

**UNIVERSITY OF UYO**



**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF  
NIGERIAN JOURNALISM**

**By**

**Professor Nkereuwem Johnson Udoakah**  
*Professor of Political Communication & Media  
Studies*

**THE 54<sup>TH</sup> INAUGURAL LECTURE  
DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO**

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to God Almighty who gives life to all mankind.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Indeed, I have found favour in the sight of God and man since I was born into this world. Words are inadequate to express my gratitude to all those who had been willing instruments in the hand of God for the realisation of what God wanted me to be. They lined up the route which I walked through to be a Professor today and did what was to be done.

At the beginning of that route were my dear parents, late Obong Johnson Udo Aka Akpan Akpan Nsek Itina and Mrs. Arit Johnson Udo Aka. They suffered to give me a meaningful early education.

Thanks to my primary school teachers who had a passion to give to children educational doses for better living in the future. My secondary school teachers were wonderful. They taught with so much confidence that they would tell us to mention their names wherever we would be asked who taught us. I cannot forget my journalism teachers in Ghana and Britain. They gave me undiluted knowledge of journalism and the skills for practice. Dr. Denis Chaplin introduced me to critical thinking when he supervised my project on "The Media and Problem of Violence in Northern Ireland".

Dr. Greth Griffith chaired the panel that interviewed me for admission into my Master's Programme. He told me after the interview that I was a candidate for the programme at the City of

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London Polytechnic (now London Metropolitan University). He taught me political theory.

Professor Ralph Negrine, my political communication teacher, supervised my dissertation, and we became co-researchers during my postdoctoral programme. He is a wonderful academic.

At the end of my Master's Programme, somebody that I never knew before, Dr. Irene Brightmer, heard about my challenge to complete my fees, and picked up the bill for my certificate to be released. What a kind-hearted lady in an odd world!

The late Professors Frank Ugboajah, Emmanuel Akpan and Solomon Unoh assessed my dissertation and encouraged me to publish it. Beyond assessing my manuscript for publication, Professor Akpan opened the door and encouraged me to enter into academics. Professor Des Wilson became the life-wire for the completion of my doctorate programme at the demise of Professor Emmanuel Akpan. For more than one year, the programme had come to a stand-still before we braved up to restart. No sooner had we returned than the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) six month strike caught up with us.

I cannot forget my father-in-law, the late Major (rtd) Edet Etim Nkana. He encouraged me in my academic pursuit. That encouragement made Mr.

Okon Udo Utuk (O.U. as he was fondly called) to volunteer his statement of account to facilitate my visa. My mother-in-law helped to care for my kids while I was away in Britain. Also, Justice Idongesit Ntem-Isua, later a Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, used to take them to school when I had no car. This, we cannot forget.

Also on this route was Chief Johny J. Udondem, a fine gentleman. I met him for the first time at the Nigerian High Commission in Ghana. He invited me to his house and I was treated to "home-brewed dishes". When I went to London, behold he was there for me again. He accommodated me there for a weekend before I moved into the hostel.

There in London, I met Mr. Moses Ekpo (now His Excellency, the Deputy Governor). He was Director of Information Service, Europe. He invited me to his house and I felt at home. Along this winding route, I met and worked under Professor Donald Ekong, then Vice-Chancellor, University of Cross River State (before the creation of Akwa Ibom State). He was a fine academic par excellence. He trusted me so much that when he could not attend an appointment, he would ask me to represent him. My experience with him has benefitted me till today.

Nobody can crown himself a king. There are always king makers. Among those who brought me to what I am today are Professor Fola Lasisi - he got me to

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Senior Lecturership; Professor Akaneren Essien - he processed my Associate Professorship; and Professor Comfort Ekpo who processed my Professorship.

The route had been rough and nobody was to blame for that. If my current Vice-Chancellor did not give me this opportunity, an honour to be here, I would not have stood before this specially constituted audience today. Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor and Chairman.

I have enjoyed the cooperation of my colleagues and students over the years, particularly each time I was saddled with the leadership of the Department. Special thanks go to Dr. Uwem Akpan of the Department of Communication Arts for helping in the production of this lecture. Nor would I forget the special relationship with the graduate students under my supervision, some of whom are Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers 1, while others are holding top public positions today. I appreciate the relationship.

The Late Professor Essien Udom was somebody who touched my life in many ways. My association with him - another fine academic par excellence - further taught me that there is nothing in this life.

Finally, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I owe the wife of my youth, Lucy Nkereuwem Udoakah, much gratitude for all that she has been to me - a wife, helper, sister, friend, and confidant. My children,

you are really God's gift to me. I am proud of you. My son and daughter-in-laws, you have really taken up your rightful positions in the family. We are proud of you.

My brothers and sisters, my brothers and sisters-in-law, all my siblings, bossom friends, my elders and deacons, ministers of the gospel, Christian brothers and sisters, thank you so very much for prayers and good wishes.

I thank one, I thank all for contributing to my success story as chronicled on this occasion. May God bless you all.

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So, no government should ever think of brushing aside the journalists and no journalist should wield his pen carelessly, under the illusion that he is trying to change society, without a thought to the possible consequences of his action. Facts reported inaccurately and wrong ideas reported accurately could still end up causing havoc to society. Sufficient attention ought to be given to Nigerian journalists as it is given to aviation operators and medical practitioners to minimize disaster in our society (Udoakah, 2003).

To achieve these, let government introduce the policy of financial capitalisation in the media industry as it is done in the banking sector, to ensure that media owners have the capacity to employ and retain labour. This should be backed up with legislation.

The Vice Chancellor, Sir, thank you very much indeed for giving me this opportunity to share with you, and the assemblage of the 'town' and 'gown', my reminiscences in the journalism profession and in the academia.

God bless you.

**Nkereuwem Johnson Udoakah, Ph.D**  
*Professor of Political Communication and Media Studies*

First, let government provide a yellow line qualification for journalism to make it a respectable and highly respected profession in Nigeria. Second, let governments recognise the unfair and unreasonable conditions of service of Nigerian journalists and bring them at par with other professionals whose jobs are not even as hazardous as journalism. This would give them a measure of financial security, social recognition and status. The present poor conditions of service and the hazardous nature of journalism, no doubt, have made the job unattractive to many honest and talented people.

Oftentimes, people underrate the potential of journalism. But journalism is a lethal weapon that can destroy society. Journalism practice, like medical practice, is a matter of life and death. But journalism exerts more power on society than medical practice, and, therefore, journalists should be treated with more care than those in medical practice. For instance, a doctor's error might engender only one or a few lives while wrong and inaccurate reports could destroy the whole community. A closer analogy to the effect of inaccurate media reports is an aircraft pilot's error, which could claim the lives of all the passengers on board.

**A CITATION ON PROFESSOR NKEREUEM JOHNSON UDOAKAH ON THE OCCASION OF HIS INAUGURAL LECTURE ON THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017, IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO, NIGERIA**

**PRESENTED BY**

**PROF. LUKE EYOH  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH  
UNIVERSITY OF UYO.**

When Nkereuem Johnson Udoakah of Ikot Obio Inyang in Etinan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State decided to join the services of the then University of Cross River State in 1985 as an Administrative Officer, his ambition was, perhaps, to rise gradually to the highest administrative cadre in the institution.

But in a twist of irony, in 1987, Udoakah began part-time lecturing in the prestigious Department of Communication Arts of the same University.

Realizing the unfolding potentials in the young and vibrant Udoakah, coupled with his professional and sound academic background in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Department of Communication Arts did not hesitate to accept the unspent asset as a full time lecturer in 1990. That was the beginning of Udoakah's academic journey within the University.

Udoakah is a product of a sound academic and professional background. After his primary and secondary education in the early 1970s, where he produced and directed the play *Idiong Udo Ndok* that won 1<sup>st</sup> Prize at the State level, Udoakah attended Ghana Institute of Journalism between 1975 and 1977. During his training, he worked as an intern with the Ghana Television, Public Relations Department of Ghana Oil Company, all in Accra, and the *Nigerian Chronicle* in Calabar, Nigeria. That made him grounded in print and television journalism and Public Relations practice. From there, he attended the College of Journalism in London between 1981 and 1982. He proceeded to the prestigious City of London Polytechnic (now London Metropolitan University) between 1982 and 1984 and came back home to study at the University of Uyo between 1993 and 1998. He later went to University of Minnesota Journalism Centre, Minneapolis, USA, in 2005 and University of Sheffield, United Kingdom, for his postdoctoral programme between 2010 and 2012.

From these institutions, Udoakah obtained Diploma in Journalism; Higher Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication; Master of Arts (M.A.) in Politics and Government; PhD in Mass Communication and Certificate in Transparency Reporting.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the key to a proper understanding of the nature of media products is to understand first, the complex interplay of the forces of the economy, politics, technology, human resources and relationships driving those products. To conceive the process of the production as wholly an empirical rule-of-the-thumb business is as misleading as it is concealing.

From this lecture, one sees the internal and external influences on media production and journalism products, pointing to ideological, social, political, economic and cultural nature of these products. The journalists are working within a politico-legal framework which may not be conventional. They are influenced by their employers – government and businessmen, their conditions of service, among other environmental factors. However, it is not only in Nigeria that journalism is affected by politics and economy. It is a universal occurrence. Just as politics and economy affect governance globally, yet one still hears of countries with good governance, there are countries with good journalism practice rating and serving as reference points. How do they make it?

But, before our patriotic legislators decide to go to those countries to find out for us how it is done, let us try the following to fast track our expectations.

news media are the primary source from which people obtain knowledge of local, national and global events and issues.

By focusing on non-environmental issues during the WED celebrations, the findings confirm that the Nigerian media are now driven less by social responsibility and more by the market.

According to Ekanem, (2003, p.207):

Experience has shown that in most cases economic considerations usually override editorial judgement in Nigeria. In several cases, it has been revealed that editors authorised the replacement of science page with an advertisement paid for at the closing hours of production. This is very frustrating to the media personnel on the science and technology desk and to the devoted readers and stakeholders. The industry has been treated with levity and contempt primarily because the financial resources required to assert its rightful position as the engine of growth in the society are lacking.

He has held many positions of responsibility within the University. These include: Administrative Officer and Assistant Registrar - Fund Raising (1985-1990); Part-time Lecturer, Communication Arts Department (1987- 1990); Lecturer 11 (1990- 1992); Lecturer 1 (1992-1998); Senior Lecturer (1998-2004); Associate Professor (2004-2011); Acting Head of Department (1997-2000, 2007-2009) and Head of Department (2015-2016).

As a communication teacher, Udoakah is a member of many related professional organizations. These are Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Nigerian Mass Communication Association, and African Council for Communication Education, Amnesty International, as well as University Media Aesthetics Association.

Udoakah has been involved in research, publications and attendance at conferences, becoming one of the most prolific communication scholars in Nigeria. He has had fourteen (14) book chapters and twenty eight (28) articles in national and international journals.

He was a member, Faculty of Arts Research Committee - 1991 to 1996; Member, University of Uyo and University of Lancaster Research Team; Senate Representative on University of Uyo Central Research Committee, 2007; Member, STEP B

Research Team; a two-time TETFUND research award winner - 2012 and 2017.

He has published eight books, namely:

- *Government and the Media in Nigeria*. Centaur Publishers, Calabar (1988).
- *Government and the Media in Nigeria*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Centaur Publishers, Calabar (1996).
- *Development Communication*. Stirling-Horden Nig. Publishers, Ibadan; 1998, Reprinted 2004.
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- *Issues in Media Practices*. Mediamark Associate Limited, Calabar; Reprinted by Stirling-Horden Nig. Publishers, Ibadan; 2001, Reprinted 2006.
- *The Nigerian Press and Political Communication*. Mediamark Associate Limited, Calabar (2003).
- *Critical Issues in Public Relations and Communication*. (A Publication of the NIPR; Akwa Ibom State Chapter, Uyo, 2012).

national newspapers (*the Guardian, This Day, Punch and Vanguard*). Only the weekday (Monday to Friday) issues of the newspapers were used since the weekend editions tended to provide more coverage on social and cultural issues, and rarely gave attention to environmental issues. In many countries, this annual event is used to enhance political attention and action on environmental issues.

Ironically, environmental problems in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region, seem to receive considerable media attention only when there is an oil spill, an environmental conference or seminar in the region. This situation makes the question of press coverage and the reporting of environmental problems a matter of utmost concern.

The result was startling. It was observed that despite the grave implications of environmental problems in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta region, the Nigerian press gave only 2.94 percent of its editorial content to environmental issues in the two-week period. Even this paltry percentage was mostly tucked in the inside pages of the papers. If this happened in the month of June, when the WED was celebrated globally, then the Nigerian press's attention to the environment at any other time of the year is best imagined than described. Yet, the

been that because government media dominated the Nigeria media environment, a paternalistic relationship was the expectation of the implementers in their dealings with the media. That is, that the media ought to have looked for them and report MDGs activities rather than the MDG implementers looking for the media, whereas, in the reality, campaigners have to strive to draw media attention to their efforts. The editors were lamenting the low level of awareness about MDGs in Nigeria.

Earlier in an interview, the former editor-in-chief of the *Daily Independent* in 2011, told me that media establishments could not afford to play *Father Christmas* in the face of their huge operational costs as a result of decrepit infrastructure in the country e.g. roads, electricity and other public utilities. According to him, the media would naturally focus on matters that would help cushion their financial burden rather than on issues with no pecuniary benefits to them.

Again, I carried out another study entitled: *“Reporting Ethnic Minority Issues in Africa: A Study of Nigerian Newspapers”* (Udoakah, 2015). This one examined media coverage of environmental issues in the country, especially in the Niger Delta, during the four-week period of the World Environmental Day (WED) in June 2004 and 2005. This was done through a content analysis of leading

- *Government and the Media in Nigeria* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd, Ibadan (2014).

He has presented fifty-two (52) papers at conferences, seminars and workshops and attended as many national and international conferences, seminars and workshops. As a journalist, he had sixty-nine (69) newspaper and magazine articles in his name in national and international publications between 1979 and 1984.

As a writer and critic, Udoakah has been on the editorial board of many academic journals and other publications. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of *UNIUYO Journal of Communication Studies*; Chairman, Editorial Board of *Uniuyo Newsletter*; Member, Editorial Board, *Journal of Linguistics and Communication Studies*, Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt; Editor, *International Journal of Communication*, Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Associate Editor, *Journal of Media and Communication*, Faculty of Communication Technology, Cross River State University of Science and Technology, Calabar; Associate Editor, *Journal of University Media and Aesthetics*, Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo; Consulting Editor, Society of Nigerian Artists Publications,

Akwa Ibom Chapter; Editor, *International Journal of Communication*, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Editorial Adviser, American Biographical Institute; Editorial Adviser, *Campus Sentinel and Campus Times*; and Member, Editorial Board, *AKSU Journal of Communication Research*.

He has been an external examiner to many universities and polytechnics in the country. He has been External Examiner, Department of Mass Communication, Polytechnic Calabar, 1996; External Examiner, Department of Mass Communication, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, 2001 –2006; External Examiner (Master's Programme), Department of Mass Communication, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2004; External Examiner (Ph.D Programme) University of Ibadan, 2010 –2011; External Examiner, Department of Theatre Arts and Mass Communication, University of Benin, Benin City; and External Examiner, Department of Mass Communication, Akwa Ibom State University, Mkpata Enin.

Professor Udoakah has been exemplary in his academic leadership in the University of Uyo. He was Acting Head, Department of Communication Arts - 1997 to 2000; 2007 to 2009. He received commendation from the University for his services during these tenures. No wonder he was appointed the Head of Department again, from 2015 to 2016.

villages were purposively selected from the two States and 192 items were analysed.

The result showed similarities in the pattern of urban and rural reporting by the two stations. More coverage attention was given to the state capitals, followed by towns accorded commercial and administrative importance. For the rural areas, places closer to the urban centre tended to receive relatively higher coverage attention. The study thus confirmed the hitherto assumed disparities in the radio's coverage of urban and rural areas. Generally, the reasons proffered for this condition included shortage of staff, lack of accessible roads, phones (at that time), to service the rural areas.

In another study (Udoakah and Negrine, 2014) entitled, "MDGs in Nigeria, Communication and the Media", we examined the communication strategy adopted by the programme's managers to implement it, with reference to media involvement and citizen mobilisation. A qualitative research method was used comprising interviews with MDGs managers, key informants with knowledge about MDGs campaign in Nigeria, editors of selected newspapers and a survey of members of the Nigerian Guild of Editors. The result showed that the MDGs implementers did not have structures through which the needed communication could be generated, processed and transmitted to all those it may concern. Their reasoning seemed to have

Presidency brought into being the antithesis of Nigerian journalism. This gives us some hope that the years ahead will ultimately bring the synthesis of Nigeria's journalism for the plums which journalism promised and had since been ripe and plucked in many societies.

