contracts will be terminated, leaving them jobless (Ekanem, 2023). In Nigeria, unemployment is a major cause of poverty, and many people lack employment opportunities. According to the World Bank, education is no longer a guarantee of employment in Africa, especially with higher education (BENTIL & TAN, 2022). In Nigeria, there are many highly qualified graduates without jobs because the government does not want to hire them. Poverty leads to crime. Because of unemployment, some young people resort to crimes like armed robbery and internet fraud, while others try to earn a living through their vocational skills.

4.7.1 #ENDSARS

The #ENDSARS movement in Nigeria began on social media, with young Nigerians using platforms like Twitter and Instagram to share their experiences of police brutality and corruption. The movement was started by a group of young Nigerians who were fed up with the abuses committed by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian police force. The movement quickly gained traction, with thousands of people joining the cause and using the hashtag #ENDSARS to raise awareness of the issue. The movement

called for the disbandment of SARS and an end to police brutality and corruption in Nigeria. Protests and demonstrations soon followed, with people across the country taking to the streets to demand change (Kadıoğlu, 2021).

The movement does not directly address the issue of poverty, but it is possible that poverty may be a contributing factor in the widespread corruption and abuse within the police force. Poverty in Nigeria is a widespread problem, with more than half of the country's population living in poverty. It is possible that the lack of opportunities and resources in the country may lead some individuals to engage in corrupt practices, including those within the police force.

A Marxist view of public opinion holds that inequality is a major cause of poverty and that it is a consequence of capitalism (Mayer, 2020). Any society with inequality will always suffer from poverty. It is more common for poor people in societies where inequality is accepted. He envisioned a collapse of the property-owning bourgeoisie, which would be ruled by the people. Thus, economic factors would no longer govern the public sphere, and social interactions would be more personal. Due to the increased participation, coordination was lost; instead of a single group, many now had access to the program; there was now a competitive environment. Marx viewed the expanded public as a powerful force (Mayer, 2020). During the liberal and Marxist eras, both parties felt trapped between the state and an unsteady public. With the disappearance or division of the civil society movement, Marxist analysis and understanding of poverty in Nigeria seem to have lost traction. The public sphere expanded in an unstable and unpredictable manner. In Nigeria, however, global inequality is reflected in the political economy. Through colonialism and neoliberal capitalism, Nigeria and other African countries became entangled in global capitalism. As long as Africa has existed, it has played a central role in the distribution and redistribution of resources (Jessop, 2012).

The #EndSARS protest represents an unprecedented point in the history of popular struggles in Nigeria. Young people have been written off as preoccupied with the primitive

accumulation of wealth, but the #EndSARS protest has largely disappeared divisions along ethnicity and religion. Protests against police brutality evolved into protests against impunity and deprivation, and the protesters' battle cry included #Buhari must go. The Lekki Massacre of October 20 was the peak of the vicious attacks on the protesters. 12 peaceful protesters were killed in cold blood. The Lekki Massacre and killings in other states highlight the question of whether ordinary people who were protesting are slaves without rights or citizens who have the right to protest (Uluç Kadıoğlu, 2021).

In the past, anti-military dictatorship struggles involved mass protests, but the #EndSARS movement has announced a new and glorious phase in mass struggles in Nigeria via the social media. The #EndSARS movement has been a powerful example of how effective grassroots organizing can be when it is combined with the power of social media (Uluç Kadıoğlu, 2021). Through the use of social media, the organizers of the #EndSARS movement have been able to spread the message of their cause and mobilize people from all over the country to take part in the protests. Social media has given the movement a platform to share stories and evidence of deprivation, bad governance and police brutality, making it easier for people to understand the cause and join the struggle. Social media has also enabled the protesters to coordinate their activities, share updates and news, and organize events such as marches, rallies and fundraisers. With the help of social media, the #EndSARS movement has become a global phenomenon and has had a profound impact on the fight against police brutality in Nigeria.

Currently, Nigerians are asking questions about President Muhammadu Buhari's social welfare intervention program, which is considered one of Africa's largest social protection schemes, allocating more than $1 billion annually to improve the lives of Nigeria's poorest and most vulnerable citizens (Sanni, 2019). Despite initial fears in Nigeria about COVID, the number of cases and deaths did not exceed the levels that were expected when the virus first emerged in February 2020 (Human Rights Watch, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in severe economic hardship, and the World Bank expects that an additional 10.9

million Nigerians will enter poverty by 2022 because of the crisis. Due to the lack of a social security system to provide assistance to households that lost their jobs and income during the crisis, Nigeria was particularly susceptible to the economic impact of COVID-19 (Lain & Vishwanath, 2020).

