

SOCIAL DYNAMICS AND BROADCAST MEDIA CONTENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper x-rays those social factors that determine or influence how broadcast media content is produced, packaged, distributed, and consumed in society. Drawing heavily from the theoretical exposition of The Systems Theory, it is established that since broadcast media institutions maintain frequent interaction with society through the mutual exchange of inputs, outputs, and feedback, they cannot function in isolation of the complexities besetting their sociological environment. The symbiotic relationship existing between the broadcast media and society has necessitated the broadcast media's entanglement with certain social complexities which are part and parcel of society and which significantly influence broadcast media operations, processes, practices, and products - contents. Those social complexities are what is treated in the paper as the social dynamics. The social dynamics are unique to specific society and their latent or manifest impacts on broadcast media practice vary from society to society. Within the Nigerian mediascape, they are traceable to cultural variations, political economy, media ownership structure, broadcast professionals, regulatory frameworks, governance, audience variations, intellectual communities, intra or inter-familial orientation, society's level of economic development, the influence of advertisers, religious interests, elitism, ethnic tensions, and groupthink. The pressure they exert on broadcast media processes and contents is overwhelming.

Keywords: Social dynamics; Social forces; Broadcast contents; Society; Systems theory

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1. INTRODUCTION

The discourse on the media-society interdependent relationship is a long-standing issue that has elicited recurring debates from sociologists and media scholars. The discourse, beyond addressing the symbiotic relationship that exists between the media and society, permeates underlying issues bothering on how the media influence society and how the society, in turn, influences the media. Of consequence to this discourse analysis and paradigm are the deep concerns on how the media generate their contents and how the contents generated by media institutions weave through and penetrate the cores, strata, institutions, and structures upon which the society is founded.

Considered very critical in the media-society discourse are the perceived impacts of social dynamics inherent in the society where the media operate and which often tend to shape, influence, massage, and exert considerable pressure on media processes. Taken into consideration are the subliminal and tangible manifestations of the effects impinge on media processes by social dynamics which have the potency to make or mar media operations and practices from the point of content generation, processing, creation, and dissemination to the extent that the media contents, products or offerings are consumed in the society. This suggests that media operations, practices, products or offerings, and consumption trends or

patterns are entwined by the social dynamics inherent in the society where the media and the media users find their footing and consequently, coexist.

The social dynamics are the social forces, facts, pressures, entanglements, implications, complications, matrices, and complexities domiciled in the society which, consequently, affect the media and their processes, practices or operations as a result of the media's frequent interaction and exchange with society. The social dynamics are part and parcel of society. They are the undetached and inseparable constituents of a given society.

There is no society without its social dynamics. As far as society has institutions that frequently interact or have friction with one another to ensure the progression, growth, and continuity of such society, social dynamics are inevitable. They are those ingredients of the society that suggest that society is not static, redundant or dead, but rather processual and in a state of progress. They cut across the components of cultural traits of a society which include the socifacts, mentifacts, and artefacts.

Hence, the social dynamics encompass group behaviours, values and lifestyles, cultures, traditions, mores, norms, creeds, family, family orientation, symbols, objects, friendships, relationships, interactions, communities, needs, governments, educational systems, shared ideas, beliefs, religion, religious groups, aspirations, yearnings, social groups and groupings, frictions, encounters, social classes, social stratifications, ego, individuals, idiosyncrasies, sentiments, biases, worldviews, laws, ethics, institutions, diversity, languages, nuances, perceptions, etc. that either bring society together or set it apart.

The social dynamics are the social “forces that cause societies to change” (Ferrante, 2011, p.12). They are the forces in a society's social sphere that seek to change, alter, shift, restructure, or shake the foundations upon which society rests. They help in defining, re-defining, shaping, re-shaping, enforcing and reinforcing social norms, practices, mores, facts, values and histories. In doing all these and more, they tend to make society colourful, thick, complex and endowed with a sense of dynamism and progression instead of being static and lifeless.

Society's level of complexity, complication, intricacy, diversity, and matrix are occasioned as a result of the

underlying social dynamics inherent in the society. Those social dynamics exert considerable influence on social institutions, systems, and strata. As the broadcast media are part of the social institutions and whose survival depends on constant friction, exchange or interaction with other institutions within the society, the social dynamics, nevertheless, influence their existence, operations, practices, and products. Hence, the broadcast media often take after the colouration of their social environment and cannot survive without constant interactions and exchange with the social environment which is repleted with social dynamics. As there is no society devoid of social dynamics, the broadcast media become overwhelmed with the complexities orchestrated by the social dynamics within their social environment.

Given that the broadcast media, as Schaefer (2012) notes, are distinguished from other social institutions by the necessary presence of an audience, the influence exerted on broadcast media productions, presentations, or contents by the social dynamics inherent in the society becomes more pervasive. The justification for this idea is simple: the audiences are social agents imbued with the dynamics of a given society they constitute. Hence, their psychographic, demographic, and psycho-social characteristics are imbued with social facts that define their social existence and, in the context of media-use patterns or experience, influence how they perceive, react, respond, and consume broadcast-mediated content.

On the flip side, the social dynamics also influence how broadcast media professionals respond to, perceive, react to, create, process, and transmit or present their content to the society. It should be noted that broadcast media professionals and the primary, secondary, and tertiary audiences of their content are the by-products of society. There is little they can do to overcome the social dynamics that shape their worldviews and perceptions as well as those of their audience.