### **5.1 NIGERIAN JOURNALISTS' REPORTAGE OF ISSUES OF GLOBAL CONCERN IN NIGERIA: MY FIELD EXPERIENCE**

Mr. Chairman Sir, following observations by scholars (Moemeka, 1981 and Boafo, 1987) that people at the grassroots were not given attention by the media, especially the radio which is supposed to cater more for the rural communities, I decided on a study entitled: "Disparity in Radio's Coverage of Urban and Rural Areas in Nigeria" (Udoakah, 2004). According to Nehu (1993), Nigerian journalists, unfortunately, define news in such a way that the rural dwellers would come into news only when they are involved in communal clashes, or are protesting the confiscation of their farmlands by government without adequate compensation.

The study compared the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation's (AKBC) FM Radio Service and Radio Rivers II FM. The broadcast schedule for AKBC FM was 6.00 am and 6 pm while that of Radio Rivers II FM was 6.30 am and 8.00 pm. Some towns and

During his first tenure as Acting Head, the Department introduced a Diploma Programme in Mass Communication, added Print Media option to the Master's Programme and got Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria's accreditation for the Advertising Programme. His second tenure saw a review of the undergraduate programme and the construction of the Radio/Television Studios, even when the first one constructed had been gutted by fire, three days to accreditation visit. Eventually, when the accreditation team came, the Department was given full accreditation for the first time. It was during this time that the National Universities Commission (NUC) granted the status of Centre of Excellence in Communication Studies to the Department. Also, he set up an internet service for the Department.

He reviewed the Postgraduate Programmes in the Department and added new ones during his third tenure. Among the new programmes added are: Political Communication, Development Communication and a Postgraduate Diploma Programme in Non-Violent Communication. Also, he published a compendium of profiles of academic staff in the Department of Communication Arts and a Directory of Communication Arts Alumni. In addition, he initiated the construction of the Communication Arts Building, which is going on at the Main Campus. All through, he kept the Department's Training Newspaper – *The Campus Times* - on the streets

without funding from the University; he launched a website for the Department.

Professor Udoakah is known within the university community and outside as a man of integrity. Little wonder he had been a member of 33 Investigative Panels between 1998 and 2016, many of which he was the Chairman. He received commendation from the University for his contribution to the success of an Investigation Panel in 2002.

A further testimony of Udoakah's character found expression in his appointment as Chairman, NIPR Electoral Committee, 1996; Chairman, UNIUYO SUG Election Petition Committee 1999 and 2000; Chairman, UNIUYO SUG Electoral Commission (ELECO), 2001-2011 and Chairman Uniuyo Alumni Association Electoral Committee, 2014.

He is the Chairman, Board of Trustees, University of Uyo Alumni Association, November 2014 - date; Progenitor, Unicross/Uniuyo Alumni Association; Founder, Ikot Obio Inyang Youth Club. He was Member, Faculty of Arts Seminar Committee, 1993-1995; Faculty of Arts Representative on Appointments and Promotions Committee (A & PC) Junior Staff, 1991 - 2015; Coordinator, University of Uyo Remedial Arts Programme, 1991-1995; Business Manager, *Faculty of Arts Journal of Humanities*, 1991-1994; Staff Adviser, Association of Communication Arts Students, 1991-1997; Vice-

that newsworthy events which should be routinely brought to public attention are often suppressed. So, it can be said that mercenary considerations rather than professional are the driving force behind Nigerian journalism today.

Sadly, the problems plaguing journalism at present in Nigeria do not merely reflect the immediate rat race for materialism; they reflect the obvious and growing contradictions between public interest and the pursuit of profit under a primitive capitalist economy. It is a known fact that the type of journalism practice found anywhere in the world is largely a product of the social and economic organization of the society.

Nigerian journalists' response to their condition today points to Marx's espousal of revolution as a way out of the unhappy situation in which humankind finds itself. So, we are witnessing a revolutionary journalism of a selfish nature in Nigeria carried out from the necessity to live and be like other professionals in the land. Certainly, this type of revolutionary journalism is not taught in Nigeria's journalism schools but by Nigeria's political class' curriculum for quick wealth-making.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if our experiences with Nigerian journalism may be put in dialectical terms, the periods of the colonial and military rules witnessed the thesis dimension of journalism practice whereas the periods of the Obasanjo and Jonathan

relationship with government and lack of requisite yellow line qualification for practitioners. It depends on government for support to build its secretariat both at national and state levels, and for funding of its yearly press week (Udoakah, 1998 and 2014). All over the country, one finds NUJ Councils and Chapels driving buses with the inscription 'Donated' by so and so 'Government', and secretariats named after politicians. This translates into an open invitation to government's meddling in the Union's elections at all levels, and provides more opportunities for journalists to be bought over by the government. Another consequence is that non-professionals are able to infiltrate and dominate the Union, thus making professional decisions difficult, if not impossible. But even if the professionals were in firm control, there seems to be no clear sanctions for the frequent abuse and neglect of professional code of conduct for journalists in Nigeria.

Another worrying phenomenon introduced into journalism practice is the use of journalists as advertisement canvassers on commission basis. They now compete with the staff of the commercial or business departments of their organizations in search of advertisements. Although they may be making some money, this is professionally unethical and humiliating. It brings them to their knees before those they are supposed to watch and report their activities in the public interest. The result is

President, Senior Staff Club, University of Uyo, 1992-1994; Member of the Committee to Select the Best Journalist of the Year in the Akwa Ibom Newspaper Limited, 1991; Member, Etinan Local Government Tourism Committee, 1991-1993; Instructor, Nigerian Christian Bible College, 1993/94; Instructor, Nigerian Christian Institute, Mass Communication Programme, 1994; Chairman, Faculty of Arts Seminar Committee, 1996 to 1999; Member, Faculty of Arts Postgraduate Examination Board, 1996 to 2001; Member, N1PR Education Committee, 1996 to date; Instructor, International Institute of Journalism, Abuja, Uyo Center, 1996; Public Relations Executive, UK Graduates Association; Member, University of Uyo Fund Raising Committee, 2000 to date; Member of the International Visitation Team to the Nigerian Christian Bible College, Ukpom, Abak, November, 2000. He has been Consultant, Publishing Project, Uniuyo Consult; Member, International Biographical Advisory Council in Nigeria; Associate, Centre For Skills Acquisition And Rural Development, University of Uyo; Member, Akwa Ibom State Committee on Information Management and Publicity, 2002; Consultant, Akwa Ibom Schools Challenge, 2003; Member, AD-HOC Committee on the Development of Junior Staff, University of Uyo, February 1998; Chairman, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations' Education and Training Committee, 2005; Member, Appointments and Promotions (Junior Staff) Sub-

Committee on the Review of Rules and Regulations Governing the Junior Staff Appointments and Promotions, April 2006; Member, Development Committee, University of Uyo, 2009; and Member, Postgraduate School Board, 2010- 2015.

Professor Udoakah is a recipient of several awards for community and humanity services. These awards include Grand Award for Services to Mankind, from the Student's Union Government, University of Cross River State, June 1991; Certificate of Honour for Services to Students, from Association of Communication Arts Students (ACAS), University of Uyo, April 1997; Certificate of Honour for Services to Community, from Ikot Obio Inyang Youth Club, Etinan, in Association with the Village Leaders, December 1997; Pulpit Watch Merit Award, 1998. He is listed in *Who is Who in Akwa Ibom State*; Winner, Association of Communication Arts Students (ACAS) Excellence Award, March 2000; Listed in the *New Who is Who in Nigeria*; listed as one of the *Outstanding People of the Twentieth Century* (a British Publication); Certificate of Honour from Faculty of Arts Students Association, 2002; and is the American Biographical Institute's Person of the Year in 2004.

Professor Udoakah has supervised 38 Masters and 24 Ph.D candidates; four of these have become Professors including the Late Professor Etim Anim, while three are Associate Professors.

and editors receive envelopes containing not press releases but 'remuneration' for service rendered. According to him, this can involve 'killing' damaging stories for 'clients', writing favourably about certain officials or politicians or extorting money by threatening to expose details that might be detrimental to those blackmailed. He cites a case of a journalist in a *Mozambican* weekly, *Zambeze*, who was sacked in March 2006 for involving in an attempt to expose government details. Another development in Ghana, recorded by Hasty (2005), is a situation where government 'sweetens' journalists so that they report government actions and not pose critical questions.