Nigeria's new president, Muhammadu Buhari, promised to diversify the country's oil-dependent economy by investing in agriculture and encouraging farmers in 2015. Moreover, the government has urged Nigerians to "grow what they eat and eat what they grow" to improve food security. 2021 saw the highest food prices in over a decade. Several factors contribute to the price hike in agricultural commodities, including fluctuations in consumer and seller income, seasonality, and farmers' poor response to price changes. According to Ososanya (2019), it is important to note that the continuous rise in food prices in Nigeria since 2019 shows that the government's policy of border closure failed to achieve its goal. Nigeria is grappling with rising food prices, as reflected in the spike in inflation. The annual inflation rate accelerated for a sixth straight month to 19.64% in July 2022, the highest rate since February 2018. The main driver of inflation is the food component, which accounts for more than 50% of the consumer price index basket (Nwokoma, 2022). Nigeria closed its borders with neighboring West African countries in August 2019 to encourage local agricultural production. The protectionist policy did not increase local production, but only enriched a few at the expense of the majority of consumers. The steadily rising cost of food has forced many Nigerian households to forgo meals because they cannot afford them anymore. SBM Intelligence, a research firm, cited this feeding burden in its March 2021 Jollof rice index. As of March 2021, a pot of jollof rice costs N7,400, an increase of 81 percent over the N4,087 it cost in July 2016 (SBM, 2021). A Nigerian earning a minimum wage of N30,000 will now have to sacrifice 25 percent of their salary in order to make jollof rice just for a meal. Jollof rice is popular in West Africa. Rice, tomatoes, onions, spices, vegetables, and meat are typically used as its ingredients. Until recent price hikes, these ingredients were affordable, so jollof rice was one of the cheapest foods to prepare.

In response, many Nigerians have turned to social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, to express their opinions and organize protests. However, Buhari's government has been accused of attempting to censor and control social media, and there have been several instances of security forces arresting and detaining people for their social media activity. In 2019, the Social Media Bill was introduced by the Senate of Nigeria in November 2019 and is still under debate as of February 2022 (Mabika & Ogu, 2022). The bill aims to criminalise the use of social media in spreading false or malicious information (Mabika & Ogu, 2022). The bill, which seeks to regulate the use of social media in Nigeria, has sparked controversy among Nigerians who feel it will restrict freedom of speech. The government has argued that the bill is necessary to combat cyber-crime, protect citizens' data, and prevent the spread of false information. The bill also criminalizes the use of social media to spread hate speech, insult people, and threaten national security. Supporters of the bill argue that it is necessary to protect citizens and ensure their safety online. Critics of the bill believe that it is a form of censorship and could be used to silence political dissent.

The Social Media Bill has generated much debate in Nigeria since it was passed. On the one hand, the bill is necessary to protect individuals from cyber-crime and hate speech, as well as to prevent the spread of false information. On the other hand, it has been seen as a form of censorship and could be used to suppress freedom of speech. Despite the controversy, it is important to remember that the Social Media Bill does not prevent citizens from using social media platforms, but rather seeks to ensure that it is used responsibly and in a way that does not harm or violate the rights of others. Overall, the relationship between Buhari and social media in Nigeria is marked by tension and conflict. Nigerian online news cimmunity has a storied history. Recently analysed data shows that Nigeria's security agents play a role in these hazards.In the decade betLaw enforcement and military in Nigeria have been involved in torture, extortion and murder.

The relationship between President Muhammadu Buhari and the media in Nigeria has been fraught with tension and conflict. Buhari, who has been in office since 2015, has been criticized for his authoritarian leadership style and his tendency to suppress dissent and

criticism. He has been accused of using the state security forces to intimidate and harass journalists, and several media outlets have been shut down during his tenure. Buhari's government has also faced criticism for its handling of the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency and the rise of insecurity and violence in the country. The media in Nigeria often reports on these issues and has been critical of Buhari's administration (AfricaNews, 2021). In response, Buhari and his supporters have accused the media of bias and spreading fake news. Overall, the relationship between Buhari and the media in Nigeria is marked by tension and mistrust.