Since the broadcast media operate within a society and society is not without its dynamics, the broadcast media, as social structures and institutions, are susceptible and vulnerable to society's whims and caprices orchestrated by the forces, pressures, matrices, complications, and complexities within the social context. It follows from the foregoing that the broadcast media cannot be independent or operate in isolation from the social complexities or forces within their social environment. To take the broadcast media out of their social milieu and context is genocidal to

media cannot become obsolete in social dynamics besetting them but rather coexist with the social dynamics. This coexistence is interdependently mutual in such a way that when society develops, advances or transforms as a result of social dynamics, the broadcast media operations, practices, and contents also develop, advance, and transform in line with the evolving social dynamics palpable in the society. In this sense, the broadcast media and social dynamics co-evolve interdependently over time and in a recurring fashion.

Theoretical Underpinning

This paper is anchored on the theoretical underpinning of **The Systems Theory** as proposed in the 1940s by Ludwig von Bertalanffy. The theory was further developed and popularised on the strengths of two seminal works: *General System Theory* and *Introduction to Cybernetics* published in the 1950s by von Bertalanffy (1951) and Asby (1956) respectively.

The theory offers an exposition of the intricacies, relationships, and interactions that occur within a system and between systems. A system, in this context, consists of composite units called sub-systems or micro-systems that are interconnected with supra-systems or macro-systems so that changes in one part induce changes in other parts of the system (Baran & Davis, 2012). Hence, it is possible to have terms such as system in a system which suggests that a system hardly operates in isolation but interdepends with other systems for survival through interaction or mutual exchange. It is from this premise that The Systems Theory provides direct explications on the behaviour of social systems, the dynamic relationships, interactions, exchanges, and interdependence that exist between components of the system and the organisation-environment relationships (Lai & Lin, 2017).

Setting The Systems Theory as the theoretical framework for this study is validated by the understanding of broadcast media institutions as open (social) systems whose functionality is deeply dependent on the level of interdependence, interaction, exchange or friction with the macro/supra-system called society. As micro and open systems within the macro/supra-system, they constantly maintain interaction with the macro/supra-system to exchange inputs and outputs and vice versa.

By viewing the broadcast media institutions as micro and open systems within the macro/supra-system

(society), it is pertinent to take note of the four basic elements for which they mutually depend on the macro/supra-system. These elements are inputs, transformation processes, outputs, and feedback. Griffin and Singh (2000, p.48) provide detailed explanations on the workings of the elements within and between systems as follows:

First, inputs are the material, human, financial, and information resources the organization gets from its environment. Next, through technological and managerial processes, inputs are transformed into outputs. Outputs include products, services, or both (tangible and intangible); profits, losses, or both (even not-for-profit organizations must operate within their budgets); employee behaviours; and information. Finally, the environment reacts to these outputs and provides feedback to the system.

The implication of The Systems Theory to this work is that the practices or operations of the broadcast media institutions as part of the social systems within the macro-system cannot thrive without taking inputs from the society. These inputs comprise the broadcast professionals or personnel themselves (broadcast journalists, reporters, editors, presenters, etc.); the raw materials upon which broadcast contents will be created or produced (newsworthy events, social realities, and happenstances in the society); money; media technologies; etc. These inputs make no sense until they are refined or transformed.

For broadcast professionals, requisite training on the rudiments and etiquettes of the profession, and professional socialisation are needed to transform them from laymen into media professionals. For the raw materials of broadcast content; coverage, interpretation, translation, writing, editing, revising, proofreading, and editorial approval are needed to turn the raw materials into finished products (broadcast contents). When the processing or transformation is done on the inputs taken, the broadcast media institutions can now export them as outputs to the society.

The outputs, in this context, are the refined raw materials called broadcast contents. Upon consumption of the refined raw materials, the society can then send feedback, whether positive or negative, to the broadcast media institutions in terms of

reactions, responses, attitudes, opinions, etc. on the quality or general appeal of their products (broadcast contents). Feedback here serves as a vital element in controlling the quality of the refined products in view of making them align with socially-acceptable standards, that is, to conform to social taste. When conformity to social tastes is at variance with what the broadcast media institution offers, they would be a social boycott of the media products. As social tastes for media consumption are often defined by social agents (members of the audience), they thereby exert some kind of latent or manifest social pressures, forces or influences on the broadcast media to perform, practice, or produce the contents in some way that will meet social taste. It is on this note that social dynamics may be said to influence or shape media practices or operations and their products.

However, broadcast media institutions as social systems have the potential to monitor the environment and alter or reposition their operations, practices, and products in response to changes in the environment (Baran & Davis, 2012). The disruptions or variations in the environment (social dynamics) considerably force the broadcast media institutions, as social open systems, to respond and adjust, through interaction with macro/supra-system, in order to maintain a state of equilibrium (Lai & Lin, 2017). This interaction, exchange, and friction with the macro/supra-system are not devoid of entanglement with forces, complexities, complications, and influences in the social realm that tends to shape their operation or practice. As real open systems, the broadcast media institutions are open to (and interact with) their environments. Being open to and interactive with their environment has necessitated their acquisition of qualitatively new properties through emergence, resulting in continual evolution (Heylighen & Joslyn, 1992).

Society: A Contextual Overview

A quick look at the term 'society' suggests that it has much to do with the social ambience, environment or context in which people and varied institutions and systems are domiciled. It has to do with the composition of people, their culture and their common history. Society, in this perspective, is what Schaefer (2012) considers the largest form of a human group that consists of people who share a common heritage and culture.

Ferrante (2011, p. 60) sees society as a “group of

interacting people who share, perpetuate, and create culture.” Ferrante's (2011) perspective on society stresses interaction as the core of ascertaining the notion of society. Aremu (2014, p. 146), in emphasising 'interaction' as an important concept in classifying a group of people as society, maintains that “in living and working together, there would be interactions between the people.” Hence, members of a society do not just come together for togetherness sake but they do so with specific purposes which all members must 'interact' with to ensure that the purposes are achieved for the continuous existence of the society (Aremu, 2014). Society, in this sense, can be considered the largest independent and organised human group sharing the same social institutions, and solidary ties, occupying a definite and permanent territory through whose interactions, systems of life and institutions are established (Obasi, 1986; Abraham, 1975; Obasi, 2015).

Though the above definitions and pontifications on society provide a sociological perspective on the concept, a contextual overview of the concept is needed in order to place the concept in perspective to the bearing of this paper. In an attempt to contextualise the concept 'society' to suit the tone of this paper, it should be considered as a socio-cultural milieu, ambience or environment where social dynamics, social forces, social matrices, or social complexities arising as a result of man's interactions with the social institutions, social systems, social patterns, and social structures are domiciled. In this perspective, society should be seen in the context of being a melting pot of social dynamics. Hence, a social mixer that blends, refines, orchestrates and integrates the forces in the social sphere or realm.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to say that there is no society without social dynamics and social dynamics cannot exist without society. Though they vary in dimensions from society to society, social dynamics are key attributes of a functional society as they tend to put pressures on composite social structures landscaping the society.

Broadcast Media and Society: The Nexus

Broadcast media and society have a long-standing relationship. The relationship between the broadcast media and society is bred on the level of interaction, exchange, interdependence, and co-existence that both shared over time. The relationship between the broadcast media and society is cordial and mutually beneficial in the sense that both seem to be thriving on the strength of one another. This is to say that the

relationship (Obong, 2019).

This symbiotic relationship is established regarding the fact that without the society, there can be no broadcast media institutions and without broadcast media institutions, the society lacks cultural expression, promotion or marketing in visual and aurally-appealing forms. The broadcast media reflect, portray, and project the cultural mores, values, norms, and patterns that are altogether considered cultural products of a society. In this instance, the broadcast media aid society in a functional perspective as the agent of socialisation, enforcer of social norms, conferral of status, shapers of socio-cultural realities, promoters of cultural values, and marketers of cultural products.

In this dimension, one can hardly dismiss the social impacts, effects, and influences of the broadcast media because they are obvious, boundless, and no less profound. Hence, in a functionalist perspective of the broadcast media, there is the resonating emphasis that society cannot function without the broadcast media and that the broadcast media as social structures, exist to serve the diverse needs of the society (Wright, 1974; Udoakah, 2006; Ferrante, 2011; Schaefer, 2012).

As no social structure can function without communication and interaction, the broadcast media's social functions in terms of surveillance (keeping track of society), interpretation (making sense of the social realities which the audience in society is exposed to and learn from), value transmission (passing values on from one generation to the next) and entertainment (providing respite and escape from the social realities) cannot be ignored (Udoakah, 2006; Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, 2014). This goes to say that broadcast media contents impact society and culture (Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport, 2014).

Society, on the other hand, impacts broadcast media content in significant ways. First, it provides the broadcast media with the socio-cultural market or environment where raw materials (news events, happenings, circumstances, etc.) are tapped and refined into finished broadcast media products (movies, films, documentaries, commentaries, news, reality shows, etc.). It is imperative to note that without these raw materials, there would be a paucity of content for the broadcast media to present, transmit, or portray to society. Hence, as Akpan (2017) maintains that programmes or programming is the soul of broadcasting, it, therefore, implies that broadcast

media institutions that are in paucity of the 'raw materials' to be refined into programmes (contents) will, nevertheless, 'die'. As programmes or programming are the souls of the broadcast media, the society is the birthplace or haven of these 'souls' for the survival of broadcast media.

The second way in which society impacts broadcast media practices, professionalism, and contents is regarding the fact that the broadcast media practitioners, professionals, journalists or workers are the by-products that are produced, manufactured, shaped, and transported to broadcast media institutions from the society. For the broadcast content producers to come from society say much about the influence society wields on the broadcast media industry in consideration of how these individuals practice or organise media functions and processes. Their social worldviews are often brought to bear in their professional practice to the extent that contents produced often, latently or manifestly, reflect their social philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, creeds, and sentiments.

The third way in which the society impacts broadcast media industry is in consideration of the inalienable fact that society harbours broadcast media institutions. The society provides the sociocultural ambience, environment, milieu, and context for broadcast media establishments to operate and thrive. Society, in this regard, plays host to broadcast media structures as they interact with other social institutions for self-sustenance. No broadcast media institution exists in isolation of social boundaries. Thus, the society houses broadcast media institutions.

The last idea on society's impact on broadcast media practices, profession, and contents is buttressed by Straubhaar *et al* (2014) who posit that society drives the changes in broadcast media contents and broadcast technology in use. As audience needs become more refined and sophisticated, the broadcast media, in response to meeting the demands of the audience, nevertheless, make drastic changes in the way and manner their contents are produced and transmitted as well as the technology that would drive such change. Hence, society shapes broadcast media content by influencing what they offer.

Broadcast Media Contents: Sociological Perspectives on Production-Dissemination Approaches, Issues and Model

Understanding sociology as a discipline that is concerned with the level of social relationships that

exist among social dynamics is to understand the sociological concerns and implications of broadcast media content to society. Such sociological concerns and implications bother on functionalism, positivism, phenomenologism, ethno-methodologism, symbolic interactionism, social actionism, social conflictism, and social exchangism between broadcast media and other structures or institutions in the society.

In the face of all these, critical concerns are placed on the kind of content that the broadcast media made available to the society and the kinds of social dynamics that influence the process (broadcast media productions and dissemination). On the hotbed of this discourse are particular concerns bothering on broadcast media production approaches, models, and systems tenable in Nigeria. Schudson (2014) suggests four approaches which serve as a template for a robust discourse on the sociology of broadcast media content in Nigeria.

The first approach is *the economic organisation of broadcast content*. In this approach, the economic consideration, implications, and interests for producing broadcast media content are considered sacrosanct and upheld above equals. It is in this approach that the broadcast media are considered lapdogs of economic power blocs and megaphones for ruling elites and can never be a critic of the powers that be and hotbeds of radical thoughts (Schudson, 2014). Producing broadcast content to suit the commercial appetites of advertisers, commercial drives of media owners, and propagandist objectives of the political class for the sole aim of financial aggrandisement are the critical concerns in this approach. Broadcast contents, in this perspective, are produced for commercial objectives and are 'commodified' to meet the profit orientation of the owners and not solely for public service.

The second approach is *the political economy of broadcast content production*. This takes into consideration the political context of broadcast content production (Schudson, 2014). In this approach, what is critical is the politics of the broadcast media and broadcast-mediated politics. It takes an inward look into political systems, political climates, political ideologies, and political culture that shroud broadcast media practices, operations, and productions. Hence, there is likely to be a distinction in the quality, quantity, tone, direction, angles, etc. of broadcast media products given a system's prevailing political culture. To this end, Schudson (2014, p. 169) is of the view that

“public criticism of state policy is invariably easier in liberal societies with privately-owned news outlets than in authoritarian societies with state or private ownership.” The political orientation of the broadcast media owners (whether government or private individuals) along with political philosophy, ideology, and culture, weigh heavily on broadcast media productions, processes, and dissemination.

The third approach is *the social organisation of broadcast media journalism and productions*. In this approach lies the idea that broadcast media content is constructed instead of being real and that they seek to promote or advance the viewpoints or ideologies of the elites. In this view, “the news media reflect not a world 'out there' but the practices of those who have the power to determine the experience of others” (Molotch & Lester, 1974 cited in Schudson, 2014, p. 172). It is in this approach that the idea of broadcast content producers creating content out of their figment of imaginations and as a result of sustaining the social ties/relationship they maintain with accredited news sources is validated. Schudson (2014, p. 172), buttressing the foregoing viewpoints, maintain that “still, an emphasis on the social organisation of journalism and on the interaction of journalists and their sources has reinforced economic and political perspectives that take news-making to be a reality-constructing activity governed by elites.”

Hence, broadcast media content, a product of accredited broadcast journalism sources, is said to be constructed in such a way that the voice of government, political class, elites, and the powers that dominate. This is to say that broadcast media contents and their process of generation, production, and outright dissemination are socially determined with the aid of established official sources and elaborated with the interaction of the news-making players with one another (Schudson, 2014).

The final approach is *the cultural approach to broadcast journalism*. This approach “focuses on the cultural givens within which everyday interaction happens” (Schudson, 2014, p. 177). Schudson (2014) says that the 'cultural givens' are parts of culture that border on “symbol system within which and in relation to which reporters and officials go about their duties” (p.177). This approach takes on the cultural meanings, symbols, and ideologies that define broadcast journalism and in turn, resonating the broadcast contents made available in the public domain. This approach comes on the heels of the fact that the

broadcast media operate or exist within a culture and are obliged to use or adopt cultural symbols in practice, operation and presentation (Hartman & Husband, 1973, cited in Schudson, 2014). “The cultural view finds symbolic determinants of news in the relations between ‘facts’ and symbols” (Schudson, 2014, p. 177). This takes into cognizance a cultural account of broadcast journalism, cultural explanations that constitute ‘news judgment’, cultural ideology and cultural phenomena that influence broadcast productions and presentations. The four approaches discussed above address three fundamental broadcast production issues specified by Hesmondhalgh (2014, p. 148) as follows:

i. (Broadcast) Contents Organisation Issue: This answers the questions: What is the process by which broadcast media products come to us? How is broadcast media production organised, coordinated, and managed? This issue is concerned with the journalistic processes put in place for the generation (gathering, collecting or collating); processing (editing, fine-tuning, adjusting, etc.); and disseminating (presentation, transmission or broadcasting) of broadcast media contents to the audience within a sociological setting.

ii. Ownership, Size and Strategy Issue: This answers the questions: How important are the size and ownership structure of the broadcast media institutions? What are their methods of content delivery to the society? How far is their reach? How wide is their audience base? What kind of content do they offer and why? This issue takes into cognizance the influence of ownership structure on broadcast media content. It also deals exclusively with how their popularity and national reach can influence content consumption as well as the audience’s random reaction to their random offerings.

iii. Work-Related Issue in the Broadcast Industry: It answers the questions: What is the nature of work in the broadcast media industry? To what extent are journalists allowed to work objectively? What level of control, censorship, regimentation, and regulation exists in broadcast journalism? This issue is very

critical because no examination of broadcast media production could be completely meaningful without thinking about the working lives and rewards of its key workers (Hesmondhalgh, 2014).

The ideas expressed above necessitated the improvising of a broadcast-contents multi-perspective sociological model illustrated below:

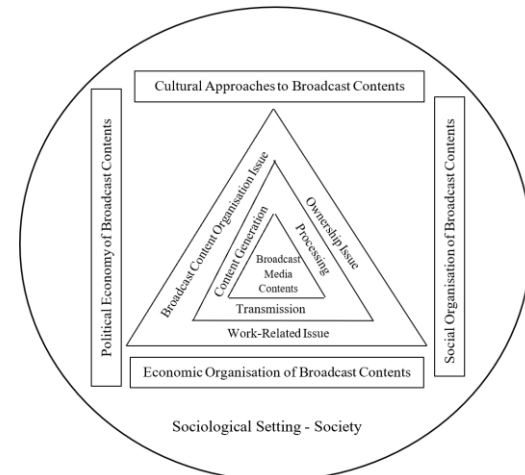


Figure 1: Broadcast-Contents Multi-perspective Sociological Model

Source: The Authors (Obong & Ukpabio, 2022)

Explicit in the model improvised above is the presupposition that the broadcast media industry is entrapped in multi-layered sociological complexities in the course of content production. Critical in the sociological complexities that influence broadcast content is the political, economic, social, and cultural forces. The model seeks to explicate the idea that certain social dynamics palpable in the political, cultural, economic, and social realms affect how broadcast contents are sourced, generated, processed, produced, and disseminated to the audience in society. These social, political, economic, and cultural forces impact three fundamental broadcast production issues which comprised the organisation of broadcast content, methods of broadcast content delivery and the extent to which broadcast journalists are allowed to produce content objectively. At the heart of the model is the ‘broadcast media contents’ whose production, processing and transmission are heavily influenced by political, cultural, social, and economic forces tenable in a society. The model spells out, explicitly, the sociological impacts of social dynamics on the

generation, processing, production, and transmission of broadcast content.

Social Dynamics and Broadcast Contents: The Nigerian Perspective

Social dynamics are the social forces that engineer changes, complexities and complications in society and which when considered holistically, affect broadcast journalism. They are the forces that threaten the cores, foundations and processes of broadcast media professionalism in Nigeria. Daily, these social forces either threaten to pull the broadcast media apart or together in attempts to maintain social equilibrium, address social conflict, define social facts, values, mores, norms, etc. as well as mitigate class relations in the society.

The broadcast media as part of social institutions in Nigerian society are subjected, susceptible, and vulnerable to social dynamics which tend to affect their operations, practices, and contents. Each of the social forces exerts significant pressures and unwarranted demands on the contents broadcast media dish out to the society. These social forces and how they impact broadcast media content in Nigeria are discussed below:

1. Culture, Cultural Lag, and Cultural Variations:

Culture is the paramount constituent of any society. There is no society without culture because culture concerns people and people's behaviour, beliefs, values, norms, mores, lifestyles, dresses, foods, and general well-being. The culture of a society in which the broadcast media find themselves avail the broadcast media the needed raw materials to produce and refine their products (news, documentaries, commentaries, films, movies, talk shows, etc.). This is possible because the raw materials for broadcast media which are the events, circumstances, occurrences or happenstances often occur within a cultural setting (society) and must involve people.

Hence, the cultural products produced and refined by the broadcast media are taken out of culture as raw materials and exported back to culture as finished cultural products. Thus, culture shapes broadcast media content. This idea will make more sense and become less cumbersome on the broadcast media institutions if the culture they project is universal and what sociologists refer to as 'culture universal' (Ferrante, 2011; Shaefer, 2012; Obasi, 2015). But

excessive pressures are exerted on broadcast media institutions in a case where they operate in a society such as Nigeria where there are cultural variations and profound counter-culture or contra-culture seeking or demanding cultural autonomy in the contents that broadcast media made available. In this instance, cultural conflicts abound and broadcast media institutions are put under pressure on which culture to mainstream and which to ignore.

But the reality is that the broadcast media cannot 'serve' or mainstream all cultures. So, producing broadcast content in a multicultural society exerts undue pressure on the broadcast media in terms of deciding on the universal strategy, language, nuance, cultural symbol, a cultural icon, etc. that will suit all cultural contexts and entities. The broadcast media contents suffer cultural lag when they cannot address the demands of contending cultures. This often leads to a state where the contending cultures find broadcast contents to be lacking in cultural substance, cultural meaning, and cultural signification thereby aiding cultural alienation.

2. Politics, Political Orientation, and Political Culture:

Broadcast media contents are significantly influenced by politics, political orientation, and political culture. From antecedence to the present broadcast scenario in Nigeria, leveraging broadcast journalism has always come on the heels of political expediency. This is to say that broadcast media content has always been produced and transmitted to correct, advance, or control the political narratives of broadcast media owners, media barons and of their cronies. In this instance, the broadcast media contents are packaged to reflect, project, portray, or propagate the political ideologies, philosophies, sentiments, and creeds of their owners. This makes it safe to say that the political milieu in which the broadcast media operate colours their perspective and to some extent, dictates the style and language of the broadcast media (Senam & Edor, 2022).

That politics shapes and influences broadcast media content in Nigeria is true. In Nigeria, no broadcast station is devoid of politically-toned content. From privately owned to government-owned broadcast media, the stories are the same. Broadcast journalism is influenced by the structure of power in Nigerian

society (Senam & Edor, 2020). "The ultimate implication of this is that the ownership and control of the media as well as accessibility to the media are considered to be critical to the wielding and sustenance of political power" (Senam & Edor, 2020, p. 86).

Another instance where the broadcast media seem to be enmeshed in a political quagmire is in consideration of the divergent interest blocs and audience base that political issues appeal to or instigate in the society. As the actions and inactions revolving around political actors make 'prominent' news, the broadcast media's consideration in relaying those political events, issues, and circumstances seems to be based on the desire to expand the audience base. By explaining why broadcast media pay much attention to politics, Senam and Edor (2020) are of the view that political activities such as electioneering, elections, rallies, party formation, political conventions, and political disputes attract public attention. The broadcast media, in view of appealing to a larger audience base, are obliged to collate them and portray the same to the audience.

3. Media Barons, Media Owners, and Media Ownership Structure: The media profession and landscape are replete with the maxim of "who pays the piper dictates the tune." This maxim also has its manifestations in broadcast journalism in Nigeria. Beyond the long-established journalistic criteria for determining news, it is sad to say that news, to a large extent, is what the media barons and media owners say it is.

The media barons are the gatekeepers (the content editors, evaluators, and assessors), the broadcast content bureaucrats, censors, journalists, reporters, graphic designers, the owners, etc. It is through their eyes and ears that society sees and hears the broadcast contents. Their decisions either add perspectives to broadcast media content or expunge them. Their contacts and interactions with the contents make the contents appear in some ways, patterns, or manners that suit their desires and interests whether political, professional, personal or ethnocentric. The biases, sentiments, and propaganda they allow or inject into the broadcast contents are their presumed 'reality' of the society. Putting it more straightforwardly, those who own and control the broadcast media wield a strong influence on the quality and quantity of broadcast content and how such content is propagated

or transmitted to the society.

Media owners and the gatekeepers within the broadcast media institutions control broadcast narratives both in government-owned and privately-owned broadcast media institutions. The interests, desires, intents, and inclinations of the media barons and their associates determine what broadcast journalism is. On ownership structure influencing broadcast media content, Shahzad and Yousaf (2019, p. 5) posit that "media organisations relatively design/structure content to develop their political economy. Evidently, media organisations have political/financial affiliations with many political or economic groups. So, media, for their own earning/capital, design or influence their contents."

4. Broadcast Professionals and Professionalism: Broadcast journalists are the first set of media people to decide the nature of broadcast content. The angle, framing, and camera shots presumably put the events, happenings, and circumstances covered in specific and specially-desirous perspectives. In the course of coverage or gathering of the broadcast contents to the point of production and transmission, their decisions, perspectives, or sentiments find their way into the broadcast contents. This makes broadcast professionalism seamlessly look like a perspectival or subjective rather than objective profession.

Shahzad and Yousaf (2019) corroborate this idea by insinuating that people involved in making broadcast media content are obliged to have emotional attachments towards a group or ideology in their professional responsibilities. They further stress that:

The biggest factor that extensively influences media content is the journalist himself, the individual who works for the media. He is overall a human being and it is natural for him to have attachments, emotional, sexual, social, etc. affiliation, fear, and enthusiasm. Ultimately, he has to be biased in any way (Shahzad & Yousaf, 2019, p.5).

However, it is unnatural to think that broadcast professionals can ever be dispassionate, undetached, unbiased, and uninvolved in the process of producing and transmitting broadcast content. As broadcast professionals are not robots, and automatic machines,

abused in the contents they produce and disseminate (Ward, 1996 cited in Shahzad & Yousaf, 2019). Broadcast journalists' show and exhibition of sentiments and biases are occasioned by their life, sense of security, job threats, love, affection, with individuals, groups, political affiliation, or country (Plesner, 2010 cited in Shahzad & Yousaf, 2019). As journalism, in this regard, has always revolved around people and what is happening around them, the biggest factor that affects broadcast media content is human beings, in this context, broadcast professionals (Shahzad & Yousaf, 2019). These professionals colour broadcast content with their ideologies, worldviews, perspectives, idiosyncrasies, and sentiments.

5. **Ethical, Legal, and Regulatory Frameworks:**

Broadcast media contents are defined and shaped by the ethical standards and legal frameworks set up to regulate excesses in broadcast journalism practice. The legal and ethical guidelines of broadcast journalism as encapsulated in the journalism code of ethics are aimed at assuaging issues bothering truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, objectivity, editorial independence, news manipulation, truth and value, truth and fantasy, truth and public interest, privacy, taste, and conflict with the legal system with recourse to the contents broadcast media make available for public consumption (Senam & Udoakah, 2018).

To state the obvious, ethical, legal, and regulatory frameworks are promulgated by the government and by extension, broadcast-related professional bodies such as the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), The Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC), National Film and Video Censors Broad (NFVCB), Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), etc. to check and control broadcast contents. In this instance, the broadcast media are at crossroads with conflicting mandates either to serve the needs of society or to meet the legal and ethical requirements of professional regulatory bodies hitherto put in place to check their practices. Violations of the legal and ethical codes and standards attract sanctions which could lead to the seizure of operational licenses. To avoid sanctions, contents are filtered, processed, and produced to address the dictates of media laws and ethics.

6. **Government, Governance, and the Governed:**

Government is one of the influential social dynamics on broadcast journalistic practices and their manifest contents. The activities, processes, acts, excesses, abuses, and circumstances that come with governance are the raw materials of broadcast media institutions. Whether or not a government performs, broadcast media are not in short supply of the impulse to keep the polity saturated with news, commentaries, and documentaries on government actions and inactions.

The way government officials and politicians run the affairs of society affects broadcast media and the contents they make available for public consumption. Hence, the kind of government in place dictates the kind of broadcast media operation in place and in turn dictates the kind of content that broadcast media are allowed to transmit.

It follows from the foregoing that authoritarian, autocratic, and repressive governments wield enormous influence on broadcast contents, in that, contents considered to be against the ideology of government are dropped, discouraged, discarded, and censored. Any attempt to broadcast anti-government content is often met with stiff and strict sanctions. But in a democratic government and pluralist politico-media economy, dissenting or alternative views echoing from broadcast media may be tolerated only to the extent that the government does not feel threatened.

From another perspective, since broadcast media licences are granted by the government, the only way broadcast media institutions can retain their licenses and receive renewal approval is for the broadcast media to be cautious with the content they serve the society about government. When broadcast content is considered to be in poor taste and against the philosophy and principle of public good, broadcast media licences are withdrawn, or revoked, and the broadcast media institutions, are sanctioned or clamped down by the government.

7. **Audience and Audience Variations:** The audiences of broadcast media institutions are human beings whose social existence, relationships, consumptions, and worldviews are shaped through the windows of their cultures and social affiliations. The audience sees, hears, understands, reacts, and responds to broadcast content given the significance of

broadcast content more or less cultural products and the audience more or less cultural meaning-makers. The cultural meaning broadcast media audiences attach to broadcast media contents are determined by the demographic, psychographic, and psycho-social gauges, filters or receptors inherent in them. These demographic, psychographic, and psycho-social gauges, filters or receptors are not universal but rather, vary from audience to audience and from culture to culture. Hence, the same broadcast media content may be appreciated in different contexts by the audience within the same sociological setting.

These variables inherent in the audience exert considerable pressure and force on broadcast media content producers in deciding and coming up with generic content that meet all audience's needs. Resorting to trend spotting, audience analysis, opinion polls, and surveys, broadcast media institutions are likely to be bombarded with enormous audiences' varied media needs that their broadcast contents can meet or cater to. Exacerbated in this situation is the fact that what they may know about the audience's media needs keep evolving, changing, and metamorphosing into newer dimensions of needs. In an attempt to meet these needs, broadcast media professionals are overstressed and their content diversified. In this respect, the broadcast media have to strive as much as possible to satisfy their audience (Senam & Udoakah, 2018).

viii. (Journalism) Schools and Intellectual Communities: The intellectual communities such as broadcast journalism schools, media academic institutions, and communication schools put in place the tone, quality, nature, curricula, and direction of media training which are impacted prospective media practitioners. It is the intellectual communities that train and mould prospective broadcast media practitioners. Hence, the quality of training impacted and the media curricula that prospective broadcast media practitioners are taught have a way of affecting their broadcast journalistic practices in terms of the quality of content they produce and disseminate when they gain entry into the broadcast media industry.

Good media training imbues in the prospective media practitioners sound ethical, legal, aesthetics, and need-driven broadcast productions that serve the public good. In this instance, the broadcast media professionals drawing on the wealth of acquired knowledge from requisite journalism, media or

communication schools can perform optimally in producing and transmitting quality broadcast content. On the other hand, if the journalism, media or communication education they acquired is faulty and lacking in merit, the contents they will eventually make available for public consumption will have a paucity of professionalism. When this happens, sham and quackery broadcast media practice will be the order of the day. A well-trained broadcast practitioner will produce professional broadcast content compared to their poorly-trained counterparts. Thus, the intellectual communities exert considerable influence on industry practice and performance of broadcast media professionalism and the nature of broadcast content produced and transmitted by broadcast media professionals.

ix. Family Unit and Inter-Familial Orientation: Though the family is the smallest institution or unit in a society, its social force and pressure on broadcast media practice are hard to be reckoned with. The family is the nucleus of the society and broadcast media industry. This is because broadcast journalists, broadcast content producers, broadcast professionals, and other composite gatekeepers in the broadcast industry come from the family. Hence, the familial orientations these media professionals imbibe over time from their respective families affect how they respond to social issues, realities, happenstances, or events and consequently, influence how they put these social issues, realities, and happenstances into broadcast content.

In this situation, it is common for broadcast media professionals to shy away from producing broadcast content from social realities, issues, and circumstances that threaten the core of their family beliefs, creeds, sentiments, lifestyles, norms or practices. Broadcast content producers can see nothing wrong in some behaviours others considered socially depraving while seeing something wrong in socially-approved behaviours. This goes to say that the orientation that media practitioners are exposed to in their family from an impressionable age has a way of influencing what content they put up in the broadcast media for the society to consume.

x. Society's Level of Economic Development: A society's level of economic development has a significant influence on broadcast content. When a society is highly industrialised with booming and

competitive business activities, the income per capita index and purchasing power parity of the audience will steadily improve, rise or appreciate. When this happens, the audience's taste for quality, specialised, and high-premium broadcast content will be on the rise. This will orchestrate competition among broadcast stations to produce quality or on-demand content to stay afloat and atop the broadcasting niche as well as to amass a large audience base and the largest share of the broadcast market. The station with these advantages is advertisers' delight and advertisers mean money. The gateway to cashing in on advertisers is having a large audience fan base that can be 'commodified' to advertisers as a result of their traction to the station's content that is in popular demand. Hence, broadcast content, because of the commercial value of the audience, is often produced and transmitted to gratify the audience's media needs while the broadcast stations also meet their economic ends in the process.

The economic factor is one of the potent forces that makes and mars broadcast journalism. The implication of this idea is that any alteration in the economic index of a society invariably reflects on the contents of broadcast content. The justification is that as a society developed economically, the nature of that society changes as it constantly faces population influx from less developed societies. As massive people gain entry into a society that is economically developed, there is likely to be an increase in crime rates in addition to other complicated issues that will arise as a result of population explosion. The socio-economic complications and complexities that come with urbanisation continuously serve as raw materials to broadcast media institutions. Their coverage enrich broadcast media institutions' routine content transmitted to keep the society informed.

Peradventure the economy is not doing well, more businesses will go bankrupt and advertisers will not have the economic power to pay for advertising slots which are much needed by broadcast media to improve. As advertising revenue dwindles or falls below the threshold, the high cost of producing and transmitting quality broadcast content will be overbearing for broadcast media institutions. Contents producers will resort to producing sub-standard content which they can afford. In this case, a decline in audience consumption of the broadcast content is tenable.

xi. **Advertising, Advertisements, and the**

Advertisers: These are among the strongest socio-economic forces that shape and exert pressures on broadcast media institutions, especially with regard to their content. Beyond ownership structure, advertisers wield enormous influence on broadcast stations' programmes, programming, and programming schedule. Broadcast content, no matter how relevant they are to the public good, can be taken off the air if an advertiser insists that the philosophy of the programmes being broadcast conflicts with their marketing or sales messages. In this regard, advertisers censor, regulate, and decide which broadcast contents are airworthy and which is not.

Media owners, proprietors, and other gatekeepers do the bidding of the advertisers with great pleasure. Perhaps, they need money to offset overhead costs and expenditures and not "contents". So, broadcast media practitioners pride advertising and advertisement over broadcast content. Belch and Belch (2007) cited by Senam and Udoakah (2018) say that the (broadcast) media give a lot of preference to advertisers, even to the detriment of other stakeholders in the broadcast media industry, all in an attempt to secure the advertisers' patronage to generate revenue from them.

xii. **Religion and Religious Interests:** A plethora of religions, religious groups, and religious organisations within the Nigerian society have demanded broadcast content producers be religiously-conscious with their routine offerings. Broadcast media institutions that are adamant about the religious sentiments, ideologies, creeds, faiths, doctrines, beliefs, biases, and concerns palpable in the society are likely to be boycotted, disregarded, and snubbed by religious fanatics.

In a multi-religious society like Nigeria, religious organisations, in view of converting people to their religion, deploy the broadcast media. Hence, a cursory observation of broadcast programming in Nigeria reveals an excessive presence of religious programmes. These religious programmes tend to insulate other secular programmes with conflicting programmes objectives and philosophies. There are also situations where religious programmes of different religious denominations, orientations, faiths, and doctrines conflict with one another, thus, leaving the audience confused with conflicting religious positions or opinions.

In the face of all these, the broadcast media institutions are overwhelmed with the conflicting and dilemmatic decision as to which religious interest groups to

project and which not to project. To survive this controversy, broadcast media institutions often shift a little to the left and a little to the right. At the centre, they tend to provide socially conscious, politically charged, and entertainment-based content in a sanctimonious way that the religious beliefs, faiths, creeds, and ideologies of the audience are not debased. Thus, as Nigerian audiences have tended to be more religious, the broadcast media content has been produced to cushion and tolerate the religious sentiments, worldviews, and philosophies of religious interest groups. The broadcast media contents are therefore produced with a sense of socio-religious tolerance to the society's composite religions. This, in turn, affects broadcast stations' programmes and programming.

xiii. Social Groups, Social Groupings, and Groupthink: The influence of social groups such as pressure groups, social unions, associations, and groupings on the broadcast content cannot be ignored. As sociological elements, they constitute formidable social forces on broadcast journalism and by extension, broadcast content. The justification is simple: groups have their critical and uncritical acceptance of or conformity to the prevailing viewpoints expressed by the broadcast media through their contents (Shaefer, 2012).

This is to say that the decisions groups make about how they are being projected, represented, framed, portrayed, and showcased on the broadcast media have a way of affecting their future portrayals. This consequently affects the contents of broadcast messages produced to represent social realities. For instance, long before now, people that engage in sexual pleasures, desires, or activities for financial aggrandisement were often referred to as 'prostitutes' or 'harlots' within the Nigerian society and broadcast media used to report these sets of people with such label but today, a softer or mild adjectival description "commercial sex workers" is considerably preferable by this social group. The same case applies to feminists' movements and campaigns against the broadcast media's stereotypical portrayal of women as sex symbols or as the weaker gender. Equally, a group once referred to as 'handicaps' has made conscious efforts to be addressed as 'people with disabilities' while 'HIV/AIDs patients/victims' now wants to be portrayed as 'people living with HIV/AIDs', etc. What this means is that groups are redefining how they were once labelled, framed, identified, and portrayed on the broadcast media. Any label tagged on them which does not

describe their identities in ways they consider appropriate often attracts caustic reactions.

The pressure these groups exert on broadcast media institutions for a change of their narrative significantly influences how content about these groups is produced and transmitted in the society. Hence, for these groups to exhibit collective pressure to resist the predominant lines of thought about their portrayal and cultural meaning in the society is known as groupthink (Shaefer, 2012). It is this collective pressure that put broadcast institutions on their toes regarding how sensitive groups in the society are portrayed in their broadcast content.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper x-rays those social dynamics that determine how broadcast content is produced, packaged, distributed, and consumed in Nigeria. It has made the claim that since the broadcast media cannot be detached or isolated from their sociological milieu, context, and setting, certain forces that are part and parcel of the society significantly influence how the broadcast media operate, and function. Those social forces are what are treated in the paper as the social dynamics. The social dynamics can be traced from the range of culture, politics, media ownership structure, broadcast professionalism, regulatory frameworks, governance, audience variations, intellectual communities, interfamilial orientation, society's level of economic development, advertisers, and religious interests; to groupthink. These social dynamics orchestrate considerable social forces and pressures on broadcast media institutions with regard to the kinds of content that are produced and consumed in society. As they are the by-products of the composite structures and institutions that make up a society, it makes it hard to say that broadcast content can ever be free from their overwhelming pressures, influences, and impacts.

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