A situation where citizens are imprisoned by poverty and destitution does not catch the attention of journalists. But they are always present at all manner of festivities by government, political parties and politicians where money is expected to be doled out. This situation has undercut the fundamental tenets of journalism and removed its sting. The consequence is that today, persons without a job but who know how to write become a journalist. They write without money for any medium that wants their contribution and use that relationship with the media to make their money anyhow!

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) which straddles between being a trade union and a professional body has remained incapacitated by its

## 5.0 JOURNALISM AND JOURNALISTS

Obviously, journalism in Nigeria is no longer what it used to be. The journalists in league with their employers have made journalism a form of theatre, played out for the benefit of the highest bidders. Udoakah (2014) notes that since the advent of news commercialization, money, more than newsworthiness or public interest, has remained the principal factor in media access and news selection in Nigeria.

Since journalists' welfare is not a priority to their employers, many of them are not committed to the profession, and are living on the politicians. The result is that they do what they can to protect their benefactors and raise issues about those they cannot benefit from. Put differently, journalists are now after what they can get from covering an event. If no money is likely to get into their pocket, then no coverage. But in order not to go without something, they may twist the story to embarrass, scandalize or blackmail, thus making the source to look for them for settlement.

Ronning (2009) notes that, journalists are not beyond the same temptations as the other people and professions. In many parts of Africa, remuneration is low and the social status of a journalist is not very high. This makes some journalists susceptible to what has been called 'the brown envelope syndrome', where some journalists

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to present, for the 54<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture of the University of Uyo, a fine teacher, Minister of the Gospel, prolific writer, researcher, fair, friendly but firm academic, husband and father of five graduates and scholars, and a grandfather of three upcoming scholars, Professor Nkereuwem Johnson Udoakah.

## **PROTOCOL**

*The Vice-Chancellor and Chairman on the occasion,  
Professor Enefiok Essien*

*The Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Administration and  
Academic)*

*Other Principal Officers of the University*

*The Provost of the College of Health Sciences*

*Chairman, Committee of Deans*

*Dean, Postgraduate School*

*Deans of Faculties*

*Dean of Student Affairs*

*Directors of Institutes and Units*

*Heads of Departments*

*Distinguished Professors and Other Members of  
Senate*

*High Ranking Academics from University of Uyo and  
Sister Institutions*

*Colleagues*

*My Elders, Deacons and Ministers of the Gospel in  
the Lord's Church, the Church of Christ*

home about? Looking at the private sector media, some of those media owners are politicians themselves or have one link or another with politicians and government, like those owners who are not politicians also do. Moreover, if they cannot or are not willing to pay salaries for months, how would investigative journalism be financed and who are those to be investigated?

The result is that much of what is going to be reported has to do with government and its officials. This makes looking for news inexpensive as reporters are just sent to where government officials congregate and they report what they say. So, government stories occupy more than fifty percent of the 'news hole' of the print or electronic media. The next is about politicians and their parties. These, too, are not expensive to get.

These news sources have become too powerful that, sometimes, they buy off the commercial air time and print media space to propagate their claims. One example in recent times was the activities of the Transformation Agenda of Nigeria (TAN) group on NTA and AIT. This lasted for months before the presidential campaign of 2015. This situation, to use the word of McChesney (2008, p. 31), has made "journalists find themselves where they cannot antagonise their sources too much, or they might get cut off and become ineffectual".

*Sun*, Dec 21, 2015). The implication of this, for the reportage by journalists to the benefitting media, is obvious.

It is worthy to note that one aspect of journalism that is very difficult to thrive in our kind of politico-economic environment is the investigative journalism. This aspect provides exclusive and detailed information on the subject being reported. It is digging hard and long enough to unravel the facts and mystery surrounding an event or a situation. It is energy-sapping, money and time-consuming, and risk-taking. Sometimes, it may take between one month and six months or even more, and budgets are made to cover travels and hotel expenses, telephone calls, photocopying and other services which might facilitate the success of the project. The risk involved goes beyond being exposed to hazards of all kinds, to include stepping on the toes of interested parties in the case under investigation and consequently marked for vengeance.

Investigative journalism unmask the corrupt and uncovers the fraudulent. Unfortunately, the majority of projects in investigative journalism concern the doings of public officials, politicians, public corporations, charities etc. So, who provides funding for investigative journalism, given that the government controls the market for journalists, and the remuneration for journalists is nothing to write

*My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal*

*Gentlemen of the Press*

*Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen*

## **1.0 PREAMBLE**

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have served in this great Department since 1992. I applied for the position of Lecturer I and I was interviewed and found qualified. But my boss at the time could not understand why the panel found me qualified for that position and so he single-handedly upturned the decision and directed that I be appointed Lecturer II. By the encouragement of the late Professor Emmanuel Akpan who was the Head of Department then, I accepted the appointment. Two years later, with additional publications, I was promoted to Lecturer I. My next promotion to Senior Lecturership came six years later. I was on that position for another six years to be promoted an Associate Professor, and six years later, I became a Professor. Let me inform here, that all that became of me in this process was none of my making. My Associate Professorial assessment was one of its kind. At a point, I was told that my papers were missing; at another point I was told that one of the assessors had died and it was not known until the family returned the papers to the university. That was when Professor Akaneren

Essien called for a resubmission, which I did. Then came the Professorial Assessment. Again the Prima Facie Qualification (PFQ) took years to be completed. When eventually it was through, and submitted as required for external assessment, it was in waiting for dispatch until it was caught up by the June 12, 2013 fire disaster in the university. Once again, I was asked to resubmit and I did and it eventually came under the watch of Professor Comfort Ekpo. So, since my progress in this Department consistently followed a sabbatical lineage, I decided to present this Inaugural Lecture in my Sabbatical year since that promotion. To have made it more historic, I desired it for July which would be the birthday of the wife of my youth but that opportunity failed to present itself. Nevertheless, since this has come now, it is still in her honour, a wife and helper indeed.

This is the third Inaugural Lecture from the Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Uyo. The first was delivered in 1994 by late Professor Emmanuel Akpan, and was entitled 'Entropy, Redundancy and Meaning Sharing. The second came in 2015 by Professor Des Wilson and was entitled 'Ethnocommunicology, Trado-Modern Communication and Mediamorphosis in Nigeria: An Iconoclast's Demystification of Some Communication Tradition'.

Although today's presentation is the third from the Department, it is the first by the first Professor of

The neglect of state-owned media establishments by their governments is a part of the grand conspiracy to deal a blow on journalism. Their action is not unlike their famous formula used to deal with public schools while promoting private schools. Today, public schools are rotting away while private schools are flourishing.

What may not be obvious, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is the relationship between governments and the private media establishments that they are patronising at the detriment of their own media outfits. But the quality of service delivery from the neglected media outfits is obvious, and it is what the public is getting today in Nigeria.

The existence and functions of the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) are self-evident proof of the grand conspiracy theory against journalism. It exists to collectively negotiate the right prices payable for materials needed for production in the media industry and to regulate the voice or professionalism of the unions in the industry, which the NUJ is part of. For example, it was this almighty association which banned airport and judiciary correspondents' associations in 2002, for having shown tendencies of becoming more popular than the NUJ. The power of this Association to clip the wings of journalism can be seen in its involvement in the Dasukigate in which it was said to have been given one hundred and twenty (₦120,000,000.00) million naira (*The*

former Minister of Information in 2008, late Prof Dora Akinyuli, to set a minimum wage of ₦84, 000 for journalists in government died with her. So, Nigerian journalists continue to receive subsistence wage and live like beggars, using the business cards of their employers to curry favour at state and political events.

Mr. Chairman, sir, at an interview I had in January this year with some editors, reported earlier in this lecture, my attention was drawn to the non funding of state-owned media houses by the state governments, and their high patronage of the privately owned media outfits in Lagos and Abuja, instead. It is public knowledge, Sir, that public sector media are optimally functioning in the United States of America, United Kingdom and other countries. For instance, the *British Broadcasting Corporation*, the *Voice of America* etc are functioning, paying highly competitive salaries, and producing programmes for sale to radio and television stations in the world.

There seems to be a conspiracy between mass media proprietors and the political class in Nigeria to eclipse the power of journalism and make economic and political power hold sway in our democratic dispensation. A version of this can be found in vote-buying and rigging for political offices, thus making the journalistic process of voters' education an effort in futility.

Political Communication and Media Studies in Nigeria. The topic is: **The Political Economy of Nigerian Journalism**. Indeed, our Department is rightly the fountain head of communication studies in Nigeria.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, permit me to give you a little background about why I have chosen to lecture on this subject matter today. I am, by the grace of God, a Ghanaian, British and American trained journalist. I had practised as a reporter, feature writer, columnist, assistant editor and production editor on national and international newspapers and magazines, and was arrested and detained for an act of investigative journalism entitled *Police May Be Gaining from Crimes (Nigerian Chronicle, July 26, 1982)*. In that article, I questioned the disturbing rate of car theft in Calabar when there was only one major road linking the City with other towns and there were police checkpoints along that link road.

I returned from Britain and wrote a series on *The Whiteman's Country is no Heaven*, for about fifteen weeks, and could not get a visa to go back for my Ph.D programme. Meanwhile, three universities - University of Stirling, University of Leicester and University of Kent - had given me admission. Besides, Mr. Chairman, my MA Dissertation entitled *Government and the Media in Nigeria* was found publishable and it became my first book. Its third edition is currently on display on this occasion. So I

have paid my dues in the profession and can analyse and comment on the practice using the **political economy analytical approach**.

Political economy is an approach to studying the ways in which media products are produced, distributed and consumed, rather than on analysing the interpretations of the signs and symbols found within texts. It is a reference to the fact that media texts are produced within specific and historically contingent systems which are not merely and ideologically neutral forms of exchange, but are conditioned by a range of complete interactions of political, economic, social, cultural, legal, technological and other factors (Taffel, 2013). According to McChesney (2008), the political economy of the media links the media and communication systems to how economic and political systems work, and how social power is exercised in society. This informed the Department's introduction of the course, Social Matrix of Communication, which I have been teaching over the years in its doctoral programme.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF NIGERIA**

Nigeria is a product of the amalgamation of many ethnic groupings. All together, the ethnic groups number more than 250. Although the mix was done

Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Garuba Mohammed, went to meet him over non-payment of salaries in his establishment. According to an editor in one of the media houses in Niger State during an interview in January 2017:

After the NUJ's team had made its presentation, he took the team outside, showed them cars of various makes and asked the team members if they knew their owners. They replied that they did not know. Then, he told them that those cars belonged to their colleagues, and that none of those cars valued less than one million naira. Sarcastically, he added, even when he was not paying them salaries they could still make it, and wondered what was the problem.

Interestingly, both State and Federal Governments are also media proprietors. Evidently, they are controlling the market for journalists. Out of the 30,000 registered practising journalists in Nigeria, as at July 2013, it is estimated that more than fifty percent are employed in government-owned media. But they are not exemplary in their treatment of journalists. Their conditions of service for the journalists are the same as those of the civil servants, and in most cases, they are bound by the Civil Service Rules (Udoakah, 2014). Efforts by the

## 4.2 JOURNALISM AND MEDIA PROPRIETORS

The way the media of mass information operate now in Nigeria is only a dramatic illustration of what has become of the Nigerian society and its institutions. And, we look on with almost eerie insensitivity, these startling new practices. Their proprietors can hardly be said to be apolitical businessmen. Rather, they belong to a group of business buccaneers with incorrigible editorial meddling instinct. They think, only of piling up profit, and compete with one another in a struggle of mutual destruction.

Infact, media ownership, particularly the print, seems to be more criminally than liberally diffused. Many of them are without known addresses and they publish just for a living. They have no capacity to employ labour, and their products are apologies to the profession. Those who employ staff are owing salaries for months. In a telephone interview the National President of National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Mrs. Ifeyinwa Omowole, on January 23, 2017, told me that many media establishments owed staff for up to twenty (20) months! What quality of service is expected in a situation such as this?

This seems to be a game plan to rubbish the profession. Consider what a media mogul is reported to have done when a team of journalists led by the immediate past National President of the

without their consent, it became legitimated when they agreed to stand together and fight for Independence. Before the amalgamation in 1914, that geographical location was divided into two by the British colonisers and administered separately as Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria. After coming into being as one political entity, Nigeria was divided into four, for administrative convenience. These were: the colony of Lagos, the Northern, Eastern and Western Provinces. Incidentally, apart from the Lagos colony which had become a metropolis, the three Provinces followed the major ethnic divisions. For instance, the Northern Province was predominantly Hausas; Eastern Province, predominantly Igbos; and Western Province, predominantly Yorubas.

After Independence in 1960, one other region - the Mid West - was created under the 1963 Constitution. Mid-Western Region was carved out of Western Region to accommodate the minority ethnic groups there. In 1967 Regions were replaced with a 12-State structure, thus making Nigeria a Federation of 12 States. But the States still followed ethnic lines, for this arrangement amounted to doing for the minorities in the then Northern and Eastern Regions what was done for the minorities in the West. In other words, the minorities were constituted into separate States along with the main ethnic groups, apparently for fear of domination by the major groups under which

they were grouped. Theoretically, this arrangement gives them equal voices in the administration of the country. The Federal Government's greatest problem since Independence has been how to satisfy its more than 250 ethnic groups and keep them within the same political arrangement handed down by Britain. It would not entertain a breakdown in that arrangement. This commitment to ONE NIGERIA was demonstrated by how aggressively it fought the Biafran secession in 1967.

In 1976, seven new States were created, bringing to nineteen, the total number of States in Nigeria. Creating more States had become a means for the military to gain political leverage. So, in 1987 and 1991, General Ibrahim Babangida created more States. The late General Sani Abacha's creation of six more States during his administration in 1996 brought the number of States in Nigeria to thirty-six.

Nigeria is an assemblage of States or a Federation in which the confederating States are dependent on the Federal Government for revenue to manage themselves. Some have come to see the system as a decentralised government or a unitary government, and are agitating for true federalism or a restructuring of the country so that the confederating States would have control over their resources. This implies that power at the centre would be devolved in a good measure to allow the

political activities. They encase the whole fabric of political journalism and process (Udoakah, 2003). The study, entitled *The Use of Cartoons in Political Communication in Selected Nigerian Newspapers*, content-analysed the political cartoons published in those newspapers both during civilian administrations and military regimes. Also, it surveyed Uyo residents in Akwa Ibom State to learn of their awareness of, and exposure to, political cartoons. The result confirmed the existence of readership of political cartoons in the Nigerian press, much of which was by men with higher education and of a politically conscious class. This contradicts the notion that cartoons are principally serving illiterate and lowly educated populations. In addition, the study brought to light that political cartoon messages had a higher recall rate than same messages from news or features.

There can be little doubt of the considerable influence and importance of political cartoons. According to Szabo (1993, p.9), political cartoons, with their use of humour and contrast, can explain and make messages "even more digestible, thus becoming a perfect means of quick and effective education". He concludes by saying that: "reading a political cartoon is hardly different from turning the lights on in a dark room, or finding the light glasses for one's blurry vision".

broad-sheet newspaper formats. These developments demonstrated the futility of attempting to silence the media from the expression of genuine political grievances (Udoakah, 1996).

To maintain the circulation of critical and independent views under this condition required the adoption of other communication forms such as cartoons as tactics of resistance. This led to an increasing use of political cartoons by the print media. Political cartoons are satirical representations in graphic form, of political actors and actions, and even socio-economic, religions or cultural issues with political undertones. They are a genre of political reporting. The criticisms they carry are an ironic concealment, whereas news, features or editorials about politics tell parallel stories without disguising the message (Udoakah, 2006). Udoakah (2003) says that political cartoon messages are usually hard-hitting because of the tools of satire – irony, sarcasm, parody, innuendo – always employed in packaging them.

Although political cartoons do not seem to be a subject of intellectual interest in Nigeria, their potential as an alternative art form for the dissemination of political information caught my research attention during my Doctor of Philosophy programme in Communication Studies. In the process, I became aware that political cartoons are really a mine of information and insight into

States to function optimally. This has been one of the recommendations of the National Conference constituted by the Goodluck Jonathan Administration.

Generally, the ruling class at all levels have continued with the capitalist mode of production inherited from the colonial administration (Mohammed, 2003), but are using the machinery of the state as an instrument for primitive capital accumulation while corruption had become endemic in their political practice (Nzimiro, 1985).

## **2.2 MEDIA SYSTEM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY OF JOURNALISM**

The media operate within the framework of the political and economic systems of their societies. In other words, the political and economic systems determine the nature of media systems (Udoakah, 1990), and, by extension, how journalism is practised, since journalism and the media cannot be separated. The world has been divided into three political and economic systems, namely: the capitalist, communist and the developing countries media systems. Nigeria belongs to this political and economic order.

At the bottom of capitalism is competition and profit, otherwise called free enterprise. So anybody can go into the media enterprise so long as he can

weather the storm of competition. But obviously, those who are into this business are part of the class that controls the economy and they directly or indirectly dictate policies to their media. Udoakah (1988, p.11) captures a statement by the proprietor of the Trafalgar House Investment, Publisher of the Daily and Sunday Express in Britain, thus: "By and large, the editors will have complete freedom as long as they agree with the policy I have laid down".

In summary, the media in capitalist societies, according to Miliband (1982), strive to legitimise their societies, to make the people conform to the social and economic status quo.

The Communist Media System is often seen as an expanded version of the authoritarian system. It takes root from the peoples' assumption about the nature of their society which they see power as belonging to the proletariat. Therefore, the media must be controlled to serve the interest of the proletariat by using them for socialisation and mobilisation towards planned social and economic goals, and for the propagation of communist ideals. However, Udoakah (1988) notes that whether the Communist media system is an expanded or contracted version of the authoritarian system, authoritarian characteristics underlie many systems of media control. Earlier McQuail (1983, p.86) states:

remained an amalgam of the Hausa Press, Igbo Press, Yoruba Press and the Minority Press.

#### **4.1 JOURNALISM: UNDERGROUND PRESS AND CARTOONS AS ALTERNATIVE MEDIA**

Apart from economic and political influences on journalism practice, there are the legal aspects. In Nigeria, there are many laws to regulate the practice. Some of them, at one time or the other had been too draconic. *A locus classicus* were the Public Officers (Protection against False Accusation) Decree, 1984, otherwise known as Decree Four and Decree 43 of 1993 which introduced the Newspapers' Registration Board. These laws led to incessant arrests and detention of journalists, and proscription of newspapers.

The result of these arrests of journalists and indiscriminate proscriptions led to the emergence of the underground press. Some of the banned newspapers and magazines resorted to publishing under new names while new titles sprung up as real protest papers, attacking the military regime in a manner similar to that employed by the pre-Independence press against the colonial masters. In this category were *The Razor*, *Congress*, *Lagos Eagle*, *Eko* and *Tempo*. Apart from more militant titles being published from the underground, magazines which were prone to seizure by overzealous security operatives, were published in

ownership was dominated by the educated class with economic power.

During the transitional periods of the Second and Third Republics in Nigeria, many newspapers and magazines sprung up to serve political parties or individual politicians. Among such publications during the transitional period to the Second Republic were the pro-NPN *National Concord*, the pro-NPP *Satelite* newspaper, the pro-PRP *African Progress* Newspaper. Their publishers, the late Chief MKO Abiola, Chief Jim Nwobodo and Dr. Una Akpan, all had political ambitions. Some of such publications during the Third Republic transitional period included the pro-SDP *Spectator* and *Republican* newspapers published by Chief Authur Nzeribe and Major General (rtd) Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, who became the SDP's presidential candidate (Udoakah, 1992). Nor can we forget the explosion of newspaper publishing in Akwa Ibom State since 2007, leading to the State accounting for not fewer than 100 newspapers and more than 800 persons claiming to be journalism practitioners as at 2015. The examples are endless. Mr. Chairman, Sir, this trend has continued to this day. Journalism is used to advocate fiercely partisan views of the owners of the mass media. Udoakah (1988) observes that since Independence, the media in Nigeria have been structured along ethnic lines to fight the cause of ethnic groups. They have

It would be a mistake to ignore the existence of authoritarian tendencies in relation to the media in societies that are not generally or openly authoritarian.

The developing countries are commonly known as a mixed economy. That is, the countries there operate an economy that has both the capitalist and the communist characteristics. They are poor and heavily indebted. They believe in a guided communication for a purposeful future and therefore cannot afford to leave the communication media in the hands of a few money lords who can afford them, hence a heavy government involvement in media ownership. This was consequent upon these countries demand in the 1970s for a new World Information Order modeled on the concept of a New World Economic Order, and granted by UNESCO at the 1978 Paris Conference. For them, according to McQuail (1983), economic, social and political developments are primary national tasks to which every other institution should submit. The media system operating here has come to be known as Development Journalism model.

The official argument, as Tatarian (1978, p.43) writes:

Is that many young states are still too fragile, too deficient in literacy and established institutions, and their people are more loyal to racial, religious or tribal communities than to the new concept of statehood, to risk the controversy and confrontation produced by the full exercise of personal freedom.

Before the creation of States, the federal and regional government had gone into newspaper publishing to champion their cause and publicise their activities. The Federal Government published the *Morning Post*; the Northern Region, *The Nigerian Citizen*; the Eastern Region, *The Outlook*; and the West Region, *The Sketch*. They co-existed and competed with the private press nationally. So, as States were created, they followed the precedent, thus making government the biggest owner of the media of mass communication, and the biggest employer of journalists in the country. This means that the government is controlling the market for journalists. Apart from this, the government is the life wire of the media, who are to operate wholly or partly according to the dictates of the market economy (McQuail, 2005). Whether they are government-owned or private organisations, the media look up to government for patronage. McQuail identifies two fundamental

Benin, *Middle Belt Herald* at Jos, *Northern Star* at Kano and *Eastern Observer* at Onitsha.

Udoakah (2014) notes that these press build-ups were later used at the introduction of party politics to articulate ethnic interests and to mobilize support for the political parties to which they subsequently affiliated. For example, all the newspapers from the Zik's press empire supported the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) while Chief Awolowo's newspaper chain supported the Action Group (AG). According to Mohammed (2003), these political parties followed regional lines. For instance, The Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a cultural group of Yoruba descendants of Oduduwa, metamorphosed into Action Group in March 1951; Jamiyyar Mutanan Arewa, another cultural group in Northern Nigeria, transformed into the Northern People's Congress in October 1957; the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons which was formed as a national party became bogged down by the affairs of Igbo State Union in Eastern Nigeria. Also, there was Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). It was not surprising that all other newspapers at that time supported the political parties to which their owners belonged. One obvious conclusion that can be drawn from the birth and proliferation of the early press up to and after Independence is that they were motivated by politics more than anything else and their

Another powerful newspaper of note at the time was *The West African Pilot* founded and edited by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1937 after his return from Ghana to Nigeria. Coleman (1963, p.223) says of Azikiwe:

The boldness, daring, and sometimes shocking directness of his editorials and news items radically differentiated them from those of his predecessors... His combative and provocative journalism was the principal source of his fame and power, and the most crucial single precipitant of Nigerian awakening.

It was in circulation till 1964, coming back in 1992 for a brief duration as a weekly. It was not long the fullness of the minds of these nationalists came to the fore. Dr. Azikiwe started to build up his press with the *Eastern Nigeria Guardian* in Port-Harcourt in 1940, the Ibadan-based *Southern Nigerian Defender* in 1943 and the *Comet* moved to Kano in 1949. In the same year, *Nigeria Spokesman* and *Northern Advocate* were established in Onitsha and Jos respectively. To match the Zik's press, Chief Obafemi Awolowo founded the *Tribune* in 1949 and added to it the *Daily Service* in the same year at Lagos, *Irohin Yoruba* in 1958 at Ibadan and *COR Advocate* at Uyo in the same year, *Midwest Echo* at

lines of media economics: the consumer market which is concerned with the sale of media products and services, and the advertising market, in which the audience is sold to advertisers in the form of access. This reliance on the two sources of revenue has far-reaching significance in the nature of output, especially the advertising source that Miliband (1969) describes as a source of conservative pressure.

The economy is an aspect of society which engages in interactional and reciprocal relationship with the communication industry. It reflects in the mass media content. The economy provides both the human and material resources needed by the media industry and therefore it is expected to pay back to the system. Anim (2007) studied the influence of geopolitical affiliations on newspaper coverage of national issues and found out that Nigerian dailies tended to champion issues 'dear' to their particular enclaves. While the *Punch* and *Tribune* were on top in matters concerning the South-West, the *Champion* was fighting the cause of the South-East, and the *New Nigerian* devoted itself to the cause of the Northern States.

### 3.0 WHAT IS JOURNALISM?

Journalism to a lay man is synonymous with the ability to speak and write good English. But when the acceptable parameters for this field of human

endeavour are applied, it turns out to be that it is not all good speakers and writers that are journalists, although journalists are of necessity good speakers and writers. Journalism is the totality of efforts at gathering, processing, evaluating and disseminating facts about current events, ideas and occurrences under the guidance of editors or producers, through the media of mass communication.

To Hasan (2013), journalism is a form of communication based on asking and answering the questions: Who? What? How? Where? Why? And McQuail (2005) defines journalism as a product or work of professional news people. This underscores the fact that journalism is practised by people with proper educational training in the art of news identification, gathering, processing and production.

From my experience over time as a reporter, copy-editor, feature writer, columnist, assistant editor and production editor, I want to add that journalism is the software of the media of mass communication, an activity without bounds and one which makes the journalist relevant in all fields of human endeavour. There is hardly any field not reported by the journalist from business, the arts, humanities, technology to natural and applied sciences (Udoakah, 1998).

west coast, stayed in Nigeria and carried out their press campaign against the colonial administration. Several newspapers were springing up and disappearing rapidly. Of course, to fund a newspaper then was as difficult as it is today. So, only the relatively rich persons could go into the venture as the main outlet for the propagation of social consciousness and political mobilization.

The aggressive approach to journalism by some of these papers made the Colonial Administration promulgate an Ordinance in 1903 requiring the registration of all newspapers, and the Sedition Offence Ordinance in 1909 to checkmate the growing political awareness at the time, the quest for Independence and increased nationalist activities. Coleman (1963) writes of the *Lagos Weekly Record* as a determined agent in the propagation of racial consciousness and whose lengthy editorial always hung on the edge of sedition. Also, Chick (1971, p.115) quotes an English journalist who visited Nigeria in 1945, as having written of the Nigerian press as 'a revolutionary native press which quite seriously threatens the stability of this part of the empire'. It is noteworthy to say that this powerful newspaper, *The Record*, was founded in 1890 by John Payne Jackson, a Liberian nationalist who lived in Lagos for twenty eight years. The paper existed for forty years.

Despite the introduction of professionalism into journalism practice, it has still been difficult to divorce it from the political class and the economic interest of the proprietors of the media of mass information. Frequently, these groups mask their political and economic class character and parade as popular fighters for the oppressed or common man and their welfare. But when the chips are down, it becomes evident that the media have no choice than to serve the long-run interests of the dominant classes, however much they may pretend.

The Nigerian experience during the period of nationalism and after Independence would suffice. According to Ekanem (2003), in all of Africa, the Nigerian media have been known to be very vocal, unrelenting and dogged in their pursuit of the ideals of social justice and political equality. In addition, Olutokun and Seteolu (2001) observe that Nigeria has the biggest and most virile African press community, followed by South Africa. History points to the Nigerian press as having been the catalyst in the fight for Nigerian's Independence. According to Golding and Elliot (1979, p.29), 'The steady advance of nationalist ideas found ready expression in the pages of the embryo press'. Before the nationalist movements in the 1930s, the press, from 1859 when the first newspaper, *Iwe Irohin*, was published, was concerned with missionary and trade news. This accounts for why many African nationalists, particularly those of the

Udoakah (2014) notes that journalists have come to be accepted as the watch dogs of society, the fourth estate of the realm. Thus, the public looks up to them for the truth about every situation that deserves public attention. As watchdogs of the society, journalists strive to research on and report the happenings in society whether good or bad. So, journalists perform a surveillance function in society, providing spotlights on events and anticipating future trends. Journalism is embroiled by decision making. It is difficult to point to another activity like it. Decisions are taken from the beginning to the end, and even after. A decision has to be taken on what is to be reported for the day and who should cover the event. The reporter assigned has to take a decision on what aspects of the event he should report on; when he submits his write-up, a decision is taken on what should be added or taken out for the story to make sense or more sense; what angle should be used as the lead (first paragraph), what headline should be given; what space should be given; what position on the page it should appear; what time it should come on the air; what footage it should be given etc. Then the readers, listeners and viewers take over from there and decide what to do with the story. These decisions have value implications.

This decision making cuts across all journalistic activities and it is not taken in abstraction but

fashioned and packaged in definite concrete ways which entail particular relations among people with whom the journalist comes in contact, and for those he works. It is only within these social connections and relations are the media products we consume produced. These forces of production and social relations have implications for how journalism practice is assessed and judged in every nation. That is to say, it is impossible to isolate the way media products are produced from the political, cultural and other social relations which make their conception and production possible. That is why it would be difficult for the standard of journalism practice in Nigeria to be higher than the country's values and morality index. According to Udoakah (1988), journalists have a moral responsibility to their communities to the extent of the scope of those communities' morality. That is to say, journalists' moral responsibility to their communities is dictated by the extent to which certain issues in such communities are seen to be of moral concern.

While anatomizing journalism products in 1993, I noted that the process which brings about news, features, profiles, interviews, documentaries, magazine programmes and films of sorts surpasses the understanding of an average consumer and even that of many of those involved in their production. The reason is that they are probably influenced by

#### **4.0 JOURNALISM AND POLITICS**

In order to understand the political economy of journalism practice in a pseudo-democratic society such as Nigeria, two issues need to be considered, namely: the relationship between the journalists, their employers and society, and the relationship between journalism practice and the government in power.

McChesney (2008) notes that journalism has from the beginning been partisan, and that the First Amendment Clause in the United States of America Constitution was to protect dissent political viewpoints because newspapers were closely linked to political parties. According to him, in the nineteenth century, the reasoning of newspaper publishing changed from being primarily political to being primarily commercial, though still being partisan.

This situation led to intense criticisms of the press, leading to some publishers to reason that if nothing was done, readers would soon find newspapers incredible, propagandistic and unconvincing (McChesney 2008). Hence, they pushed for the establishment of a formal School of Journalism to train a cadre of professional editors and reporters who would give a touch of professionalism to newspaper contents. So, Journalism Schools came into existence by 1920 in the United States of America.

those with blogs are playing the journalist and feeding in all manner of information.

To the developing countries, journalism is a philosophy for development. It is used to persuade citizens to accept that their happiness lies in and is enhanced by their adoption of innovations. It proclaims and extends values in society. According to Udoakah (1998), at the heart of this development-oriented journalism is a deliberate effort to redeem the battered image given to the developing countries by the Western media and hopefully attract investments. Secondly, it is a resolve to use reporting techniques and programmes considered appropriate to bring citizens together for development. And thirdly, it is a determination to work with the mass media for social engineering that would bring about wealth and thereby ensure individual and collective well being. Moreover, journalism is lived and felt by all and sundry through internet-based platforms, electronic and print media.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, a profession would not have been this pervasive, environment-searching, important and powerful, making and bringing down governments, without attracting envy and enemies. This discourse, therefore, is a contribution to the search for explanations of the disappointments you may be experiencing in recent years from Nigerian journalism, and new visions of future possibilities.

the idealistic recipe for their production which may read like this:

*Take an occurrence, put in the medium of mass communication and send out to the public.*

Were journalism products cookery as straight forward as this, we would be living in a world of absolute truth. But we are far away from that world. The ingredients for journalism products cookery vary with the chef. But a more widely and frequently used recipe can be depicted as follows:

- (i) *Put some quantity of water as desired into a porcelain.*
- (ii) *Add a desired quantity of idiosyncrasy.*
- (iii) *Add the goal and aspiration of the media organization.*
- (iv) *Add some quantity of the values of the society within which the medium of mass communication operates.*
- (v) *Add some quantity of the dominant ideology.*
- (vi) *Stir until a solution is got.*
- (vii) *Put an occurrence into the solution and allow to saturate.*
- (viii) *Take it out and put in a medium of mass communication and serve those who have access to such medium (Udoakah, 1993).*

There is no occurrence that is put in this solution and it does not change its original properties for

new ones. It follows, therefore, that mass media products are **transmuted** products. They are an interplay of reality with variables (ii) to (v) above. It is difficult to identify which media product is an interplay of reality with one or two of these variables. But it is certain that they have these colourations.

**Transmutation** of occurrence begins with the reporter. Reporters, like other sets of journalists, come from different socio-economic, religious, cultural and educational backgrounds. These backgrounds affect the way they select and organize the facts of the occurrence which they cover. As you probably know, every occurrence is a result of a process and it is made up of facts which had accumulated in a somewhat systematic fashion. But rarely has it been reported in its 'raw' form. What you get most of the time are constructed versions of the facts of the occurrence.

Personal interest and stereotype also influence the reporter's selection and organization of facts about an occurrence. Personal interest may arise as a result of social, economic or blood relationship between the reporter and those in the centre of, or who are affected by, the occurrence. If the relationship is favourable, facts are selected to give a 'white image' to the occurrence; if the relationship is a sour one, facts are selected to portray the occurrence in bad light. Stereotype, on

world" which enables us to watch televised information and read news about our social, cultural and political life. Through journalism our environment is ex-rayed for our precaution and safety in our interaction with it. Current issues and concerns are brought to citizens in ways that help them to understand social problems and take rational decisions. In other words, journalism serves as a channel of social communication (Udoakah, 1995).

Moreover, journalism has established itself as a channel of political communication and education, bringing to the people news of how political actions affect them and enlightening them on electoral processes. Also, it publishes or broadcasts profiles of political candidates for public offices to enable citizens to know the quality of persons vying for those offices; it reports political candidates' statements and policy options regarding how specific political and economic problems would be tackled (Udoakah, 1996). The styles adopted often help to develop a greater information and civic consciousness among people in the urban and rural areas alike.

Furthermore, with new media technologies, there are internet-based communication systems which make it possible to receive print and broadcast news or other stories online. It is not surprising, therefore, that people with facebook account and

*African Pilot* to go out of circulation in 1964, and by the Obasanjo Regime between 1976 and 1978 without success (Udoakah, 1996). The relationship between the mass media and the advertisers and the economy is very significant to note. Big time advertisers are industrialists and other business gurus behind the economy. So, advertising exerts obvious, though frequently denied, pressure on the media and journalism practice.

### 3.2 THE EXPANDING COAST OF JOURNALISM

Arising from the role which journalism has chosen to play in society - informing the public accurately, bringing to light what a party or government wants to keep secret, and presenting a cost - benefit analysis of major public issues to the public (Udoakah 2014) - it has made waves across many facets of human endeavour. According to Siebert *et al* (1956), journalism undertook the role of helping to discover truth, to assist in the process of solving political and social problem by presenting all manner of evidence and opinion as a basis for decision. Also, Bruhn-Jensen (1986) says, the task of journalism is to make information publicly available, this being one basic ingredient of the public sphere required for public participation in discussion and decisions.

In the performance of its chosen role, journalism has come to be accepted as a "window on the

the other hand, refers to the witting or unwitting effort by the mass media operators to help maintain the socio-political and economic system in their country as they are at present. Thus, events are reported in a way likely to shape mass perception and cognition in order for the elites to muddle through the business of governance. In social terms, Bernard Roshco refers to stereotype as the "effect of widely shared expectations in standardizing the popular perception and definition of social situations" (Roshco, 1975).

There is no doubt that the facts of any event given a news status by the mass media managers are selected and presented within the framework of public ethos. The reporters are not the only hands involved in the **transmutation**. The editors, who also have peculiar idiosyncrasies and come from different backgrounds as well, are not an exception. In editing the stories brought in by the reporters they try to retain some facts about the event, reconstruct others to sharpen a point of view or understanding from a particular perspective. In short, directions are given to stories to reflect or conform to what the particular mass medium processing them stands for. While sometimes the editors may be concerned with keeping out information or facts likely to offend public ethos, generally they make sure that facts which may bring the management of the medium

into public spite and result to loss of patronage are dropped or polished. In this way, reality becomes distorted.

Journalism products are nothing more than different cuisines from one kitchen by different chefs. The condiments for these cuisines are supplied by somebody and the freedom of choice of the chefs is limited to the condiments available in that kitchen. Yet, their choices naturally produce different tastes of the meals from that same kitchen.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, again, I see journalism as the purveyor of a stock of resources, a commodity known and called news. 'News as a commodity has a utility value or ability to satisfy certain human needs. It is demanded and supplied; it is produced from a combination of factors of production; it is packaged and paid for; it comes in different brands — economic and commercial, political, science and technology, entertainment, religious, social, welfare, sports etc (Udoakah, 2001). News from the mass media has a great diversity of consumers who range from individuals who may be students, workers in the commerce and industry, bureaucrats and technocrats, diplomats, academics, farmers, market men and women, retirees, to institutions and governments. Many business organizations, private and public institutions, including libraries and government agencies, subscribe to or buy

therefore, would only patronise the media that are sympathetic to their interest. In Britain, a number of advertising agencies had once admitted before the Royal Inquiry on the Press that they had boycotted left publications for political reasons (Udoakah, 1996).

In the Nigerian economy, as in many other economies, especially in a mono-economy like ours, government is the biggest advertiser. So, it can decide to be funny at the least provocation. It happened in the seventh month in office of General Abacha. A circular dated June 20, 1994 from the Office of the Director-General, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, Lagos, was sent to all ministries, extra ministerial departments, parastatals and other agencies of government, at the federal, state and local government denouncing their "indiscriminate use of advertisements, especially in newspapers and magazines...". According to the circular, "Government has therefore stopped the use of public funds for advertisements in the print media; the only exceptions are strictly official matters which may be advertised in the print media controlled by the Federal or State governments".

Of course, this followed a history. The British administration had adopted this stratagem against the *Lagos Weekly Record* without success. It was copied by the Balewa Administration in the early 1960s, causing the *Daily Express* and the *West*

editorial content, whereas the commercial contents are the responsibility of the business department. But, because journalism occupies the centre stage in the mass media, a lot of things which may not be from journalism stable are passed to be its products. So, since the union between journalism and the mass media is inevitable and cannot be asundered, we need to look at the consequences of the technological and institutional systems in which journalism finds itself and how its products are made to fit into the social, political and economic structure of the society.

However, you may want to suggest that the journalists should team up and get their mass media. It is a good idea indeed. The Ray Ekpus, Nosa Igiebors and others had taken that decision. Their experience thereafter is well known to us. Yes, it could not be otherwise since they must depend on government and advertising revenue to remain afloat, and these are obtained with a consideration.

Neither the newspapers nor the broadcasting organizations can survive without advertisements, unless they are funded by the public. The alternative will be for the readers, with regard to the print media, to be willing to pay a higher cover price. So governments and industries are the life-wire of the mass media in terms of advertising revenue. And, incidentally, advertisers seem to share the interest of the ruling class and,

newspapers and magazines, and install the satellite dishes for television news reception. They also have radio receivers in the offices. Indeed, many people would not leave their homes without listening to the news on matters which interest them. These may be weather forecast, exchange rates, entertainment or breaking news on any issue. Many managers would not start the day's work without reading the newspapers.

The fact that there are conscious consumers of mass media news, be they individuals, corporate bodies or governments, confirms that, as a commodity, news really satisfies a functional or psychological need or want. At the individual level, it keeps the consumer informed and abreast of the happenings within and outside his environment. It can help its consumers to adopt protective measures and save them and their immediate families from unpleasant situations.

Mass media news can help its consumers to improve themselves materially in general terms; but specifically it can lead to having jobs or changing jobs for more lucrative ones. Examples of such mass media news with these potentials could be news of innovations in doing certain things, news of research findings, news of contracts for construction works or news of new companies coming to town etc. The benefits of the mass media news are of a social nature. One of such social benefits is the mass education or the awareness it

gives to the citizens. Mass media news conveys a lot of public information to citizens who have the means to receive it. Such public information, it is believed, has the potential of affecting public attitude positively toward the governing authorities. This consideration is a factor in the government decision in the developing countries to invest in the news industry.

Mass media news can stimulate or inspire development of a general nature, including economic, political and social. Both nations and citizens can adopt research findings in mass media news to better their lot economically. Nations can be challenged by news of scientific and technological breakthroughs in other countries, onto new technologies and more researches. Moreover, a free flow of mass media news has been seen as an important ingredient of democracy. It seems to have overhauled the wheels of democracy to the extent that the quantity and quality of news have become matters of interest to both the electorate and the government.

### 3.1 JOURNALISM AND THE MASS MEDIA

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, journalism and the mass media of public information are two distinct entities. Journalism serves as the software while the mass media - whether the print, electronic or internet based - are the hardware (Udoakah, 1998).

In truth, journalism is what makes the mass media popular. Although the mass media do engage in other businesses of a commercial nature, it is doubtful if they could survive without journalism. In other words, take away journalism from the mass media and they would be standing on a sinking sand.

Also, in truth, journalism knows that it cannot stand on its own without the mass media system. So by nature, there is a compelling relationship between journalism and the mass media system which is difficult to asunder. Another way to understand their relationship is to use the lens of the landlord-tenant relationship. The landlord needs a tenant just as the tenant needs a landlord. However, there is always an understanding consummated by a tenancy agreement. In the case of the mass media and journalism, the understanding is unwritten. But it goes something like this. **“You are welcome to our media. You are free to blossom out and flourish so long as you don’t stand on the way of our success”**. This has been for Nigerian journalism, walking a tightrope forever.

A fact which may not be known by many mass media users is that, what they consume are not entirely journalism products. The mass media fill their pages, airtime or platform with two principal items, namely: the editorial and commercial matters. Journalists are responsible only for