4.8 History of Violence Against Journalists & Media Workers

Since 1997, over 179 cases of violence against journalists and media workers have been recorded in Nigeria, with 78 fatalities (UNESCO, 2021). The Nigerian Police and Military have contributed to the violence against journalists. Nigeria's security agencies contributed 9.5% of civilian deaths within a two-decade period, and in essence, aided terrorists and assailants to raise the death toll on innocent Nigerians. Between 1997 and 2020, there have been 179 cases of violence resulting in 78 fatalities against journalists and media workers. The prevalence of violence increased for the last two years on record. Lagos had the highest number of cases of violence against journalists, while Kogi State had the lowest number of cases. Abuja Municipal had the highest number of cases (UNESCO, 2021). The data revealed that An Unidentified Armed Group perpetrated 51 cases of violence against journalists, while the Nigerian Police perpetrated 26 cases (UNESCO, 2021). Law enforcement and the military in Nigeria have been involved in torture, extortion and murder. Their actions question the very existence of press freedom in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government keeps throwing the word 'regulation' to curtail the rights of free speech and television broadcast, and the National Broadcasting Commission has also issued unconstitutional fines to television stations for "unprofessional coverage" of EndSARS protests (Amnesty International, 2021). The back-and-forth between Lagos and Federal government officials raises a few eyebrows. So who is the purveyor of fake news? Human

rights organization Amnesty International said the government used legislative tools to harass journalists, bloggers and media activists.

4.9 The Capitalist and the Anti-Feminist Effect

However, many politicians and business moguls in Nigeria have been known to use their influence to influence media coverage of their activities from day one. Many outlets have accepted payments from politicians and business moguls in exchange for favorable coverage of their activities that may not contribute to the populace's living conditions. By diverting attention from social issues to trivial issues such as party news, which achieve no economic goals. Random blogs were the 'news' sources on the internet that served various segments, including lifestyle, gossip, and success stories. Some Nigerian social media urban pages have become mainstream as a source of escapist news, followed by online money-focussed convenient news sites modeled after traditional media, but offering features such as convenience, interactivity, and, in some cases, real-time updates on urban gossip. As the internet has become increasingly accessible in Nigeria, more people are turning to social media for news and entertainment (Nwammuo, 2011). There are now a vast array of platforms to choose from, allowing users to explore their interests, share opinions, and engage in conversations. Social media has become a source of escapism for Nigerians, providing them with a way to take a break from everyday life and engage with the outside world.

Lara, (2019) argues that Habermas failed to consider the non-liberal, non-bourgeois public, which is a great oversight that excludes those who do not conform to the bourgeois public life. Furthermore, the exclusion of women from the public sphere is evidence of the bias of the bourgeois public life, which further excludes diversity and perpetuates inequality. The exclusion of women from the public sphere is a direct manifestation of the gender inequality that is deeply rooted in the capitalist system (Lara, 2019). This exclusion is perpetuated by the belief that the public sphere is a realm that is traditionally reserved for men, and that women do not belong in this realm. This bias has allowed for the underrepresentation of women in the public sphere and has created a culture of inequality. Furthermore, this

exclusion of women from the public sphere has contributed to the marginalization of other marginalized groups, such as people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and those with disabilities. This bias has been further perpetuated by the lack of economic resources available to women and the lack of access to education and other opportunities that would enable them to participate in the public sphere. As a result, the exclusion of women from the public sphere continues to perpetuate inequality and limit diversity.

There is a general lack of diversity in Nigerian media as most outlets are owned by wealthy individuals or corporations (Momoh, 2022). This has resulted in a lack of representation of minority voices and perspectives in the media landscape. This has resulted in a lack of diverse voices and perspectives in Nigerian media. As such, there has been a push in recent years to diversify the media landscape in the country. This has included initiatives such as the creation of media outlets that are owned by and/or cater to indigenous people, as well as the establishment of media outlets that are owned by women and people of different religious backgrounds. Additionally, there have been efforts to increase the representation of marginalized groups in the media, including those from rural areas, minority ethnicities, and the LGBTQ+ community. These initiatives have had some success, but there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Feminism has the potential to play a major role in Nigerian politics and poverty reduction, but it is not being effectively used to promote these goals. Despite the fact that women make up over half of the population, they are still underrepresented in politics and decision-making processes. This means that the interests of women are often not taken into account when policies are created and implemented. Women are often portrayed in a negative light in Nigerian media, which perpetuates damaging stereotypes. This can have a negative impact on poverty reduction efforts, as women are less likely to be seen as capable of taking on leadership roles or contributing to poverty reduction initiatives.

In addition, there are a number of cultural and social barriers that prevent women from participating in politics and decision-making processes. These include a lack of education,

societal expectations, and unequal access to resources. Furthermore, there is a lack of financial resources available to support women's participation in politics and decision-making.

In order to effectively use feminism to address Nigerian politics and poverty reduction, it is necessary to remove these barriers and create a more equitable and just society where women can participate in decision-making and have equal access to resources. This includes providing better education and access to resources, creating equal opportunities for women in the workplace, and addressing the cultural and social attitudes that lead to gender inequality (Reddy & Moletsane, 2009). It is also important to ensure that women are represented in politics and decision-making processes. Ultimately, these changes will create an environment in which women can play an active role in poverty reduction and the political process.

5.0 Conclusion

As one of the world's most dominant forces, social media has allowed the new, digital capitalism to make sense of the public sphere. While critics claim that digital media gives people the illusion of being part of society by posting content to chat forums, they are actually posting fragments of content to the web. Critics of digital media hold this view. As Dean (2019) argues, our messages are now detached from their literal contexts, so they no longer have any connection to a circulating stream of information that develops over time. Instead, they become simply a part of the ever-burgeoning flood of information (Dean, 2019).

A concerted effort by stakeholders, the public, and the media can alleviate poverty, as explained in the study. This argument suggests that a collaborative effort between different groups and individuals can help address the issue of poverty. The stakeholders referred to are likely organizations or individuals who have a vested interest in addressing poverty, such as governments, NGOs, and community groups. The public refers to the general population,

and their involvement in efforts to alleviate poverty could involve donating money, volunteering, or raising awareness about the issue. The media, in this context, refers to news outlets and journalists who can use their platform to inform the public about poverty and promote solutions and initiatives to address it. Generally speaking, the argument suggests that a collective and coordinated effort from these different groups can lead to progress in reducing poverty.

According to the findings of the study, several poverty alleviation programs, introduced in the past and currently implemented by governments, are facing many obstacles that are preventing them from reaching their goals. It is clear that the country is facing several challenges, such as inadequate funding, corruption, poor management and supervision, an inability to access reliable data, political instability, poor infrastructure facilities, a lack of transparency and accountability, and inadequate policies for microeconomic development.

The media in Nigeria often highlights the poverty challenges facing the country, including widespread unemployment, inadequate access to education and healthcare, and inadequate infrastructure. However, media coverage often focuses on high-profile cases or sensationalized stories, rather than providing in-depth analysis or solutions to the root causes of poverty (Roberts, 2020). This type of reporting ignores the more systemic issues perpetuating poverty, such as unequal access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. It also fails to take a holistic approach to understanding poverty and its effects on individuals, families, and communities. By doing so, it perpetuates the false idea that poverty is the result of individual failings.

Additionally, the media can be influenced by political interests, leading to biased or incomplete reporting on poverty issues (Jean-Noel, 2019). This is especially true in countries where the media is under government control or where regulations are in place to limit reporting on poverty-related issues. In such cases, the media may be prevented from reporting on certain aspects of poverty, which can lead to a misinformed public.

However, the new media in Nigeria plays a role in raising awareness about poverty challenges, but it may not always provide a comprehensive or unbiased perspective on these issues. Media politics toward poverty challenges in Nigeria tends to focus on highlighting the government's failure to address the issue and the negative effects of poverty on the population. There is often a focus on corruption within the government and the unequal distribution of wealth, with an emphasis on the need for change and policy reform. The media also often highlights the efforts of non-governmental organizations and individuals working to alleviate poverty in the country. Accordingly, the media portrays poverty in Nigeria as a pervasive and urgent issue that requires immediate attention and action.

It is generally believed, however, that the media can play an important role in raising awareness about poverty and promoting transparency and accountability in government efforts to reduce poverty. Luengo and García-Marín (2020) suggest that a free and independent media can serve as a check on the actions of politicians and hold them accountable to the public. Investigating and reporting on government policies and programs, and holding politicians accountable for their actions, a free and independent media can play a crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability in government efforts to reduce poverty. Nevertheless, media coverage can also be biased or misleading due to political and economic interests. The public may lose trust in the media and government if they are influenced by political or economic interests. It is important for media outlets to be transparent about their funding sources, and for the public to be critical consumers of news, in order to ensure that the information they receive is accurate and unbiased.

The public should be critical of news outlets and transparent about their funding sources. Poverty reduction in Nigeria will likely require a multifaceted approach that includes economic growth, improved governance, and targeted social programs.

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