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Sanusi, Lookman**

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THE CHALLENGES OF  
DIGITAL SWITCHOVER IN NIGERIA  
WITHIN THE GLOBAL TREND IN  
DIGITAL BROADCASTING

By  
Lookman Sanusi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
University of Westminster for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**March 2024**

## ABSTRACT

The overarching objective of this thesis is to investigate Nigeria's protracted digital switchover (DSO) process from June 2008 when the DSO began until December 2022, which marks the fifth attempt at analogue switch-off (ASO). The global trend in digital terrestrial broadcasting has profoundly impacted the broadcast media and telecommunication sectors due to its efficient use of the radio spectrum. Thus, digitisation presents an opportunity for countries with weak broadcast policy architecture, such as Nigeria, to overhaul their communication policy towards broader public interest objectives. The study relies on the qualitative research methods of document analysis and in-depth interviews. Documents were collected from various private and public institutions; 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with policy-makers, public and private broadcasters, technical experts, journalists and academics. The research applies stakeholder analysis and advocacy coalition framework (ACF) to examine the interplay between state actors and the main stakeholders to determine how their relationship affects the DSO policy. The significant role of 'power' as an element that shapes stakeholders' preferences, logic and interaction in the policy process is analysed, particularly the notion of 'indecision' as a form of power exercised at the early stages of the DSO process in Nigeria. Also, the study explores the impact of institutionalism and its strands (path dependence, critical junction and the so-called new institutionalism) on DSO policy outcomes. The critique of the critical political economy of broadcasting policy in the study illuminates the broader and long-term political-economic context within which the DSO policies in Nigeria should be understood. This study argues that the Nigerian government took a hands-on approach to the DSO process, centralising decision-making, which explains the persistence of the analogue regime in a digital regulatory environment. It observes how the government insists as a policy concern that Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) remains free-to-air (FTA) and not pay-TV services in keeping with PSB's universal mission. In the Nigerian context, however, over and above such a public interest rationale, the thesis argues that the real motivation is that pay-TV services could challenge the government hegemony in the broadcasting environment by outputting more content. It also appears the Nigerian government perceives pay-TV as a potential threat to the advertising revenue of PSB, which is one of the main sources of income for FTA television due to its reliance on advertising revenue.

The study shows how a weak national institutional structure enables the executive decision to frustrate the digital switchover policy while critical stakeholders are left confused or unable to effectively advocate for a reform broadcasting policy that would serve the public interest. The thesis also demonstrates how the external influence of international policy actors such as the ITU, the Bretton Woods institutions and multinational corporations shapes the direction of digital migration policy in a weak traditional democracy such as Nigeria and within the broader context of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region where only two of its members (Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast) have completed the DSO at the time of writing (October 2023). Therefore, this thesis contributes to the paucity of empirical literature on communication policy formulation in the sub-Saharan region by critical analysis of the DSO process in Nigeria.

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## **DECLARATION**

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

Signature:.....

Name: Lookman Sanusi

Date: March 2024

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMS	Audience Measurement System
ASO	Analogue Switchover
ATSC	Advanced Television System Committee
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSD	Broadcast Signal Distributor
BskyB	British Sky Broadcasting
CAS	Conditional Access System
DAF	Digital Access Funds
DSD	Digital Signal Distributor
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
DSO	Digital Switchover
DTH	Direct-to-Home
DTT	Digital Terrestrial Television
DTV	Digital Television
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
DVR	Digital Video Recorder
EBS	Enhanced Broadcasting Services
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDTV	Enhanced-Definition Television
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
ENTV	Eastern Nigeria Television Service
EPG	Electronic Programme Guide



EPL	English Premier League
EU	European Union
FCC	Federal Communication Commission
FRCN	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria
FTA	Free-to-air
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HbbTV	Hybrid Broadcast Broadband Television
HD	High Definition
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Funds
IP	Internet Protocol
IP-TV	Internet Protocol Television
ITS	Integrated Television Service
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
ITU-R	Radiocommunication Sector
ITU-T	Telecommunication Standardization Sector
MHz	Megahertz
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MoC	Minister of Communication
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPEG	Moving Picture Experts Group
NBC	National Broadcasting Commission
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun
NGO	Non-governmental organisations

NP	National Party
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NTA	Nigerian Television Authority
NTS	Nigerian Television Service
NTSC	National Television System Committee
OFCOM	Office of Communication
PAC	Presidential Advisory Committee
PCL	Pinnacle Communication Limited
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting
RDS	Radio Diffusion Services
RSM	Radio Spectrum Management
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policies
STB	Set-Top Boxes
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UN	United Nation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VCR	Videocassette Recorder
VON	Voice of Nigeria
WNTV	Western Television
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organization

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Context and argument**

Digital technology, particularly in broadcast media and communication industries, is influencing the production, distribution, and consumption of media (Wasko, 2005; Murdock and Golding, 1999). The digitisation of broadcasting has expanded the relationship between the state and the market in the global media and communication environment, which is governed by intergovernmental organisations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The ITU is a specialised United Nations agency responsible for radio spectrum regulation. ITU's role ensures the efficient use of the radio spectrum across the globe and this is achieved by carrying out a periodical review of radio spectrum regulation "taking into consideration technological and market development" (Massaro, 2017, p.3). Following the Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC 06) Geneva in 2006, the ITU prompted member states to migrate from analogue to digital mode of broadcasting because of its inherent benefits. However, the ITU member states have had their challenges with the implementation of the global agreement on the digital switchover (DSO) process, and "the experience of each country is a reflection of the nation's current broadcasting environment" (Taylor, 2010, p.13).

This thesis analyses the broadcasting policy decisions in Nigeria by examining the challenges posed by the DSO process. The study also investigates why the analogue broadcast system in Nigeria persists despite the policy reform opportunities presented by the DSO process.

Nigeria deregulated the broadcasting industry in 1992, and the sector witnessed an expansion of actors in the policy arena. However, policy decisions remain in the grip of powerful executives (Hacker and Van Dijk, 2000, p.6), enabled by weak institutional structures. This

has rendered ineffective the calls by main stakeholders for policy regulatory reform that reflects broadcasting in the digital environment. Therefore, the case study of Nigeria's DTT policy examines the strong role of the government in the transition to digital broadcasting and the external influence of intergovernmental organisations.

Granting the challenges presented by the digital revolution to nation states, there are, however, benefits derivable from the completion of the digital migration process. The transition from analogue to digital broadcasting in the Ultra High Frequency (UHF) makes the Digital Dividends Spectrum (DDS) available for other use (Hassan et al. 2012 p.2). Enticed by better picture and sound quality of digital broadcasting; potential income from the sales of the liberated spectrum and lower transmission cost, member states decided "how to accommodate the shift from analogue to digital broadcasting" (Taylor, 2010, p.8), keeping in perspective this new technology and the effects it would have on any state regulatory regime. In this respect, members of the European Union (EU) pooled resources together to support each other through the migration process. Although digital switchover policy is the function of national policy-makers, the European Commission (EC) sees the need to intervene to accelerate the switchover process and promote the 'best practices' among member states. Therefore, (as discussed in Chapter 3) the EC Communication (EC 2005a) urged member states to "bring forward the likely date of analogue switch off and call[ed] for a coordinated approach to making freed-up spectrum available across the EU" (Iosifidis, 2006, p.249). The regional influence on the implementation of the DSO process and the recommended analogue switch-off date of June 2012 were used to speed up decision-making, which diminished public debate and transparency, as well as rushed policy decisions in some EU member-states such as Bulgaria (Rashid, 2015, p. 230). Despite, the various measures by the European Commission (EC) to encourage member states to 'speed up' digital broadcasting services in

the various national administrations, not all member states were able to meet their original switch-off dates. Only 23 out of the 28 EU member states were able to meet the Analogue Switch Off (ASO) deadline of 2012 recommended by the EU (Rashid, 2015, p.3).

Similarly, the United States of America also missed switch-off dates due to various influencing factors from policy stakeholders. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the US regulating authority for broadcasting and telecommunication sectors, planned a switch-off of NTSC (National Television System Committee) analogue transmissions for 31 December 2006, but broadcasters lobbied Congress for a softer switchover date because they were faced with multiple challenges of bad weather, dispute over commercial towers, limited availability of tower crews, financial problems and delays in issuance of construction permit from FCC (Cotlar, 2005). The Congress then provided “an escape clause whereby analogue broadcast could continue after 2006 if fewer than 85 per cent of households in any given area were at that point equipped to receive digital television, whether terrestrially, by satellite or cable” (García Leiva and Stark, 2009, p.788). However, at the time, the sales of digital TV receivers were low because of the high cost, and consumers waited for more digital content. The combined factors resulted in a slow uptake of the DTT services, therefore, by way of policy intervention, the American government directed electronic manufacturers to integrate television receivers in the TV set by 01 July 2007 (Cotlar, 2005). At the beginning of 2006, the government took a political decision to switch off analogue broadcasting in 2009 and had to subsidise set-top boxes for the ‘disproportionately poor’ with USD\$1.5 billion. Nevertheless, the 12 February 2009 set for the USA television analogue switch-off could not take effect as only one-third of the country was ready such that the Obama administration had to extend the programme for another four months (Freedman, 2010, p.244).

However, the digital terrestrial TV take-up in Africa has been particularly slow due to the interplay of political and economic interests among the actors, which has shaped the direction of the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting within the region. Loan and Mitomo (2017, p.3) note,

the factors that influence the decision of regional policy and shape the degree of harmonization include the participation of economic actors and the power of regional policy development, regional administrative capacity and effectiveness as well as regional decision-making structure.

The above observation points to the multi-stakeholder approach deployed at the sub-regional level and underscores the increasing influence of the ‘industry’ that shapes policy decisions. As covered in Chapter 6, some of the policy outcomes in the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) were tied to the ‘supply side’ of the multinationals of developed economies as opposed to the demand-led of African countries (Berger, 2010, p.20). The ATU is a sub-regional continental communication policy body, to which Nigeria belongs. Beyond the power of the sub-regional policy decision to harmonise the efficient use of the freed-up spectrum, Matumaini (2010, p.4) hints at the ‘historical factor’ that has characterised African communication policy: the colonial legacy approach to media and communication roles seen as part of the state institutional structure. The state-centric approach to broadcasting persists in some African states “in what has been described as neo-colonial characteristics” (Berger, 2012, p.12) and features prominently in the Nigerian media ecosystem as observed in this study. For instance, Nigeria does not have a single and integrated communication policy but pockets of regulations and codes for prints and electronic media, film and telecommunication, which is a relic of Colonial administration.

Although no two countries had the same experience in their transition to digital broadcasting (Starks, 2007), studies have shown that in Africa, there is a common denominating factor influencing the digital migration process: the dependency factor (Berger, 2010, p.5). The dependency approach adopted in the African continent has made it possible to be reliant on advanced economies for technology and funding support. While countries such as the USA, UK, Japan and China developed digital broadcasting standards (DBS) to use in broadcasting services, African countries waited to adopt one and this ‘wait’ syndrome shaped policy direction on the implementation of the DSO process. The transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting requires deploying infrastructure, financial commitment, and political will on the part of the government to execute. Africa, the most heavily indebted continent in the world per capita (African Telecommunications Union, 2001a) accepted fiscal intervention from the World Bank and the IMF with an agreement to deregulate their economy and allow foreign direct investment by multinational corporations. The implication of this agreement particularly in the broadcast media and telecommunication sectors is the influx of global conglomerates investing in the broadcasting and telecommunication landscape in Africa. For instance, there is the presence of French-owned Canal+, Chinese-owned StarTimes, and South Africa’s MultiChoice, and these multinationals have established dominance in the sub-Saharan African digital television market.

In addition to the dependent approach to the DSO in Africa (see more illustration in Chapter 3), other factors impeding the DSO process include but are not limited to: issues concerning the transparency of the programme; policy implementation of the digital process and decision-making, public awareness of the programme; different switch-off dates and state incentives such as subsidy of set-top-box. Despite all the challenges of digital migration, African countries went ahead with the implementation because they did not wish to be left

behind in the digital television revolution (Berger, 2010). However, the transition to digital broadcasting could be a 'disruptive' technology that "offers a very large window into the policy process, involving a profound and current structural change" (Taylor, 2010, p.7) in the regulatory regime of states. In this respect, analysts have identified three main actors that are likely to be affected by this change: industry players, citizens, and governments. Digital switchover involves the (re)distribution of resources where "many established interests are threatened and many new ones have arisen" (Hart, 2004, p.1). Therefore, it is important to ask the crucial questions: who stands to benefit and who stands to lose from the transition to digital broadcasting? In other words, who is bearing the costs and who is reaping the rewards?

Nigeria, as a signatory to the Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC-06) in Geneva, commenced the transition to digital terrestrial television (DTT) in 2008 under the administration of late President Yar'Adua. Although the ITU deadline for member states in Region 1, which comprises Europe, Africa, Arab States, and the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC), countries was 2015, Nigeria initially set a completion date of 17 June 2012, which it failed to meet before moving it to 17 June 2015. Again, the country missed the deadline for the second time and set a third date of 17 June 2017 but could not cover "95 per cent digital access across the country" (Dyikuk and Chinda, 2017, p.44). In light of the many missed deadlines, the thesis argues that the lack of political will and the non-inclusive strategy adopted by the government contributed to the stall in the implementation of the global agreement on digital switchover.

With over 30 million TV households, Nigeria attracted multinational media and telecommunication conglomerates to participate in the DTT market. Foreign media



conglomerates like StarTimes of China and MultiChoice of South Africa invested in infrastructure and established a lead in the DTT market, yet as it will be discussed in this thesis (see Chapters 7 and 8), the government excluded them from the strategy to implement DSO policy in Nigeria. This research, therefore, analyses the implementation of the digital switchover in Nigeria and interrogates the various factors and actors influencing the domestic broadcasting policy within the context of global communication governance and market forces.

There are challenges associated with evaluating an ongoing or unfinished DSO process. This includes keeping abreast of the constant changes in the approaches to the process. For instance, since this research began in 2017, there have been two changes in the Director-General (DG) at the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC (5 changes in total from 2009 to 2023). The different DGs have introduced differing strategies in the implementation of the DSO, albeit answering to the dictates of the supervising Minister of Information. Also, the Digital Implementation Committee (DigiTeam) that was set up by the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) in 2012 to drive the implementation of the DSO process was ‘subsumed’ in another committee, the Ministerial Task Force (MTF) established by the then Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed in 2021. The policy approach deployed by MTF was different from DigiTeam (see more analysis in Chapters 7 and 8). Another recent development during this research was the inauguration of a 15-member committee, the Audience Measurement System (AMS) task force in January 2022 to implement the report of the AMS Committee set up in 2020. The government believed a Scientific Audience Measurement System could help the growth of the broadcasting and advertising sectors therefore, the government tasked the AMS Committee to come up with a framework that should identify the best global practice Audience Measurement System (AMS), one that

would support the sustainable growth of the creative industry in Nigeria. These various changes contributed to the outcome of this research and presented some challenges to the researcher who kept reinvestigating the impact the changes had on the policy process and the implementation of the DSO agenda. For these reasons, the thesis chose December 2022 as a cut-off point for the analysis of the digital migration process in Nigeria.

## **1.2 Background study: understanding the Nigerian ethno-regional divides and, socio-political and economic setting**

It is essential to provide context for the study by critically examining Nigeria's socio-political and economic landscape. It will help understand the Nigerian approach contributing to the delay in implementing the digital switchover process.

Nigeria was created in 1914 after the amalgamation of over 250 disparate ethnic groups, forming a single political authority. The lopsided administrative structure left by the colonial administration created a seed of ethnic chauvinism in the country. The political structure resulted in suspicion, mistrust, rivalry and lack of cooperation that has characterised the relationship between the three dominant groups of Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo in Nigeria (Bassey and Edet, 2005). The Richards Constitution of 1946 established a federal structure in the country, creating three regions: East, West, and North. The political parties that emerged in 1951 were mainly tribal and focused on regional interests rather than a national perspective. The Action Group (AG), led by Chief Awolowo, was a Yoruba party in the West. The Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), led by Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, was predominantly Hausa/Fulani in the North. The National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCPC), led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, was predominantly an Igbo party in the Eastern region (more details are available in Chapter 4).

In post-independence Nigeria, the three main ethnic groups conflicted with each other as they vied for dominance. The rivalry resulted in heightened divisions, competition, and unstable ethnic alliances at the federal level. The dynamic has led to the regionalisation of politics and the politicisation of ethnicity, which are defining features of Nigerian politics today.

Whenever a specific ethnic group takes on political power, they perceive their position as an opportunity to benefit their people. Consequently, the benefits for their ethnic group play a crucial role in determining and implementing a particular policy rather than the majority.

Ezeani (2006) argues that there is a disconnect between the political elite and the masses in policy implementation in Nigeria, leading to frequent policy failures. Policy mismanagement has caused immense hardship for the population, as service delivery has been in a state of paralysis. Oftentimes in Nigeria, official appointments are influenced by party affiliation, rather than based on competence. Arguably, political interference weakens public institutions' ability to effectively monitor project execution. Oboreh (2019, 11) argues that the interference of politicians in project approval and execution has been identified as a breeding ground for corruption, leading to shady execution and abandonment of projects. Numerous ambitious projects have been abandoned throughout the country due to a lack of consistent government policies (Agu, 2012; Agbazuere, 2020). The practice is attributed to the prebendalism of the Nigerian state, where politicians and government officials believe they are entitled to a portion of government revenues to benefit their supporters, as well as members of their ethnic and religious groups (Adebanwi and Obadare, 2013 cited in Sutherland, 2018, p.250). This type of attitude encourages corruption.

Agu (2012) asserts that Transparency International (TI), a global anti-corruption monitoring organisation, publishes the corruption perception index of Nigeria annually. The index indicated that Nigeria was rated as one of the top ten most corrupt nations from the 1990s to the early 2000s. The perception that corruption is rampant in Nigeria has not changed. This is despite the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in 2003 by the Obasanjo regime, which was set up at the request of the International Financial Institutions (IFI) to combat corruption (Sutherland, 2018). Human Rights Watch (2011) criticised the efforts of the EFCC, stating that the organisation has fallen far short of its potential. Political figures widely implicated in corruption cases have not been prosecuted, and in most cases, these politicians were given only a slap on the wrist. As a result, the EFCC's reputation has suffered, and its record of accomplishments remained uncertain. Sutherland (2018) also observes that corruption that could not be hidden was either dismissed by the courts or lost in endless investigatory commissions.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 demonstrate that the ongoing DSO process was plagued by cases of corruption, with little or no consequences from the courts. This has eroded public trust and left the main stakeholders less enthusiastic about the project. Given the socio-political and economic context, the thesis argues that economic development and urbanisation processes have weakened and undermined institutions through interest-group politics and sectional and ethnic allegiances. As of October 2023 (the time of writing), there was no update from the government regarding the DSO process, leaving the completion of digital migration uncertain.

### **1.3 Research gap and current dominant arguments about the DSO in Nigeria**

The global shift to digital broadcasting has sparked academic interest, particularly in implementing digital migration in developed nations (Murdock and Golding, 1999/2002; Hart, 2004; Mansell, 2004; Starks, 2007; García Leiva and Stark, 2009; Taylor, 2010; Berger, 2010). The technological changes have had an impact on African television, which hitherto was an unwieldy, governmental bureaucratic mouthpiece tied to a narrow vision of African governments (Eko, 2019). As will be demonstrated in the study, digital switchover is an agenda of the advanced countries to *force* the hands of African broadcasters to release spectrum in the UHF band sooner to support the spectrum requirement of the advanced economies, who have developed communication policies that can cope with the new technology in broadcast media and telecommunication (Berger, 2010). On the other hand, developing countries such as Africa had to rely on the technical expertise and advice of intergovernmental institutions such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to assist African countries in creating their national-specific roadmaps to facilitate a smooth transition from analogue to digital terrestrial television (DTT). This ‘assistance’ by intergovernmental institutions has been criticised by Cross (2013) as an opportunity for external bodies to exert influence in the domestic implementation of DTT policy, which only focuses on technical rather than the needs of the domestic broadcasters.

There is ongoing scholarly debate about the best way to achieve the DSO process, especially after Nigeria missed previous ASO dates. Lasisi et al. (2014) discuss the strategic benefits of using modern communication satellites and satellite communication techniques to achieve universal access goals and digital inclusion in Nigeria. They argue that because it is challenging to install terrestrial infrastructure in rural and mountainous areas, communication satellites, which remain the ‘low-hanging fruit’ can quickly bridge the digital divide and provide broadcasting, Internet access, and other services to overcome these limitations

effectively. Ate and Talabi (2013) share the view that the Nigerian broadcasting industry could benefit from the Nigerian Communication Satellite (NigCommSat), which was first launched in 2007 during the Obasanjo regime. NigCommSat was launched to provide satellite communication for Nigeria and beyond. Ate and Talabi (2013) reference Binkowski (1988) to emphasise the ability of satellite broadcasting to overcome distance barriers and improve communication in areas of Nigeria where physical infrastructure is lacking.

Dyikuk and Chinda (2017) explore the modernisation theory to analyse and ascertain the level of compliance with the deadline of the DSO in the country. The authors argue that the theory suggests that rapid development can only happen in a country when hindering factors such as ethnic interests, high illiteracy rates, and ignorance are replaced by modern methods, such as technological transfer and foreign investment. They argue that the lack of political will on the part of the government contributed to the delay witnessed in the implementation of the DSO. On their part, Arihilam and Ikonne (2023) advance the need for Nigeria to modernise the existing broadcasting framework that would serve as a critical enabler in the transition to DTT. They note that 70% of the over 200 million population have access to just 4 (four) or fewer analogue TV broadcast channels, which is relatively weak. Therefore, the government should ensure the completion of the DSO process to guarantee a viable terrestrial broadcasting industry in Nigeria.

Abikanlu's (2020) article "Transition to digital television in Nigeria: challenges and promises" analysed the DSO from the perspective of neo-liberal orthodoxy. The neo-liberal ideology encourages market-led policy in the global media eco-system and directs the actions of main international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Harvey, 2005; Zajda, 2014). The author

opines that the Nigerian government seems to be more focused on the expected revenue from the sale of the released spectrum, operational licence fees, and entertainment tax, rather than on completing the DSO process. With his critique of the neo-liberal orthodoxy, Abikanlu (2020) reveals the effect of the existing complexities with the policy framework and approach to the implementation of the DSO process in Nigeria. He argues that the challenge of DTT policy in Nigeria includes the lack of policy clarity, the non-inclusive approach of the government in the DSO process and the policy-burdened intervention of the regulatory body, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). To buttress the latter view, Akingbulu (2010) highlighted how NBC's capture through the law setting up the regulatory body incapacitated it from carrying out its primary functions.

This thesis deviates from the prevailing developmental analytical framework applied to the DSO process in Nigeria. The study adopts as a theoretical framework the political economy of broadcasting to illuminate the broader and long-term political-economic context within which the DSO policies in Nigeria should be understood. The thesis critically engages with the Nigerian socio-politics to examine the extent to which corruption and ethno-regional divides contributed to the delay in the digital switchover process.

This thesis is arguably the first comprehensive research analysis solely on the national case study of Nigeria's protracted digital switchover process. It approaches the study from the positionality of a content provider aiming to comprehend the complexities of the DSO process. This has led the researcher to reflect on the research process, gaining a better understanding of the challenges faced by domestic stakeholders advocating for a change in communication policy. The only scholarly work that has come close to this research is *A Comparative Study of the Digital Switchover Process in Nigeria and New Zealand* (2018) by

Olorunfemi Abikanlu, which analysed the successful approach to the implementation of the DSO process in New Zealand and the complexities associated with the Nigerian digital television market.

Due to the comparative analysis of the study, Abikanlu (2018) overlooked the key role played by Nigeria in the international policy arena that allowed African countries to retain and harmonise the use of the 490-698 MHz band for broadcasting services and also managed to identify mobile allocation and IMT identification in the 698-790 MHz (El-Moghazi et al. 2017, p.639). As a result, three telecommunication players (MTN, Mafab and Airtel) were awarded 5G licences between 2021 and 2023 to facilitate broadband penetration in Nigeria and improve digital inclusion to bridge the information gap. However, the thesis illustrates how Nigeria's international posture is not proportional to its internal politics and policy inaction on the DSO process (more in Chapter 6).

This study advances Abikanlu's (2018) research by elaborating on how the executive exerts full control over the digital switchover policy and stalled the digital migration process. The policy decision to set up the MTF in 2021 appeared to be a unilateral decision of the executive that enabled the capture of the digital transition.

The thesis fills the gap in research and contributes to the empirical literature on the protracted digital switchover in Nigeria. It focuses on the future of DTT policy and aims to determine the public interest objective in the transition to digital migration.

#### **1.4 Research aim**

The main objective of this thesis is to examine the implementation of the digital switchover policy in Nigeria to help illustrate the challenges confronting the DSO process. The study



aims to investigate the DTT policy by critically analysing the decision-making process to understand; despite the opportunity presented by digitisation why Nigeria continues to operate in the analogue broadcasting system, a scenario similar to Ghana's broadcasting media environment (Bedu-addo 2023).

The historical path to broadcasting policy in Nigeria shows the reliance of the broadcast industry on the government for its 'survival' in the analogue era (see Chapter 4). The practice could not be sustained after the deregulation of the broadcasting industry in 1992. The liberalisation of the broadcasting sector in 1992 changed the broadcasting structure to include both government and private media ownership. Furthermore, the era of digital broadcasting witnessed an increase in the number of actors in the policy arena yet there was no change in the broadcasting policy. It appeared the government had a hold on the broadcasting sector through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) enabled by the laws setting up the regulatory body. The sectoral capture became glaring when policy state actors maintained the status quo by missing the opportunity to reform the broadcasting regulatory policy presented by the global agreement on digital migration. Therefore, the thesis aims to investigate the impact of the government's hands-on approach on the DSO and observe to what extent the institutional factors have enabled or constrained the digital migration process.

As will be discussed in the thesis, the Nigerian government excluded key non-state stakeholders from the initial planning stage of the DSO process and failed to take advantage of the 'State-Market' relationship (Ahn, 2006). The study analyses the relationship between the policy state actors and other policy stakeholders involved in the switchover process to unravel the underlying interests and how they influenced the implementation of the DTT policy.

Beyond the domestic ‘politics’ of regulatory policy, the study also examines the influence of supranational actors such as the ITU, IMF, and WTO on the media and communication policy in Nigeria -given that these international organisations advance the neoliberal ideology- to determine those who are benefitting and those who stand to lose. The aim of the thesis is also expressed in the research questions below.

## **1.5 Research questions**

The study starts from the hypothesis that the interplay between political actors, domestic players, and foreign interests had a bearing on the implementation of the DSO in Nigeria. Therefore, it intends to answer the following main research question (RQ1) and the three sub-research questions (RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4):

RQ1 - How has the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria been shaped by domestic politics and the global agenda?

RQ2 - Who were the main stakeholder groups in the domestic policy arena? How effective was each stakeholder group in pursuing its own interests and goals?

RQ3 - To what extent did state actors manage to exert control over the digital switchover process, and through which means?

RQ4 - How has the intersection of foreign media/telecommunication conglomerates and local politics in Nigeria influenced the digital migration process? Who stood to lose and who stood to benefit?

## 1.6 Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into nine chapters (including this introduction). Chapter 2 establishes the concepts and theoretical framework with which this study analyses the implementation of the DTT policy in Nigeria. The chapter examines from a broad perspective the communication policy-making in a weak traditional democracy such as found in the Global South as a result of Colonial invasion and several decades of Colonial administrative rules, which left a legacy of weak structure and institution capacity even in the modern era. It analyses the political economy of broadcasting policy as a way of studying the structure and policies of communication institutions in society (Wasko, 2005). In the modern time, the wave of democratic reform swept across the world and with it came the liberalisation of the global economy. The chapter discusses the impact of liberalisation in Africa particularly focusing on broadcast media and demonstrates how intergovernmental organisations aided the renewal of the neo-liberal approach to digital broadcasting; therefore the chapter investigates the public interest objectives with digital TV. It examines how government and official policy discourse understand the public interest in the age of digital TV. The chapter then develops the analytical tools applied to the study, which include stakeholder analysis (Van den Bulck and Donders, 2014b; Van den Bulck 2012, 2019; Flew and Lim, 2019), advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; Brugha and Varvasovsky, 2000; Weible, 2006) as well as a critical element of ‘power’ (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974/2005; Crenson, 1971; Freedman, 2006; 2008; 2014) and historical institutionalism (Hall, 1986; Lowndes, 2002; Peters, Pierre and King, 2005; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013), which explores path-dependency to explain how policy legacy inherited makes it difficult for policy change.

Chapter 3 reviews some literature drawing on the concept and main themes of the study. It discusses the efficient technology behind digital broadcasting to demonstrate the socio-economic as well as the political context and notes how digitisation has renewed the neo-liberal approach to broadcasting aided by intergovernmental institutions like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Bretton Woods institutions. The chapter also examines the different approaches adopted by different countries to show variations in the implementation of the DTT policy. The chapter then draws on Berger's (2010) argument that developed countries drove the DTT and DSO policies within the ITU to analyse the compelling need for African countries to embark on the DSO process even as their spectrum needs were different from that of the developed countries. The last section of the chapter reviews the challenges of implementing the DSO policy within sub-Saharan Africa with a focus on a few country cases.

Chapter 4 presents a historical overview of broadcasting policy in post-independence Nigeria (1960-2010). First, it traces briefly the political history of how Nigeria was carved out of people with diverse cultures, religious beliefs, and political aspirations in 1914 by the Colonial administrators until Nigeria obtained independence in 1960. The chapter then moves on to examine the role of broadcast media as an integral element in shaping the political existence of Nigeria. The different administrations - colonial, military and civilian - had full control of the broadcasting policy and funding such that the broadcast media was used as a propaganda instrument to sell government agenda until the liberalisation of broadcast media and telecommunication sectors in 1992 influenced by the intergovernmental organisations' agreement on global trade in media commodity. This brought about a change in the broadcasting policy, a new licencing regime, plurality in the media ecosystem and less government involvement due to the new market structure. The chapter continues with the introduction of the global agreement on the migration from analogue to digital terrestrial

broadcasting by ITU member states in 2006. The chapter argues that the ITU-driven DSO process offered the Nigerian government an opportunity to review its role in the media ecosystem in the digital era.

Chapter 5 details the methodological framework for this thesis. This study relies on document analysis and semi-structured interviews as part of a qualitative research strategy. Documents can provide background information and historical insights into past events that could be used as context in research, therefore, this thesis gathered documents from relevant government departments, private organisations and individuals involved in Nigeria's digital switchover process to investigate the interplay between the domestic and the global influence. In media policy research, document analysis is a common method, often used in combination with other methods as a means of triangulation (Bowen, 2009, p.3). A set of 12 semi-structured interviews was conducted to corroborate or validate information contained in some of the documents gathered (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p.175). Therefore, document analysis was used in this study as the main method, while semi-structured interviews were conducted to fill in the gap left out in the analysis of policy documents and provides better insight to examine the technological shift in the broadcasting industry in Nigeria. The chapter also reveals the limitations peculiar to the method and design.

Chapter 6, the first empirical chapter, investigates global communication governance and its implications on nation-states. As it were, the evolution in global trade, market integration, and convergence has extended policies beyond national administrations such that there is the voluntary surrender of the 'sovereignty' of states in a global agreement. This chapter starts by examining the key actors involved in global communication governance because of its multi-stakeholder approach. In the digital environment, intergovernmental institutions such as the

WTO and the IMF have renewed the neoliberal ideology in nations, which has encouraged a new form of capitalism through the expansion of multinational corporations in developing economies. These developing countries that are member states (particularly the Arabs and Africans) of ITU came to realise that active participation and agenda-setting at the WRCs could enable them to achieve better utilisation of the spectrum allocated to meet their needs. For instance, at the WRC-12 in 2012 and WRC-15 in 2015, Arab and African countries called for the use of the 700 MHz band in mobile services to meet growing broadband demand and the harmonisation of allocations in the 698-790 MHz band in the three regions of the ITU. This chapter then examines the global governance process from Nigeria's perspective to demonstrate the significant role Nigeria played in influencing decision-making at the sub-regional level without a commensurate effect on the domestic DSO process.

Chapter 7 the second empirical chapter of the study, begins by examining the timeline of key events to acquaint the reader with the various challenges in the digital migration process in Nigeria. It shows how the determinative and influential policy-makers proposed an ambitious ASO date of June 2012 without considering the inadequate broadcasting policy even though the ITU deadline was June 2015. As a result of this, the DSO agenda witnessed a period of inaction, which set the political tone on the digital migration process. This chapter observes the delay in the release of the Government White Paper such that when it was eventually released, some of the policies were obsolete and led to confusion among the critical stakeholders. It reveals how the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) through informal procedures and practices (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013) gave out DTT licences to some operators before the policy document was released for public scrutiny, which then became a subject of litigation. Finally, the chapter examines the different stakeholders involved in the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting to capture their preferences,

interests, and influence in the decision-making process. It argues the preferences of domestic actors were different from foreign media and telecommunication conglomerate actors who had dominated the DTT market.

Chapter 8 analyses the DTT policy process and decisions to show the many missed opportunities of the government through its non-inclusive approach to the DSO process. The first section reveals the capture of the broadcasting regulatory body to demonstrate how weak institutional capacity impinges on NBC's ability to carry out such complex tasks as the digital switchover process. The laws setting up the NBC empowered the executive to 'intrude' the operations and stall the implementation of the DSO for all critical stakeholders. The chapter reveals significantly the lack of priority given to the digital migration process. It also demonstrates how the government insisted that PSB should remain free-to-air (FTA) and not pay-TV because the government perceived pay-TV as a potential threat to the advertising revenue of PSB, which is one of the main sources of income for FTA television due to its reliance on advertising revenue. However, the neo-liberal ideology supports the market-centred approach to broadcasting in the digital environment. The last section of the chapter reviews the attempt by the government to reposition the moribund PSB by assigning it a strong role in the DTT policy.

Chapter 9 recaps the main arguments and answers the research questions of the study. First, it argues the global agreement on the transition to digital terrestrial television allowed the Nigerian government to review its role in broadcast media and communication sectors. The study argues the 'legitimate' policy intention of the government to redefine the role of PSB in the digital environment may have been a ploy by the executive to exert control over the digital switchover policy. Second, the thesis argues the exclusive approach of the government

on the DSO policy led to haphazard implementation of the DTT policy. The thesis observes instead of the supposed public interest objectives of making efficient use of freed spectrum to bridge the information gap, the DSO became an agenda of the elite decision-makers to score a political point for the Buhari administration, which contributed to stalling the process and left critical main stakeholders more confused. Third, it is the argument of the thesis that Nigeria missed the opportunity to reform the broadcasting policy framework to cope with the challenges of digital broadcasting. The outcome of the failed broadcasting policy reform explains the persistence of the analogue broadcasting system in the digital regulatory era, which has not helped in the transition to DTT.

Having engaged with the outcome of the government's non-inclusive strategy to the DSO, the chapter then discusses the importance of inclusive response as an alternative strategy to the approach to DTT policy in Nigeria. The chapter then considers the implication of Nigeria not concluding the DSO process to demonstrate the possible socio-economic as well as the political loss to the country. Finally, the thesis states the limitations of the research and its contribution to knowledge and makes some suggestions for further study.



## **Chapter 2: Theoretical perspective on communication policy-making in a weak traditional democracy**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter establishes the concepts and theoretical framework with which the study analyses the implementation of the DTT policy in Nigeria. The chapter examines from a broad perspective the communication policy-making in weak traditional democracies such as those found in the sub-Saharan Africa region (Berger, 2012). Colonial invasion and several decades of colonial administrative rules in Africa left a legacy of weak structure and institution capacity in the modern era (Berger, 2010; 2012; Matumaini, 2010). The wave of political reform swept across Africa as a repercussion effect of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s and with it came the liberalisation of the global economy (Eko, 2019). The chapter discusses the impact of liberalisation in Africa particularly focusing on broadcast media and demonstrates how intergovernmental organisations aided the neo-liberal approach to broadcasting. The conceptual framework of this thesis is based on the political economy of broadcasting policy commonly used in communication fields as a way of studying the structure and policies of communication institutions in society (Wasko, 2005). The chapter investigates the public interest objectives in the digital switchover process and examines how government and official policy discourses frame the public interest in the age of digital TV.

In the second part, the chapter develops the analytical tools applied to the study, which include stakeholder analysis and the advocacy coalition framework (ACF). Stakeholder analysis (Van den Bulck and Donders, 2014b; Flew and Lim, 2019) helps the study to identify main actors, their logic and preferences in the policy process, while the advocacy

coalition framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 1999; Weible, 2006) focuses on how policy actors and stakeholders come together across traditional political-economic or governing divides, and on how their shared values and beliefs impact policy outcome (Van den Bulck, 2019). The critical role of power as an element that shapes stakeholders' preferences, logic, and interactions in the policy process was examined in the study (Freedman, 2006; 2008; 2010; 2014), particularly the notion of 'inaction' as a form of power. The chapter acknowledges and applies historical institutionalism (Hall, 1986; Peters et al., 2005; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013), as an analytical tool: institutions (formal or informal) are said to enable some actions and actors over others (Jessop, 2001, p.1223), while path-dependence explains how policy legacy inherited makes it difficult for policy change. Finally, the chapter explores supranational policy-making in the communication sector through a foreign policy framework to demonstrate how countries strategically position themselves to influence policy outcomes in the international policy arena. In the context of this study, Nigeria continuously sought re-election into the Administrative Council that governs the ITU. The thesis argues that the accomplishments of Nigeria in the international policy arena were yet to translate into achieving the completion of the domestic digital switchover process due to the government's exclusive approach to the implementation of the DTT policy.

Although it is uncommon to find heterogeneous analytical tools applied in the same study as this, I believe the application of these analytical tools here helps to inform answers to the research questions and better analyse the DTT implementation context in Nigeria.

The historic approach to communication policy development particularly in the Global South will be examined next to show how external forces impacted the growth of communication policy within the African continent.

## **2.2 Liberal democracy: impact of colonialism on the communication policy development in sub-Saharan Africa**

The historical factor of the colonial administration and the political process of communication policy development in Africa cannot be ignored, especially its legal and institutional framework that left communication policy development weak (Matumaini, 2010). The colonisation of Africa following the conquest of the continent in the 18th century resulting in the Berlin conference of 1884-85 and eventual balkanisation of the continent in the name of civilisation and evangelism left variations of democratic practice in sub-Saharan Africa. The colonial divisive rule interrupted the development of the communication system on the continent (Matumaitini, 2010).

The centrality of face-to-face communication was prevalent in pre-colonial Africa to build social consensus among people of diverse interests, which Barber (2003) has described as one of the features of a strong democratic society. Drawing on Barber's (2003) definition, strong democracy is participatory politics, which anchors on the idea of a self-governing community of people who are less united by homogenous interests than by civic education. In Africa, colonial administration rule followed a pattern of "divide and conquer philosophy" (Aginam, 2010), which was also reflected in the development of the communication policy on the continent. The formulation of communication policy (in the print media and radio broadcasting) in Africa during the colonial era was to facilitate the transmission of information, news, and entertainment programmes to colonial rulers and to also enable

Europeans in Africa to maintain links with the Metropolitan countries (Matumaitini, 2010, p.4). The introduction of the radio system of broadcasting gradually replaced the ‘orality’, ‘visuality’, and ‘language diversity’ of communication in Africa and reduced it to a unidirectional operation to date (Berger, 2012).

In the post-colonial era, the political events around East Central Europe in 1989 had ripple effects on the political landscape in Africa. The twin effects of the collapse of the Berlin Wall in Germany in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, signalling the end of communism in Eastern Europe, had a liberating impact in Africa. Africans took to the streets and demanded political change, and the “embattled [African] government granted a modicum of political reforms and freedom of expression” (Eko, 2019, p.422). However, analysts argued that the liberal rhetoric and freedom of the press in Africa hinged on ‘developmentalism’ (Berger, 2012). Ake (1996, cited in Aginam, 2010, p.5) notes;

the newly independent African leaders desperately in need of something to replace the fast-fading “nationalist ideology of self-government” opted for ‘development’ but not as a strategy of empowerment of the people but as a means of fostering political hegemony.

Concerning the press and broadcast media, developmentalism highlights the role of the government regarding society in general and broadcast media in particular (Berger, 2012).

The presumption here is that the mass media was required to be at the service of the state in its task of building a strong nation. Therefore, any critical and dissenting views that may lead to chaos and disintegration, particularly under military regimes must defer to the real and sometimes contrived developmental challenges the state grapples with (Hachten and Scotton, 2002). The notion of developmentalism explains the state-centric approach to broadcast media on the continent such that despotic civilian and military leaders explored mass media to achieve their narrow agenda. Chapter 4 illustrates the propagandist role broadcast media

was subjected to during the Nigerian Civil War (1966-1970) where the broadcast media served the parochial interest of their ‘masters’.

The liberalisation of the political economy of broadcast media and communication sectors in Africa came with the intervention of international organisations such as the ITU, UNESCO, WTO, and the IMF, which critics said further weakened the communication policy capacity in Africa. Communication analysts (Eko, 2003; Hamelink, 1994) agree such intervention influenced communication policy formulation in Africa because the intervention came as “packaged and prefabricated” (Freire, 1978, p.9) in the form of aids that included technical, legal, manpower development, and financial aids (Gaventa and Rosemary, 2010). For instance, UNESCO embarked on communication for developing policies in the Global South, which communication analysts such as Tomlinson (1977), criticises as the first step toward Westernising communication institutions, values, and system. Manyozo (2014, p.320) commenting on the UNESCO agenda to design communication for development in developing countries, notes how

The overall agenda-setting by external organizations [such as UNESCO] does not provide a space for national governments to develop capacities to implement these policies because these [external] organizations are based mainly on a conceptualization of communication for development that is homogenous and heavily influenced by external, western considerations and priorities.

The author argues UNESCO is media-centric in its debate for communication policy for development and treats as a footnote the significance of participatory communications that is central to communication for development policies. The author’s submission here draws back to the earlier observation made about the effective culture of face-to-face communication system in Africa before colonialism, and arguably, if left could have developed its own indigenous knowledge communication system because no indigenous communication exists

outside structures and processes of indigenous knowledge (Pottier et al. 2003; Mazonde and Pradip, 2007). For this reason, critics pick holes in the intervention of international organisations in the development of communication policy for developing countries partly because it failed to take into consideration the important question of culture, identity, participation and globalisation that have become a major discourse in media study (Eko 2003). Instead, Kelly (1978) suggests that to strengthen the communication policy formulation of developing countries, international organisations should recognise the rights of developing nations to design their communication policy informed by the vision of institutions such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Analysts (Raboy, 1995; Van Cuilenburg and McQuail, 2003; Karppinen, 2007) observe how the BBC accords much importance to the public service models, which emphasises a strong interaction between the public and public service broadcasters. What is crucial to the communication policy of the BBC is “the centrality placed on discourses of freedom of communication, access, and accountability, as well as the democratization of communication” (Manyozo, 2014, p.325).

However, with the global agreement on digital migration, international institutions renewed the neo-liberal ideology in the broadcast media and communication policy development, especially in developing countries. Thus, the thesis adopts as a conceptual framework the political economy of broadcasting policy, which helps to illuminate the broader and long-term political-economic context within which the digital switchover policies in Nigeria should be understood. I will discuss next the political economy of broadcasting policy to explain why the theoretical approach was adopted for the study.

### 2.3 Political economy of broadcasting policy

The impacts of globalisation on broadcast media and telecommunication brought about the market-oriented approach to broadcasting policy developments in national administrations (Suine and Truetzschler, 1992; Mosco 2009). Before the convergence in communication technology, state regulatory regimes “dominated by national developmental goals” (Matumaini, 2010, p.1) attended to communication policy. Murdock and Golding (1999) describe the new development in the communication sector as ‘marketisation’ set out to achieve five objectives: privatisation, liberalisation, corporatisation, spectrum auction and reorienting the regulatory system such that it allows multinationals access to markets and extend their freedom of business activity. Furthermore, Murdock and Golding (2002, p.113) have argued that the motivating force behind communication innovation- the transition from old to ‘new’ (digital) broadcast media- is *economic* and not technology. The authors’ argument justifies the critical political economy approach to broadcasting, which sees digital broadcast media as “commodities that are produced and distributed by profit-seeking organisations in capitalist industries” (Wasko, 2014, p.261).

Political economy is commonly applied in the broadcasting and communication field to offer an insight into the interaction between forces shaping global communication (Murdock and Golding, 1999/2002; Wasko, 2005/ 2014; Mansell, 2004; Hardy, 2014; Fuchs, 2014). Mosco and Reddick (1997) describe political economy as the study of social interaction, particularly power interplay that mutually constitutes the production, distribution, and consumption of resources. Garnham (2000) sees political economy as an approach to understanding how power is structured and differentiated, as well as where power emanates from and how it is renewed. Mansell (2004, p.5) opines that the political economy approach to digital broadcasting examines “how the structure of global networks and digital information flows;

and their consumption are informed by predominant and by alternative principles, values and power relations”. To buttress this view, some analysts (Mansell et al., 2002; Melody, 1994) have argued that the political economy of digital broadcast media examines the circumstances that warrant any given distribution of power and the implications for consumers and citizens.

For Hardy (2014), the critical political economy approach to broadcasting studies entails all forms of investigation into the political and economic aspects of communication, which may include emphasising the unequal power-sharing and criticising the system that maintains and replicates those inequalities. However, critiques of political economy have accused it of ‘reductionism’ and ‘economism’ (Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Wasko, 2005). Hesmondhalgh (2002) argues that the critical political economy of communication is preoccupied with the production side of [broadcast] media while paying scanty attention to the consumption aspect. The argument on critical political economy here reduces the complexity of forces shaping broadcasting policy to basic economic rationale coming from the “predominant forces and relations of production” (Singh and Kumar, 2023, p.20). Here, the critics’ view overlooks or downplays the importance of class analysis, and Fuchs (2019, p.19) has argued that there is a need to “relate the notion of communication to the study of society, class, capitalism and the commons”, and by so doing, to bring the focus back to how the economics and non-economics are intertwined in any cultural-political analysis.

Therefore, the political economy approach to broadcasting policy emphasises the intersection of interests among political, domestic, and global actors shaping the communication direction of digital switchover policy across the world. Scholars working in the tradition of the political economy of communication policy have traced how the neo-liberal ideology and pro-market



actors have shaped national and regional communication systems towards the marketisation and commodification of broadcast media. Thus, this chapter explores the political economy of broadcasting policy as a framework to analyse the interplay between states, international institutions and main stakeholders (both conglomerate and domestic) who were involved in shaping the direction of the DSO implementation in Nigeria.

## **2.4 Liberalisation of communication sectors in Africa: the dominant ideology of neo-liberalism**

Communication scholars observe neoliberalism is a dominant ideology, which encourages market-led policy in the global market economy and directs the actions of main international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Harvey, 2005; Zajda, 2014). The actions of these supranational institutions have economic implications on national administrations, especially those of underdeveloped member states. By the early 1990s, the USA Treasury, in conjunction with the World Bank and the IMF, agreed that neo-liberal policy is what an underdeveloped and emerging economy needs to adopt. Besides, neo-liberal theory suggests that underdeveloped countries need to learn from the experiences of developed societies. This concept has been influential in the modernisation approach, which suggests that the implementation of neo-liberal policy will restructure the economy of an underdeveloped society such that private businesses would accumulate sufficient capital and the gains from such growth would benefit the poor in the society.

However, scholars in the tradition of the political economy of communication note that the conceptual basis for neoliberalism does not protect the domestic market in broadcast media; rather, it encourages openness and allows efficient use of domestic resources to provide

greater opportunity for economic growth. Thus, neoliberalism “values a global market without trade blockades or protectionist market policies in the bilateral and multilateral trade relationship between countries” (Abikanlu, 2018, p.43). Therefore, in this chapter, the criticism of the neo-liberal approach to digital broadcasting underscores the dependence on international regulatory governance in the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria, which has been shaping the DSO implementation process. This also informs the answer to the thesis’ sub-research question 4: how has the intersection of foreign media/telecommunication conglomerates and local politics in Nigeria influenced digital migration in reference to global communication governance?

According to Murdock and Golding (1999), the political economy of broadcasting policy in the digital era is concerned with the commercialisation, commodification, and marketisation of media as a product that is produced and distributed by ‘profit-seeking’ companies in a capitalist industry. Wasko (2005) observes many countries have privatised public media institutions along with other public institutions thereby opening additional markets for growing transnational media and entertainment conglomerates. Arguably, the marketisation of broadcast media has prompted the ‘interplay of control’ between private media owners and the state. Thus, this thesis espouses Freedman’s (2006) views on policy-making to illustrate the political economists’ views that the neo-liberal approach of supranational institutions in the global communication governance encouraged the deregulation of the telecommunication and broadcast media industries across the world. As such, private media conglomerates were able to expand beyond their powerbase sustained by their accumulated capital in the form of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which is in line with the free market agenda (Bremmer, 2010; Herrmann and McChesney, 2001; Lapavitsas, 2009). The interdependency between the state and the international policy institutions influenced the political institutions of the state to

enforce the free market agenda on their domestic broadcast media environment (Bracking, 2003). As a result, Freedman (2006, p.908) observes an “unmistakably neoliberal character to contemporary [broadcasting] policy-making, which subsumes the distinctive characteristic of media goods and flows in a market-driven approach.”

Freedman’s (2006) views on broadcasting policy-making, therefore, take into account the dynamics and the balance of power in the policy-making process. The author notes that as a result of the neo-liberal approach to global communication governance, the policy-making in broadcasting is no longer confined to the national level and “domestic [broadcast] media systems are subject to a complex barrage of rules from bilateral trade deals, regional directives and multilateral trade disciplines” (Freedman, 2006, p.912). So, international broadcast media policy could be said to ‘protect’ the interest of broadcast media and telecommunication conglomerates in a domestic broadcast media environment. In the context of the digital switchover policy in Nigeria, the fiscal policy framework of the IMF and the World Bank after the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) restricted the lending capacity of domestic financial institutions to provide loans to domestic digital TV operators such as HiTV to challenge the market dominance of a media conglomerate such as DStv in the digital television environment. In Chapter 4, the thesis examines the events leading to the liberalisation of broadcasting and telecommunication sectors in 1992 after Nigeria accepted the fiscal conditions of the intergovernmental institutions, while Chapter 8 analyses the impact of digitisation and see if it achieved the set public interest objectives.

At this juncture, I will investigate the public interest objectives in the move towards digital switchover and also examine if the aims of broadcast policy change with digital technology.

## **2.5 Broadcast policy in the digital age: changes in public interest objectives in the move towards digital switchover**

Mansell and Raboy (2014, p.1) note that broadcast media policy emerged as an identifiable field within the broader domain of Western media and communications studies in the 1950s. According to Chakravartty and Sarikakis, (2007, pgs. 4-5), [broadcast] policy is the outcome of the discussions between the state's approach to problem-solving and the interactions with other stakeholders involved in policy-making, which is inextricably glued with politics, whether in agenda or procedure, thus, suggesting there is a correlation between broadcast policy and political communication. However, broadcast policy is "itself a medium of control which acts upon politics and at the same time it is a product of political process" (Kaitatzi-Whitlock 2005, p.17), which should determine the benefits of public interest in policy outcome. However, the concept of 'public interest' is vague and loosely constructed (Iosifidis, 2012).

Kolsen (1974) opines that public interest is difficult to define. In the author's view, 'the public' implies everyone, "and the concept of the public interest conjures up the false impression that everyone's interest will in some mysterious way be looked after" (p.44). 'The public' comprises different groups with diverse interests and these aggregated interests are sometimes in conflict with one another. Kolsen (1974, pp.44-45) further submits that:

Once the "public" has been disaggregated into groups having a more or less direct interest in some activity, and the likelihood of conflict between some of the interest groups is recognized, the problem becomes one of the weights to be attached to the interests of each of the groups.

Kolsen (1974) then suggests any intervention on behalf of the public would need to consider a balance between opposing interests based on informed judgment. In terms of broadcast media, Iosifidis, (2012) argues that anything that serves the aims of all who took part in

public communication and not just a few could be counted as serving the public interest. Therefore, the criticism of the public interest concept in this research helps to illustrate the level of public interest objectives in the move towards domestic digital switchover policy; particularly, as the Nigerian government insisted that the ‘legitimate’ DTT policy concern was in the best interest of the public.

Traditionally, broadcasters are regarded as ‘public trustees’ required to serve the public interest through broadcasting in exchange for an exclusive licence of the public spectrum (Graham, 2003) since radio frequency is a scarce public resource. Digital technology has enhanced efficient use of radio frequency thus addressing the issue of spectrum scarcity, which is one of the objectives of digitisation. Moreover, with the efficient use of spectrum comes enhanced broadcasting services: consumers are presented with a clearer picture and sound quality, a wider choice of programmes, and are not restricted to time and space in viewing digital content. Digital television also offers consumers multiple channels and presents interactive opportunities with digital content. Iosifidis (2012) suggests that the public interest outcome with digital technology will depend on how the technology is used by the consumers. In his view, digital media can provide useful tools or “the basis for a participatory democracy and informed citizenry, but they are not themselves inherently pro-democratic” (Iosifidis, 2012, p.18).

Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003) opine the paradigm of public service communication is being replaced by a new policy in digital broadcasting. In essence, the digital broadcasting environment places the economy over political and social value due to the market structure. The justification for setting up public service communication backed by broadcast regulation in the analogue era was to safeguard the public and the public interest to ensure diversity,

pluralism, freedom of speech and access to knowledge and information for political participation (Gibbons, 1998a). With the move towards digital switchover, the statutory functions of the public service model of broadcasting to carry on the aims (public interest objectives) appear threatened. Broadcast media consumption has become more fragmented with enhanced broadcasting services coupled with competition from commercial broadcasters who might be well capitalised to produce compelling digital content.

In the digital TV era, consumers are presented with increased choices of distribution mode (DTT, cable, satellite and IPTV) and content but; critics are concerned that not every consumer's interest would be met because citizens' incomes are different (Iosifidis, 2012). Poor citizens' universal access to and participation in digital broadcasting may be restricted (Melody, 2014). Besides, digital TV infrastructure presents gatekeeping measures that may constrain the values and principles of public interest objectives that may include, accessibility, freedom, pluralism, accountability, and public service broadcasting.

To ensure universal digital access and sustain public interest objectives after the digital switchover, analysts (Graham, 1998; Murdock and Golding, 2004; Iosifidis, 2012) have suggested that public service broadcasting (PSB) takes on a key role in the digital environment and contribute to the recreation of the public sphere, one that would inform citizenship and enhance civic engagement (Iosifidis, 2012). Graham (1998) argues that despite the stiff competition from the commercial media sector, PSB is capable of resolving the dilemma between access, fragmentation, and quality programmes. This the author argues can be achieved through proper funding of the PSB with TV license fees, which should be considered as spending towards high-quality programmes with access for all. Iosifidis (2012)

is of the view that PSB should take full advantage of digital switchover and expand its platform to include online services. The author believes,

Cross-platform strategies help PSB to retain audience share, reach new audiences and develop on-demand services while enabling them to create a stronger partnership with civil society and serve an extended form of citizenship (Iosifidis, 2012, p.16).

The role of PSB could be extended to encourage the uptake of DTT services. Iosifidis (2012) cited how the UK government gave BBC a nod to lead digital conversion in the move towards digital switchover and boost public confidence in digital TV. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, the Nigerian government adopted the same approach to DTT policy by defining a stronger role for PSB and insisting that the FTA remains DTT and not pay-TV.

This section has examined broadcast policy and explored the public interest objectives in the move towards digital switchover. It observes how the aims of broadcast policy could change through the gatekeeping mechanism of digital technology. To achieve universal access and participation of citizens in the digital environment, critics have argued that PSB should take on a new role that would contribute to the recreation of the public sphere. Therefore, it may become necessary for state actors and policy stakeholders to embark on reforming the broadcasting system to deliver public interest objectives in the digital environment.

Meanwhile, to understand the interaction between state actors and other stakeholders in the policy process, this study examines some media analytical tools. Media policy researchers (Siune, Sorbets and Rolland, 1986; Van den Bulck, 2012; 2013, Van den Bulck and Donders, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c) have applied a framework for analysing broadcasting policy. This includes stakeholders (actors) and their logic (interests, preferences) in determining the outcome of decision-making in the broadcasting policy arena as well as the advocacy coalition framework (ACF), which is the focus of the next section.

## **2.6 Analytical tools of broadcasting policy: stakeholder analysis, advocacy coalition framework and power of decision-making**

As earlier mentioned, media policy researchers have applied tools in analysing the study of broadcast media policy, which they have narrowed to actors and the logic they pursue in the process of policy-making. Van den Bulck and Donders (2014b) have argued that policy decision is an “outcome of a process characterized by the formulation of different views and interests, expressed by actors or stakeholders that adhere to a certain logic and that engage in debate and work towards a policy decision on relevant fora” (P.88). In this regard, the process of policy decision involves different actors that operate at different levels and engage in different issues.

The Euromedia research group (Siune, Sorbets and Rolland, 1986; McQuail, Mateo and Tapper, 1992) argue that policy decision is both a reaction to a challenge as well as a reaction that intends to strike a reasonable balance between forces of change and forces of preservation because actors’ stakes in policy formulation differ; some actors may be seen to preserve an ‘old order’ while some stakeholders may push for a change. Nonetheless, the reactions of actors in media policy decisions are regarded as ‘intentional in their behaviour’ or having a “specific set of purposes they want to fulfil” (Ahn, 2006, p.38). Media policy researchers have applied both stakeholder analysis and advocacy coalition framework, as analytical tools to better understand the complex nature of media in the policy-making process. According to Van den Bulck (2019, p.452), stakeholder analysis is often “implicitly applied yet rarely explicitly outlined” in media policy research while advocacy coalition framework (ACF), a concept developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993), focuses on how policy actors and stakeholders come together across traditional political-economic or



governing divides and on how their shared values and beliefs impact policy outcome (Van den Bulck, 2019).

However, both analytical tools (stakeholder analysis and advocacy coalition framework) appear insufficient to answer why certain policy interests were dominant over others in the policy process or the reason why some policies were adopted and others kept out. Therefore, the concept of ‘power’ is examined to explain the real reason behind certain policy outcomes. The notion of power observed here goes beyond the visible instances of decision-making but equally in ‘inaction’. The application of the analytical tools in this study underlines the different preferences and interests of all actors involved in the DSO process in Nigeria, as demonstrated in Chapter 7. First, I start with stakeholder analysis.

### ***2.6.1 Stakeholder analysis: actors and logics***

Stakeholders are groups or organisations with deep concern for the outcome of a specific policy in a society. According to Flew and Lim (2019), stakeholder analysis looks at society as a “set of organized and competing interests and identifies the role of the state and policy-making institutions as one reconciling these competing interests towards shared goals.” The authors then underscore the importance of dialogue and deliberation to encourage shared perspectives on issues and geared towards a consensus. Van den Bulck (2019) has stressed that with the policy process, it is critical to pay attention to the *who* and the *how* of policy-making, that is, who are the individuals, organisations, institutions and so on involved and how did their interaction impact the outcome of the policy process. For this reason, analysts (Van den Bulck and Donders, 2014b; Van den Bulck, 2012; 2019) recognise four stages in the process of decision-making: (1) identify the overall structural characteristics in decision-making of specific national administrations, (2) identify relevant actors in the policy process,

(3) identify the ideas, interests and preferences on policy issues and the outcomes that various actors support and (4) the relevant venues in which the debates take place.

Chapters 7 and 8 demonstrate how the various stakeholders- government, public institutions, private media owners, non-governmental organisations, and international institutions- voiced different logic and preferences about their goals. The chapters also illustrate how the non-state policy stakeholders' agitation for policy reform was rendered ineffective in the outcome of the policy decision within the communication policy arena due to the executive non-inclusive approach to the DTT policy.

Despite the potential of stakeholder analysis to identify key policy actors - politicians, media and telecommunication organisations, regulatory institutions, civil society, advertising industry, trade unions and so on (Hutchinson (1999)- and their concerns in policy decisions, it could not account for individual actor or their "combined visibility, impact and power, nor for the policy processes in which they take part" (Van den Bulck and Donders, 2014a, p.24). Therefore, Weible (2006) in his literature review of the stakeholder concept identifies three limitations to the current approach to stakeholder analysis. First, the author opines that some critics such as Brugha and Varvasovsky (2000) have noted that stakeholder analysis is easily outdated, with an implicit assumption that "stakeholder coalitions, beliefs, resources, and strategies change too rapidly to make a systematic stakeholder analysis worthwhile" (Weible 2006, p.97). Second, Weible (2006) notes stakeholder analysts (Crosby, 1991 and Meltsner, 1972) developed concepts of key stakeholder variables such as policy positions, interests, stakeholder alliances and resources but failed to "specify a theoretical basis for explaining the causal interdependence among these variables and how a combination of these variables affects belief and policy change" (Weible 2006, p.97). Third, the author notes that some

analysts such as Crosby (1991), Ramirez (1999) and Susskind and Thomas-Larmer (1999) have argued that the application of stakeholder analysis much like political feasibility analysis focuses on a 'single alternative or venue'. Weible (2006) then gives an example of how Susskind and Thomas-Larmer (1999) used conflict assessment to estimate the possible success or failure of a single venue (a consensus-based process) and emphasises that carrying out a stakeholder analysis on a single particular venue or alternative restricts the substantive reach of policy decision and its use over time. Thus, Weible (2006, p.98) concludes:

To complement political feasibility analysis, we need a theory that focuses on a wider subsystem scope, recognizing that stakeholders typically are not concerned with just one policy venue or alternative but with the outcome of an entire policy subsystem over long periods of time.

Therefore, policy researchers (Van den Bulck and Donders, 2014a and Weible, 2006) have suggested the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) (Sabatier 1988; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 1999) approach to ground the stakeholder analysis. John (2003) opines that ACF shifts focus from actors and stakeholders to the actual relationship between them, which forms the so-called policy process (Van den Bulk and Donders, 2014, p.24 cited in Rashid, 2016).

### ***2.6.2 Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF): a different approach to stakeholder analysis***

Van den Bulck and Donders, (2014b) see an advocacy coalition framework (ACF) as a tool that examines the relationship between actors who share similar values, beliefs and a general agreement on the best solution to a certain policy issue (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 1999). For Sabatier and Weible (2005), ACF is often applied to explain stakeholder behaviour and policy decisions in intense political conflicts over a period of time. Weible (2006, p.98) notes further that ACF

has explicit assumptions and hypotheses regarding (1) the substantive and territorial boundary of the policy issue and who to include in a stakeholder analysis; (2) the structure of individual beliefs and motivation to influence policy, (3) individual motivation to form relationships (into coalitions); (4) the identification of stakeholder resources and available political venues; and (5) the factors necessary to produce major and minor policy changes.

In addition, ACF offers a different perspective on stakeholder analysis because of its focus on the policy subsystem as the most significant unit of stakeholder analysis. Analysts define a policy subsystem by a set of policy participants and substantive scopes. Within the framework, stakeholders specialise in the policy subsystem maintaining their participation over a long period of time to encourage the institutionalisation and implementation of policy objectives (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). Various actors are found within a policy subsystem, which may include state and federal government representatives, interest and community groups, non-governmental organisations, target groups, media advocacy groups, researchers and scientists.

Weible (2006) has observed that individuals' identities are closely tied to their beliefs and within the ACF individuals are motivated to convert their beliefs into policy "but are limited in their ability to do so" (99), thereby they tend to form a coalition with other individuals who share similar beliefs (Sabatier and McLaughlin, 1987). Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993,1999) identified a three-tiered hierarchical belief system within the ACF: (1) the deep core beliefs are at the top of the hierarchy and they emphasise normative/fundamental beliefs that cut across multiple policy subsystems, which are resistant to change. (2) Policy core beliefs are next and they represent a coalition's basic normative commitments and casual perceptions spanning an entire policy subsystem. Policy core beliefs are also resistant to change but are more flexible than deep core belief systems. (3) The secondary beliefs are at the bottom and they represent empirical beliefs that relate to a 'subcomponent of a policy

system'. Secondary beliefs are more flexible and adaptive to change in response to new events and information. Within ACF, changes can occur to major policy on two levels: changes in the beliefs of a dominant coalition or changes in available resources and venue. Changes are delivered either by external shocks, policy-oriented learning or by hurting stalemate (Weible, 2006, p.101).

External shocks or 'exogenous factors' occur outside of a policy subsystem. For example, in the Nigerian context, the economic recession resulting from the effect of COVID-19 on the global scale made the Nigerian government shift its DSO strategy from a government-run to a commercial implementation approach. Therefore, the examination of the stakeholder analysis and the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) in this thesis find their relevance particularly in Chapters 7 and 8 where the different actors and stakeholders were investigated to know the crucial part they played in the implementation of the DTT policy. However, the changes took place within the policy arena that excluded main stakeholders who could only monitor and criticise the broadcasting policy.

The applications of stakeholder analysis and ACF as tools of media policy although helpful, proved to be inadequate in certain policy analyses. For instance, the analytical models assume that the relationships (conflicts and cooperation) among various subsystems of policy coalitions are 'overt' and 'visible' but remain silent on the role of 'power' in the interactions between actors in the policy process. For this reason, the chapter examines the role of power in the policy process and its relevance in the implementation of the DSO process in Nigeria.

### **2.6.3 Policy decision: power and silence**

Analysts perceive policy-making as a form of power to control, influence and possibly muffle opposition on public issues. There are many factors at play in the process of policy-making; in some cases, the policy outcome may not achieve the public interest objectives even though classical liberalism expressed in the work of John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government* (1690), states that power is derived from the governed as enshrined in the constitution (cited in Birkland, 2019, p.11). Thus, any decision the government takes should in such circumstances consider the interest of the public. However, there are many approaches to power in the policy process but the ones applicable in this thesis are those of contemporary critics (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974/2005; Crenson, 1971; Freedman, 2006; 2008; 2010; 2014) who see power as the promotion of particular interests over another through the selection of non-issues (Freedman 2010). In other words, the policy process should not just focus on decisions that are made; attention should also be paid to 'invisible' issues and alternatives that are left out or agendas that are not considered in a policy process.

In his view, Dahl (1957) describes power as visible and direct, which could bring policy issues to an agenda. He argues the determination of power in a policy process is such that an actor A can induce actor B to do something contrary to their wish (Freedman, 2010, p. 348) because an actor's power is made up of opportunities, acts [including] objects that are used to induce the behaviour of another. However, Bachrach and Baratz (1962) see the application of power differently. They view power as having the potential to prevent policy issues from getting on an agenda by the process of 'inaction'. In the authors' analogy, they posit that if actor A devotes its energy and resources to curtail issues that are important to actor B through

a political process of public presentation and only advance concerns that are of benefit to actor A, that is another form of power prejudice to B. It is a non-decision-making power that “highlights the material and symbolic resources that powerful players have at their disposal in aiming both to dominate the visible policy process” and to “limit the scope of actual decision-making to ‘safe’ issues” (Bachrach and Baratz 1962, p.952).

Crenson (1971, p.21) supports this view when he argues that power is at play when a particular group enforces *inaction* over another “thereby maintaining the impenetrability of the political process,” in other words, an exercise of ‘power of obstruction’. Crenson (1971) submits that critics should examine and bring to the fore those important decisions that were never made, issues that never arose and significant policies that were never formulated (Crenson, 1971, p.4). With this observation, Crenson (1971) reinforces that power is not only exercised in the visible instances of decision-making but equally in ‘inaction’. Steven Lukes (1974/2005) takes the argument forward building on Crenson’s (1971) theory of non-decision and identifies a third face of power: the ideological face; which he describes as “a serious sociological and not merely a personalized explanation of how political systems prevent political demands from becoming political issues or even from being made” (Lukes, 2005, p.40). Lukes is inferring here that power needs not be physically exercised but could consist of negative action or failure to act. In Freedman’s (2010) view, negative action or negative policy does not mean policy-makers lack energy for ‘doing nothing’; it is in fact “a strategic decision that the best way to promote hegemonic interests and to naturalize foundational values is through a particular role for the state as policy maker” (p.355) thus, government’s silence on certain policies could also be considered as a strategy in policy-making.

In this study, policy silence or negative action is demonstrated through the Nigerian

government's delay in the release of the white paper report three years after it was submitted, which resulted in the country missing its first switch-off date of 17 June 2012. The White paper is the policy document that was meant to drive the implementation of the DSO process in Nigeria. As illustrated in Chapter 7 and the analytical Chapter 8, the delay also enabled the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to issue DTT licences to two broadcast media conglomerates, which brought confusion in the DSO process. This renewed the efforts of various stakeholders to call for reform in the broadcasting regulation partly due to the weak institutional structure within which the regulatory body operates. Therefore, the next section examines the concept of institutionalism as an analytical tool and explains how it was used in the study.

## **2.7 Institutionalism: history and path dependency**

The role of institutions and how they determine the outcome of DTT policy in Nigeria is central to this thesis. Institutions used within the context of this research refer to formal and informal 'structures' in which actors are involved in the policy process.

Hall (1986) defines institutions as

The formal rules, compliance procedures and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of policy and economy. As such, they have a more formal status than do cultural norms but one that does not necessarily derive from legal, as opposed to conventional, standing (Hall, 1986, cited in Peters et al., 2005, p.1280).

This implies that institutions are structured on both formal and informal rules in the policy process (also see Lowndes, 2002; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). In line with Hall's (1986) definition, Steinmo (2008) also describes institutions as *rules*, whether as formal institutions or informal rules and norms. The author stresses that institutions are important for politics



because “they shape who participates in a given decision and, simultaneously, their strategic behaviour” (Steinmo, 2008, p.159).

Historical institutionalism has emerged as a prominent approach to policy analysis in recent decades. According to Peters et al. (2005), this approach views policy-making and political change as a gradual process characterised by a prolonged period of stability, known as path-dependency. However, this stability can be interrupted by critical junctures, which refer to a significant period of change (as described by Collier and Collier in 1991, p.29). Historical institutions are considered more as policy-making in formal [well institutionalised] structure: political, administrative, legal, and regulatory authorities, which may make policy change difficult “because of the deeply entrenched clientele and bureaucratic interests involved in the particular ‘solution’ to the problem” (Peters et al., 2005, p. 1276). In this regard, the formal structure of an institution may enable some actions and actors over others (Jessop, 2001, p.1223). Peters et al. (2005) identify two shortcomings of the historical institutional approach to policy analysis: first, it is incapable of incorporating adequate political change in the analytical framework and second; it fails to identify “the political conflict and dissensus within what at the surface might appear to be stable, path-dependent time periods” (Peters et al., 2005, p.1277). The authors submit that the historical institutionalism approach may be inadequate to explain political and policy change. Therefore, the so-called new institutionalism derived from historical institutionalism evolved as an approach to institutional analysis (March and Olsen, 1984; Hall, 1986; Steinmo, 2008).

The new institutionalism framework is largely applied to the media study of broadcasting policy-making, which includes digital television (D’Arma, 2007; Sümer, 2007; Galperin, 2004b). The new institutionalist approach builds on historical institutionalism by observing both “formal and informal procedure, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the

organizational structure” (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p.938) in the policy process. According to Lowndes and Roberts (2013), informal procedures and practices are “conveyed through demonstration rather than written rules” (p.93) and over time the informal practices may be accepted as *rules*. Structure within the context of institutionalism here refers to the rules, norms, and practices used in a particular way by individuals and actors. Norms and structure conditioned by the environment tend to reinforce each other, “an intellectual stance that emphasizes the image of structural rigidity” (Peters et al. 2005, p. 1279). Proponents of new institutionalism (Hall, 86; March and Olsen, 1989) postulate that as soon as formal and informal practices are institutionalised in a given society, they assume certain rigidity, one that may be difficult to change. More so, they may provide a path framework for subsequent policy decisions.

### ***2.7.1 Path dependence and significance of history***

According to Peters et al. (2005, p. 1275) theoretically, “the central analytical notion of ‘path-dependency’ in historical institutionalism may mask the dissensus that may exist beneath the surface of a program, or organizational field, and thus produce some neglect of the forces for change.” In other words, there are certain ‘self-reinforcing processes’ inherent in institutions, which make institutional configurations and policies difficult to change once particular norms have been established (Pierson, 2000). March and Olsen (1989, p.165) also agree, “policies once adopted are embedded into institutions and associated with rules, expectations and commitment,” thus strengthening the considerable impact of policy inheritances in the substance of policy-making (Heclo, 1974, p.63). However, some path dependence theorists (North, 1990; Pierson, 1996; Berman 1998) have submitted that history to some extent is a ‘self-evident truth’ in institution analysis.

Steinmo (2008, p.164) echoes this thought when he submits that historical institutionalists study history “because they believe history matters, not merely to increase the reference points for analysis.” The author then highlights three key factors of history in institutionalism: First, political events occur within a historical context, and these have a direct bearing on the decisions or events. Second, actors or agents can learn from experience. Historical institutionalists are aware that behaviour, attitudes, and strategic choices occur within particular political, social, economic, and cultural contexts and at different times. Therefore, they can situate the variables in the appropriate context. This way, historical institutionalists can deepen their understanding of the historical moment and the actors within it. Thirdly, expectations are shaped by the past.

Arguably, ‘policy legacies’, that is, the effects of earlier decisions may constrain subsequent policy decisions on what innovation is permissible (Mucciaroni, 1990; Weir, 1992), and the resistance of institutions to change could be taken as a successful institutionalisation of the structure (Peters et al. 2005, p. 1288). However, institutional change does occur, which may require significant external shocks (Baumgartner and Bryan, 1993) observed earlier in the ACF section. North (1990) has also acknowledged institutional change even though incremental, is facilitated by ‘agents of change’, or by what is called “individual entrepreneur responding to incentives embodied in the institutional framework” (North, 1990, p.38). Although institutions structure actors’ choices, institutions are susceptible to change by actors themselves because real individuals make decisions in the policy process that may not always be efficient or purely out of self-interest (Steinmo, 2008, p.178).

The background chapter (Chapter 4) traces the history and political narrative of broadcasting policy in Nigeria, which established a path-dependence that persisted to the digital TV era.

Chapters 7 and 8 in particular demonstrate the influence of the state institutions in structuring and shaping preferences of the stakeholders in the implementation of domestic digital switchover policy in line with the global agenda.

## **2.8 Foreign policy framework: supranational policy-making in the communication sector**

Slightly moving away from the analytical tools in media study to another concept applied in this thesis, this section discusses the notion of foreign policy, which embraces a deliberately constructed design to fit a country properly into the international system (Afinotan 2015, p.163). Post-colonial African countries, after obtaining political independence, found themselves abruptly thrown into the existing international political arena already skewed in favour of developed countries. Therefore, the challenge became how developing countries can evolve and align a foreign policy orientation to meet the demands of international power politics.

According to Rosenau (1974), foreign policy is described as an authoritative action a government takes or is committed to taking, to preserve the desirable aspects of the international environment. Holsti (1983) sees foreign policy as actions of a state towards its external environment; that is, the “interplay between the outside and the inside” (Northedge, 1968). For Afinotan (2007), central to foreign policy is the idea of national interest, the pivot around which foreign policy revolves.

In Chapter 6, the thesis demonstrates how Nigeria made Africa the centre-piece of its foreign policy and then committed to playing the ‘big brother’ role on the continent to strategically position itself in the international policy arena, especially in the global communication

governance to influence policy decisions. However, Nigeria's contributions in the international policy forum are yet to translate to achieving progress in the domestic digital switch process due to the exclusive approach of the government in the implementation of the DTT policy.

## **2.9 Conclusions**

The chapter discussed the conceptual and theoretical framework, which the study draws upon. It demonstrated from a broad perspective that weak traditional democracies contribute to inadequate communication policy, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the effects of colonial rules left legacies of weak structure and institution capacity to formulate comprehensive communication policy in the modern era. The chapter adopted the political economy of broadcasting policy as a theoretical framework for the study. It noted the political economy of broadcasting policy illuminates the broader and long-term political-economic context within which the DSO policies in Nigeria should be understood.

The chapter then illustrated how intergovernmental institutions renewed the neoliberal ideology in developing economies following the global agreement on the digital switchover process. It also analysed government and official policy discourses on public interest in the digital broadcasting environment. The discourses bordered on the changes that occurred with the public interest objectives in the digital switchover policy. In the second part of the chapter, the analytical tools for this study were discussed and their application in the thesis was explained. The analytical tool examined included stakeholder analysis, advocacy coalition framework, and the concept of power beyond visible instances of decision-making, which is expressed in 'inaction' as a policy decision strategy. Also established, as an analytical tool in the study is historical institutionalism, which explored path-dependence to

demonstrate how policy legacy inherited makes it difficult for policy change. Finally, the notion of foreign policy was critically examined to show how national administrations pursue their interest by positioning themselves strategically to influence policy in the international policy arena. The various frameworks and concepts examined here form an overarching framework that informs the analysis of the DSO process in Nigeria.

The next chapter will review the literature on the global trend in digital broadcasting and investigate the different approaches to the implementation of the DTT policy across the world.

## **Chapter 3: The modern trend in digital broadcasting and the different approaches to the digital switchover around the world**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The last chapter developed the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. This chapter continues with the literature review drawing on the concept and the main theme of the study: the challenges of digital switchover in Nigeria within the global trend in digital broadcasting. The socio-political and economic benefits of digital broadcasting have encouraged the development path for digital television in different countries globally (García Leiva and Stark, 2009). This chapter begins by reviewing some literature on the efficient technology that enhanced digital broadcasting (Tadayoni and Skouby, 1999; Sugari and Reljin, 2011; Doeven, 2013; Abreu et al., 2017). It discusses the concept and rationale behind digital broadcasting to demonstrate the socio-economic as well as the political context. The chapter notes that digital technology and convergence renewed the neo-liberal approach to broadcasting across the globe such that broadcast media and telecommunication conglomerates continue to expand their businesses beyond their national administrations aided by intergovernmental institutions.

The other section of the chapter examines the different strategies adopted by different countries to demonstrate variations among member states in the implementation of the DTT policy (García Leiva et al., 2006; Starks, 2007). For instance, the dependency approach adopted in Africa has made it possible to be reliant on developed countries for technology and funding assistance, which dictated the direction of the implementation of the digital switchover on the continent. Following this section, the chapter draws on Berger's (2010) argument that developed countries drove the DTT and DSO policies within the ITU and examines the compelling need for African countries to embark on the digital migration

process even though their spectrum needs were different from that of the developed economies. The last section then extends the discussion by analysing the challenges of implementing a digital switchover policy within the sub-Saharan African region focusing on a few country case studies. Although this research is not designed as a comparative analysis (elaborate research would be needed for that), this is to give an overview of the common denominating factors impeding the DSO process in Africa, particularly the issue of inadequate communication policy, insufficient funds, technical challenges, and how to achieve the overall objective of efficient use of freed spectrum (digital dividends).

According to Tadayoni and Skouby (1999), the efficient use of the radio spectrum enables multi-lingual delivery of programmes and more capacity than in the analogue system.

Communication analysts believe that efficient technology lowers operating costs in transmission and broadcasting (Doyle, 2002a). The next section discusses the development and rationale behind the DTT.

### **3.2 The development of digital terrestrial broadcasting (DTTB)**

The idea of digital terrestrial broadcasting as a substitute for analogue terrestrial transmission was developed in the United States “ as an industrial response to Japan’s bid in the 1980s to set global standards for high-definition television (HDTV) using analogue technology” (García Leiva and Stark, 2009, p.788). Following the Japanese development of the HDTV standard transmission system, the US began to carry out research into developing its *digital transmission standard* until 1990 when “General Instrument (GI), a cable TV equipment maker in the US[A], designed a method to compress and transmit digitally HDTV signals within a normal 6 MHz channel” (Ahn, 2006, p.162). At this point, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), the USA media and telecommunication regulatory



body, set up an advisory group, the Advance Television Testing Centre (ATTC) to perfect the digital transmission standard hence, the Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) was adopted as technical standards for both standard and high-definition digital terrestrial television.

Similarly, Europe responded to the Japanese global standard for high-definition television (HDTV) by developing its own analogue high-definition satellite system, the Multiplex Analogue Component (MAC) in the 1980s. With the development of MAC, the European Commission (EC) wanted to end the analogue television divide between the Phase Alternating Line (PAL) and Electronic Colour System with Memory (SECAM) system of broadcasting within the European Community and in a way boost the global position of the European receiver industry. However, there was a drawback with the plan as García Leiva and Stark (2009, p.790) note:

MAC's over-ambitious technical profile contributed to its disastrous commercial failure. The European receiver manufacturers, Philips and Thomson, suffered seriously and the UK's national direct-to-home satellite venture, British Satellite Broadcasting, BSB, were humiliated by Sky, using simpler technology (and leading to the formation of BSkyB).

This scenario led the EC to allow the European audiovisual industry to set the pace in developing technical standards in digital broadcasting and the EC only concerned itself with matters of platform neutrality and regulation of conditional access. Therefore, Europe's digital television standards were developed in an industry-centred joint project, which gave rise to the Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB) technical standard adopted in the transition to digital terrestrial television.

Since the trend towards digital television began, the Japanese government and industry also reacted by designing the Integrated Services Digital Broadcasting (ISDB) as their technical standard for digital television. According to García Leiva and Stark (2009), Japan's ISDB had an edge over the digital broadcasting standard developed in the USA and Europe due to 'platform interoperability' embedded in the design to facilitate the manufacture of digital television sets that could handle digital satellite, cable and terrestrial reception as well as multi-media and mobile services.

Not all country around the world could practically develop their technical standard; therefore, other countries across the globe embarking on digital switchover were faced with adopting one or the other technical standards developed in the USA, Europe, or Japan. For instance, South Korea and Canada adopted the ATSC standard, while South Africa, Russia, Kenya, and Nigeria among others selected the DVB-T system developed in Europe. Botswana, the Philippines, Maldives, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile adopted the ISDB-T. However, China is another country that developed its own set of technical standards called Digital Multimedia Broadcasting Terrestrial (DMBT), which shares some similarities with DVB technology. For China, the motivation to embark on digital switchover has little to do with spectrum efficiency (which was what motivated the majority of countries) but more to do with keeping on top of global technology changes in the TV receiver market. More so, given that China has over 380 million TV households "makes digital switchover with distinctive Chinese technical standard attractive proposition for its industry" (García Leiva and Stark, 2009, p.795).

From the analysis above, it appears political motivation was behind the USA and Europe's response to Japan's earlier development of global standards for high-definition TV (HDTV),

as each country wanted to dominate in setting the global standard. Consequently, this development had significant implications for the efficient use of spectrum in broadcasting, which, in turn, prompted the transition to digital broadcasting as the next section demonstrates.

### **3.3 The motivation for digital migration: efficient technology, lower transmission cost and multi-platform process**

Tadayoni and Skouby (1999, p.189) argue that the technological edge digital TV has over analogue TV include the possibility of transmitting more channels as a result of digital compression. The adoption of a Single Frequency Network (SFN) technology enables the acquisition of more frequency resources and the possibility of rendering data services that include interactive features. The authors argue further that with digital TV, it is possible to send programme-related data for instance Electronic Programming Guide (EPG), with the possibility to involve viewers in the composition of the programme (voting for the programme) and a better possibility for signal encryption for offering DTT services. The chapter examines these features, along with others, highlighting the necessity of digital migration and the potential benefits that can be realised.

#### ***3.3.1 Digital Terrestrial TV: A transition to more efficient broadcasting***

The introduction of Digital Terrestrial TV (DTT) has brought about a significant transformation in the television industry, providing several benefits for governance, commerce, entertainment, and telecommunication. DTT is the first significant change in terrestrial television since the invention of colour TV (Sugari and Reljin, 2011). Unlike the evolutionary change in the era of colour TV, digitisation has disrupted the entire broadcasting

value chain, including content creators, content aggregators, multiplex operators, service providers, content distributors, and device creators.

Traditional terrestrial television is a linear and one-way communication medium where programming units transition smoothly to the next. However, non-linear DTT has disrupted this nature with its attribute, allowing viewers to consume digital content at their convenience (time-shifted), anywhere (spatial), and interact with it to obtain additional information (Abreu et al., 2017). This has enhanced traditional terrestrial broadcasting services. Arguably, the disruption complements and enhances the services offered on all available digital delivery platforms such as terrestrial, cable, satellite, and Internet protocol when combined with a broadband network. These enhanced broadcasting services (EBS) are referred to as Hybrid Broadcast-Broadband (HBB) services (Doeven, 2013, p.7).

According to Abreu et al. (2017), the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting and the growth of broadband Internet access were disruptive processes that affected the entire broadcasting value chain, from content creators to device creators. As earlier stated, the use of EBS now allows viewers to access digital content from anywhere, including on mobile devices such as tablets or smartphones with an internet connection. Moreover, EBS can facilitate interactivity, which is achieved using middleware in the set-top box, or through a TV receiver (Doeven, 2013). However, analysts believe that the full benefits of digital broadcasting may not be fully realised until the digital switchover process is completed. This is because EBS relies heavily on effective broadband penetration (Doeven, 2013). To facilitate the development of broadcasting and multimedia services via the Internet to a larger part of the population, the World Radio Conference (WRC) 2012 in 2012 decided to allocate

International Mobile Services (IMT) in the 700 MHz and 800 MHz bands to the telecommunication sector (El-Moghazi et al. 2017).

After Analogue Switch-Off (ASO), the telecommunications industry could use the digital dividends in the 700 MHz and 800 MHz bands to facilitate broadband penetration. Nigeria may require such broadband facilities to bridge the information gap between urban and rural settlements, as a larger percentage of Nigeria's population lives in rural areas (Gbenga-Ilori and Ibiyemi, 2010).

### ***3.3.2 The improvement in different generations of compression and standard technology***

The development of digital technology has led to an improvement in the quality of services and coverage in DTT. This has been achieved through the efficient use of spectrum and the compression of video and audio coding systems.

According to Shivam et al. (2014), the ISO/IEC Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG) and ITU-T Video Coding Expert Group (VCEG) jointly developed the video compression technology used in DTT. The first DTT implementation used MPEG-2, also known as ITU-T H.222. However, this has since been replaced with a more efficient compression system, MPEG-4/ITU-T 264. The advantage of the latter compression system was the ability to get the same video quality at half the bitrate. This was an enabler in launching HDTV services, particularly through digital terrestrial transmission (McCann et al. 2012, p.15). The MPEG-4 compression technology was also used on cable and satellite networks (Sugari and Reljin, 2011, p.109). In 2013, a third-generation video compression system known as High Efficient Video Coding (HEVC) was developed. HEVC video encoding has the same efficiency as H.264 but can reduce bandwidth by up to half while maintaining the same or improved video

quality. However, the disadvantage of the improved generation of compression technologies is that they are not backward compatible with the previous generation (Doeven, 2013, p.17).

The Digital Video Broadcasting-Terrestrial (DVB-T) standard was adopted as the broadcasting transmission standard in Europe's DTT. DVB-T was developed in the mid/late 1990s and used a multicarrier modulation scheme. This gave it "immunity to multipath reception and resistance from analogue television transmission systems" (McCann et al. 2012, p.22). The UK and other countries that commenced their migration from analogue to digital broadcasting before 2007 adopted DVB-T and MPEG-2 compression. By June 2008, the DVB-T2 was introduced to the digital broadcasting system. DVB-T2 increased the transmission capacity over DVB-T by at least 30% while maintaining the same TV coverage, including the transport of Internet Protocol (IP) data (Sugari and Reljin, 2011, p.110). DVB-T2 could be used with mobile and portable receivers, such as smartphones and tablets. DVB-T2 and MPEG-4 technologies were adopted for DTT broadcasting in ITU Region 1 because they "provide increased capacity and ruggedness in the terrestrial broadcasting environment" (Sugari and Reljin, 2011, p.109). Therefore, the White Paper on the implementation of digital migration in Nigeria recommended the adoption of the DVB-T2 and MPEG-4 systems in the implementation of the DTT process.

### **3.4 The major platforms delivery in digital TV**

Digital television, according to the Commission of the European Communities (2003, p.6), is a "multi-network or multi-platform process." Traditional terrestrial television is transmitted through analogue signals, while cable and satellite networks are digitally transmitted and complimented the delivery of television broadcasting. With the convergence of technology in telecommunication and media, additional platforms are developed for the delivery of digital

broadcasting, which included Internet Protocol TV (IP-TV). In Nigeria, all these platforms are available and compete with digital terrestrial television broadcasting (DTTB).

#### ***3.4.1 Direct-to-Home (DTH) platform***

Direct-to-Home (DTH) services are a type of satellite television broadcasting that offers digital services for home reception through personal antennas (Ranjith, 2015). DTH is a pay TV service that includes both digital cable and satellite television. Cable TV uses radio frequency signals transmitted via coaxial cable or fibre-optic cables and services are available in areas close to network providers while DTH satellite television delivers content through communication satellite directly to consumers (Ranjith, 2015, p.46). To access digital content on a satellite TV, the consumer requires a portable satellite dish and a set-top box. DTH satellite television has an advantage over cable TV and terrestrial TV as it can cover remote or difficult-to-reach areas where television services are poor or nonexistent. Satellite TV broadcasts high-quality satellite signals with a large number of TV channels in a service area over a large territory. Due to its greater technological capacity, satellite transmission has developed the ideal capacity for HDTV (Jaksic et al. 2016). The DTH platform was designed to compete with other television services, including DTT. The study observed that in Nigeria, several DTH operators were rendering high-quality content including premium programmes.

#### ***3.4.2 Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) platform***

Recent studies have shown that traditional analogue TV is being replaced by digital terrestrial broadcasting (DTT) due to its numerous advantages (García Leiva and Stark, 2009). The debate around DTT was about the potential recovery of spectrum occupied by analogue broadcasters, which could be released for other uses. The switch to DTT offers more services, extended coverage, and better picture quality including HDTV and interactive services

(Doeven, 2013). However, in some countries such as the USA and UK, DTT services are combined with other forms of delivery platforms like Direct-To-Home platforms and Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexer (XDSL) platforms. One disadvantage of the DTT platform is its lower capacity compared to digital satellite TV and digital cable TV (Doeven, 2013). According to Doeven (2013), these platforms have a higher multiplex capacity and more multiplexes than DTT. Nevertheless, with the enhanced broadcasting services previously mentioned, DTT could deliver mobile and portable reception services. Nigeria launched DTT in 2008 and was grappling with its completion at the time of writing (October 2023).

### ***3.4.3 Internet Protocol Television (IP-TV)***

According to McCann et al. (2012), IP-TV is an alternative digital platform for delivering audio-visual content over IP networks, whether they are managed or unmanaged. Originally, copper wire telecommunication networks were designed to carry voice frequencies from the local telephone exchange to homes over several kilometres. Later, they were used to offer broadband data services through a modem at home and a Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexer [XDSL] at the office (McCann et al. 2012, p.31). As a result of convergence, XDSL technology was used as a digital broadcasting platform.

As previously mentioned, there are two forms of delivery of TV over Internet Protocol networks: (a) IP-TV over managed network and, (b) Streamed TV over unmanaged Internet. Managed IP-TV networks benefit from Quality of Service (QoS) mechanisms, which help operators protect services from unsolicited online traffic, such as web browsing (McCann et al. 2012). France has a higher adoption rate of IP-TV services compared to the UK, according to the Ofcom report (2011).



Unmanaged IP network streaming services are provided through the wider Internet and cannot rely on the operator to control the overall quality of services. However, the emerging Digital Television Group (DTG) that includes the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) adaptive streaming (McCann et al. 2012) has provided alternative approaches the overall quality of services. This development enables Over-The-Top (OTT) services that traditional broadcast stations use to extend services through catch-up TV, push video on demand, and other interactive services.

The introduction of digital terrestrial broadcasting has brought about a significant change in the global media industry (Ahn, 2006, p.152). Countries, including Nigeria, have embraced this trend for political and economic benefits, with many adopting neoliberal free market policies. However, different national administrations have taken varying approaches to the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting, which will be explored in the next section.

### **3.5 Approaches to digital switchover around the world**

The digital revolution has enabled a transition to digital broadcasting, and the digital switchover is closely linked to the efficient use of the radio spectrum. Digital switchover involves compressing frequencies to accommodate more stations into one channel, freeing up the spectrum. This transition has resulted in “better transmission efficiency of the television signals by DTT compared to analogue broadcasting” (Korteweg and McGonagle, 2010, p.8), leading to the digital dividend. In times of economic recession, analysts argue that dividends could be used to augment national gross domestic product (GDP), particularly in Africa, which tends to rely on developed countries for most of its technological and fiscal needs.

Although radio spectrum is a national prerogative, it is subject to the ITU regulation, given that “radio spectrum does not respect national borders and without any international cooperation the exploitation of the radio spectrum would be seriously impaired by cross-border interference” (Korteweg and McGonagle, 2010, p.9).

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) holds the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) every three to four years, allowing its 193 member states to participate in the decision-making process and review and revise Radio Regulations (RR) (Gregg, 2000 in El-Moghazi et al. 2017, p.2). During the WRC, member states set the agenda for the use of radio spectrum and make legally binding decisions by consensus.

The ITU-Radiocommunication sector divides the member states into three “macro-regions” (Region 1, Region 2 and Region 3) and further subdivides them into six regional entities for easy coordination. Massaro (2017, p.4), sums the division of the six regional entities thus:

Coordination within each ITU Region is fundamental in order to avoid the risk of producing harmful interference. Regional entities have been established in order to facilitate negotiations between countries belonging to the same region. Countries in Region 1 are organized into four regional entities: the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrators (CEPT); the African Telecommunications Union (ATU); the Arab Spectrum Management Group (ASMG); and the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC). Countries in Region 2 are all members of one single regional entity called the Inter-America Telecommunication Commission (CITEL). Likewise, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) represents Region 3.

Comparative studies have shown that states differ in their approaches to the transition to digital broadcasting (Brown and Picard, 2005; Cave and Nakamura, 2006; Galperin, 2004). This chapter focuses on the different approaches among regions that make up the ITU’s

member states. For ease of understanding, the chapter uses the ITU-R's framework of dividing member states into the three regional entities identified above. The chapter begins with CEPT, which was the first to begin a regional transition to digital broadcasting in 2003 (García Leiva and Stark, 2009, p.287).

### ***3.5.1 Coordinated approach in the transition to digital broadcasting in the CEPT region***

The transition from analogue to digital broadcasting is a global trend, and developed economies competed to adopt digital broadcasting standards (DBS) for their economic benefits. The European Union (EU) and its members adopted a coordinated approach to digital broadcasting to take full advantage of digital dividends for economic and social gains. One of the ways the EU achieved DTT was through agenda-setting.

Agenda-setting is a key determinant of the outcomes of international negotiation (Modelski and Thompson, 1999). According to Massaro (2017), the theory of agenda-setting stipulates that where there are competing interests among actors, each competitor endeavours to get their issues on the agenda and keep other issues off. Actors with similar interests pull resources together to arrive at a common goal. At the WRC, decisions are made by consensus, and the EU presents a common front to influence agenda-setting (El-Moghazi et al. 2014). Thus, the dynamics of power on policy decisions identified by Freedman (2006) were at play when EU member states pushed for the adoption of the broadcasting standard developed in Europe (DVB-T) as the region's standard. Again, putting the DSO on the agenda at WRC could be argued to be an advantage for the member states from the EU and not necessarily a priority for others, especially African member states and this is reflected in the delay by many African countries to implement the global agreement on digital migration.

As will be demonstrated later in other regional contexts, the implementation of the digital switchover policy could be affected by differing national approaches to the transition process. The EU recognises that to realise the full potential of the digital dividend, member states need to adopt a ‘common approach’ towards spectrum planning and harmonisation of national policies among EU member states, which contributed to achieving a ‘level playing field’ and eliminated legal uncertainty (EC, 2005a: 8). However, studies show that there were interventions on the part of the EU on the policy process of member states that were restrictive as was in the case of Bulgaria (Rashid, 2015).

Other factors informed the synchronisation of national policy on the digital switchover among EU member states, and according to BIPE (2002), this includes- (a) the transnational nature of spectrum management, (b) the free circulation of goods and services in the single European market and, (c) the promotion of global European competitiveness in all the industries involved (television services, consumer electronics, advance television technologies) which requires coordination and synchronisation of developments.

The coordinated approach also enabled interoperability across digital platforms in the European media environment. This was crucial to the region because it helped businesses (manufacturers and software developers) and policy-makers such as the European Commission (EC) to take advantage of the interconnected system among manufacturers. The European Commission publication (2002) (cited in Rashid, 2015) notes the interoperability framework encouraged transparency along the various levels of the platforms. The coordinated approach to spectrum management proved to be beneficial to member states of the CEPT region as the majority of them were able to meet the targeted dates of the transition

to digital broadcasting (see Chapter 1). However, the approach in the Arab region was different giving the need for the use of spectrum.

### **3.5.2 Co-existence approach in the transition to digital broadcasting in the Arab region**

The transition from analogue terrestrial TV to digital terrestrial TV (DTT) broadcasting has allowed for the possibility of spectrum sharing with systems other than broadcasting (Abdelghany and Digham, 2019, p.4). This means that the freed-up spectrum can be used for other purposes, as the radio spectrum is arguably a finite public resource that should be maximised for efficiency.

Miller et al. (2015) observe that in the Arab region, the viewership of terrestrial television was very low; most prefer to watch television over cable or satellite, with an increasing number of consumers watching television on IP-TV. The authors further observe that the demand for mobile communication increased tremendously across the region with mobile voice penetration as high as 100% in some Arab countries and at the same time, mobile broadband penetration was low in some Arab states partly due to the lack of available spectrum. The ITU has identified broadband as critical in boosting the economic growth of developing countries, where spectrum is the ‘lifeblood’ of mobile broadband (Abdelghany and Digham; 2019, p.3).

In 2015, the Arab Spectrum Management Group (ASMG) called for co-primary allocation in the Ultra High Frequency (UHF) spectrum for broadcast and mobile. The decisions to allocate radio spectrum are taken at international fora, as was the case for the 800 MHz band, which was identified for mobile broadband services at WRC-07 in 2007 and for the 700 MHz band at the WRC-12 in 2012 (Miller et al. 2015, p.7).

The Arab region determined how much spectrum should be allocated for each country for them to know the frequencies to be released for mobile broadband and digital broadcasting. The Arab countries allocated a maximum of 4 multiplexes, which allowed up to 32 television channels in each country (Miller et al. 2015). As a result, the Geneva 2006 frequency plan was modified among Arab countries to release frequency above the 694 MHz band and for the spectrum to be identified as co-primary for broadcasting and mobile if the benefits are to be accrued by releasing some of this spectrum for mobile broadband (Miller et al. 2015, p.6).

However, among the considerations for releasing spectrum above 694 MHz was the need to prevent in-country as well as cross-border interference, which means no two Arab countries could use the same and contiguous frequency. Therefore, the co-existence approach could be argued to mark the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting where the release of 700 MHz was used by both broadcasting and the telecommunication industries in the Arab region. Unlike the co-existence approach adopted in the Arab region, a differing policy strategy was observed in the Asia Pacific region.

### **3.5.3 The transition to digital broadcasting in the APT region: the differing policy approach**

The Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) falls within the Region 3 country division of the ITU-R. Like Regions 1 and 2, “high spectral efficiency” (Hassan et al., 2012 p.2) in telecommunication prompted the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting in this region. The decisions reached at the WRCs on the use of radio spectrum have a major influence on the shape of DSO implementation at the regional level that may also inform the national approach of states. In 2008, the member states in the CEPT Region through the

European Communication Office (ECO), submitted “the first frequency channel assignment (FCA) for mobile service operating in the DDS [digital dividend spectrum] band for region 1” (Hassan et al. 2012, p.2) which resulted in the harmonisation of the DDS band in that region. In 2010, the APT put forward its FCA proposal for Region 3 but because of the earlier proposal from CEPT, some countries in Region 3 adopted the digital broadcasting standard in Region 1 while others in Region 3 adopted the APT proposal and this informed the different approaches to the DSO implementation in the APT region: a non-harmonisation spectrum, which could lead to an inefficient use of the DDS in Region 3.

García Leiva and Starks (2009, p.799) observe that “the transition to digital television offers an opportunity to forge a more consistent regional approach” but the different digital broadcasting standards (DBS) adopted in Region 3 could bring ‘inconsistency’ and ‘incompatibility’ between varied broadcasting services in Region 3 country, (Hassan et al. 2012, p.2). For instance, the DBS adopted in the CEPT region was the DVB-T and this allowed for harmonise spectrum management and helped to maximise the DDS usage efficiency. The differing DBS options in Region 3 could hamper the implementation of the DSO in that region. Hassan et al. (2012, p.2) note that some countries in Region 3 like China, Korea, and Japan developed their standard while other countries in Region 3 were divided on the choice of the DBS to adopt. For instance, Vietnam adopted the DVB-T standard as a trial to change it to the more advanced DVB-T2 with MPEG-4 for audio standard. It ensured that the set-top box was specified to receive the DVB-T2 technology. On the other hand, Sri Lanka and a few other countries like Japan, the Philippines and Maldives settled for the ISDB-T standard developed in Japan. For Sri Lanka, this was a preferred choice because the ISDB-T standard allows the same signal to be received by fixed, portable and mobile receivers, including any mobile handsets that have the capacity built-in. Singapore adopted

the DVB-T2 and carried out a trial for 5 months in 2011 to ensure its suitability, especially in dense environments. It was discovered that households will not only require a set-top box, that is, DVB-T2 compliant to receive digital television, but will also need an indoor antenna.

However, the transition to digital broadcasting in China took a different approach: the policy of uniform transition and efficient communication and coordination among stakeholders (Xing et al. 2009, p.654). The uniform transition was unique to China's DSO as Xing et al. (2009, p.653) explain:

China's transition to digital TV adopted the policy of "uniform transition", which means that after most of the residents in a residential quarter switch to digital signals, the analogue TV signals for the residential quarter will be switched off except that six or so analogue channels will be retained. As network operators will give every urban household one set-top box (STB) "for free" on the condition that they subscribe to the digital service for a certain period (usually 1 or 2 years) of time, a majority of consumers passively accept the transition to digital TV for the fear that they would have only about six channels to watch after the "uniform transition".

This policy helped to speed up the DSO process in China but the approach had a negative social impact on the consumers who were not satisfied with the DTT services and equally had a negative economic impact on the cable operators as they were not making enough profit (Xing et.al 2009; p.655).

A negative effect of non-harmonise spectrum policy in the APT region could result from the impact of non-digitally compliant of a neighbouring country due to the "sensitivity of digital broadcasting to interference from high transmitted power by the analogue broadcasting radiation" (Hassan et al. 2012 p.3). For instance, the slow take-off of the transition from analogue to digital television in Indonesia could affect the digital switchover in Singapore.



However, the DTT implementation in Africa was dependent on both internal and external factors, which has accounted for the slow pace of the DSO process.

#### ***3.5.4 Dependency approach to Digital switchover in the African region***

Africa is one of the most heavily indebted “continents in the world per capita with nearly half of its population subsisting on less than one US[A] dollar per day” (African Telecommunications Union (ATU), 2001a, cited in McCormick, 2005). The digital switchover is both capital intensive and technologically demanding coupled with Africa’s inability to control cost makes the implementation of the global agreement on digital switchover an “unattainable demand on the continent” (McCormick, 2005 p.2).

African media landscape cannot be completed without a mention of the historical impact of her colonial past (see Chapter 2). The dependency relationship and the ‘predatory’ policies left behind by Africa’s formal colonial masters have been hard to shake off. In light of this, the dependency approach in Africa was observed to be shaping the implementation of the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. Friedmann and Wayne (1977) note that dependency theorists take a holistic perspective on the relationship between developed and underdeveloped societies to understand the ‘exploitative’ tendencies in the context of the growth of capitalism as a global system. Arguably, in modern society, capitalist’s accumulation of wealth is enabled by the neoliberal approach in the media environment influenced by supranational institutions.

African countries largely depended on the legal and institutional framework of communication policy left by colonial rulers, which arguably has been hampering the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. Studies have shown that media regulatory

authorities in Africa were still dependent on the central government for funding and this gave the government access to influence policies of regulatory bodies, which brought about the lack of trust and transparency in the DSO process among state actors and the public. As will be demonstrated in Chapters 7, 8 and 9, the Nigerian government through the Ministry of Information and Culture, exerted control over the DSO process.

Arguably, the transition to digital broadcasting agenda was 'foisted' on Africa by developed countries at the WRC and, this is evident in the slow process of the DSO on the continent. The implementation of the DSO is heavily reliant on technology transfer and "Africa's rent position in terms of technology" (McCormick 2005, p.2) puts her on a dependent stature. Whilst developed regions such as Asia (Japan), the USA and Europe developed digital broadcasting standards (DBS) to use for broadcasting services, African countries were waiting to adopt one and this 'wait' syndrome helped to shape the direction of the implementation of the DSO process.

Despite the huge revenue supposedly accrued from the sales of liberated spectrum (digital dividends) on the African continent- about \$USD82 billion (GSMA 2017)- the transition to digital broadcasting does not come cheap. The deregulation of the telecommunication and broadcast media industries was given as one of the conditions by international institutions such as the WTO and the World Bank before they could assist African countries with their fiscal needs after the recession of the 1980s. Therefore, foreign media conglomerates invested in the broadcast media environment in Africa and were protected by international media regulation, which further allowed the exploitation of the telecommunication and media ecosystem in Africa; an example is the dominance of the Chinese media company StarTimes in Africa. The dependency approach on the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting

has made the thesis investigate the interplay between the media conglomerates (the Chinese's StarTimes and the South African's MutiChoice, operator of DSTv) and the political actors in Nigeria. The investigation will inform answers to the thesis sub-research question 4: How has the intersection of foreign media/telecommunication conglomerates and local politics in Nigeria influenced the digital migration process? Who stood to lose and who stood to benefit?

The next section will examine the necessity for African countries to undergo the digital migration process, even though their spectrum needs differ from those of developed countries. This will draw on Berger's (2010) argument that developed countries drove policies on DTT and digital switchover within the ITU.

### **3.6 The compelling need for digital migration in sub-Saharan Africa, whose interest?**

Intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank, WTO, IMF, and ITU have facilitated the global trade of commodities and national administrations were known to surrender their 'sovereignty' through global agreements. In addition, multinational corporations have taken the opportunity of the global agreement to expand their businesses across the world; and as will be demonstrated in Chapter 6, broadcast media and telecommunication conglomerates have impacted policy-decision of states. Many national administrations adopted the neoliberal market ideology to digital broadcasting, which dictated the directions on the implementation of the DSO process in nation-states.

Although critics have argued that the radio spectrum is the natural resource of every country, the ITU allocates spectrum to all member states and the spectrum is managed by ITU-R to

avoid harmful interference. Technological advancement has made the radio spectrum more efficient and could be put to many uses. As illustrated earlier, some member states particularly the developed countries influenced policy decisions and drove the use of spectrum for underdeveloped countries through the institutional structure of global communication governance. One of the ways they achieved this was by agenda-setting and making political decisions at WRCs, which became binding on all member states. Specifically, the spectrum use of European countries does not necessarily justify the immediate needs of the African countries (El-Moghazi et al. 2014). The question is whether African countries are being forced to switch from analogue to digital broadcasting. There are two main factors to consider when answering this question. Firstly, it highlights the importance of agenda-setting at WRCs. Secondly; it emphasises the need for African countries to increase their participation in ITU conferences, which will be explained in detail in Chapter 6.

At the early stage of its formation, the ITU was controlled before 1950 by a small number of European countries, namely France, Great Britain, Italy, and Portugal, that used the votes of their colonies in Africa and elsewhere (Ryan, 2012). To avoid conflict of interest between European countries and other member states, the ITU divided the member states into three regions for spectrum allocation and Africa lies in Region 1 as CEPT, ASMG, and RCC. As it were, Europeans in the CEPT set the agenda and influence decision-making in the region on behalf of developing countries because “most of the developing countries lacked sufficient knowledgeable and experienced staff to participate efficiently in the decision-making process” (McCormick, 2007 in El-Moghazi, 2017, p.633). Besides, the scope of WRCs’ agenda could be extensive such that developing countries usually concentrate on a few issues that are important to them (Constant and Warren, 2003).

However, developing countries prevailed upon the ITU to change focus from the technology needs of the industrial world to the basic demand of developing economies, which prompted the ITU to introduce priori planning in the allocation of spectrum. According to Foster (2008), (cited in El-Moghazi et al. (2017) the advantage of priori planning is that it ensures equitable access to the spectrum such that valuable spectrum is pre-allocated. Therefore, the push by the CEPT for the UHF bands to be used for broadcasting services in Region 1 when it was clear that the spectrum use of the African continent reflected different needs was evident that broadcasting planning in Africa was tied to Europe. El-Moghazi et al. (2017) argue that:

Firstly, there is evidence that the future of the broadcasting service in the UHF band is uncertain in Africa. In particular, during the RRC-06 conference, 34 countries requested a later date for the digital switchover in the VHF band in 2020 with 31 of them being from Africa (Youell, 2015e) that was due mainly to the dependency of these countries on the broadcasting service in the VHF band, (El-Moghazi et al., 2017, p.636).

Furthermore, the authors posit that “the timing of digital switchover and bandwidth allocated for the broadcasting service in the UHF band was, broadly speaking, imposed by Europe on Africa due to the need of introducing digital broadcasting in the former” (p.363).

The burden of transitioning from analogue to digital broadcasting is already too heavy on African countries that many of them were struggling to complete, Nigeria being one of the struggling African countries. Some critics have argued that in Africa the actual need for spectrum in the UHF band was to deliver International Mobile Telecommunication (IMT) for mobile communication. Since studies have shown that a larger percentage of the African population lives in rural areas, mobile communication is essential as “it is currently the

primary source of voice and data as fixed services do not exist in many cases” (Song, 2014, in El-Moghazi et al. 2017).

The study illuminates in Chapter 6 that the increased participation of African countries at the WRCs impacted their political role and opportunity to influence policy in the international communication arena. For instance, the resistance of some African countries to the IMT identification in the UHF 470-698 MHz enabled Africa and underdeveloped countries to have IMT identifications in the 790-862 MHz and 698-790 MHz during the WRC-07 in 2007 and WRC-12 in 2012 respectively. Particularly during WRC-15 in 2015, which was chaired by a Nigerian, Africa was able to realise their strength as the majority in Region 1 and presented a common front to negotiate their spectrum need.

Although this research is not intended as a comparative study on digital migration, it is important to note that detailed research would be required for such a study. In the next section, I will discuss a general overview of implementing the Digital Switch Over (DSO) within the context of sub-Saharan Africa. The aim is to highlight common challenges such as inadequate communication policy, insufficient funds, and low levels of awareness campaigns that are hindering the implementation of the DSO in the region.

### **3.7 The challenges of implementing digital switchover within the sub-Saharan African region: common denominating influences**

Berger (2010) argues that the drive towards digital migration was the agenda of the developed countries with an overriding impact on international regulation, globalisation, and aspiration trends. He further contends that there was no urgency for African countries to free up airways spectrum because TV industries on the continent were generally weak and “don’t even have enough quality content to fill up existing opportunities for analogue broadcasting”

(18), therefore, there was no scarcity of frequency on the continent. El-Moghazi et al. (2017) agree with Berger (2010) when they note, that the decision for digital migration in Africa was a response to the interest of Europe to introduce digital broadcasting on the continent.

However, Berger (2010) believed that DSO was a global phenomenon that cannot be avoided in the medium term and as such African countries embarked on digital migration to prevent missing out on the accrued digital dividends or become a dumping continent for obsolete broadcasting equipment. The DSO has been described as a ‘complex’ and ‘immense’ process, which explains why in 2022, only 11 out of the 54 countries in Africa had completed the digital migration and they were: Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia, Namibia, Gabon, Burkina Faso, and Eswatini (Stuart Thomson, 31/03/2023). This study notes that extended research would be needed to get a total experience of the challenges of implementing the DSO in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) therefore, the discussion here of the different contexts would be limited to a few African countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon, Botswana and Nigeria. Meanwhile, a comparative communication study of the digital switchover process found common factors militating against DSO in the Sub-Saharan African region such as the need for regulatory reforms, funding, availability of STBs and consumer outreach among others (Kitisha et al. 2016; Eko, 2019; Ndonye et al. 2015 and Berger, 2010).

As already mentioned, digitisation and convergence in broadcasting offered opportunities for African countries to reform their regulatory regime to accommodate the challenges of digital broadcasting. Berger (2010) argues that the digital migration agenda exposed the policy inadequacies in Africa and this might have explained the complexities and ASO delays witnessed in many African countries. Nonetheless, Tanzania applied a broad perspective to

the DSO process against the parochial and narrow set (Berger 2010) of DSO policy adopted by some African countries where policy or political decision was centred on the executive such as may be found in the Nigerian context. For instance, before Tanzania reformed its regulatory framework, it first released a document that introduced the concept of DSO and held regular meetings with critical stakeholders to get their viewpoints, which informed the regulatory framework developed for the DTT (GSMA 2022). This inclusive approach echoes Berger's (2010, p.7) argument that:

Each [African] country needs a broad-based and inclusive stakeholder forum so as to formulate a comprehensive policy for the whole digital panorama (involving both broadcasting and internet sectors, and their stakeholders).

Besides, inclusive policy reform promotes mutual understanding among the stakeholders and presents less 'friction' as will be demonstrated in the case of Nigeria where there was disagreement among some domestic actors (see Chapter 7), or in Kenya where some broadcasters felt their inputs were not considered and incorporated into the digital policy framework, which resulted in litigation and three years delay of the DSO process (Ndonye et al. 2015).

The regulatory architecture layout in the analogue system of broadcasting in Africa post-liberalisation and licensing of private/independent broadcasters tend to give governments strict control over broadcast media through the judiciary and extra-judicial regulatory power, which seemed to make the regulatory reform a challenge in some African countries (Eko, 2019, p.427). However, the political, economic, and social benefits of DTT led some African countries to "adopt an explicit policy on the transition to digital television" (García Leiva, 2010, p.3). In the digital broadcasting environment, most African countries adopted policies that unbundled their broadcast infrastructure into transmission and content generation and created a new licensing regime of multiplex operators, that is, broadcast signal distributor



(BSD) and broadcast content provision (BCP) in the DSO process (GSMA, 2022). However, the implementation of the unbundling policy by different African countries accounted for its success or failure. In some cases where this policy appeared to have failed, some governments had to make adjustments to the policy framework to get it back on track while other governments 'refused' to yield to the calls of relevant stakeholders to adapt the policy and accommodate their circumstances. For example, Tanzania demonstrated some flexibility with their DTT policy framework. The Tanzanian Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) prior to the Analogue Switch Off (ASO) intervened in the conflict between the licensed multiplex operators and the content service providers when the latter complained about the exorbitant fee charged (from USD\$ 3,700 per transmitter per channel to USD\$17,600 per transmitter per channel). To resolve the conflict, TCRA issued a consultation paper in 2012 to address the licensing framework and establish Cost Based Fee (CBF), which pegged the carriage fee to USD\$3,800 (GSMA, 2022). In the case of Nigeria, although the reform regulatory policy was silent on the roles of private broadcasters, the government was not ready to adjust the policy document to accommodate pay DTT service providers who had funds to facilitate a quick rollout of the DTT services.

Communication studies have identified funding as one of the most critical factors impeding digital migration on the continent, and inadequate funding could create or exacerbate problems for the DSO process. Chapter 8 of the study demonstrates that the African Union Commission document (AUC, 2016) recommended public-private partnerships as one of the funding mechanisms for the implementation of the DSO in Africa. Some national administrations in Sub-Saharan Africa went into partnership with private sectors to supplement finance for digital migration (GSMA, 2022). It is significant to stress the Africa-China relationship, particularly in the broadcast media and telecommunication sectors. In the

post-Cold War era, China had the greatest single influence on the African television market due to its ‘Going-Out’ globalisation policy (Gagliardone and Geall, 2014; Eko, 2019) and it achieved this through soft power diplomacy and state capitalism. China with its ‘Going-Out’ globalisation policy invested in the DSO process in Africa through the action plan of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), an intervention several African countries welcomed (Eko, 2019). For instance, in Kenya, the initial plan was for the government to fully fund Signet (a government-owned agency) to carry out signal distribution services during the simulcast period but after a three-year delay in rolling out infrastructure owing to inadequate funding from the government, this policy failed (Kitisha et al. 2016). The Digital Television Committee (DTC), Kenya’s digital migration task force, in 2011 recommended licensing a private broadcast signal distributor (BSD), which was awarded to Pan Africa Network Group (PANG), a Chinese company and PANG’s investment facilitated the deployment of DTT infrastructure in cities outside Nairobi (GSMA, 2017). This initiative of combining government and private funding contributed to Kenya meeting up with the GE-06 agreement. To overcome the financial shortfall in the implementation of the DSO, the Cameroonian government relied on external funding provided by StarTimes, a Chinese media conglomerate, and EXIM Bank of China (ocamer.org on 22/05/2017). On the other hand, the Télédiffusion du Sénégal (TDS), a government-owned broadcast station entrusted to implement the DSO in Senegal relied totally on government funds and struggled with insufficient funds (GSMA, 2022). In Nigeria, the DTT policy allowed public-private partnership (PPP) (Idachaba, 2018), which was why StarTimes Nigeria, a Chinese conglomerate was able to partner with Integrated Television Services (ITS) as the licensed national signal carrier. However, it appeared the implementation of this policy was poorly executed and could not see to the actualisation of the DTT policy in Nigeria. Unlike in Nigeria, the PPP policy approach observed in Tanzania and Kenya was far-reaching; a

mixture of government and private funding was deployed to facilitate awareness campaigns and made set-top boxes (STBs) available and affordable to citizens (GSMA, 2022).

The affordability and accessibility of STBs were a challenge for not only African countries but also the majority of countries embarking on the DSO. However, it was more pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa due to the high poverty level on the continent. The high cost of STB especially for the low-income earners and vulnerable citizens had an impact on the uptake of the STB. One of the methods to overcome the STB challenge was for each regional block in Africa to come up with a policy to harmonise and adopt a common standard STB specification so as to benefit from the economies of scale and drive down the cost of STB (Yomi Bolarinwa, personal communication in November 2022). Additionally, each African country adopted a different approach to encourage the uptake of STB. Senegal adopted a policy to improve accessibility for all consumers by direct subsidy of STB slashing up to a quarter of the market price and distribution of STB free of charge to the most vulnerable (GSMA 2022). In Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda, the strategy employed by the private sector encouraged the uptake of STB. Discounted STBs were offered to consumers and the losses were recouped through monthly subscription fees. Kenya on the other hand applied a drastic approach to making STB available and affordable by reducing import duties and liberalised importation, supply and distribution of STBs so that any vendor who got STB specification approval from the regulator could engage in the business (Kitisha et al. 2016). The effects of reduced taxes and allowing market forces to determine the affordability of STB in Kenya resulted in an 80% reduction of the cost to consumers (GSMA 2022). The initial strategy adopted in Nigeria was for the subsidy of STBs by the government and encouraged local production to boost job creation. The West African sub-region because of the market size adopted the STB standard approved in Nigeria to enjoy economies of scale.

However, there were challenges confronting the licensed STB manufacturers as illustrated in Chapter 7, which made the STBs unavailable. The financial constraint on the Nigerian government partly due to the global economic recession resulting from COVID-19 prompted a change of approach and the withdrawal of government subsidy on STBs. This change of policy further exacerbated the scarcity and affordability of STB and delayed the DSO implementation.

Lastly, consumer awareness and information over the DSO played a “strong role in exciting consumer interest in digital, tackling consumer confusion and assuaging fears” (Iosifidis, 2005 p.16), which was why countries embarking on DSO placed public awareness campaigns well in advance (García Leiva, 2010). Tanzania took an early approach to consumer outreach with a broad consumer awareness campaign incorporating electronic media, print, outdoor advertising and roadshows. The campaign materials were specifically designed to appeal to different demographics as well as consumers in rural and urban environments. Furthermore, to create brand recognition for the transition, the Tanzania government selected through public competition an identifiable logo for the outreach. This campaign strategy, which enjoyed the participation of the Tanzanian President in August 2011, boosted the uptake of DTT unlike the outreach strategy adopted in Nigeria. Although the policy document on the DSO in Nigeria made some recommendations that included sensitisation of all stakeholders and the promotion of consumer awareness campaign material by all broadcasting stations (White paper 2012), no visible coordinated campaign was carried out, (Idachaba, 2018) therefore, the lack of coordinated policy awareness constituted a major set back for the digital migration agenda in Nigeria.

The overview of the digital switchover experience of the few African countries examined above could be summarised in three main categories:

A) The flexible approach to reform regulatory policies, as demonstrated by Tanzania. This is in contrast to a rigid policy displayed by Nigeria, which did not allow pay-TV service providers to play a part in the DSO rollout.

B) The government should show political will and spearhead the DSO process. However, when the government cannot shoulder the financial burden, its policy should be flexible enough to allow a mix in the source of funding for the DSO. Kenya turned to private investment to supplement funding the digital migration while Senegal and Nigeria struggled with the DSO implementation due to reliance on government funds alone.

C) A coordinated consumer awareness campaign is crucial in the DSO process. The campaign should involve all stakeholders to ensure the participation and support of consumers, leading to a rapid adoption of DTT. This, in turn, could free up spectrum for use in mobile services.

### **3.8 Conclusions**

In this chapter, the study examined the global trends in digital broadcasting and the rationale behind it. For many countries, the political and economic benefits prompted the adoption of a neo-liberal free market policy for digital broadcasting. The efficient use of spectrum enables enhanced broadcasting services; improves images and sound quality of content and could create an interactive 'tele-broadcasting'. Therefore, digitisation has enabled global media and telecommunication conglomerates to expand their trade across the world and they have influenced policy decisions.

The chapter also investigated the different approaches and implementation of the digital switchover around the world to demonstrate that no two regions have the same experience in the transition to digital broadcasting. Within the regions, member states have demonstrated different DSO experiences, which accounted for the different completion dates among member states that have completed the digital migration. In the case of Africa, the dependency approach has characterised the transition to digital broadcasting because Africa as a developing continent relies on the developed countries and international institutions for fiscal and technological assistance to implement the global agreement on the DSO, which has been shaping the policy process in the transition to digital broadcasting on the continent. This chapter also interrogated the compelling need for Africa to embark on digital migration when there are other pressing needs for the use of digital dividends such as facilitating broadband penetration. Finally, even though this is not a comparative research on the DSO policy implementation in Africa, the chapter took an overview of a few country cases to demonstrate a shared denominating factor hindering DTT policy implementation in the sub-Saharan African region.

Thus far, the study has taken a broad perspective on digital migration to establish the variations in the implementation of the DTT policy around the world. The next chapter will begin to narrow the focus on Nigeria's case study to understand how the transition to digital broadcasting has been influenced by both domestic politics and global agendas.

## **Chapter 4: Historical overview of broadcasting policy in post-independence Nigeria (1960-2010)**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is a background study of this thesis and it is divided into six sections. Following this introduction, the second section gives a brief historical overview of a country of diverse people, cultures, and religious beliefs. The chapter traces how the country's Colonial administrators amalgamated the southern protectorates, which was the seat of power with the northern protectorate in 1914 and called it Nigeria. The third section illustrates how constitutional agitation was at the centre of Nigeria's existence until she gained independence in 1960. Shortly after independence, Nigeria suffered a series of military coups, which had a bearing on the media policy formulation. The fourth section portrays the significant role of broadcasting media as an integral element that shaped the political existence of Nigeria. The different administrations – colonial, military, and civilian have 'dictated' the broadcasting policy and used broadcast media to propagate their different agenda. This era marked government involvement and control of the media landscape until the liberalisation of the media and telecommunication sectors in 1992 through the influence of intergovernmental organisations like the World Bank and the IMF. The fifth section demonstrates how the deregulation of the broadcasting industry in Nigeria brought about a change in the broadcasting policy: a new licencing regime, plurality in the media ecosystem and less government involvement due to the market structure. The sixth section of the chapter reveals the introduction of the global agreement on the implementation of digital terrestrial broadcasting by member states of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 2006.

## **4.2 A brief political history of Nigeria: the amalgamation of people of diverse cultures and religious beliefs**

Nigeria, geographically located on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, is often referred to as the ‘Giant of Africa’ due to its abundant natural and human resources. According to a publication in *Statista (2022)*, ‘Demographics of Nigeria –statistic and facts’ the population of Nigeria was estimated to be over 215 million (Doris Dakua Sasu, 18/11/2022), making her the most populous black African nation in the world. In terms of landmass, Nigeria occupies 356,699 sq. miles (or 923,773 sq. km.), equalling a combined size of three states in America: Michigan, Texas, and South Carolina (Uche 1989, p.1). Nigeria is an ethnically diverse country with over 250 ethno-linguistic groups. These ethnic groups are divided into three major tribes: Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. The Yoruba occupy the Western part of Nigeria, while the Igbo and the Hausa are in the Eastern and Northern parts of the country respectively. The three major tribes make up more than half of the population of Nigeria, totalling 58%: Yoruba 20%, Hausa 21% and Igbo 17% (Aginam 2010 p. 1) there is also the fourth significantly large group, the Ijaw, occupying the South southern part of the country constituting about 10% of the total population. It was based on the three major tribes that the country was divided into three main regions leading up to independence in 1960. Nigeria being a former colony of Britain, adopted the English Language as her official Language for ease of communication among the many ethnic groups that inhabit the country. Nigeria is also a multi-religious country with about 40% Christians and 50% Muslims, while the rest of the 10% practice one form of traditional religion or the other. The Christians are predominantly found in the South, particularly among the Igbo in the Southeast while the Islamic religion is practised majorly in the North among the Hausa-fulani. The Yoruba in the Southwest practice both Islam and Christianity (see Aginam 2010, p. 2).



In 1914, Sir Frederick Lugard amalgamated Nigeria in what historians termed ‘the 1914 mistake’ (Aginam 2010 p 3). When the British colonised the territory in the 17th century, they subjugated the various ethnic groups into two protectorates: the Northern and the Southern protectorates. Thus, Nigeria as a nation was carved out of people with different cultures, religious beliefs and political aspirations and “successive colonial administrators did manage to keep the disparate units together either by sheer use of force or some divide and rule policy” (Aginam 2010 p. 3). This ‘forced marriage’ of the various ethnic groups was kept going until Nigeria obtained her independence on 01 October 1960. Soon after the British left Nigeria, the political crisis reached its peak and eventually culminated in a protracted 30-month Civil War in 1967, as will be demonstrated later on in this chapter.

### **4.3 Constitution agitation and Nigerian politics (1954-1962)**

Before the Nigerian Civil War of 1967, Constitution agitation had been the basis of political crisis in Nigeria and this was as a result of the three different regions lobbying for favourable provisions in the Constitution of the country (Aginam 2010 p. 2). Political parties in Nigeria were founded along ethnic lines. Chief Obafemi Awolowo formed the Action Group (AG) from the Yoruba Cultural Organization, *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* (Society of the Children of Oduduwa). The Igbo Pan-Union, from the Eastern part of Nigeria, continued with the nationalist party, National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) under the leadership of Nnamdi Azikiwe after the demise of its first President Herbert Macaulay. The Northern elite constituted themselves into a cultural organisation called *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa* and later transformed into a political party called the Northern People's Congress (see Uche 1989, p. 25).

In 1946, a national Constitution was drafted in London (the Richard Constitution) to govern the country and was rejected by the nationalists (the political elites in the country), citing that they were not carried along and labelled the 1946 Constitution as ‘Divisionist’ (Olusanya 2004, p.528 cited in Oyeweso 2015 p.6). Having rejected the 1946 Constitution, another one was drafted in 1951. The 1951 Constitution (the Macpherson Constitution) did not only include the nationalists “but also made limited provision for their participation in legislative and executive matters” (Oyeweso 2015, p.6). Again, the nationalist rejected the 1951 Constitution and their grievances were summed up in what Chief Awolowo described as a “wretched compromise between Federalism and Unitarianism” (Olusanya 2004, cited in Oyeweso 2015, p.7). Governor General John Macpherson, Head of the Colonial government criticised Chief Obafemi Awolowo, one of the nationalists, over the Constitutional crisis on government-owned radio, NBS (Nigerian Broadcasting Service) and Chief Awolowo was denied the right to reply to the government through the same medium (Inwang 1981). This lends credence to the fact that the government in power controlled the media without recourse to its perceived functionality, but it was only the beginning of changes in the broadcasting industry in Nigeria.

Following the controversy around the 1951 Constitution, another was drafted in 1954. The new Constitution (the Lyttleton Constitution) made “provision for separate governors and premier, including legislatures, judiciaries, public commissions, civil services, marketing board and development plans” (Oyeweso 2015 p.7) in the three regions of the North, East and Southern Nigeria. The nationalists continued to press for Nigeria’s independence and eventually in another constitution conference in London, the Independence Act was passed in the British parliament in July 1960 (Deji, 2013) resulting in Nigeria’s independence on 01

October 1960. General elections were held and a coalition government was sworn in. Uche (1989, p. 26) aptly captures this when he observes that

In 1959, after a series of painstaking negotiations and agonizing and divisive constitutional conferences for independence in 1960, general elections were held all over Nigeria for an independent nation. The NPC swept the North and the NCNC and the AG also swept the East and West, respectively. Although the NPC was assigned the largest number of seats in the Federal House, it did not command the necessary majority required by the Constitution. It thus entered into an alliance with the NCNC to form a coalition government.

The 1960 Constitution made provision for a bi-cameral legislature: the Upper House (Senate) and the Lower House (House of Representatives) and it also provided for the office of the Governor General. At the regional level, the Constitution made provision for a House of Assembly and a House of Chiefs for the three regions. It also provided for a regional executive council comprising of the Premier and other ministers, in short, the Constitution allowed for the division of power (Deji, 2013). The coalition government continued until Nigeria became a republic in 1963 with the broadcasting industry playing a significant role in shaping the political environment.

#### **4.4 The history of broadcasting policy in post-Colonial Nigeria**

Broadcast media was an integral element in shaping the political terrain in Nigeria. Although, without any clear-cut media policy, the country continued to experiment with its broadcast media in what Vincent Maduka, former Director-General of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) between 1977-1986 described as “a freewheeling medium, without any clear-cut objective ... so any gain we have made is accidental” (Ukoha, 2000, p. 9, cited in Betiang, 2013, p.3). This made the broadcast media in Nigeria susceptible to any government in power to manipulate to their advantage and in some cases against the public interest.

Nevertheless, broadcast media has penetrative advantages over the other forms of communication. It has always been a veritable tool in the hands of any government to propagate their innate agenda, and the British Colonial government in Nigeria was no exception, (Jega, 2016). Broadcasting policy in Nigeria continued to evolve as a reflection of the socio-economic and political reality in the country. Agitation by some nationalists to ensure that the 1954 constitution of Nigeria made adequate provisions to guarantee regional autonomy in broadcasting paid off. Obazele (1996 cited in Akashoro et al., 2013, p.45) observes

The continued thirst for information by Nigerians besides the political, economic and social development and the increased struggle for political independence by the nationalists, led to the establishment of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in April 1957, three years before Nigeria's independence.

The Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation Act was backed by the ordinance act of 1956 and some of its functions were:

- To provide, as a public service, independent and impartial broadcasting services by means of wireless telegraphy and by television for general reception within Nigeria
- To provide services for general reception in counties and places outside of Nigeria
- To ensure that the services it provides, when considered as a whole, reflect the unity of Nigeria as a federation, and at the same time give adequate expression to the culture, characteristics, affairs, and opinions of the people of each region or part of the Federation (Obazele 1996:146-147).

Chief Awolowo took advantage of the provision made in the 1954 Constitution that granted media independence to the regional government to launch the Western region's television station. Betiang (2013, p.2) notes the significance of the event that led to the establishment of regional broadcasting in Nigeria thus:

To begin with, the development of Western Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC) Television as the first TV in Nigeria (or Africa) in 1959 as an act of protest against the colonial governor, John McPherson, by Obafemi Awolowo, the premier of Western Nigeria, spawned a model for the spiral of new TV stations as a way of managing political propaganda through airwaves.

Therefore, On 31 October 1959, through the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC), Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) commenced transmission in Ibadan, the capital of Western Nigeria with the slogan, 'First in Africa'.

Following the successful launching of WNTV, the first regional television in Nigeria, the other two regions - the Eastern and the Northern - immediately launched their regional broadcasting services. The Eastern Nigerian Television (ENTV) was established on 01 October 1960 in Enugu, the region's capital, under Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Service (ENBS) while the Northern regional government flagged off its broadcasting services through the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN) and launched Radio Kaduna Television (RKTV) in 1962. In a quick response, the central government, hitherto having enjoyed the monopoly of running a radio station through Radio Distribution Service (RDS) established the Nigeria Television Service (NTS) in 1962. With this event, media ownership changed from the exclusive preserve of the federal government to include the three regional governments in Nigeria. The significance of the regional government operating a regional broadcast media was to advance their political aspiration, which "conceived later years' paradigm of undue bureaucratization and political domination of state media" (Betiang, 2013, p.2) and will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

This lends credence to the notion of the media-government relationship. Akashoro et al. (2013) opine that the government element, represented by the regional governments in

Nigeria, constituted the main social source of demand and or constraint for Nigeria's first experience in regional broadcasting. The authors observe further that,

Since the essence of establishing regional broadcasting institutions was "to feather the political nest of the owner-region, which provided subsidy for media operations" (Udejah, 2005), their programming were exclusively customized to reflect, serve, and propagate the political aspirations of the regional governments... Similarly, the NBC owed its existence and allegiance to the instrument that set it up (The NBC Act of 1956) and to the electorate (nationally and regionally) to whom its programming contents were directed. (Akashoro et al., 2013, p.46).

Hence, the national and regional broadcast media organisations could not, but be controlled in their programming and content by the aspirations of their owners that established and funded them. Some media scholars (Opubor, 1985; Lasode, 1994; Maduka 1998) have argued that political domination of the media has continued today among the nation's public service broadcasters, in which the medium is governed by authoritarian principles with the political leadership and power elite dominating and interfering with media content, management, and ownership (this is illustrated in the subsequent chapters).

By 1962, Nigeria was running a national broadcasting service through NBC with three regional broadcasting services, WNBC, ENBS, and BCNN. NBC centralised its operations in Lagos, the then-federal capital of Nigeria and from there regulated the activities of the regional broadcasting services. The regional governments were not comfortable with the role of NBC; they saw it as an 'extension' of the federal government to 'control' their broadcasting service as they did in the past with NBS. Adejunmobi (1974, p.54) agrees when he observes that "the regions, already suspicious of the motives behind the creation of NBC interpreted such centralisation as simply continuation of federal control." The author further argues that the regional governments were competing with each other socially, economically, and politically. The rivalry was obvious in their programming and through the differentiated

broadcasting slogans: Western Nigeria Television has as its slogan, 'First in Africa', while Eastern Nigeria Television responded with its slogan, 'Second to None' (Akashoro et al., 2013). Each region of the federation was different from the other in terms of culture, language, and ethnicity. The regional governments felt that NBC's programming was not representing them adequately and therefore decided to secede from the Corporation. There were claims and counterclaims cited from all three regions to justify their secession. Uche (1989, p.xix) cites one such dissatisfaction against the News broadcast of NBC by the Northern regional government:

The Northern Regional Government wishes to express its serious concern about the representation of news from the Lagos studio of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). Despite its continued representations to the NBC about its handling of news items concerning the Northern Regional Government, in which facts favourable to the Northern Regional Government are omitted, while those damaging to the Northern Region are given considerable prominence, the NBC have (sic) continued to present unbalanced news programmes from their Lagos studio. This discriminatory handling of news came to a head yesterday when the Regional news service in Kaduna included M. Ahidjo's criticism of Alhaji Ibrahim Imam and his threats to sue the Leader of the Opposition in the court for his statement about Cameroon. Yet M. Ahidjo's criticism of Alhaji Ibrahim Imam was cut from the Lagos report of Ahidjo's statement.

Umeh (1989) also cites complaints by the other regional governments represented by their political parties. This was compiled and presented in an address to the House of Parliament in 1961 by T.O.S Benson, the then Minister-in-charge of broadcasting as follows:

1. Press release from Action Group on 02 August 1961, representing the interest of the Western Region:

"In view of the Action Group, the NBC has all along been showing bias in favour of NPC and its partner in the Federal Coalition Government...Its bias is against the Federal Opposition Party".

2. Letter from Acting National Administrative Secretary, NCNC (representing the interest of the Eastern Regional Government) to the NBC Director-General on 30 July 1961:

“On behalf of my party, I send you this protest drawing your special attention to the uncooperative and vexatious attitude of the News Division of NBC towards us. This is not the first time we are protesting against the inexplicable discrimination of the NBC against the NCNC, a partner in the two-party Federation Coalition Government”.

The secession of the three regional broadcasting services from NBC was legal and constitutional judging from the provision made in the 1954 Constitution, which ensured the independence of regional broadcasting. The provision could be interpreted to mean, that each region might secede if they wish. Consequently, the three NBC extension stations, one in each region began to secede from NBC (Adejunmobi 1974), each with full control of its broadcasting service. The idea of ‘one country’ expressed in the NBC slogan, ‘Unity in Diversity, Diversity in Unity’ began to look unattainable.

The perceived ‘double standard’ of Governor General Macpherson in the 1952 RDS-NBS dispute over advertising revenues was a constant reminder for the three regional governments not to make the same mistake. Right from the beginning of broadcasting in Nigeria, the Colonial government headed by Governor General Macpherson had insisted that the RDS, which took over the operations of broadcasting in the country from the Post and Telegraphy Department, should be non-commercial in the like manner of the BBC, which it was modelled after. Radio broadcasting in Nigeria relied on the subscription fee levy on listeners as its main source of revenue. By 1952, radio communication had become more popular and penetrated many homes and communities such that the government saw the need to expand its operations and attract more investors into the industry. Nigeria Broadcasting Service



(NBS) was created as the indigenous radio station in Nigeria. NBS took over the operations of broadcasting from RDS but new RDS stations, mostly foreign companies (particularly British) led by Oversea Rediffusion Limited (Adejunmobi 1974) were granted licence to operate side by side with the newly formed NBS. While the government insisted that NBS should not be commercialised, it allowed the new RDS stations to carry paid adverts on their station, this brought about a crisis and protest led by the Action Group. In particular, there was a singular incident where Governor General Macpherson's government had granted London's Overseas Rediffusion Limited a fifteen-year franchise to operate an RDS system (Adejunmobi 1974). As soon as the three regional broadcasting stations seceded from NBC, they went commercial and carried paid announcements on their stations. Apart from the NBC station in Lagos, there were three other stations, one in each region. The regional government inherited the NBC station in their region and began to upgrade the facilities and train personnel to provide the best service to their listeners.

As demonstrated above, broadcasting in post-independence Nigeria presents an interesting scenario in the annals of the media in the country. This section illustrates briefly the antecedence of broadcasting in post-colonial Nigeria. The next section will discuss the development of broadcasting policy before the liberalisation of broadcast media in 1992.

#### **4.5 A timeline of broadcast media policy in post-independence Nigeria: the interplay of politics and media policy development**

Folarin (2000) aptly captures the timeline for broadcast media in Nigeria in four phases. He identifies the first phase from the launch of Western Nigeria Television (WNTV/WNBC) by the Western Nigeria Regional government in 1959 to the break out of the civil war in Nigeria in 1967. The second phase began in 1970 after the end of the hostility between the Nigerian

Armed Forces and the secessionist Army of Biafra (more on this in the later part of the chapter) to 1977, when the federal government took over broadcasting services and established the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) as a centralised system of broadcasting for the ‘common good’ of the country. The third phase witnessed the return of broadcasting to the concurrent list of the legislature in 1979 until 1992 when the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) was established by decree 38 of that year (and later amended by Act 55 in the 1999 Constitution) to deregulate the broadcast industry and open it up for private investors. The fourth phase captures the astronomic rise in the number of television and radio stations in Nigeria following the period of deregulation by the Military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, the then President of Nigeria.

The following section will illustrate the ‘independence’ of broadcast media from the central government in 1960, as well as its defining characteristics.

#### ***4.5.1 Broadcast media in post-independence Nigeria (1960-1965): early media policy development***

In 1963 when Nigeria became a Federal Republic, there were four major broadcasting services in operation: NBC, WNBC, ENBC and BCNN indicating media independence from the central government. However, some peculiarities marked the broadcasting service in this era, which helped to inform some of the policies adopted for effective management of the different broadcasting systems. The first peculiarity was Partnership. In the early years when Nigeria began to operate broadcasting services through NBS and then NBC in 1961, it sought a partnership with BBC, which was responsible for facilities, training, and management. The regional broadcasting services toed the same route and each region relied on foreign partner investments for technical support, manpower development, and corporation management on a

contract basis. The three regional broadcast corporations were free from federal government influence apart from technical issues bordering on the allocation of frequency and location of station infrastructure. Uche (1989, p.41) observes

The three regional governments' broadcasting organisations were wholly independent of the Federal Government control. The only thing they had to do that required action on the part of the Federal Government was to apply through the Ministry of Communications, for frequency allocation. In fact, this was even considered to be automatic in granting. And frequency allocation was necessary so as to avoid interference with the already assigned frequencies to other stations.

The Western Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC) went into partnership with Overseas Rediffusion Limited, and the Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (ENBC) enjoyed the expertise of the same foreign company. Although the Northern regional government was the last to establish its broadcasting service, the Broadcasting Corporation of Northern Nigeria (BCNN) in 1962 had two British company partners- Granada Television and EMI Radio. All three regional governments ran both audio (radio) and visual (TV) services; only the federal government at the centre operated audio services until 1962 when it started its own television station, the Nigerian Television Service (NTS). The federal government developed and managed NTS in partnership with an American company called the National Broadcasting International Limited (NBCI).

The 'partnership-system' approach by the autonomous regional broadcasting services was a good indication that the broadcasting services were established "as quasi-commercial ventures, which unlike the NBC relied exclusively on government grants" (Aginam 2010, p.35). This development made NBC introduce paid advertisement in 1961 even though it still relied on the federal government subvention. The partnership arrangement both by the regional and federal government with their various foreign companies did not endure for long due largely to some reasons among which was "the primarily commercial goals of the partner

companies and the crass partisan political motives of the regional governments; the latter which helped foster the highly toxic political environment of Nigeria's short-lived first republic" (Aginam 2010, p.35).

The second peculiarity was educational programmes. The 1956 ordinance that eventually created NBC had as one of its primary functions the provision of educational programmes. The ordinance established the Board of Governors for NBC at both federal and regional levels and made the establishment an 'independent policy-making institution'. The board's function at both levels was similar, and the difference was that the federal network programme was expected to depict the national culture, while the regional NBC stations portrayed the culture of the region they were operating from. The NBC Regional boards were expected to "ensure that Regional programmes designed for the use of schools or other educational institutions shall have regard to the educational policy of the Government of the Region" (NBC code).

One of the cogent reasons Chief Awolowo called for the creation of WNBC was to provide formal and informal education through broadcast media for his region. Establishing a television station at the time was considered a prestigious venture, one that required huge capital investment and technical skills. Some critics in the Western region queried the logic behind their government embarking on a 'wasteful' and 'prestigious' project and considered such a decision as a diversion of the limited resources of the region. In his defence, Chief Awolowo argued that Television was necessary to meet the educational gap of the people in the Western region. According to Umeh (1989, p.56), at the inauguration of WNTV in Ibadan in 1959, "Chief Awolowo said in his speech that the venture was initiated because the Regional Government was convinced that television could play a major role in increasing

both the pace and standard of education which was regarded as the key to progress in other fields”. In other words, Chief Awolowo intention was to utilise the medium of television to bring the people of the Western region closer to development within Nigeria and the outside world so that his people could benefit from such knowledge.

The third peculiarity was government control. One of the distinctive characteristics of broadcasting in this era was government control whether at the federal or regional level; the broadcast media served its ‘master’. The regional government accused the federal government of bias and control, which was why they seceded from NBC. But the regional broadcast media “were unarguably more complicit than the NBC in using broadcasting for parochial and partisan political ends which evidently was the primary reason why they were established,” (Aginam 2010 p.36). In the First Republic, broadcast media was purely the privilege and responsibility of the political elite in power, a ‘tool’ the regional party politicians utilised to further their agenda at the risk of upsetting public peace. Umeh (1989, p.57, citing Egbon, 1982, p.7) examines how political leaders explore the broadcast media in their care for propaganda:

Although all the Nigerian Regional Television Stations in the First Republic (post-independence period) proclaimed national goals in their operational statements, yet the dominant tone was very much sectional and essentially partisan in federal politics. The accent was on regionalism and strengthening the power base according to the needs of the government in power. In short, programming was simply divisive and propagandistic, as the coverage traced a sectional pattern-reflective of the nation’s political ideologies and diversities, (Egbon, 1982, p.7).

During the period in question, three key aspects defined broadcast media. Firstly, domestic broadcasting stations formed partnerships with foreign media companies to gain access to technical and managerial expertise, and commercial revenue. Secondly, media was utilised as a tool for educating and bringing citizens closer to the government. Finally, regional

governments took control of the media and utilised it to their advantage. This control increased significantly during the first military coup in Nigeria in 1966 and the Nigerian Civil War in 1967.

#### ***4.5.2 Broadcast media during the first military coup and the Nigeria Civil War (1965-1970): media as a tool of propaganda***

Between 1964 and 1967, Nigeria underwent political upheaval, which led to the first military coup and a 30-month Civil War. Before the start of the Nigeria Civil War in July 1967, a series of incidents in the country had already raised tensions. This included a crisis between Chief Awolowo and Chief Akintola, both of whom were members of the Action Group who had differences in political ideologies (Falola and Heaton, 2008). The crisis within the Action Group resulted in the expulsion of Chief Akintola from the party in 1962. This led to Chief Adegbenro emerging as the party leader. The political crisis in the Western region worsened, and the Federal government imposed a six-month state of emergency under the administration of Dr. Majekodunmi (Oyeweso, 2015). Chief Akintola exposed a plot by Chief Awolowo to overthrow the government of the Northern People's Congress. As a result, Chief Awolowo was arrested, found guilty, and sentenced to 10 years in prison. After the state of emergency ended, the NPC government reinstated Chief Akintola as the Premier of the Western region in 1963.

In late December 1964, the Federal House was dissolved to pave the way for that year's general election. As a result, different political parties began strategising to strengthen their support, form new alliances, and weaken opposing parties (Oyeweso, 2015, p.15). For example, Chief Awolowo's party Action Group (AG) in the Western region formed an alliance with Dr Azikiwe's National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the Eastern

region to create the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). This newly formed party also formed alliances with other minority parties in the Northern region, such as the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and the Northern Element Progress Union (NEPU). On the other hand, the ruling majority party, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), allied with Chief Akintola's Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) and the Mid-West Democratic Front, resulting in the formation of the Nigeria National Alliance Party (NNP). Oyeweso (2015) notes that the political atmosphere in the country at the time led to numerous allegations and counter-allegations of electoral malpractices from different parties. The author also observes that there was significant political tension in the West, particularly because Chief Akintola, who was the Western Premier, had become so unpopular that he had to use the state apparatus, including the police and civil service, to harass opposition parties.

Violent incidents, the destruction of property and the loss of lives marked the electioneering campaign. Uche (1989, p.27) observes

During the ensuing campaign for the 1964 general elections, members of the UPGA were not allowed to campaign freely in the North, and neither were the members of the NNA allowed to campaign freely in UPGA strongholds in the South. When the UPGA saw that it was going to lose the elections under the prevailing non-democratic atmosphere, it boycotted the election.

However, the elections proceeded despite widespread rigging and intimidation. When the results were announced, many candidates were returned unopposed in the three regions where the power of incumbency was used and the ruling party secured the majority of the seats in the Legislative House (Oyeweso, 2015). Afterwards, Azikiwe's UPGA and Balewa's NNA agreed to form a new government in what became known as the 'Zik-Balewa Pact'. The pact agreed to establish a broad-based government that would incorporate UPGA members into various positions of authority. There were also plans to hold rerun elections in areas where

boycotts had been recorded.

After the rerun election in 1965, most of the results remained the same: the NNA still controlled the majority in the Legislative House of Assembly, and the NCNC won most of the seats in the region's assembly (Oyeweso, 2015). Once again, violence erupted during the announcement of the results in the Western region, which declared Akintola's NNDP as the winner. Chief Adegbenro, under the AG leadership, rejected the results, declared himself the winner, and decided to form an interim government in the Western Region in September 1965 (Amuwo, 1992, p.11). Feeling threatened, Chief Akintola ordered the arrest of Chief Adegbenro, leading to clashes between supporters of both parties. The federal government had to intervene to restore peace. Oyeweso (2015) notes:

The government therefore decided to send more forces to quell the crisis. As observed by some of the men in the army, the government's decision was another attempt to deal with its enemy just like it did earlier to quell the riots in Tiv land. Incidentally, the men who shared this view had also devised a plot to oust the Balewa government out of power. Thus, on the 15th of January [1966], a day before the scheduled bombardment of the Western Region, the army struck, killing the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, premiers of the Northern and Western Regions, Sir Ahmadu Bello and Chief Akintola, among other prominent public officers and some senior members in the army.

There were many reasons for the military intervention in the politics of Nigeria. Some of these reasons include the political influence of UPGA and the Igbo theory (Adegboyega, 1981; Oyeweso, 1992; Olaniyan 2003). Regarding the UPGA connection, it is argued that UPGA worked with the coup-plotters to overthrow the NNA government, resulting in more members of the NNA being killed than any other political party as a result of the coup (Oyeweso, 1992). However, due to the lack of concrete evidence, Oyeweso (2015) argues that it was safe to state that UPGA had no connection to the coup of January 1966.



Concerning the Igbo theory, officers of Igbo extraction led by Major Kaduna Chukwuma Nzeogwu motivated the military coup of 15 January 1966. However, senior members in the army led by Aguiyi Ironsi (another Igbo man) dislodged the army officers who devised and executed the coup. To confirm the Igbo theory, the Ironsi-led government did nothing to the coup plotters despite calls for their trials. Instead, the government appointed more Igbo men into public office (Oyeweso, 2015). The issue of ethnicity became more pronounced when the military junta implemented reforms through decrees that appeared to dismantle the British political structure, putting the Northern Region at a disadvantage. Additionally, the aftermath of the coup saw more casualties from the Northern Region, leading to a perception among northerners that the Igbos were attempting to seize power through force. Subsequently, a group of northern soldiers, led by Lt. Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, staged a counter-coup on 29 July 1966, resulting in the deaths of General Aguiyi Ironsi and some of his key officers. Following this, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon was sworn in as the new military head of state.

Lt. Col. Ojukwu, the then Eastern Region military governor, was unhappy that a junior officer, Lt. Col. Gowon, was appointed as the head of state, disregarding the existing military hierarchy. Around the same time, many Igbo citizens in the north were facing persecution as the Northerners viewed them as a threat. Retaliatory attacks took place in the Eastern region, leading Ojukwu to believe that his people's security was no longer guaranteed under the new military government. Consequently, he decided that seceding from Nigeria was the only option. Despite several attempts to resolve the crisis through constitutional conferences, Ojukwu refused to participate unless the meeting was held in neutral territory. In compliance with Ojukwu's request, a summit was held in Aburi, Ghana on January 4-5, 1967, attended by Gowon, Ojukwu, and other members of the Supreme Military Council. According to Oyeweso (2015),

The Aburi Accord barred the government from using force against the Igbos and conceded some power to him [Ojukwu] including the raising of revenues and option of secession. Ojukwu's intention to raise revenues met with resistance from Gowon. When the matter could not be resolved peacefully, Ojukwu on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1967 declared the independence of the Eastern Region known as the Independent Republic of Biafra from Nigeria.

Gowon's attempt to resolve the crisis by forcibly bringing the Eastern Region back to the country resulted into a full-blown war. The Nigerian Civil War was fought between the Nigerian Army and the rebel forces of the Biafran Army headed by Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, the then Governor of the Eastern region.

During this period, the broadcast media remained a government-owned establishment and promoted the interest of the controlling government. Udeaja (2005, p.79 cited in Akashoro et al. 2013) notes;

Teaming up with the political elite, broadcasters took sides with their regions during the series of conferences that were organized to determine the supposedly new constitutional propositions for the country.

During the Nigeria Civil War, the Eastern Regional broadcast supported the Biafran Army's cause and labelled it 'Broadcast for Survival'. Meanwhile, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) at the federal level promoted the fight 'to Keep Nigeria one'. Even during the war, the broadcast media continued to educate the public about politics. However, the military recognised the power of broadcast media and decided to use it to their advantage.

#### ***4.5.3 Broadcasting policy in post-war Nigeria (1970- 1975): military infiltration on the board of NBC***

The Military government in Nigeria ruled by decree. General Gowon governed the country by the principles of the previous Military administration decrees and promulgated a few of

his own to maintain a firm hold on power. In May 1967, just in the wake of the Civil War, General Gowon created 12 states after abolishing the federal and regional form of government in the country to stem the voice of dissent and to give every Nigerian a sense of belonging. With the creation of states came a sense of 'statism', which encouraged sectional consciousness where every new state wanted their infrastructural facilities: its university, college of education, teaching hospital and television and radio station among other facilities. This entire clamour came as the country discovered oil wealth that "eliminated the fear of financial constraints for most of these hastily conjectured and planned development ventures" (Umeh 1989 p.58). Therefore, the Gowon administration created a few television stations: Bendel State Television, Nigerian Television, Sokoto, NTV Benin, Nigerian Television Jos, Nigerian Television Kano, and Nigeria Television Port-Harcourt.

During General Gowon's era, the broadcast media was entrusted with the responsibility of promoting the post-war policy of the federal government, which in essence was to 'Rehabilitate', 'Reconstruct', and 'Reconcile' the citizenry. Udejah (2005 cited in Akashoro et al. 2013, p.104) opines that the broadcast media was "envisioned to provide, among other things, viable media of information to enhance the programmes of fostering reconciliation after the civil war and to mobilize support for effective national development." In the process, balanced information about the country was to be provided. To substantiate this, citing the August 1970 public inquiry on the critical role of NBC, Elegalem (1985, p.69 cited in Aginam, 2010, p.42) observes that Chief Anthony Enahoro, the then federal Commissioner for Information and Labour speaking on NBC's policies and programmes noted that NBC

Should be designed and broadcast in a way and manner more in harmony with the interest and aspirations of a people who have passed through crises, who still face national dangers and who have ambitions to build a united and modern state.

One of the impacts of the Military regime on broadcasting in Nigeria was the complacent

posture of broadcast media, which in most cases eroded their independence. General Gowon's administration took control of the broadcast media by infiltrating the structure of NBC. As Aginam (2010, p.42) observes,

The new arrangement dramatically altered the composition of the corporation's board, which now consisted of the Director-General, officials from the major relevant ministries and a representative of the military.

Unfortunately, subsequent military administrations further weakened and annexed the broadcasting industry in Nigeria.

#### ***4.5.4 Broadcasting policy after the bloody coup (1975-1979): annexation of the broadcast media***

After nine years in power, the Military regime of General Gowon soon became unpopular largely due to the wasteful spending of the country's resources in the era of the oil boom in Nigeria, coupled with the corruption of military administrators and top civil servants at the helm of affairs. Also, General Gowon's seemingly unending transition programme to democratic rule, which he pledged to end by 1976, culminated in a bloodless military coup on 29 July 1975 led by General Murtala Muhammed. Unfortunately, the Military administration of General Murtala Muhammed only lasted six months (July 1975- February 1976). General Murtala Muhammed was assassinated in a bloody but unsuccessful military coup on 13 February 1976 led by Lt. Col. Buka Suka Dimka. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Murtala's deputy at the time, succeeded him and carried on with the government's legacy to rid the country of corruption and return Nigeria to civil rule ushering in the second republic.

Murtala/Obasanjo regime increased the number of states in Nigeria from 12 to 19, which also witnessed a similar increase in the number of broadcast media to meet the communication needs of its citizenry. However, in April 1976, the administration 'forcefully' took control of

all the state-owned television stations to stop their “proliferation, make for increased central coordination, and enhance program exchange and networking as well as promote unity”, (Betiang, 2013, p.3). The idea for a ‘coordinated broadcasting’ of all the television stations in Nigeria stems from an initiative of Christopher Kolade, former Director-General of Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). Kolade established the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) in 1973, as the occasion arose for Nigeria to present a united front at a seminar on broadcasting in Nigeria organised in West Germany. Membership of BON was made up of all regional and state broadcasting media organisations in Nigeria and it served as a forum for “exchange of professional advice, programming and program as well as personnel exchange and so on”, (Betiang, 2013, p.3).

To annex broadcasting in the country, the administration dissolved the board of NBC and in its place established two corporations, one for television, and the other for radio. Decree No. 24 of 1977 was promulgated to establish the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) as the only organization that could broadcast television signals in Nigeria, giving the newly created body a monopoly over all other television stations in the country. In part, the Decree establishing NTA states, “The Authority shall, to the exclusion of any other broadcasting authority or any person in Nigeria, be responsible for television broadcasting.” It insisted NTA should operate as a “public service in the interest of Nigeria, independent and impartial television broadcasting” emphasising on promoting cultural diversity and further uniting the country.

Decree No. 24 of 1977 not only forcefully took over all existing TV stations; it took away the prerogative of state government to open new stations. By 1978, the federal government had established NTA stations in all the states in the country and developed a network of programming. For instance, all the TV stations were expected to hook on to NTA

Headquarters in Lagos for the Network News. A provision in Decree No. 24 allowed for a zoning system and structure. The country was divided into six zoning structures to cater for grassroots coverage, the different ethnic cultures and ease of networking. The NTA zoning was spread across Sokoto, Kaduna, Enugu, Benin, Maiduguri, and the Headquarters in Lagos.

To ensure complete broadcast media control, Decree 8 of April 1978 was promulgated to establish the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). The defunct NBC handed over all its radio facilities to FRCN and distributed them to the 19 states for operation. According to Uche (1989, p.54),

The following influential radio systems that possessed powerful transmitters were re-organised and they consequently formed the nucleus of the FRCN... they were the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN), the Anambra Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Imo Broadcasting Service (IBS) and Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS).

FRCN maintained the ownership of NBC facilities in Lagos, Enugu, Kaduna and Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service in Ibadan, and distributed 20 NBC infrastructures to the 19 states of the federation to curb the installation of powerful transmitters in Nigeria. In a similar fashion to the old regional structure, FRCN was divided into four zones to take care of the cultural and linguistic differences in the country. Lagos transmitted its services in English language then, being the capital of Nigeria and the administrative state. Other zones and the language they broadcast in were as follows: Kaduna (Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Nupe and English), Ibadan, (Yoruba, Edo, Igala Urhobo and English) and Enugu (Igbo, Tiv, Izon, Efik and English). Zoning of the FRCN permitted to some extent 'independence' in programming in line with the cultural need of the populace as much as it was in tune with the overall national developmental goals- to reach the grassroots in the language they understood. This group (grassroots) lives mostly in rural areas and constitutes the majority of the population.

To reach the grassroots, each zone was empowered to set up FM stations in their area and “with transmitters in virtually all states of the country, FRCN developed the capacity to reach 90 per cent of the population either in English or any of the major local languages” (Aginam 2010, p.49). The 1978 FRCN Decree allowed for the installation of a transmitter not more than 10 kilowatts with 1 millivolt per metre in field strength as a measure for all-state transmission. This provision was to stop “the political influence of ambitious, powerful state governments and their people, especially in periods of political crises” (Uche 1989, p.55).

Akashoro et al. (2013) capture some of the impacts of the Murtala/Obasanjo administration on broadcast media in Nigeria including:

- The complete subordination of the broadcast media to its status quo and used to promote, defend and support the administration’s policies and actions to the governed.
- The Broadcast system, particularly the federal radio broadcasting system was barred from accepting advertisements and getting involved in commercial broadcasting. The argument was that radio broadcasting was developed as a public utility and as such it should aid the government in its development campaign, (also see Uche 1989, p.45).
- The broadcast media suffered a massive withdrawal of experienced broadcast practitioners and the deployment to these media organisations of inexperienced hands and this negatively affected the media’s professional performance.

Needless to say, the military regime of Obasanjo witnessed a complete annexation of the broadcast media in Nigeria.

#### ***4.5.5 Broadcast media in the second republic (1979-1983): fierce media partisanship***

After 13 years of uninterrupted military rule, the country was handed over to the democratically elected President, Alhaji Sheu Shagari in 1979. Alhaji Shagari through his party, the National Party of Nigeria, (NPN) became the first Executive President of Nigeria. The return to civil rule in Nigeria was reminiscent of the first republic, not only were there two political stalwarts from the previous political dispensation; Chief Obafemi Awolowo representing the United Party of Nigeria (UPN) and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe representing Nigerian People's Party (NPP), the political parties were also structured on ethnic divide of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo and "the fierce media partisanship of the second republic was even worse in broadcasting because of its extensive reach", (Aginam 2010 p.50).

The broadcast media was again subjected to party control during the Second Republic. The Executive arm of government introduced an amendment to the 1978 FRCN decree to break up FRCN into 4 zones and establish Federal government-owned radio stations in every state of the country to vie with state government own-radio stations. This move was to enable the federal government to gain control of radio stations and be able to penetrate the grassroots where they did not have local support when it came to re-election. The opposition contested the amended bill and it was withdrawn (Uche 1989, p.56).

Despite the opposition to the bill, the federal government of Alhaji Shagari, went ahead to violate the FRCN decree by erecting high-powered transmitters for radio broadcast in enclaves where the ruling party did not have majority support such that by mid-1983, "the Federal Minister of Information had commissioned seven such new stations at Owerri, Akure, Enugu, Jos, Abeokuta, Calabar and Ikeja" (Uche 1989, p.56). The Government at the centre also established transmitters that covered over 800 kilometres in distance as against the 10 kilowatts limit that was stipulated in the decree. The Shagari Government established



illegal radio stations during the 1983 electoral campaigns to aid their chances of reaching the voters as Uche (1989, p.56) notes “some of the state governments established multiple radio stations, especially FM stereo stations, in strategic locations to inundate their people with political agenda.”

Television broadcasting suffered a similar fate in the hands of the civilian administration of Alhaji Shagari. Umeh (1989, p.62) opines that as soon as the military handed over power to the government of Alhaji Shagari, an amendment was introduced to the decree establishing NTA (The NTA Act) in the 1979 constitution. The amendment allowed the President to grant state government to establish state-owned television stations. However, Aginam (2010, pp.50-51), holds a contrary view, when he observes that because of the ‘rabid’ support NTA was seen to be giving the NPN-led government at the centre, state governors in the opposition party demanded to establish their television station citing Section 36, Subsection 2 of the 1979 Constitution of Nigeria, which states that:

Every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate a medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions provided that no person, other than the government of the Federation or of a state or any other person or body authorized by the President, shall own, establish or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for any purposes whatsoever, (Section 36, Subsection 2 of the 1979 Constitution).

Having granted the states in Nigeria the authority to establish their television station, Umeh (1989) observes that by 1983, nine new television stations were created to compete with the 22 existing NTA stations. The newly established stations were in the following states: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Anambra, Ondo, Imo, Bendel, Plateau, and Kano. The fight by the state government for state-owned stations was more for political reasons and to reach more potential voters during elections.

During Nigeria's second republic, the pursuit of re-election by the federal and state governments using broadcast media fueled partisan politics, leading to military intervention.

#### ***4.5.6 The return of the military and media rationalisation (1984- 1985)***

The Shagari administration had barely completed its first lap and was at the beginning of a second term when the Military intervened again. The elections that ushered in Shagari's second term were marked with violence and massive rigging at the polls with the broadcast media aiding the ruling party in the process. General Muhammed Buhari sacked the Shagari administration on 31 December 1983 citing political corruption and the abuse of the media, particularly broadcasting among the major reasons for its intervention, (Aginam, 2010, p.52).

The General Buhari regime set to right the wrongs of the previous administration especially in the media by setting up the Rationalisation of Radio and Television Services Committee. The recommendations of this committee among others were to stem the proliferation of broadcast media and prune down their numbers. As Umeh (1989) opines, instead of the increase in the number of radio and television stations between 1979 and 1983 to forge unity in the country, "it produced widespread disharmony caused by the unprecedented misuse of these two media facilities by politicians and their agents", (p.62). Therefore, following the Rationalisation Committee recommendation, FRCN stations in Ilorin, Owerri, Ibadan, Akure, and Calabar were closed down leading to the sacking of 2000 staff (Uche 1989, p.58) as a reprehensive measure against the abuse of the media by the Shagari regime. Udejah (2005 p.156) also notes

the year 1985 was a very difficult one for the broadcast practitioners in Nigeria. A government white paper was released on the rationalization of the services of the NTA. The stations were directed to seek alternative sources of revenue through a revision of their advertisement policy. As a result of this, some public interest-oriented programmes failed to get sponsorship and eventually to die off. The

broadcast industry thus became subject to the dictates of advertisers who determined the air space and time.

For the above reason, the broadcast media was once again brought under the military government and was returned to the status quo: its ownership, funding and operational control was determined by the military government at both the state and federal level.

The Buhari regime introduced many decrees but the most dreaded of all is the Decree No. 4 of 1984, enacted three months after the military took over. According to Aginam (2010, p.53), the Decree made it an indictable act for a newspaper or wireless telegraphy station to publish or transmit in any form

any message, rumor (sic), report or statement, being a message, rumor, statement or report which is false in any material particular or which brings or is calculated to bring the Federal Military Government or the Government of a State or public officer to ridicule or disrepute.

Hence, broadcast media under Buhari witnessed a totalitarian system where little or no chance was given to critical analysis and journalists who ventured to stray from the line were made to face the wrath of the draconian decree, (see Aginam 2010, pp. 52-55). However, the hostility broadcast media experienced under the Buhari administration was little compared to the next military regime.

#### ***4.5.7 The general Babangida and general Abacha era (1985-1998): loss of press freedom***

On 27 August 1985, the then Chief of Army Staff General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB as he is fondly called) in a palace coup ousted the General Buhari regime, which had become unpopular due to its firm grip on the country through its various ‘unfavourable’ decrees. General Babangida’s coup was highly welcomed by Nigerians especially the media industry when the regime in its maiden broadcast to the nation immediately repelled the

obnoxious Decree No 4, considered an anti-media decree and ordered the immediate and unconditional release of journalists detained under it (Aginam 2010, p.57). IBB promised to review all the decrees promulgated by his predecessors to ensure full compliance with the rule of law and human rights. He urged the broadcast media to work with his administration and monitor his government policies and assured all that he would amend where necessary to deliver what was expected of his regime. While IBB encouraged the broadcast media to disseminate information on his regime freely without hindrance, he however warned that this must be done with the interest of the nation as the ultimate concern, (Ogbondah, 1994, p.141). The regime proposed a timetable to return the country to civil rule.

IBB's transition programme to civil rule was frost with many uncertainties; his regime kept moving the handover dates forward from 1990 to 1992 and 1993. The press observed the lack of transparency in the transition programme and the 'unfriendly' posture of the IBB regime towards the media reports on his government policies. Aginam (2010) notes the media also discovered that instead of reviewing the obnoxious decrees as promised, IBB used the decree to clamp down on the media, especially Decree No 2 of 1984 State Security (Detention of Persons). Many journalists were detained under this decree and similar decrees, yet the print media continued to scrutinise the 'hidden agenda' intended towards self-succession by the IBB administration. The regime continued to manipulate the citizenry on the handover date even after it allowed a two-party race election between the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). Chief MKO Abiola was the flag bearer for the SDP, while Alh. Bashir Tofa represented the NRC at the presidential poll. The Presidential elections were held on 12 June 1993 and Chief MKO Abiola presumably won in what was adjudged the freest and fairest election in the history of the country. IBB due to his 'hidden agenda' annulled the election and this almost plunged the country into chaos. There

were protests on the streets and private print media openly criticised the government over the annulment of the June 12 elections. Aginam (2010, p.61) cites that IBB replied by promulgating three more decrees within one week and in retrospect to silence the press: Decree 35 of 1993, Offensive Publication (Proscription), Newspapers Decree 43 of 1993, replacing the subsisting Newspaper Act with more stringent guidelines and Newspapers and Decree 48 of 1993 (Proscription and Prohibition from circulation).

Despite the hostilities towards the media, the IBB administration contributed significantly to the development of the broadcast media in the country. First, IBB increased the number of states in Nigeria by eleven; he created two states in 1987, Katsina and Akwa-Ibom states, and nine more in 1991, Abia, Taraba, Osun, Delta, Anambra, Yobe, Jigawa, Kebbi and Kogi states. The increase in the number of states also witnessed a corresponding increase in the number of state broadcast media. There was also an upsurge in the ‘scramble’ for broadcast assets and liabilities between the newly created states and their ‘mother state’ because “the new states wanted to be like their counterpart and even felt an air of superiority over their mother state”, (Udejah 2005, p.161).

One of the endearing legacies the IBB administration bequeathed broadcast media was the liberalisation of the broadcast industry. The 1979 constitution made provisions for the deregulation of the broadcast industry, but it took the military administration of IBB to make this happen (Shehu, 2004, p.19). Nigeria began to witness a downturn in her economy after the profligacy of the Shagari regime. The IBB government tried to get the economy back on its feet and approached the World Bank and the IMF for assistance. As a pre-condition, the two world bodies urged Nigeria to open up its economy in line with the global trend and allow it to be driven by ‘market forces’. IBB regime pursued a market-driven programme by

enacting Decree 25 of 1988; this eventually established the Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialisation (TCPC). The mandate of the committee was to get the Nigerian economy going once more by commercialising some government agencies. About 90 government agencies were up for privatisation and commercialisation but NTA and FRCN were left out (Betiang, 2010, p.5). Instead, in May 1990, the government set up another committee headed by Christopher Kolade, in collaboration with TCPC to find a way and “modalities for commercialisation of NTA and explore the feasibility of private radio and television stations” (Lasode, 1994, p.43). The submission of Kolade/TCPC resulted in the promulgation of Decree 38 of 1992 (Amendment Act 55 of 1999) which established the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and empowered it to deregulate the broadcast industry, license it and regulate its operations. Thus, the deregulation of the broadcast industry in Nigeria brought to an end over 60 years of government monopoly on the industry. However, some have argued that NBC was used as an instrument to influence the broadcast industry (more on that in the subsequent chapters).

The circumstances leading to the end of the IBB regime – the annulment of the 1993 June 12 election, the civil unrest as an aftermath of the cancellation of the June 12 election results and the eventual ‘stepping aside’ of the IBB regime- led to a hurriedly put together Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Earnest Shonekan on 26 August 1993. The then Defense Minister, General Sani Abacha who played a prominent role during the IBB regime, ousted the Interim National Government in a palace coup, after barely three months in power. General Abacha’s ascension to power was a dark period for Nigeria and the broadcast media.

General Abacha came into power on 17 November 1993 due largely to political and economic crises under the administration of Chief Shonekan: Nigerians were still seething

from the June 12 crisis when Chief Shonekan's government reopened negotiations with the IMF. One of the pre-conditions to secure the IMF loan was the removal of subsidies on petroleum that resulted in a 700% hike in the price of petroleum. General Abacha seized the opportunity to 'relieve' Chief Shonekan of his position thus marking the return of the Military to power. Like his military predecessors, General Abacha enacted new decrees to legitimise himself in power and work towards self-succession.

Private broadcast media for fear of brutal reprisal from the junta, could not openly criticise the Abacha government therefore, toed the line of state-owned broadcast media by promoting the "government policies and programmes at the expense of objective and critical reporting", (Akashoro et al. 2013, p.52). However, the pro-democracy group did not relent in their effort to see that Chief MKO Abiola; who was incarcerated by the Abacha regime for treason after declaring himself President-elect, was given his mandate and also ensured that democracy was enthroned in Nigeria. The group (pro-democracy) floated a guerilla broadcasting through Radio Democrat International Nigeria (RDIN) to advocate their cause. True to the nature of a pirate broadcasting station, RDIN's physical site could not be ascertained by the junta who tried everything to locate it both home and abroad. RDIN was renamed Radio Kudirat after the slain wife of Chief MKO Abiola. Kudirat Abiola was assassinated on 4 June 1996 while trying to protest the incarceration of her husband and demanded his mandate.

To entrench himself in power and guarantee his self-succession agenda, General Abacha set up a committee to come forward with a draft constitution in 1995 and within it to establish a media body that would further erode the autonomy of broadcast media. According to Aginam (2010, p.74):

Section 154(q) of the 1995 Draft Constitution provided for the establishment of the National Mass Media Commission with the responsibility to 'coordinate, promote and

regulate the existence of newspapers, magazines, and publications...as well as radio and television stations in the country'. The proposed agency was also "to coordinate the activities of all professional bodies of the mass media (and) to protect against intrusions and unwarranted inquiries into the private life of any person without his (sic) consent". Among such responsibilities were the enforcement of professional standards and ethical codes of conduct aimed at protecting individuals against media harassment and intimidation. Further, the draft constitution limited the ownership of any mass media with interstate coverage—print and electronic—to government corporations and publicly quoted companies.

Critics of the proposed National Mass Media Commission (NMMC) saw its functions as overlapping in duties similar to the existing government agencies like the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the Nigerian Press Council (NPC). Non-governmental bodies like the Nigeria Press Organisation (NPO) believed that NMMC's establishment would constitute a hindrance to the ideal of press freedom and further submitted that "a free press is one of the important pillars of democracy and to entrench in the constitution provisions for the creation of a censorship agency is to undermine our aspiration for democracy" (Aginam 2010 p.74). The sudden death of General Abacha on 7 June 1998 meant the end of the drafted 1995 Constitution and the controversial NMMC bill (Ogbondah, 2003, pp. 20-21).

The control of broadcast media by successive governments, both civilian and military, can be traced back to the Colonial era as discussed in Chapter 1. However, the Babangida/Abacha regime's repression of mass communications showed that the media was often treated as a tool by the powerful, with little interest in engaging with citizens (Berger, 2012). In 1992, the deregulation of the broadcast industry began to loosen the government's hold on the media landscape, which could be regarded as a period of significant change, a critical juncture in the history of broadcasting in Nigeria.



## **4.6 The liberalisation of broadcast media in Nigeria (1992-2008)**

According to Udejah (2005, p.164),

Liberalization of broadcasting was a landmark of achievement in the Babangida administration. The General, by authorizing private ownership of the broadcast media, loosened the tight rope of government monopoly on the electronics media. Thus, he untied the knot that was tied in the early years of Radio Redistribution Services.

Decree No. 38 of 1992 amended by Act 55 of 1999 allowed private ownership of broadcast media, and this marked the end of government ‘stranglehold’ on broadcast media after 60 years of the establishment of broadcasting in Nigeria. There were arguments about the reason IBB ascended to the bill for the deregulation of the broadcast industry. Some critics proclaimed that the reason was towards the realisation of self-succession agenda while others claimed that the administration of IBB liberalised the broadcast industry to satisfy the ‘Western Overloads’ particularly Ronald Regan and Margret Thatcher who believed that the policy of a deregulated economy was key to driving economy growth (Betiang, 2013, p.4; also see Foroohar, 2005). On the other hand, some critics believed that because of the advances in technology, satellite dishes powerful enough to crash through any government censorship were been developed. Aginam (2010, p.152) notes that the case was not different in Nigeria where “by the 1980s, the elites in some of Nigeria’s major cities had purchased fixed service satellite (FSS) dish antennas which they used to pirate satellite signals carrying broadcast and cable television programs from Europe”.

As mentioned earlier, the liberalisation of the broadcast industry in Nigeria heralded the establishment of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Act. The Commission was saddled among other things with the responsibility of deregulating, regulating, licensing and monitoring the operations of the federal, state, and private broadcasting in the country. The

other functions of NBC as summarised by Media Right Agenda (MRA 2001) include:

- Receiving, processing, and considering applications for the ownership of radio and television stations including cable TV service, direct satellite broadcast, etc.
- Regulating and controlling the broadcast industry;
- Receiving, considering and investigating complaints from individuals and bodies regarding the content of a broadcast or conduct of a station;
- Upholding the principles of equity and fairness in broadcasting;
- Establishing and disseminating a national broadcasting code and setting standards about the content and quality of broadcasting
- Regulating ethical standards and technical excellence.
- Promoting Nigerian indigenous cultures, morals and community life through broadcasting.

Thus, the enactment of Decree No. 38 of 1992 witnessed the transfer of duties and responsibilities over broadcast media regulation from the Wireless Telegraphy enabled by the Wireless Telegraphy Act No. 31 of 1961, to the newly formed Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (as amended Act 55 of 1999).

Although the deregulation occurred on 24 August 1992, it was not until 1993 before the first set of private broadcasting licences was issued. Before this, Jega (2016) notes that there were 45 television stations and 45 radio stations all run and owned by federal and state governments in Nigeria. With liberalisation came the participation of private business entrepreneurs who took advantage of the deregulated broadcasting market to operate and own both radio and television stations. The Nigerian broadcasting industry through liberalisation was also opened to foreigners “to participate, for the first time in the establishment,

ownership and operation of broadcasting; something which had been prohibited under the system imposed by the Wireless Telegraphy Act” (MRA, 2001, p.10). However, for this to happen, Nigerian citizens must hold a majority of shares in the company applying for the licence (Aginam, 2010, p.158).

There were concerns over the regulatory role of the NBC. Stakeholders perceive some functions of NBC as an extension of government influence and control over the operations of broadcast media both at the state and private levels (Akashoro et al. 2013). It became easier for the government to exert influence over the broadcast industry going by the structure of NBC. Aginam (2010, p.156) sums this up when he observes that:

The Commission is made up of a chairman and 10 members (including the Director-General) who are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Minister of Information and can be removed at any time without recourse. Apart from a representative each from the Ministry of Information and the State Security Services (SSS), the other board members are supposed to represent various interests like law, business, education, broadcasting, engineering etc but there is no stakeholders process for nominating representatives and neither is the Minister nor the President required to consult with the sectors to be represented before making an appointment.

Given the circumstances, it seems that the government influenced the decisions made regarding the industry. This tendency became more apparent after the military relinquished power. The government of the day or the political party in power has made the appointments to the NBC board. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the appointment of individuals who are not suited to the positions, which has caused a problem.

The Nigerian government through NBC could wield the stick on any broadcast operator who did not toe the line of government. This further exposed NBC’s lack of autonomy, which was seen in most cases as the extension of the Ministry of Information. This was about the fact that Decree 38 was full of such phrases as ‘National interest’ and ‘Public interest’, which

were never clearly defined. Examples of such code include section 2 (1) n which enjoined NBC in “determining and applying sanctions including revocation of licences of defaulting stations which do not operate in accordance with the broadcasting code and in the public interest”. NBC was empowered to revoke the license of any operator who contravened the code under section 8 (d), which reads, “Where in the opinion of the Commission the station has been used in a manner detrimental to the national interest.”

For applicants to be eligible for a licence, Section 9 of Decree 38 specifies that such applicants must make “an undertaking that the licensed station shall be used to promote the national interest, unity and cohesion and that it shall not be used to offend religious sensibilities or promote ethnicity, sectionalism, hatred and disaffection among the peoples of Nigeria”. Aginam (2010) notes that there were two categories of licence fees: Category A and B “according to the economic viability of the area” (p.158). Also, NBC “conducts public hearings for license renewals but not for the original application process further fuelling suspicion of cronyism” (p.158). Licences were granted for 5 years and may be revoked if not used within 2 years of issuance.

In 1993, NBC granted the first set of licences to 4 radio stations, 15 open television stations and 13 cable television operators (Jega, 2016) and by 2012 had increased to over 225 television stations and 203 radio stations comprising, the federal government (Radio: 46, TV: 128), state government (Radio: 107, TV: 64), private investors (Radio: 102, TV: 33), Community (Radio: 50, TV: 0) (Source: National Broadcasting Commission NBC, 19/8/16 cited in Jega 2016, p.13). In 2016, there were 453 licensed radio stations in Nigeria with an embargo on licensing additional television stations (NBC 22/8/16 cited in Jega 2016).

It could be argued that the proliferation of broadcasting stations has helped to improve the diversity of media in Nigeria. It has given audience choices, concerning a variety of contents that suit their needs as opposed to the ‘off’ and ‘on’ access during the British Empire Broadcasting Service. This has also brought about competition among the stations to build up their viewership or listenership as the case may be that would invariably attract more advertisers to their station and improve their revenue base. Many of the broadcast operators, especially the private ones could go to any length to increase their popularity by broadcasting programmes that appeal to the ‘sensual instinct’ of the public. As Enemaku (2003, pp.59-60) argues:

In the bid to increase their audience, many broadcasting stations transmit programmes that appeal to the sensual instinct of the public. Sex appeal is capitalized upon, and in spite of the regulation of both the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the National Films and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), many violent, erotic and generally morally perverse programmes are transmitted. In recent times, many Nigerians, including religious leaders and others have vehemently criticized broadcasting stations for the nudity and violence transmitted on the station.

The NBC has a set of codes to ensure that the general public is protected from obscenity. For instance, Section 3.7.2 (Good Taste and Decency) stipulated, “the sanctity of marriage and family life must be promoted and strictly upheld.” These codes were also to ensure that programmes reflected more of the viewers’ culture. An example of this was Section 4.7 that specified, 60% of the programmes transmitted by the station must be local content while 40% should be foreign. But this was hardly obeyed due to the high cost of producing local programmes.

Post-deregulation, broadcast media in Nigeria has been moving towards a global trend in broadcasting. Nigeria as a member state of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) followed the directive of the Union to commence the migration from analogue to digital

broadcasting by 2015. The prompt came in 2006 at the Regional Radiocommunication Conference.

The digital switchover (DSO) programme officially started in Nigeria in December 2007 at the approval of President Umaru Yar'Adua after due consultation and response from stakeholders, "however, the digitization programme commenced in Abuja on 3 June 2008 in response to a meeting of stakeholders" (Ihechu and Uche, 2012, p.40). To facilitate the transition from analogue to digital broadcast in Nigeria, the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) was set up in October 2008 (Udeorah, 2008). The committee was given the mandate to come up with a recommended policy, regulatory framework, and a broadcasting model for the process. This committee adopted the 17 June 2012 deadline for the country's DSO, and in 2009 submitted its report with several recommendations.

In 1992, the broadcast industry in Nigeria underwent a significant change when the government liberalised it, allowing private ownership of broadcasting stations. This marked a critical juncture (Collier and Collier, 1991) for the industry. The Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) was established in 1992 to regulate the broadcasting sector, however, some stakeholders argue that NBC's role is another form of government control. This is because the law that established NBC *does* provide for stakeholders to nominate representatives on the board, yet the government overlooks this provision in the law and appoints members most often based on political affiliation (Beli and Inuwa, 2014). Nonetheless, digital migration gave the government an opportunity to restructure its regulatory policy to address the challenges of digital broadcasting.

## 4.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, the thesis examined the political history of Nigeria to get a better insight into how the country was put together by her past Colonial administrators in 1914. Some critics described the amalgamation of Nigeria as a ‘mistake’ because the country is made up of people with diverse cultures, political aspirations, and beliefs. Constitution agitation set the political elites against the Colonial administrations, which led to the country’s independence in 1960. Before the independence, the Colonial rulers had established the broadcasting media, RDS that they used to propagate their agenda and were in full control. The chapter also demonstrated the significance of the Western Nigeria Television service being the first regional TV to be established and how it inspired other regions, including the central government to commence Television services in the country. It discussed media ownership and how media-government ties reflected the aspirations of the owners that established and funded them. This set the precedence, a pathway for broadcasting policy in Nigeria such that during the Nigerian Civil War in 1967, the media took sides with its ‘controllers’. Therefore, subsequent administrations used the media to their advantage at the federal, regional, and state levels. It was established in this chapter that at the early stage of broadcasting in Nigeria, the media establishment had foreigners who were either technical partners or shareholders.

The global economic recession in the mid-1980s/ early 1990s made countries especially developing African countries adopt stringent measures put forward by intergovernmental organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank for struggling countries to open up their economy and allow foreign direct investment by corporate multinationals. This led to the liberalisation of media and telecommunication in Nigeria in 1992. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) were established to

regulate the broadcasting and telecommunication sectors respectively. There were changes to media ownership and regulations with less government involvement because the media ecosystem was market-driven. It was also observed here how the introduction of digital terrestrial broadcasting prompted by the ITU in 2006, got Nigeria ready to join the rest of the member states in the implementation of the GE-06 agreement.

In the following chapter, the thesis discusses the method and design adopted to analyse the complexity of the digital migration process in Nigeria.



## **Chapter 5: Method and Design**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the methodological framework for this thesis, which employs document analysis and semi-structured interviews as part of a qualitative research strategy. The two methods of document analysis and semi-structured interviews adopted are appropriate to answer the research questions of the study because “documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1988, p.118), and semi-structured interviews focus on variables that are likely to impact a given policy and influence its outcome.

Therefore, the collection and analysis of policy documents is used as the main research method to highlight the challenges of the implementation of the DSO policy in Nigeria. Document analysis complements the semi-structured interview method, which helps to bridge the gap left by document analysis alone and provide answers to this thesis’ overarching research question (RQ1) and other sub-questions (RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4):

RQ1 - How has the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria been shaped by domestic politics and the global agenda?

RQ2 - Who were the main stakeholder groups in the domestic policy arena? How effective was each stakeholder group in pursuing its own interests and goals?

RQ3 - To what extent did state actors manage to exert control over the digital switchover process, and through which means?

RQ4 - How has the intersection of foreign media/telecommunication conglomerates and local politics in Nigeria influenced the digital migration process? Who stood to lose and who stood to benefit?

This chapter focuses on the two research methods and the justification for adopting them. In discussing the framework of the semi-structured interviews, it sets out the criteria for the selection of the interviewees and pays attention to the issue of confidentiality, which is important in this kind of research. The other sections of the chapter explore the sampling method applied in the study, that is, the non-random sampling strategy commonly used in qualitative research. Besides, purposeful sampling applied in qualitative research has “the capacity to provide richly-textured information, relevant to the phenomenon under investigation” (Vasileiou et al. 2018, p.2). Lastly, the Method of Data Analysis section demonstrates how data collected are analysed using content and thematic analytical approach.

Before I proceed with this chapter, I need to clarify my positionality on the research mentioned in the introduction chapter to explain why I undertook the study and also reflect on the research process.

## **5.2 Positionality in qualitative research: A dialectic relationship between a researcher and research participants**

According to Cloke et al. (2000), positionality is a strategy deployed to contextualise research observations and interpretations. England (1994) opines research reflects a shared space shaped by both researcher and research participants and as such the personalities of both invariably impact the research process. More so, the personality of the researcher shapes the research process, “serving as checkpoints along the way” (Bourke, 2014). To buttress this view, McDowell (1992) argues that researchers must recognise and take account of their position as well as that of the research participants. Hall (1990, p.18) then submits,

There’s no enunciation without positionality. You [researcher] have to position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all.

Therefore, I carry out this research from an artistic/journalistic background. I joined the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Channel 10 Lagos in 1985 as a contract staff. I worked in various capacities as an actor, production assistant, continuity man, scriptwriter, location manager, production manager, and left in 1993 as an independent producer/consultant. I freelance as a journalist with reputable Newspapers in Nigeria, which include The Punch, The Guardian, This Day, and Vanguard. I was the arts editor AM Newspaper (now defunct) and a contributing editor with Position magazine that focuses on contemporary African culture in various creative arms, in Africa and the African diaspora. As a theatre practitioner, I produce and direct stage plays in Nigeria and in the United Kingdom; suffice to say I come from content creation background. So, when Nigeria commenced the DSO implementation at the switch-on in Jos in April 2016, I saw it as an opportunity for the industry (broadcast sector): more television channels, theme channels, more diverse content, and more business opportunities. I invested in building a television studio (Bubbles Studios launched in 2018) in Lagos with post-production facilities to take advantage of the DSO implementation. However the state actors delayed the DSO process due to the stalling in the implementation of the DTT policy.

I recall being a performing artiste at the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) Badagry Conference in 1987, where Nigeria developed its first National Mass Policy at the behest of General Babangida, which was implemented in 1990 (Jide Ojo in Punch Newspaper, 2016). This experience got me thinking about the crucial role of communication policy in driving the broadcasting industry. As a result, I was motivated to conduct this research to gain a better understanding of the challenges associated with the implementation of the DSO and make a contribution to the existing empirical literature in the field of communication studies.

Bourke (2014) has argued that the position of a researcher “does not mean that the scholarly work is weakened as a result, but rather revealing the social structure or position from which one writes can actually lead to more insightful analyses.” Again, many scholars (Rose 1997, Madge 1993; Sidaway, 1992) have observed how the positionality of the researcher is important to the process of producing knowledge. Bourke (2014) stresses that the potency of a research process lays in the relationship between the researcher and the research participants. Therefore, positionality represents a space in which ‘objectivism’ meets ‘subjectivism’, suggesting a “dialectic relationship” (Freire, 2000, p.50) between the researcher and the research participants. England (1994, pp. 247-248) identifies two issues arising from a dialectic relationship thus:

The first is that the dialogical nature of research increases the probability that the research may be transformed by the input of the researched [research participants]. The second is that dialogism means that the researcher is a visible and integral part of the research setting.

Therefore, the interaction between the researcher and the research participants can lead to critical and transformative understanding and better insight of a research topic (Frydaki, 2011). In the context of this research, the semi-structured interviews and analysis of the data gathered made me understand better the challenges confronting the DTT policy in Nigeria. England (1997, p.244) posits that a more reflexive and flexible approach to fieldwork allows the researcher to be more open to any challenges to their theoretical position that fieldwork almost inevitably raises. My positionality, coming from a creative background to communication policy, allowed me to reflect on the research process and I gained a better insight into what goes on in the communication arena in Nigeria. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the Nigerian cultural influence has significantly hindered the implementation of the DTT policy as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters.

Before I carried out the field study, I collected documents from public and private institutions and from individuals who were involved in the DSO process and this will be the focus of the following sections.

### **5.3 Policy documents as data**

According to Bowen (2009, p.29), “bearing witness to past events, [policy] documents provide background information as well as historical insight.” Therefore, documents can make available data on the context in which researchers can operate. To buttress the view above, May (2011, p.191) also notes that policy documents “can tell us a great deal about the way in which events are constructed, the reason employed, as well as providing materials upon which to base further research investigations”. In other words, data gathered by researchers from documents, for instance, could be used to contextualise data gathered during interviews. Therefore, information found in policy documents may suggest questions that could be asked and circumstances that need to be observed as an integral part of the research.

In the qualitative research method, the researcher is expected to “draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence; that is, to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods” (Bowen, 2009, p.28). Again, May (2011, p.209) argues that documents need to be placed within the context they are produced and not to be examined alone; thus, policy documents are used in this thesis to triangulate other sources of data in an attempt to demonstrate “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner, 1991, p 110). This also laid credence to the fact that multiple sources of evidence boost confidence in the research; improve the acceptability of findings and reduce methodological bias (Ahn, 2006). Given that the development in digital technology has shifted the

positioning of the media from being highly regulated by the government to a market-driven environment, the analysis of the policy documents with other sources of data in the context of this study helps to investigate the interplay between political actors and domestic stakeholders. It demonstrates how their relationship has been shaping the direction of the DSO process in Nigeria.

Next, I will discuss the types of policy documents collected as well as the process and challenges of collecting them. Finally, I will explain the method used for analysing these documents.

### ***5.3.1 Sources and types of policy documents***

The sources of documents selected as data for this research came from relevant government departments, private organisations involved in the DSO process and individuals who were documenting the process of the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria. Sourcing the documents for this research, as well as accessing materials from contact persons and institutions was challenging. Initially, I made several attempts at contacting institutions involved with the DSO process without much success. I then relied on the network opportunities as a broadcaster to link contacts within the industry and gain access to the relevant departments and individuals to source data for the research.

The types of documents vary from regulatory reports, paper presentations and committee reports, minutes of executive meetings, academic papers, newspaper reports, and the main source being the Government White Paper on the Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) on Transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting in Nigeria. It is important to mention that my familiarisation of the digital switchover process in

Nigeria was a guiding principle in determining the sources and types of documents gathered for critical examination.

### ***5.3.2 Process of collecting documents***

My personal communication in March 2018 with Emeka Mba, former Director General (DG) of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) enabled me to collect some documents which included; “NBC Issue Map Draft”, “Understanding NBC DSO”, “NBC DG Presentation to Contact Group”, “NBC Freeview - DG Presentation” and “Life After Analogue: NBC Ready for the Future!” among others. These documents gave an insight into the government’s position and planned strategy for the DSO. Through the snowball technique, I was introduced via email to Prof. Armstrong Idachaba when he was the former Director, Broadcast Policy, and Research at NBC (and later became the acting DG of NBC between 2021 to 2022). Prof. Armstrong emailed me a soft copy of his book, *Media Policy and Regulation in Nigeria* (2018), which contained the full document on Media Policy in Nigeria. The book also contained the full report of the 2012 Government White Paper on the implementation of the digital policy. The Ministry of Information and Culture website (<https://fmino.gov.ng/>) published the speeches of the then Minister, Alh Lai Mohammed particularly on the DSO process, which benefitted this research. The early groundwork lay out by the Ministry and NBC on the digital process was well articulated in these documents but it was from the government’s perspective and I am aware of the limits and potential risks associated with using documents published by governments and their agencies alone in research.

I also gained access to the minutes of meetings of the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), which capture the reactions and objections to some of the government’s decisions on

the implementation of the DTT policy as such decisions infringe on their broadcasting operation. BON is a broad coalition of public and private broadcasters as the nation's umbrella Union of terrestrial radio/television, direct-to-home (DTH), digital terrestrial television (DTT) and multimedia distribution system (MMDS) (bon.ng cited 20/08/2020). I gathered data from newspaper reports online, particularly from the muck rack of Okoh Aihe, a journalist with the Vanguard Newspaper, Nigeria who had devoted his time to reporting on the progress of the DSO process in the country (<https://muckrack.com/okoh-aihe>). Okoh Aihe had adequate knowledge of the telecommunication and media sector's legislative and regulatory policy process and was a former Director at the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). I also made use of reports of domestic non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) and Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability (SERAP), which serve as watchdogs on government policies as they affect civil society. I consulted documents produced by non-domestic organisations such as the international media governance regulations and ITU country reports on the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria. These documents were accessed online.

The various documents gathered provided a robust contextual background for the research and drew on the earlier argument of May (2011) that documents need to be placed within the context they are produced and not to be analysed alone. Therefore, the following section will discuss the significance of semi-structured interviews in triangulating the information collected from the documents.

#### **5.4 In-depth interviews as qualitative research methodology**

The qualitative research design adopted for this study is to interrogate among other questions the interchange between the multilateral global agreement (which includes international



institutions such as the ITU and WTO) in broadcasting services and the domestic media policy in Nigeria that has been shaping the implementation of the DSO process. Although the analysis of policy documents serves as the primary source of data, it is not the only source. In-depth interviews were conducted to corroborate evidence from documents in this research, and according to Irvin (2012, p.291), “qualitative interviews are used in studies that seek to understand personal experiences perspectives and meanings.”

Across media and communication studies, the use of in-depth interviews as a qualitative research design is common (see, Delbert and Salkind, 2002; Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Berger, 2014; Warren and Karner, 2010; Winstone et al., 2014). Van Selm and Helberger (2019, p.163) observe that [in-depth]

interviews can be a useful means for an in-depth exploration of the actors, context and dynamics of a situation that is subject to policy research and advice, as well as the different views, experiences, motivations and incentives, values and conflicts at stake.

In qualitative research, interviews are the primary means of data collection. In-depth interviews as used in qualitative research is a two-way communication between the researcher who is interested in gathering information that he may not get from other places and the interviewee who is allowed flexibility in the process to import and discuss detailed information and views (Irvin 2012, p.291). This also underscores the ‘dialectic relationship’ between the researcher and the research participant I referred to earlier in section 5.2 of this chapter.

Irvin (2012) identifies two types of in-depth interviews: an unstructured and semi-structured interview though some critics have argued that there is no such concept as an ‘unstructured’ interview because ‘every social interaction is structured in a number of ways’. The author submits that both concepts use “open, non-directive questions but vary in the extent to which

themes are pre-determined and the amount of latitude given to interviewer and interviewee in the way that questions and responses are formulated” (p.291). This research employs the semi-structured interview because it enables the study to focus on “issues that were meaningful,” and allows “diverse perceptions to be expressed” (Kallio et al. 2016 p.12). Van Selm and Helberger (2019, p.163) agree when they opine, “the focus [of semi-structured interview] is more on meaning than on measuring quantifiable phenomena, more on depth and detail and sensitivity to context rather than finding generalizations.” Through semi-structured interviews, I interrogated the ‘politics’ of implementing the digital switchover policy in Nigeria and got diverse views from respondents on the issue.

Semi-structured interviews are normally conducted around a set of questions in the interview guide that are sent to the respondents before the interview. The interview guide question provides an opportunity for the interviewer to ask further questions based on responses, and to “make on-the-spot adjustments to the guide questions” (Irvin, 2012, p.291). Ogden and Cornwell (2010) argue that open follow-up questions asked later in an interview tend to produce richer data, which is the case in this study.

#### ***5.4.1 Framework for semi-structured interview and sampling technique***

Conducting a semi-structured interview demands some social and communicative skills that improve with practices and Irvin (2012) identifies some practical and ethical guides that were useful to me in carrying out the semi-structured interviews. Even though the fieldwork for this research did not warrant major ethical concerns, it was conducted in compliance with the University of Westminster’s ethics rules.

As I mentioned earlier, I carefully selected broadcast industry representatives and regulatory institutions after reviewing the different roles they played in the implementation of the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria. This selected group of broadcast representatives and regulatory institutions (state and non-state actors) is the central focus of the study and thus form the research population (Fraenkel et al., 2015).

However, the sampling strategy applied to the study is the purposeful sampling method commonly used in qualitative research to reflect the different perspectives of the different stakeholders groups (Van Audenhove and Donders, 2019). Fraenkel et al. (2015) opine that purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select objectives and specially qualified participants to collect the requisite data, while Maxwell (1996) argues purposeful sampling strategy enables the researcher to deliberately include particular settings, persons or events to provide important information not available through other options. In the context of the DSO in Nigeria, the sample method ensures the inclusion of cases or participants, which were crucial to understanding the DTT policy.

As soon as I identified possible respondents for the research, (some through phone calls, emails and referrals), I established a relationship that was professional and respectful to gain the trust and understanding of the interviewees. I then sent out an interview guide and made respondents aware their views and opinions were of value to the research. Although I did not get an instant reply in most cases, not all respondents got back to me. I reached out to 27 respondents, but only 12 interviews were possible, which provided the needed support for the study and buttressed Vasileiou et al.'s (2018) view that samples in qualitative research tend to be small to support the depth of case-oriented analysis that is fundamental to the mode of inquiry.

For the 12 respondents who comprise the research population, I kept the questions open, and understandable (in English Language) and avoided leading questions. I maintained words that were appropriate for the interviewees and kept the overall themes of the questions in focus, this elicited more response from the interviewees and kept our conversation ‘free-flowing’.

Carrying out research can be a positive and equally stressful experience. I was mindful of the responses (verbal and non-verbal) of the interviewee when ‘sensitive’ questions were asked and they cleverly refused to speak to the question. I quickly acknowledged and moved on so as not to stop the flow of the conversation, this is not uncommon in policy research where an interviewee may choose to apply conscious self-censorship when asked very sensitive questions (Löblich and Phaff-Rüdiger, 2012). The essence of carrying out interviews is to collect data accurately and ensure that the conversation is recorded in a safe device for full transcription afterwards. Before conducting the interviews, I explained the importance of the interview to the interviewee and obtained their permission to record high-quality audio on my mp3 device.

#### ***5.4.2 Interview process***

The interviewees comprised policy-makers, public broadcasters, local and foreign private media owners, technical experts, academics, and journalists who were monitoring the process and progress of the transition to digital broadcasting.

I made a list of interviewees and contacted them via phone, email, and referrals. The research benefitted from my professional relationship (as a broadcast practitioner) with some respondents who replied promptly. For those who didn’t respond, I sent gentle reminders without causing any inconvenience. After studying the policy documents and other data

gathered, I formulated a preliminary semi-structured interview guide. Between November 2018 and January 2019 (pre COVID-19 period), I was in Nigeria to conduct a field-testing of the interview guide with three potential interviewees because “field-testing simulated the real interview situation and provided crucial information about the implementation of the interview” (Kallio et al. 2016, p.16). The three interviewees cut across a policy-maker, a technical expert, and a broadcaster. I had planned to interview five respondents for the field-testing of the interview guide but due to a lack of access to government officials in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory where offices of all government officials are located, only three study interviewees were conducted in Lagos due to earlier scheduled agreements with them. The three study interviewees were Emeka Mba (former DG at NBC, policy-maker), Tunde Adegbola (technical consultant and member of DigiTeam) and Femi Odugbemi (independent producer/broadcaster). The interviewees were informed about the significance of the study and the interview process. A preliminary interview guide containing questions was sent ahead to the interviewees to acquaint them of the process. The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face conducive environment and the duration of each interview varied between thirty minutes and one hour. As already mentioned, among the study participants for the preliminary test interview was the former DG of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Emeka Mba under whose tenure the DSO implementation commenced. He was also a member of the DigiTeam, a body set up by the government to look into the policy layout of the DSO process. The conversation with Emeka Mba on the process of the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria gave insights into the contribution of factors that influenced some policy decisions of the Government White Paper.

By testing the interview guide questions with the three study participants, I was able to make an informed adjustment (Kallio et al.; 2016, p.16) to the interview guide questions. For

instance, when I directed some technical questions to a respondent, he quickly declined and advised that a technical expert best answered the question. After the adjustment to the interview guide questions, I was ready to conduct in-depth interviews to gather the necessary data for this study. Unfortunately, Emeka Mba was unavailable to participate in the final interview.

In all, I conducted 12 interviews with stakeholders as earlier mentioned: policy-makers, public broadcasters, local and foreign private media owners, technical experts, academics, and journalists to cover a variety of ‘voices’ in the study (see appendix IV for the full list of interviewees). For instance, the transition to digital broadcasting informed a change in the structure of the media industry; it led to the unbundling of broadcasting infrastructure in Nigeria along the value chain of Signal Distributors and Content Aggregators. I conducted interviews with the two licensed Signal Distributors: The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), which represented the public broadcasters while Pinnacle Communications Limited (PCL) represented the private sector operator. Content aggregators and private media owners, such as StarTimes were interviewed to determine their contribution to the DSO process.

The DSO process in Nigeria was ongoing as of October 2023. Many types of research were conducted during the COVID-19 period, but there were challenges in conducting interviews and carrying out fieldwork due to restrictions and additional measures put in place.

Therefore, I conducted all the interviews via social media devices/apps like Microsoft Meeting and WhatsApp, which still presented a ‘face-to-face’ interaction with the interviewees and captured most of the non-verbal functions as in a real-life situation. These modern social media apps ensure high-quality digital audio recording that allows full transcription of the entire interviews for data analysis.

### ***5.4.3 Limitations of the semi-structured interview process***

While preparing for the field-testing and eventual interviews, I encountered some limitations with the semi-structured interview method. First, it was difficult to establish contact with the offices of the government institutions in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, that were directly involved in the DSO process. The bureaucracy at the lower levels was frustrating in most cases, the decision often rested with the assistant to the top official, even after I explained the purpose and importance of the research. Nevertheless, I was still able to test the interview guide and make the necessary adjustments.

Second, transcribing the interviews was another challenge. According to Potter and Hepburn (2012, p.13), “the fuller transcript allows the identification of a number of potentially consequential interviewer actions.” In other words, full transcription without editing or omitting captures a range of ‘hearable’ that could be vital in the analysis of the interview. Full transcription of the interviews at the end was very tasking and could be time-consuming.

Finally, the qualitative nature of an analysis arising out of an interview is another concern. Scholars have argued that researchers ‘underanalyse’ their data. Therefore, in analysing the interviews, I was cautious not to (1) summarise, (2) take sides, (3) over-quote or isolate quotations, (4) identify discourses from mental constructs, and (5) overgeneralise claims (Potter and Hepburn 2012).

## **5.5 Method of data analysis**

Every data collected (in this case documents and semi-structured interviews) was not necessarily analysed in this research. Bowen (2009) has stressed the importance of going through data with a critical eye to determine its relevance and “contribution to the issues

being explored” (P.33). In the context of this research, relevant data that advance the theoretical framework and help to answer the study research questions were selected. Qualitative analysis examines the “construction of meaning” (Lindlof, 1991 cited in Van Slem and Helberger, 2019, p.163) therefore, data collected were subjected to an interpretative process to contextualise them. I have applied both content and thematic approaches as methods to analyse the data gathered for this research. According to Bowen (2009), content analysis of data involves a process of organising information into categories related to the central question of the research, therefore in the context of the challenges of DSO in Nigeria, documents and interviews were identified, categorised and reviewed to answer the overarching research question about the influence of domestic politics and global agenda in the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria.

On the other hand, thematic analysis is a data analysis that is widely used in a qualitative research method (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) describe thematic analysis as a recognisable form of pattern within the data that could be categorised for analysis. Bowen (2009) therefore suggested that coding and themes could be applied to integrate data gathered for research. The coding process in this study drew from the recurring theme of the research aim, conceptual chapter, and research questions. Recurring themes that were coded from the data collected included but were not limited to; (a) Regulatory reform to broadcasting policy, (b) the auctioning of the spectrum (c) A new role for the PSB in the DSO process (d) Funding the DSO and (e) Domestic stakeholders involvement in the DSO.

## **5.6 Conclusions**

In this chapter, I demonstrated the purpose and merit of using document analysis and semi-structured interviews as a methodological design for research. I also emphasise the



importance of combining research methods to triangulate data and establish the credibility of the materials collected. I discussed my positionality in the research to state why I embarked on the study and briefly reflected on it. Using method literature, I explained why the study adopts the purpose sampling technique to reflect the different perspectives of the different stakeholder groups.

The methods adopted in this study are aimed at investigating the research questions of this thesis, specifically analysing the impact of global communication governance on relevant domestic media policy in Nigeria and its influence on the direction of the DSO process.

In the next chapter, I will discuss Nigeria's role in the international policy arena of global communication governance and examine the impact of decisions made on the DTT policy implementation in Nigeria.

## **Chapter 6: Global communication governance: power, policy, politics, and the implications for the DTT policy in Nigeria**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The evolution in global trade, market integration, and convergence has extended policies beyond nation-states such that there was a voluntary surrender of the sovereignty of states within a global agreement. In other words, global communication governance (GCG) supplemented national regulation. According to Kersbergen and Waarden (2004 p.155), “governance decisions are made in complicated networks of encompassing supranational, national and sub-national actors- public, semi-public and private.” Therefore, at all levels, there was interplay among actors to secure their interest in policy implementation and decision-making. In the previous chapter, (Chapter 3), the study examined the different DSO approaches around the world and demonstrated that no two regions shared the same experience, which explained why there were different completion dates among member-states who had concluded the DSO process. However, the challenges among member-states who were yet to migrate proved that the switchover was neither commercially nor politically simple (García Leiva and Stark, 2009).

GCG adopts a multi-stakeholder approach to communication policy; therefore, this chapter starts by identifying the key policy actors in global communication governance. It investigates their different decision-making roles and the implications on member-states, particularly the preference of the Bretton Woods institutions and how their philosophy helps to renew the neoliberal approach to media and telecommunication post-liberalisation in national administrations, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. Perhaps, this helps to shed light on the RQ4, “How has the intersection of foreign

media/telecommunication conglomerates and local politics in Nigeria influenced the digital migration process”?

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, spectrum is a finite natural resource of member states and the common objective of member states was to “achieve greater spectrum efficiency by closing down analogue terrestrial transmission” (García and Stark, 2009, p. 787). The ITU-R regulates spectrum use at the international level to avoid harmful interference with other member states but it was observed that developed countries influenced the spectrum use of developing countries even though their spectrum needs were different (Berger 2012). For instance, the EU set a policy agenda at the World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs) that influenced policy decisions in Region 1 where Africa belongs. Scholars have argued that developing countries were not equipped with the prerequisite capacity and experienced staff to participate efficiently in the decision-making process (McCormick, 2005 in El-Moghazi et al. 2017) therefore, policy decisions went unchallenged and became binding on all signatories to the Convention. Until developing countries began to participate actively in the WRCs (particularly since WRC-12 in 2012) were they able to make demands for spectrum use that met their needs, which set in ‘observable conflicts’ in the international policy arena in Region 1. This chapter investigates the specific role Nigeria played in Africa to retain and harmonise the use of the 490-698 MHz band for broadcasting services and also managed to identify mobile allocation and the International Mobile Telecommunication (IMT) identification in the 698-790 MHz (El-Moghazi et al. 2017). The chapter then examines the influence of the key actors in the GCG on the domestic digital switchover policy in Nigeria. First, who are the key actors in the international policy arena?

## **6.2 The key actors in the global communication governance: politics of decision-making in the international policy arena**

The evolution in global trade and market integration brought about policies that extended beyond national administrations, which necessitated global governance. Murdock and Golding (1999, pp.118-119) view the development in broadcast media and telecommunication industries as ‘marketisation’, and both industries were among the most lucrative growth areas of global capitalism and as such “the owners of these industries [broadcast media and telecommunication] do not hesitate to engage in political activity to promote their interests” (Mansell and Raboy, 2014, p.4). For instance, the USA-based global media conglomerates saw the advantages of scale and capacity over other countries and they explored the option of a multilateral trade agreement as an instrument to open the telecommunication and media markets (Ahn, 2006).

Global [communication] governance by its broad definition is described as “sustaining coordination and coherence among a wide variety of actors with different purposes and objectives such as political actors and institutions, corporate interests, civil society, and transnational organizations” (Pierre, 2000, pp.3-4). Going by this definition, there are many actors involved in shaping global communication governance (GCG) due to its ‘multi-stakeholders’ approach. Kooiman (2003) suggests the multi-stakeholder approach of GCG highlights the diversity, dynamics and complexities associated with the governing mechanisms and renders the conventional arrangement centred on state policy actors incapable of responding effectively to the challenges brought by the development in media technology and convergence. In this respect, Kooiman states:

No single [state] actor, public or private, has the knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic and diversified societal challenges; no governing actor has

an overview sufficient to make the necessary instrument effective, no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally, (Kooiman 2003, p.11)

The *diversity* Kooiman (2003) was referring to within the GCG could be interpreted as a shift from an exclusive presence of state actors to the interplay of a plurality of entities. For instance, the interactions between state regulatory bodies and other international actors produced governance outputs, which informed nation-states to embark on regulatory reform to cope with international regulations, a task some African countries like Ghana and Nigeria were not able to accomplish in their ‘attempt’ at DSO (see Chapter 7). Both countries were yet to domesticate the new broadcast regulatory reform in their national law (Bedu-addo, 2023; Abikanlu, 2018).

In terms of *dynamics*, Kooiman (2003) discusses the dynamic quality of governing processes characterised by a centrality of information exchange and communicative interaction which informs choices about change and conservation in policy discourses and action. In other words, the dynamic approach to GCG suggests a complete shift from a ‘state-centre logic’ grounded in ‘traditional diplomatic codes of secrecy’ and policy exclusivity such as found in the Nigerian context of DTT policy implementation (this is demonstrated in Chapter 7), to an approach typified not only by a diverse range of actors but also by the societal quest for institutional accountability, transparency and public scrutiny. The *complexity* approach is the combination of both the diverse and dynamics and also refers to the various interactions that occur in different forms, at different levels with different outcomes. However, scholars (Ó Siochrú and Girard, 2002; Hamelink, 1994) have traced the history of international policies related to communication and pointed out the different reasons driving international and global regulations of communication over time. Padovani and Pavan (2014) opine that some national administration governing arrangements had effects on those at a transnational level

just as some regulatory mechanisms adopted at the supranational level could “constrain state autonomy, sometimes creating conflicting systems of jurisdiction” (p.547). The concern of this section is not to dwell on the complexities of GCG but to identify the key actors involved within GCG, outline their preferences and illustrate how their decision-making mechanism affected the DTT policy implementation of state actors like Nigeria.

For the purpose of this research, the policy actors involved in the global political arena of communication governance include national administrations, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professional associations, and private sector corporations and associations. The study will also include a key political actor in the sub-Saharan African region, the African Telecommunication Union (ATU). As observed in Chapter 1, such a regional actor (ATU) helped to shape the degree of harmonisation within the sub-region and presented a common agenda at the international level. First, the thesis examines the significant role of national administration within the GCG.

National administrations witnessed a rapid change in media and communication as a result of commercialisation, privatisation, and globalisation such that national policies have to accommodate a “more extensive and differentiated form of social management” (McQuail, 2007, p.19). Particularly, digitisation and media convergence blur the demarcations between broadcast media and telecommunication thereby necessitating further expansion of the scope of broadcasting regulations. It could be argued then that traditional statutory broadcasting policy became insufficient and required new forms of media regulation (Puppis, 2010, p136). Digitisation thus presents an opportunity for national administrations to adopt a reform regulatory framework that would enable broadcasting and telecommunication to cope with

the challenges of DTT policy. Apparently, Nigeria missed the opportunity by not adopting the legal framework that would back the reform regulatory DTT policy (as will be demonstrated later on in Chapter 7) and analysts have noted that national administration policies have been a key determinant of the transition to digital terrestrial TV. However, policy inadequacy does not render national administrations obsolete (Kooiman, 2003, p.3) or powerless instead, “the capacity for conventional ‘command’ and ‘control’ regulation is said to be complemented and gradually replaced by a capacity for influence” (Puppis, 2010, p137). The capacity of national administrations to influence decisions in international organisations is a form of power.

However, “the ‘realpolitik’ of international organisations is forcing other nations to accept her [the] decisions by the menace of unilateral action, secret deals among powerful countries, and dragging in impertinent bilateral or multilateral agendas of crucial interest to reluctant nations”, (Ahn 2006, p.73) which the EU had demonstrated by pushing the DTT agenda in region 1 as Yomi Bolarinwa, former DG of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) also confirmed thus,

You must realise that we do not manufacture any equipment in Africa, or let me limit myself to West Africa, which I know well. We do not manufacture any equipment and so when we take this into consideration, we have to follow... and then you know region 1 is where you have Europe and they do manufacture equipment, so we need to closely follow the European Union. Even when you look at the 2006 planning, the software used [DVB-T] was developed in Europe, so we closely monitored the decision taken by European countries and based on that position we also took a final position, (Yomi Bolarinwa, personal communication in November 2022)

Suffice it to say that in the context of globalisation, the idea of national sovereignty is under siege. National administrations may adopt new policies in accordance with international agreements and treaties, which suggests a surrender of sovereignty however voluntary. In essence, Nigeria being a member state and signatory to ITU conventions is obligated to

undergo the digital migration. Therefore, this study asks: is the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting what Nigeria need at the moment in the face of other crucial socio-political and economic challenges or was the digital switchover policy an international agenda ‘foisted’ on reluctant nations? To answer this question, the chapter examines the role of intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) within the GCG.

The intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) concerned with global communication governance include the United Nations organisations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). This also includes the ‘trade and market paradigm’, the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Funds (IMF) and the World Bank), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). One of the duties of the IGOs is to set standards and a global political agenda. The IGOs are also known to fulfil three functions namely: modifying states’ behaviour; being instrumental to nation-states’ foreign policy; and acting as players in their own right (Hamelink, 1994, p39). Although the power of the IGOs to carry out their decisions ranges from simple consultation to sanctions; they wield influence “through setting the agenda, proposing budgets, executing activities, undertaking external liaison, and by the other measures available to bureaucracies” (Ó Siochrú, Girard and Mahan 2002, p.39).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the ITU is the UN agency responsible for spectrum allocation and an orbital slot for satellites among its member states and it is organised into three main sectors: ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), ITU Telecommunications Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and ITU Development Sector (ITU-D). The power and functions of these



sectors were enshrined within the ITU Constitution and supplemented by the ITU Convention (Ahn, 2006). For instance, the ITU-R is responsible for the global governance of spectrum use and ensures the efficient and economic use of the radio spectrum by all communication services, including those using satellite orbits, as well as the carrying out of studies and the adoption of recommendations on radio communication matters (El-Moghazi et al. 2014). In addition to that, the ITU-R is also involved in the standardisation of mobile technologies (IMT) (El-Moghazi et al. 2017). As a result of the efficient use of the spectrum, the ITU prompted its member states to migrate from analogue to digital terrestrial systems of broadcasting by 2015 after the ITU convention in 2006. This prompt became *binding* on all member states, who were signatories to the Geneva 2006 Convention. The ‘rush’ to meet up the 2015 deadline by African countries had overarching effects on the implementation of DTT policy in the sub-Saharan African region. Berger (2010) criticises the rush by African countries to jump onto the bandwagon and be “part of the world of DTT before 2015” (p.22). The author argues that there was no scarcity of frequency in Africa because “many [African] countries still have analogue space available for many broadcasters” (p.55) and the constraint for African broadcasters therefore, was non-technical factors.

In the context of Nigeria, to justify the DTT decision in line with the global agreement, state actors such as the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) made a political statement indicating that digital migration was an ‘inevitable global phenomenon’ therefore, Nigeria cannot be left behind (cited in Berger, 2010) to become a dumping country for obsolete broadcasting equipment. However, NBC did not ensure a broad-based policy was put in place, which exposed the inadequate communication policy in Nigeria to cope with the challenges of digital migration. Unlike developing countries, their developed counterparts were more resourceful and had broader policies to deal with the issue of digital migration.

Berger (2010) argues therefore, the real politics behind the international decision to embark on digital migration was to fulfil the burning desire in developed countries where “big broadcast industries want to run more channels (including for High Definition TV and for 3D TV) [and] they cannot do so in these [developing] countries because analogue transmission methods are hogging the frequency” (Berger, 2010, p.17). Therefore, going by the critical political economy approach to DTT policy discussed in the conceptual chapter, such international policy decisions empowered some actors for example, the EU member states while putting political and economic pressure on other actors such as Nigeria and other countries in the sub-Saharan African region.

The ITU is not the only IGO whose policy decisions are *binding* on member-states, UNESCO, an international policy actor, adopted several legal instruments in the form of conventions, recommendations, and declarations relating to various aspects of GCG (MacLean, 2014) particularly, the UNESCO 2009 General Conference. The document produced at the UNESCO 2009 Convention in 2009, reads in part:

Assist Member States in building capacity for the establishment and application of internally recognized legal and regulatory standards for freedom of expression, freedom of information and free and independent [broadcast] media; assist Member States in the establishment of an enabling environment for freedom of expression and freedom of information; promote internet governance based on the principles of openness, diversity, including cultural and linguistic diversity and transparency, (UNESCO 2009, p.60)

The statement above emphasises one of the roles of UNESCO in the GCG to assist member states towards the free flow of information to ensure the promotion of good governance. In this regard, “there are [...] some indicators that [broadcast] media are being more recognised by the policy-makers as having a central role in [national] development” (Dunu, 2013, p.184). Therefore, UNESCO made PSB an important pillar in its standard-setting functions

about the broadcasting system of member states (Jakubowicz, 2014). For instance, in the African Charter on broadcasting developed under UNESCO auspices in 2001, there was a special section on PSB that stated:

All state and government-controlled broadcasters should be transformed into public service broadcasters, that are accountable to all strata of the people as represented by an independent board, and that serve the overall public interest, avoiding one-sided reporting and programming in regard to religion, political beliefs, culture, race and gender, (UNESCO 2009, np)

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the broadcast media in Nigeria has always been under the control of governments and its board as constituted has never been independent due to the laws setting up the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Although defining the public interest in broadcasting was always difficult (Melody 1990; Blumler 1992; Barendt 1993; Hoffmann-Riem 1996), in the Nigerian broadcasting space, the government determines what was in the best interest of the public. As would be demonstrated in Chapter 8, the Nigerian government insisted that in the public interest, FTA and not pay-TV should drive DTT services and perhaps this was also an attempt to revamp the moribund PSB in Nigeria neglected after the liberalisation of the broadcasting sector in 1992. However, in line with one of the principles of the UNESCO 2009 Convention, which emphasised access of all to information [in the digital environment], the then Nigerian Minister of Information Alh. Lai Mohammed noted,

The ordinary Nigerian must reap the benefits of digital television without having to break the bank. This is what we have set out to achieve. Once a TV household acquires the Set-Top-Box and pays the once-a-year access fee, which is a token, it's free viewing all the way. Our FreeTV brand is not a fluke. There is no monthly subscription payment. This enables millions of Nigerians who cannot afford to pay the rising subscription fees being charged by the Pay TV platforms to enjoy the benefit of digital television, (Alh Lai Mohammed's speech on 29/04/2021)

The study will further analyse in Chapter 8 the public interest objectives of the PSB to highlight the UNESCO standard-setting and show whether or not these objectives were

achieved in the overall communication policy of Nigerians in the era of digital broadcasting. Before then, this chapter examines the fiscal impact of other intergovernmental organisations such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the global agreement in digital switchover policy.

The Bretton Woods institutions in the international policy arena supplemented the role of UNESCO and ITU. The WTO was part of an initiative that began in 1948 to “create an international trade organization that would help re-build a global economy shattered by Great Depression and World War II, along the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (the Bretton Woods institutions)” (MacLean, 2014, p.43). Together, these international institutions came up with policy-centred frameworks that incorporate the neoliberal free market ideology as a global set of rules; and all states signatories to the WTO and the IMF agreed to adhere to the rules or suffer severe penalties (Harvey, 2007). The WTO has two major binding agreements relating to global communication governance – telecommunication services and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, and these agreements are enforceable through the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (MacLean, 2014, p.44). The Bretton Woods institutions, dedicated to creating a unified international financial system (Calabrese and Briziarelli, 2014, p.385) provide credits and loans with strict conditions to recipient member states especially the economically weak countries. According to Kwakwa (2000), ‘weaker’ countries frequently became ‘rule takers’ instead of negotiating parties. The intervention of the WTO and Bretton Woods institutions in developing economies often resulted in the liberalisation and privatisation of the recipient’s national economy in favour of international financial capital as demonstrated in Chapter 2. Petras and Brill (1986), capture it succinctly when they note,

The IMF does not act independently, nor does its symbolic representation as an international body signifies anything less than a political economic instrument for

Western capital. The IMF is a significant actor, but its effectiveness is based on the economic interests it represents and its capacity to fashion a policy, which effectively defends those interests, (Petras and Brill 1986: 425 cited in Dunn, 2014, p.405)

In the case of Nigeria, the intervention of the WTO and Bretton Woods institutions helped to shape the direction of the regulatory policy in the broadcasting sector. The IMF imposed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as a condition for the fiscal assistance to the Nigerian economy in 1986. A condition that compelled the Nigerian government under Gen. Ibrahim Babangida to liberalise and privatise all state enterprises, including the broadcasting and telecommunication sectors in 1992. As a result, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) were established to regulate the broadcast and telecommunication industries respectively. The government became less involved in the broadcast media and telecommunication sectors until the global agreement on digital migration when the government reviewed its role and intervened once more in the media ecosystem much of which would be investigated in the succeeding chapters.

The significant role of the UN organisations related to global communication governance, the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions replaced, particularly the ITU and UNESCO, and together with the support of private-sector corporations renewed the neoliberal ideas within global communication governance.

Private-sector corporations and associations constitute a ‘power’ block in global communication governance because they have deep pockets and wield economic influence through a “well-organised lobby supported by huge spending” (Ó Siochrú, Girard and Mahan 2002, p.148). Private-sector corporations operate in the global arena as Sector Members without voting power and as industry or multinational corporations (MNCs) in national governments. However, MNCs exert economic power in nation-states to facilitate a

beneficial investment environment (Hamelink, 1994). As it appears, the MNCs benefit most from global marketisation and deregulation of the broadcast media and telecommunication sectors. For instance, the neo-liberal free market orthodoxy advanced the expansion of South Africa's broadcast media conglomerate, MultiChoice and the telecommunication giant, MTN into the Nigerian market in 1994, soon after the liberalisation of both sectors in 1992. This initiative enabled the South African conglomerates to dominate and monopolise the pay-TV and telecommunication sectors facilitated by Apartheid capitalism (Abikanlu, 2018) to the detriment of domestic players who do not have the financial capacity to compete in the 'newly' deregulated media and telecommunication market. For instance, HiTV a domestic pay-TV operator tried to compete with DStv, (operated by MultiChoice) by "acquiring the broadcast rights to the English Premier League (EPL), previously held by DStv" (Abikanlu 2018, p.118) but it could not sustain this competitive edge in the Nigerian pay-TV market due to financial constraint to keep up with payment schedule to the English Premier League (EPL).

Likewise, the incursion of the Chinese media conglomerate, StarTimes in 2010 into the Nigerian digital media environment at the start of the DSO process followed the same pattern as MultiChoice. StarTimes supported by the Chinese state capitalism invested in the Nigerian DTT market as they have done in several other African countries under the guise of supporting the digital transition in Africa. The entry of StarTimes shifted the competition in the Nigerian pay-TV environment. Abikanlu (2018) notes StarTimes was able to break the market dominant established by DStv in the pay-TV market within a short time and became the lead service provider in the DTT market, which could be attributed to "the affordability of its services and the introduction of content in various indigenous languages that cut across the main ethnic concentration" (Abikanlu 2018, p.119). This then prompted MultiChoice to

launch its own DTT service GoTV in 2011 to match the stiff competition of StarTimes. There had been the entries of other pay DTT service providers such as Metro Digital, TStv, KWESÉ TV, and Stong/MyTV however; with the launch of the FreeTV in Nigeria in 2016, the government had insisted as a policy that FTA and not pay-TV should drive the DTT services.

Next is the influence of international non-governmental organisations (NGO) actors in the international policy arena. The opportunities for the international NGO actors involved in the policy and regulatory processes of GCG institutions are, in general, “much more limited than at the national level” (MacLean 2014, p.47) and have influenced outcomes of UN programmes that have a direct link on issues bordering on global communication governance like the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), (Raboy 2004b, p. 228). Ahn, (2006, p.76-77) notes the functions of NGOs in the global arena thus:

International NGOs and professional associations perform various functions in global politics: as publicists, calling public attention to certain matters; as lobbyists, exerting various pressures for the adoption of demands; as legitimators, providing credibility to certain statements; as epistemic communities, which is sources of knowledge, expertise, ideas and intellectual support; and as alternative forums, offering opportunities for international discussion and opinion building where the IGOs decline to keep concerns on the agenda.

As observed in Chapter 3, policy decision-making at the ITU international Conferences was dominated by developed countries because they understood better the process and technicality of policy formulation particularly on the technical issues of the digital migration process. Most African countries lack the technical expertise to cope with the intricacies of digital switchover (Bedu-addo, 2023); therefore, they rely on global bodies for expertise, ideas, and intellectual advice to craft digital policies. One of such global bodies is the

Commonwealth Telecommunication Organisation (CTO). According to Shola Taylor, former Secretary-General of CTO (2015, p.1):

The CTO founded in 1901, is an international treaty organisation of the Commonwealth family mandated in telecommunication and ICTs in which the 53 Commonwealth countries, industry and some other Non-Commonwealth countries are members. Through this membership network, the CTO facilitates policy and regulatory dialogues aimed at improving the utilization of ICTs for development.

In some instances, the intervention of global and transnational organisations in national administrations has been seen as an avenue through which external organisations could exert their influence over a nation-state's domestic DSO policy. This observation may be valid when considered against the background that the UK is a leading member of the CTO (El-Moghazi et al. 2014; El-Moghazi et al. 2017) and this study established the policy influence Europe wields in region 1. For instance, Bedu-addo (2023) observed how during the DSO policy-making process in Ghana, the combined effects of state-controlled institutions and transnational NGOs such as CTO defined a narrow technical focus for Ghana's DSO objectives while it "relegated longstanding broadcasting policy and regulatory concerns that could have been made part of the policy objective to the background" (p.55). In the Nigerian context, the CTO offered 'to assist within the framework of capacity building' should the government wish to embark on a comprehensive review of the individual Acts for telecommunication, broadcasting and mass communication to cope with digital convergence. In Taylor's (2015) view, the repeal of the individual acts "would provide a modern ICT framework that will take the country forward and allow the full benefits of ICTs to be realized" (p.4).

In summary, global communication governance involves a multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach to policy decision. However, some policy actors hold more influence than others,



particularly on the technical issue of digital switchover policy formation. Africa and other developing countries lack the technicalities required to cope with the demand of formulating DTT policy and therefore must rely on the advice and expertise of external global bodies, such as ITU and CTO. This reliance on external bodies creates opportunities for these organisations to influence the domestic DTT policy of national administrations.

Having identified key actors in the GCG, it is necessary to examine the role Nigeria plays in the international policy arena. How important is Nigeria, who are the actors developing her policy and who are those representing her in the international policy arena?

### **6.3 The place of Nigeria in the international broadcasting policy arena: playing the ‘big brother’ role in Africa**

Apart from the background study covered in Chapter 4, this chapter emphasises the significance of Nigeria’s crucial role in the supranational policy forum. Towards the end of the chapter, I illustrate that Nigeria’s image, particularly in Africa, is not proportional to its internal politics and policy inaction on the DSO process. The fundamental determinants of Nigeria’s foreign policy were designed towards the attainment and preservation of national unity, security, and survival, which “may be more easily found in foreign relations and foreign policy than in the beleaguered milieu of domestic [broadcasting] setting” (Afinotan, 2007 cited in Afinotan 2017, p.164). This supports the thesis’ argument that Nigeria’s foreign policy approach has negatively impacted the domestic broadcasting policy. Despite this, Nigeria has established itself as a leader on the continent and beyond, earning the title “giant of Africa” (Ostheimer, 1973). To attest to Nigeria’s leadership role, Legum (1973, cited in Johnson, 1986, p.294) notes:

Nigeria is Africa’s most important country- in size of population and in resources- as well as in trained people...it could provide decisive leadership for the entire continent

strong enough to consolidate a powerful organization embracing Anglophone and Francophone African States; militarily and economically strong enough to play a leading role in challenging the minority white regimes in Portuguese and Southern Africa and to provide more muscle for OAU [Organisation of African Unity]; and influential enough to strengthen the whole of Africa's relationships within the international community.

From Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country established and maintained a strong and unequivocal leadership position in foreign policy commitment to Africa. Although the notion of Africa as a centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy was not concretised until 1979 (Afinotan 2017) when Nigeria enshrined this in section 19 of the Nigerian Constitution of 1979 thus:

The State shall promote African unity as well as total political, economic, social, and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international cooperation conducive to the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states, and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestations.

Therefore, Nigeria assumed the 'big brother' role in sub-Saharan Africa majorly to support the liberation of Southern Africa; ensure peace and stability in the region as well as promote economic prosperity. For instance, politically, Nigeria played a leadership role in the liberation of Namibia in 1989 and the dismantling of South Africa's apartheid regime in 1994. Before then, Nigeria mediated in the Congo crisis of the early 1960s and her intervention in the perennial conflict between Togo and the Republic of Benin served Nigeria's national security interest (Afinotan, 2017). Nigeria also contributed variously to regional peacekeeping in West Africa through the Economic Community of West Africa States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), a West African multilateral armed force established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), particularly in Liberia and Sierra Leone where Nigeria accounted for 70% to 90% of the 20,000 troops involved in the peacekeeping mission (Ajayi, 1998 cited in Afinotan, 2017). Equally, Nigeria participated in the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia (1991), Bosnia (1992), Lebanon (2006), and Sudan

(2011) to demonstrate Nigeria's commitment to world peace as a central element in the foreign policy issue area.

Economically, Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa with a gross domestic product (GDP) amounting to USD\$477.4 billion in 2022 (Saifaddin Galal cited in Statista.com 22/10/23).

Nigeria's population (see Chapter 4) serves as the largest market in Africa, which has attracted foreign investors with the opportunity to sell and market media commodities and services in the country. With the global initiative in the digital migration process, Nigeria continues to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) from broadcast media and telecommunication conglomerates, again, being the largest broadcast media market with over 30 million TV households. However, the communication policy in Nigeria is arguably too weak for the domestic actors to take full advantage of the emerging digital broadcasting market.

In contrast to the communication policy models of the USA or UK, Nigeria's regulatory framework for communication is fragmented (Idachaba, 2018; Odufuwa 2010). It consists of various government agencies, each with its own area of responsibility. The Nigerian Press Council Acts established the Nigerian Press Council in 1992 to regulate the press media. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) was legally established in 1992 to regulate the telecommunication industry. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) was empowered by the NBC Act 38 of 1992, as amended by NBC Act 55 of 1999, to regulate the broadcasting industry. The National Frequency Management Council (NFMC), established by section 26 of the NCC Act 2003 and located within the Ministry of Communication, is charged with the responsibility for planning, coordinating, and bulk trans-sectoral allocation of radio spectrum to the regulatory bodies (NCC and NBC). The National Information

Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was established by the National Information Technology Act 2007 and is responsible for developing, standardising, coordinating, and regulating information technology practices in Nigeria. These government agencies were involved in the policy formulation and governance of the broadcast media and telecommunication sectors in Nigeria (Odufuwa 2010), and a selection of members from the aforementioned agencies and regulatory bodies represent Nigeria in the international policy arena (Friday Ukwela, personal communication, November 2022).

Strategically, Nigeria positioned itself within the international media and telecommunication policy arena to ensure that it got elected into the ITU Council regularly to continue to play a ‘critical role’ (Umar Danbatta’s speech cited in Greenbidge Reporters 04/10/2022). The Plenipotentiary Conference and the Administrative Council govern the ITU. The plenipotentiary conference is held every 4 years and it is the decision-making body that determines the direction of the ITU; however, the Council acts as the ITU governing body in the interval and between Plenipotentiary Conferences (Massaro, 2017). After the re-election of Nigeria into the Council at the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2022, Umar Danbatta, the executive vice chairman and chief executive officer of NCC noted:

The re-election of Nigeria as a member of the ITU Council for the next four years, again, points to the globally recognised leadership role Nigeria is playing in Africa and at the level of ITU Council in the area of telecommunications policy formulation and technical regulations development to drive ITU’s mission and vision (Umar Danbatta’s speech in Greenbidge Reporters cited 04/10/2022).

A few other Nigerians have also been elected into decision-making bodies of the ITU such as the ITU study group. For instance, the former Director General of the NBC, Yomi Bolarinwa served for 8 years as Vice-Chairman in the ITU’s Study Group 6 that dealt with broadcasting policy issues (Yomi Bolarinwa, personal communication, November 2022).

Arguably, strategic positioning in the international policy arena has critically helped Nigeria to build capacity, increase its participation in global conferences and impact the decision-making process at the regional and supranational levels.

#### **6.4 The significance of increased participation for Nigeria at the WRCs and the impact on the DTT policy implementation**

The thesis illustrated in Chapter 3 that the ITU-R divided the world into three regions for spectrum allocation (ITU-R 2008). Nigeria being a member of the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) is in Region 1 along Europe, the Arab Spectrum Management Group (ASMG) and the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC) countries. A country or group of countries may have a different spectrum use than the regional allocation in a specific band; if this happens, they may add a footnote to the Regional Radiocommunication stating their particular use. However, other neighbouring countries may oppose such use if it would constrain their use (ITU-R, 1995 cited in El-Moghazi et al., 2017).

The World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) is one of the ITU-R conferences that deliberate on specific radio communication matters. At WRCs, regional organisations put forward a common proposal on behalf of their member states and proposals must have the backing of more than one administration to be considered (El-Moghazi et al. 2014, & El-Moghazi et al. 2017). Usually, the previous one determined the agenda of the current conference however; one of the items on the agenda (agenda item 1.17) of the WRC-12 in 2012 came as a surprise to some member states, particularly the European countries. This study established that CEPT plans used to be the first and maybe the only choice for the Arabs and African countries (El-Moghazi et al. 2014) particularly as broadcasting planning in

the African continent was tied to Europe even though they may have different use of spectrum (El-Moghazi et al. 2017).

A comparative communication study indicates that the policy influence of Europe over Africa spectrum use was because “most of the developing countries lacked sufficient knowledgeable and experienced staff to participate efficiently in the decision making process” (Mc Cormick, 2007 in El-Moghazi et al. 2017, p.633). This research finds that over time Nigeria increased its participation in the ITU. Friday Ukwela, then Acting Director, Engineering and Technology at NBC in a personal communication, (November 2022) corroborates this finding thus:

Nigeria had had useful and viable contribution to the work of ITU in terms of the WRC in particular, which is the deciding conference for the use of the spectrum for the various bands. One of the Conferences [WRC] was chaired by a Nigerian, [Festus Dauda in 2015], that is to tell you the level of participation of Nigeria (Friday Ukwela, personal communication, November 2022).

As mentioned earlier, other Nigerians had served in the different sectors of the ITU; built capacity and gained knowledge to influence policy decisions at the sub-regional and international levels (Friday Ukwela, personal communication, November 2022). Yomi Bolarinwa, a former DG at NBC noted that the knowledge gained was shared in the form of workshops and conferences organised in Nigeria among stakeholders and later at a regional level to present an informed decision and a common front at the WRC. Bolarinwa notes further:

You will find conferences within Nigeria talking about upcoming WRC, [and asking] what will be Nigeria’s position? Nigeria’s position is articulated and that is taken into the [ITU] Conference. Nigeria also has regional meetings and takes regional positions with other countries (Yomi Bolarinwa, personal communication, November 2022)

One of those crucial positions articulated by Nigeria at the WRC-12 in 2012 helped shape policy decisions on the 700 MHz band. Edward Amana, the Chair of the Digital Implementation Team (DigiTeam) in Nigeria noted:

As a matter of fact, the motion that resulted in the resolution that resulted in the ceding of the 700 MHz band (694 to 790 MHz) was initiated by Nigeria, (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022).

At the WRC-12 in 2012, Africa having adopted Nigeria's proposal (Friday Ukwela, personal communication, November 2022) aligned its position with the Arabs in Region 1 to present a common policy position in the 700 MHz band. The common policy position was for "immediate allocation of spectrum in the 694-790 MHz band to mobile services to meet growing broadband demand" (El-Moghazi et al. 2014, p.13) and called for harmonisation of allocations in the band 698-790 MHz in the three regions of ITU-R (ASMG, 2011). The Arab and the African countries further argued that since the 694-790 MHz band was already allocated in ITU Region 2 and 3 for mobile services when deployed in Region 1 would decrease cost and "contribute to reducing the digital divide between developing and developed countries" (El-Moghazi et al. 2014, p.6). This position alignment supports Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993; 1999) advocacy coalition framework (ACF) examined in Chapter 2, which stipulates the relationships between actors who share similar values and beliefs and generally agree on the best solution to a certain policy issue (Van den Bulk 2012, p.226).

However, The CEPT and RCC countries in Region 1 opposed this position. CEPT argued that the 700 MHz band was heavily used by the broadcasting industry with long-term licensing arrangements (ITU, 2013b in El-Moghazi et al. 2014, p.6), while RCC contended, "such allocation would require a further coordination in border countries that are part of the GE-06 plan" (El-Moghazi et al. 2014, p.6). The conflict among these actors in the international policy arena justifies the concept of power that examines 'observable'

competition among interests as illustrated in Chapter 2. The policy decision at the WRC-12 was to allocate the 694-790 MHz in Region 1 to mobile services on a co-primary basis effective immediately after WRC-15 (El-Moghazi et al. 2014, p.6). Again, at the WRC-15 in 2015, African countries opposed the International Mobile Telecommunication (IMT) identification in the 470-698 MHz bands, which were already allocated to broadcasting services. Moreover, a change to the spectrum in the 470-698 MHz band for Africa would require “significant effort and financial resources to update the UHF broadcasting plan” (El-Moghazi et al. 2017, p.638), which could pose a further challenge. Therefore, the majority of the African countries were able to harmonise the use of the 470-698 MHz band for broadcasting services.

Some critics have argued that after the WRC-12, there was a decline in the influence of Europe in Region 1, while others argue that “the balance of power has changed a little bit” (El-Moghazi et al. 2014, p.11). This chapter presents a different perspective on the achievements of African and Arab countries in the WRC-12 and WRC-15. Despite the apparent progress made, it is argued that a significant portion of spectrum use in Africa and other developing countries may still be tied to industrialised nations. This is because the successes recorded were largely achieved with the support of foreign telecommunication and media industries. This is due to the fact that African countries do not have ‘national champions’ from their own industry to support them. El-Moghazi et al. (2014, p.11) also observe,

It seems that the European countries still have the upper hand with regard to decisions related to the industry, as they are a major base of several international operators and manufacturers that have operations in the Arab and African countries.

It has been noted that many consultancies and signal manufacturers have a vested interest in digital transition happening sooner rather than later, which agrees with Berger’s (2010, p.23)



assertion. Additionally, Africa is one of the fastest growing emerging markets, attracting major multinational corporations to its media and telecommunication sectors (El-Moghazi et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be argued that without the support of foreign telecommunication and media industries, the decision to enforce IMT in the 700MHz band would have been difficult to accomplish.

This section illustrated that the increased participation of Africa and other developing countries at the World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs) influenced policy decisions in the international policy arena. However, the position of African countries and Arab states cannot be enforced without the support of foreign telecommunication and media industries of developed economic countries. Thus, Nigeria through the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), advocated for enforcing International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) in the 700MHz band and using the 470-698 MHz band for broadcasting services in Region 1. In the next section, the chapter examines the implications of spectrum reallocation and management in Nigeria.

## **6.5 Re-planning of Nigeria RRC-06 Plan**

The WRC-12 implied that the spectrum had to be reallocated and managed for harmonisation at the international, regional, and national levels to avoid harmful interference. Therefore, Nigeria along with other Economic Committee of West African States (ECOWAS) in the sub-Saharan Africa region had to re-plan their RRC-06 to maximise the use of the Digital Dividend 1 (DD1) in the 790 to 862 MHz band (800 MHz band) and Digital Dividend 2 (DD2) in the 694 to 790 bands (700MHz band). ECOWAS also met to review and harmonise the spectrum use in the 470-694 MHz frequency range to avoid cross-border interference as Friday Ukwela, then Acting Director, Engineering and Technology at NBC explained:

The frequency planning was an African affair. Even at the ITU level, those things [meetings] happened but majorly it was within Africa. There were several meetings where...most of the meetings took place in Nairobi Kenya, because that is where the Head Quarter of the Africa Telecommunication Union (ATU) is. All the countries came together to do a re-planning of the various bands that are outside the DD1 and DD2, what was left of the UHF and decisions were taken. Accordingly, in West Africa, I remember when I was the Director of Engineering, I initiated a West Africa meeting where 5 countries in West Africa came together in Abuja to coordinate and re-plan the frequencies such that there are no international interferences along the border, (Friday Ukwela, personal communication, November 2022).

At the meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Broadcasting/Communications on 25 September 2013 in Banjul, Gambia, it was agreed to have a common standard for all ECOWAS countries and a common minimum standard for set-top boxes/digital receivers (Bolarinwa, 2015). The broadcasting transmission standard adopted in digital terrestrial broadcasting in ECOWAS country was the DVB-T 2 standard with MPEG-4 compression because it “provide[s] increased capacity and ruggedness in the terrestrial broadcasting environment” (Sugari and Reljin, 2011, p.109). Again, the DVB-T2 broadcast standard adopted was developed in Europe, which substantiated the earlier argument that spectrum use in Africa would still be tied to industry in developed countries until Africa began to manufacture telecom and media equipment to meet their need.

Beyond regional and international harmonisation of spectrum frequency, country-to-country frequency negotiation was also necessary to avoid harmful cross-border interference. Yomi Bolarinwa, former DG at NBC) observed:

What ITU allows is that once you come to ITU and say, between country A and country B, which are neighbours, this is the agreement. It is country-to-country and the ITU only coordinate. They (ITU) accept what you have agreed, (Yomi Bolarinwa personal communication November 2022).

As noted earlier in this chapter, the role of the ITU-R is to manage the efficient use of the spectrum among member states and fall back on the Convention agreement to settle any interference conflicts. Bolarinwa noted that the frequency of negotiation between Nigeria and its neighbours was challenging. For instance, the frequency of negotiation between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin posed a twin challenge of language barrier and little cooperation.

We went to the Republic of Benin... they are bilingual but when it comes to [negotiation with] Nigeria, they spoke [only] French and most of us [at the meeting] don't speak French. So you must also look for somebody to translate, so that is extra money. The coordination is not as frequent as it should be...your patience is tasked, but of course you must have patience because of what you desire," (Yomi Bolarinwa personal communication November 2022).

Although frequency co-ordination with Nigeria's immediate neighbouring countries had concluded (Bolarinwa, 2013), they were revisited at the actual point of digital transmitter deployment. For instance, the switch-on in Kwara State in 2018 afforded Nigeria to test frequency interference with the Republic of Benin (Kawu, 2018), while the switch-on in Kano State in November 2021 also tested frequency interference with the neighbouring Niger Republic. However, it may be difficult to ascertain the level of compliance with the cross-border frequency agreement because most of the countries in ECOWAS had not completed the DSO process at the time of writing (October 2023).

There were many new and emerging radio services and technologies competing to have access to the digital dividend spectrum in the 700 MHz and 800 MHz bands in Nigeria such as military, transportation, healthcare, education, media, communication and other socioeconomic activities. Therefore, the policy actors involved in the management and allocation of spectrum in Nigeria identified earlier in the chapter carried out frequency re-planning to ensure spectrum resources were efficiently and optimally utilised for the overall benefit of the country. The study will elaborate on their functions, roles and interests in

Chapter 7. The focus of this section is to illuminate the efficient utilisation of the digital dividend spectrum in the broadcast media and communication sectors as a result of the digital migration process, which majorly involves the reallocation of freed spectrum from analogue broadcasting to the telecommunication sector with high financial benefits to the government.

Yomi Bolarinwa, former DG at NBC noted thus:

At the planning stage, we already knew that we had to cede these [analogue] frequencies, so there was no plan to use them. As you do the transition, wherever you have the digital coverage, after a period you then switch over to the analogue. Once you switch over the analogue, you do not reallocate that particular frequency to any broadcaster. What was done carefully at the planning stage in 2006 was that those frequencies were not assigned, so what you then have on the ground is those who have been there [incumbent]; who have been on those frequencies, once digitization gets to their environment they switchover the analogue transition and the frequency is taken and reverted to ceded frequency (Yomi Bolarinwa personal communication November 2022).

Although the financial benefits of the digital dividend to a nation-state could be high, Gbenga-Ilori and Ibiyemi, (2010, p.82) are convinced, “it is important to use the dividends in a way that will also benefit the citizens of the country and not just driven solely by the market gains”. Such a conviction might have prompted the Nigerian government to assume a more prominent role to dictate the direction of the digital migration beyond the market imperatives and “deep economic interest of the private digital television services” (Abikanlu 2018, p.120). Again, the policy proposal of the government was to use the digital dividend to encourage deep penetration of broadband to bridge the digital divide in the urban and rural areas of the country. In March 2023, the government announced it had achieved 50% broadband penetration, which should drive digital inclusivity and digital economy (Temitayo Jaiyeola, 2023).

Having illustrated the place of Nigeria in the international community and much of her achievements in terms of influencing policy decisions in the sub-regional and supranational

policy arena, such as demonstrated above, the government was yet to complete the digital migration process. After all, both international and domestic arenas deploy a multi-stakeholder approach to policy issues. The gap between Nigeria's posture in the international policy community and the reality of her domestic digital switchover policy needs to be narrowed to the point of congruence as Nigeria's accomplishments in the international policy arena have consistently failed to approximate or even show potential to implement the domestic DTT policy. This throws up the main research question of the study and the argument that the failure of the government to accomplish the domestic digital switchover process could be attributed to the lack of political will and failure of leadership at home especially in the area of policy conceptualisation, design and implementation. The thesis then argues that the executive has centralised decision-making such that the DTT policy implementation is haphazard.

## **6.6 Conclusions**

This chapter is the first empirical chapter of the study; the others are Chapters 7 and 8. The chapter examined the global communication governance (GCG) process from Nigeria's perspective. It illustrated the multi-stakeholder approach of GCG to policy due to the involvement of various actors. This chapter observed that national administration's regulations such as in Nigeria were subsumed in global governance and agreement with other nation-states. However, the traditional statutory regulation of nation-states was not rendered obsolete by governance (kooiman, 2003, in Puppis, 2010) rather, the nation state's capacity for 'control' and 'command' regulation was complemented and replaced by the capacity to influence. This chapter further examined the central role of supranational institutions like the ITU, WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions in the implementation of the global agreement on the DSO in member states with particular reference to the Nigeria context. The interplay

between these supranational institutions and member states influenced the neo-liberal approach to telecommunication and media, which shaped the direction of the implementation of the DSO in Nigeria and other member states.

Radio spectrum was allocated to member states and regulated by ITU-R. The chapter examined the intersection between the international radio spectrum needs and Africa's international spectrum policy and uncovered some elements of restrictions. It revealed that broadcasting planning in the African continent was tied to Europe even though they may have different needs. Furthermore, increased participation by African countries at WRCs (WRC-12 in 2012 and WRC-15 in 2015 in particular) led them to record much success by retaining and harmonising the use of the 490-698 MHz band for broadcasting services and also managed to identify mobile allocation and IMT identification in the 698-790 MHz band needed to facilitate broadband penetration.

Following the progress made by Africa in the 700 MHz and 800 MHz bands, Nigeria, and other ECOWAS countries carried out frequency re-planning and relocated stations in the GE-06 plan that fell within the DD1 and DD2. Despite the significant roles Nigeria played within the sub-Saharan African region, the country still struggled to complete the transition to DTT. The next chapter will analyse the challenges and complexities of the DSO process in Nigeria to give better insights and address some of the thesis research questions.

## **Chapter 7: Analysis of DTT policy in Nigeria: politics of decision-making**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed global communication governance from Nigeria's perspective. It showed how Nigeria played a crucial role within the African sub-regional group, which had a significant influence on Africa's decisions at the World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs) (El-Moghazi et al. 2017). Specifically, in 2015, Nigeria led the "change in the African position regarding the 3.4-3.6 GHz band during WRC-15, where it influenced the ECOWAS position to favour IMT identification" (Youell, 2015b). Chapter 6 also demonstrated how Nigeria contributed to shaping the sub-regional policy on the harmonisation of the 490-698 MHz bands for broadcasting in Region 1, to prevent harmful interference with neighbouring countries. However, despite Nigeria's leadership role in the DTT policy in the sub-Saharan African region, it has yet to complete the DSO process and take full advantage of the accrued digital dividends (DD). Some African countries, such as Tanzania and Kenya, are already benefiting from it (GSMA, 2022).

The challenge of digital switchover (DSO) lies in the migration process itself (Ekeh, 2009 cited in Ihechu and Uche, 2012). No two national administrations have the same experience when it comes to implementing the migration process (García Leiva and Stark, 2009). Comparative studies of DSO policies indicate that countries that have completed the digital migration process adopt different approaches and face unique challenges along the way (Stark, 2007; García Leiva 2008; Galperin, 2004). This chapter provides a descriptive and chronological account of the digital switchover process in Nigeria. The critical analysis has been reserved for Chapter 8. This approach is intentional so that the reader can have a clear understanding of the DSO timeline. The chapter begins by examining the timeline of the

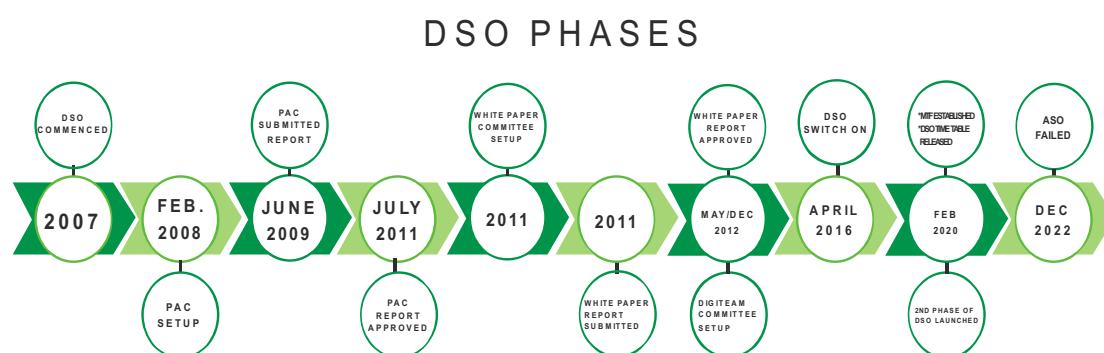
major events that took place from the Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC-06) in 2006 to the last change in leadership at the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in 2021. It highlights the impact of these events on the roadmap towards achieving the DTT policy in Nigeria. The timeline addresses the main research question of the thesis: “How has the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria been influenced by domestic politics and the global agenda?” The investigation continues by identifying the policy state actors and various domestic players involved in the DSO process, highlighting their preferences and interests. This helps to answer the sub-research question 2: “Who were the main stakeholder groups in the domestic policy arena? How effective was each stakeholder group in pursuing its own interests and goals?” In the end, this research finds that too many actors were involved, making the DSO process cumbersome.

## **7.2 Timeline of the key events in the DSO in Nigeria**

This section provides a timeline of the key events related to the DSO in Nigeria, starting from the RR-06 Conference in 2006 in Geneva where member states signatories to the Convention were encouraged to begin the DSO process. It covers the establishment of the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) in 2007, the award of two DTT licences to StarTimes Nigeria in 2010 and GoTV in 2011, and the release of the government White Paper in 2011. The White Paper recommended the formation of a committee to lead the implementation of the DSO process, which led to the creation of the Digital Implementation Committee (DigiTeam) in 2012. However, between 2012 and 2015, there was no significant progress due to a lack of funding. The DSO process only commenced in 2016 in Jos, Plateau State after the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) sold some of the 72 MHz bands that were ‘laying fallow’ (Emeka Mba, 2015). The timeline also includes the frequent changes of the Director General at NBC from 2013 to 2021, which contributed to the delay in the DSO process. Figure 7.1 provides a visual representation of the timeline of the DSO in Nigeria.



**Figure 7.1: Timeline of the DSO in Nigeria**



**Source:** Author based on secondary materials and other publicly available documents.

The DSO process in Nigeria has been protracted and complicated; I have prepared a summary table of key events below (see Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1 Summary of key events of the DSO in Nigeria**

Date	Key events	Set ASO dates
2006	ITU gave a directive to member states to commence digital migration after the RRC-06 Convention	June 2015 for UHF band and June 2020 for VHF band
2007	President Yar'Adua approved the commencement of DSO in Nigeria	
2008	Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) inaugurated with Engr. Wakombo as Chairman	
2009	PAC submitted the report to the Federal Government	Set June 2012 as completion date
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>President Yar'Adua died, stalling the release of the PAC report</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NBC awarded DTT licence to StarTimes</li> </ul>	
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NBC awarded DTT licence to GoTV</li> <li>White Paper drafting Committee on DSO constituted with Amb. S.O Willoughby as Chairman</li> </ul>	
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White Paper on DSO released a month before the initial completion date of June 2012</li> <li>DigiTeam was constituted to drive the DSO implantation</li> </ul>	Nigeria missed the June 2012 completion date, set June 2015 as new date
2013 -2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The DSO process stalled due to lack of funds</li> </ul>	Nigeria missed the 2015 ITU deadline and sets June 2017 as new date
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change of government, President Muhammadu Buhari assumed power</li> <li>NBC raised N34 billion (equivalent to USD\$171 million by selling part of the 700 MHz band to MTN to fund the DSO</li> </ul>	
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSO switch-on in Jos, Plateau state on 30<sup>th</sup> April marking the beginning of simulcast period and Free-TV</li> <li>Emeka Mba sacked as DG of NBC and Is’haq Moddibo Kawu appointed</li> <li>DSO switch-on in the FCT Abuja</li> </ul>	
2017	DSO switch-on in Kwara state and Kaduna state	Nigeria missed June 2017 completion date and set 2020 as new date
2018	DSO switch-on in Enugu state and Osun state	
2019-2020	DSO hiatus due to inaction on the part of government	No ASO was achieved

2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kawu removed as DG of NBC and Armstrong Idachaba appointed in an acting capacity</li> </ul>	Nigeria set 7 December 2022 as ASO date
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministerial Task Force inaugurated to drive DSO</li> <li>• DSO Time-table released</li> <li>• DSO 2<sup>nd</sup> phase commenced with the switch-on in Lagos state</li> <li>• Idachaba removed and replaced with Balarabe Sheu Ilelah as DG.</li> <li>• DSO switch-on in Kano, so far, DSO has been launched in 8 out of the 36 states</li> </ul>	
2022	NBC and MTF negotiated an MoU between ITS and NTA-Star to facilitate a quick DSO roll-out for December 2022	No ASO was achieved

**Source:** Author based on news reports and other secondary materials publicly available.

### ***7.2.1 From the inauguration of the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) (2007) to the award of DTT licences (2011): circumstantial delay of report for public scrutiny***

In line with global best practices, most countries that embarked on digital migration established a task force to draw up a roadmap on the implementation for the DSO process (GSMA, 2022). The essence of a roadmap was to delineate a timeline that was important to ensure that all stakeholders had a clear understanding of the process and its milestones. For instance, Kenya constituted a multi-stakeholder digital migration task force in 2007 (Kitisha et al., 2016), which defined “clear deadlines, contemplating potential consumer issues at an early stage, and laying out the necessary transition steps,” (GSMA, 2022, p.25). Similarly, Uganda began its preparatory phase in 2009 following the approval of its policy on DTT (Agona and Otim, 2011). In Nigeria, the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting commenced in 2007 under the administration of late Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, and the government, through a domestic policy decision, set an ambitious completion date of 17 June 2012, three years earlier than the GE-06 agreement deadline, and

such a decision, Berger (2012) quips, required a broad-base policy development (p.28) to achieve.

On 13 February 2008, President Yar'Adua through the then Honourable Minister of Information and Communications, Mr. John Ogar Odey inaugurated the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) on transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting in Nigeria with Engineer Isaac Wakombo as the chairman of the committee. Engineer Wakombo was the former Director of Engineering at the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Other members of the PAC Committee comprised a wide range of stakeholders, including government representatives, the National Broadcast Commission (NBC), veterans in the broadcast industry, telecommunication experts, and the consumer protection council.

The task of the Presidential Advisory Committee included but was not limited to:

- (1) Recommend a policy on digital terrestrial broadcast transition using global best practices
- (2) Recommend appropriate regulatory framework
- (3) Recommend a National Broadcasting Model
- (4) Assess impact of the digitization on consumers and recommend possible government intervention
- (5) Determine the quantum of expected digital dividend
- (6) Assess the environmental impact of digitization, if any, and recommend steps to be taken
- (7) Advise the government on any action relevant to a smooth transition in Nigeria

The Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) met on two occasions, the first was on 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008 and on 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009 in Osun State, South-west Nigeria. The PAC report addressed issues concerning the regulatory framework to accommodate digital broadcasting, a new licensing regime; a consumer awareness campaign and funding the DSO amongst other recommendations. The PAC submitted its final report to the Federal Government on 20 June 2009 with a well-defined roadmap that would have seen Nigeria completing the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting by 17 June 2012. However, the government did not take an immediate decision on the final report of the PAC. This non-decision, which is also regarded as a decision (Freedman, 2014), was due to the political challenges in the country at the time - the militancy in the Niger Delta region, the prolonged sickness of President Yar'Adua, which resulted in several overseas medical treatments and his eventual death on 05 May 2010 - and other 'unforeseen bureaucratic delays' made it impossible for the government to act on the recommendations of the Committee (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022). The circumstances of the inaction of the government not to immediately act on the recommendations of the PAC report underscores the significance of timing, which has been identified as critical in the outcome of the digital migration process. According to Idachaba (2018), the time of the year chosen for analogue switch-off can impact the success of the process especially if it falls within a political calendar like general elections. For instance, in Kenya, the plans for the ASO were postponed due to the Presidential election in March 2012 (Idachaba 2018). Apart from the death of President Yar'Adua in May 2010, the preparation for general elections in Nigeria in 2011 might have contributed to the non-decision on the part of the government to act on the PAC report.

The government's decision to delay implementing a policy regarding the switch to digital terrestrial television (DTT) had negative effects on the process. This delay allowed certain players to gain an advantage over others. For example, while the policy was still being developed, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) went ahead and awarded two DTT licences to private companies under the old licensing regime. StarTimes Nigeria, a subsidiary of Chinese media conglomerate StarTimes Media, was awarded the first licence in 2010, while GoTV, operated by multinational South African media company MultiChoice Nigeria, was awarded the second licence in 2011. This decision by NBC gave the pay DTT operators an unfair advantage, making them dominant players in the DTT ecosystem in Nigeria.

### ***7.2.2 The Government White Paper (2011)***

White papers are official documents that analyse issues about subject matters, along with proposed solutions. As such, a Government White Paper is a policy document produced by the government, which presents proposals for future legislation. In Senegal, "an updated regulated framework for digital broadcasting was established in 2017, with the legislative's approval of a new Press Code" (GSMA, 2022, p.30). Likewise in Tanzania, legal backing was given to the recommendations for licensing and policy frameworks on its digital broadcasting as early as 2006 (Kisaka, 2015). On 11 July 2011, the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan approved the final report of PAC and instructed the Secretary to the Federal Government to constitute the white paper drafting committee on digital migration (personal communication with Engr. Amana June 2022). The committee, led by Ambassador S. O. Willoughby, the then Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Information, had three weeks to complete its tasks.

The recommendations of the White Paper, mostly in tandem with the PAC report were approved in 2012 (Idachaba, 2018) and became the policy document driving the DSO process in Nigeria. The ITU recommended that a legal framework should be established before the commencement of the DSO process, which should make the GE-06 agreement domesticated in the laws of member states. Therefore, the policy document approved by the Nigerian government was meant to be an amendment to the existing NBC Act No 38 of 1992 (as amended by No 55 of the 1999 Constitution). Unlike in Kenya, Tanzania, and Senegal, the policy document driving the DSO in Nigeria did not receive legislative backing, a scenario similar to what was observed in Ghana (Kobina Bedu-addo, 2023). Some critics have attributed this to the lack of political will of the government. For this reason, it appeared that without legislative backing, the DSO implementation operated solely on the executive policy left to the whims of the Minister as evident in the directive given to broadcasters to migrate onto the digital platforms of the two licensed signal distributors when it was clear that they (the licensed BSDs) did not have the capacity to carry out this function.

The recommendations of the policy document in Nigeria followed the approach of unbundling the audio-visual value chain, which allowed for competition in broadcast signal distribution and content provision as found in Kenya, Tanzania, and Cameroon, among other African countries. Other recommendations of the policy document included a restructure in the licensing framework for the split structure; management of the digital data spectrum (DDS), technical standards to adhere to in the transition; and set-top boxes to be manufactured in the country to boost employment capacity (White Paper on DSO in Nigeria, 2012 reproduced in Idachaba, 2018). However, the policy document without any law backing appeared to be merely a guiding paper [document] on the implementation of the DSO.

### ***7.2.3 The digital implementation committee (DigiTeam) (2012-2015)***

García Leiva (2010) suggests that the transition to digital terrestrial television offers various opportunities for economic and industrial development. The author noted further “the amount of spectrum to be released and the necessity to upgrade equipment raise, have led most [...] countries to adopt an explicit policy on the transition to digital television” (p.3). In order to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by DTT, most countries engaged in digital migration set up a body to drive the policy on the transition to digital television. In the UK, Digital UK, an independent organisation was entrusted to handle the digital transition (Agona and Otim, 2011) while in Kenya, the Digital Transition Committee (DTC), managed the transition process. In Nigeria, the digital implementation committee (DigiTeam) was constituted in December 2012 to drive the implementation of the recommendation of the Government White Paper. The DigiTeam was composed of a 14-man team and was headed by a seasoned broadcaster, Engineer Edward Amana (Idachaba, 2018).

Although the policy document recommended the establishment of DigiTeam and its funding, the government did not make provision for the body, instead, the DigiTeam went cap-in-hand with NBC to carry out its primary roles. This lack of provision of funds by the government to DigiTeam constituted a constraint, which prevented it from operating effectively and efficiently.

The terms of reference under which DigiTeam was established were another major constraint to the function of the body. The White Paper directed that “DigiTeam be set up with the secretariat and leadership provided by the regulator”, (White Paper, 2012, section 31.2. i). This put DigiTeam under the supervision of NBC. However, the NBC under Emeka Mba set up a parallel body DIGIGROUP, to perform the same functions as DigiTeam (Edward



Amana, personal communication, June 2022). Again, DigiTeam was expected to report its activities to the Minister of Information, which is reminiscent of the policy of ‘control’ the government has over the NBC through the law setting it up.

#### ***7.2.4 Digital switch-on: the launch of the pilot phase of the DSO (2013-2016)***

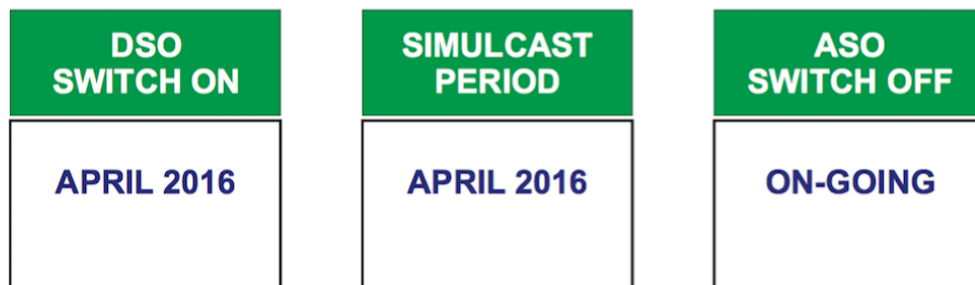
The DSO process witnessed a gap between 2012 after DigiTeam was constituted, and 2015, when a new government took over the administration due to the lack of funds to implement the DSO agenda. According to Edward Amana, the Chair of DigiTeam,

There were no budgetary allocations for the transition in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 national budgets. [Although the policy document recommended] the seed grant should be supplemented by funds accruable from the ceding of 72 MHz spectrums, and that 790-862 MHz should be utilised in the funding of the transition programme; the government did not honour any of these commitments. In light of the above situation, NBC had to seek Presidential approval to lease out a portion of the digital dividend spectrum in the 700 MHz band to a telecommunication company [MTN] and was able to raise the sum of N34 billion (Thirty-four billion Naira, equivalent to USD\$171 million) towards the implementation of the transition, (Edward Amana, personal communication June 2022).

The lease of the portion of 72 MHz spectrums to Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) Nigeria Communication enabled the DSO process to kick-start. The DSO strategy recommended by the policy document in Nigeria was a phased transition, which allowed a focused implementation from region to region (White Paper, 2012, section 30.3). Research has demonstrated that the digital migration process is comprised of three distinct phases: (1) Digital switch-on (DSO), the time when DTT services are introduced, which involves the deployment of digital infrastructure, the introduction of multiplex and content providers, and accessibility of STBs. (2) The Simulcast period is when both analogue and digital run concurrently to allow gradual replacement of transmission infrastructure and viewer devices

like STBs. (3) