



**BABCOCK
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COLLEGE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES 2022/2023 PhD Thesis Abstract

Department of Mass Communication

RFN: Lateef Aderemi IBIROGBA

RD: Mass Communication

RS: Veronica Adeleke School of Social Sciences

RE: ibirogbalateef@yahoo.com

RAE: aderemiibirogba@gmail.com

RP: 08023224470

**RT: Elitist Media Ownership, Political Coverage Influence and Election-Related
Violence in South-West, Nigeria**

MS: Prof. Kolade AJILORE

ME: ajilorek@babcock.edu.ng

SP: 08055134044

CS: Dr. Olusegun OJOMO

CE: Nil

CP: Nil

AB: Media liberty, political equality and fair election are pivotal to representative democracy. The consolidation of media and political powers in the hands of a privileged individual detracts from the principles of democracy and presages electoral violence (intimidation of and physical harm to election participants, tampering with and destruction of ballot materials). Ownership of the mass media in Nigeria by some political actors has generated concern that such partisan proprietors use their privileged position to marginalize opposition views and create tension that are ventilated through violence during elections. South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria is host to the highest number of media and has over the years recorded the highest number of election related violence. Earlier related studies have worked on the key constructs like democracy, elections and violence, but none has looked at the relationship between media ownership, political elitism and election-related violence. Therefore, the study examined the influence of elitist media ownership on electoral violence in South-West Nigeria.

The study adopted phenomenological design using key informant interview and focus group discussion. The population was 575 political actors (former and serving governors and national assembly members representing South-West, Nigeria), six media operators and an indeterminate number of political street urchins. A sample size of 48 respondents (six political chieftains, six media owners and 36 political street urchins engaged in six sessions) were employed using purposive sampling technique. The interview and focus group discussion guides which constituted the instrument of data collection were tested

using face and communicative validity. The non-numeric data were manually analysed into themes.

Findings revealed that mainstream media owned by political actors indirectly caused electoral violence by inflaming negative emotion through biased coverage that magnify the political clout of the proprietors within their political parties. Findings also showed that partisan proprietors stirred violence by deploying their media publicity strength to bolster the popularity and acceptability of their preferred candidates. Furthermore, fake news and contents were deliberately disseminated through the media to discredit opposition candidates. It was further revealed that the partisan media disseminated ideological contents targeted at unemployed vulnerable youths to fuel their sense of hopelessness in Nigeria and suggest physical demonstration as their only means of taking back their country.

The study concluded that Nigerian political elites used their media outfits to unfairly create political imbalance during major elections. The study recommended that an independent body of communication professionals should be set up to monitor and sanction the media that violate journalism ethics.

Keywords: Election-related violence, Mass media, Media ownership, Partisan media, Political elite

Word Count: 406

Abbreviations: *RFN: Researcher's Full Name, RD: Researcher's Department, RS: Researcher's School, RE: Researcher's Email, RAE: Researcher's Alternate Email, RP: Researcher's Phone Contact, RT: Registered Title, MS: Main Supervisor, ME: Main Supervisor's E-mail Address, SP: Main Supervisor's Phone Contact, CS: Co-Supervisor, CE: Co-Supervisor's E-mail Address, CP: Co-Supervisor's Phone Contact, AB: Abstract*

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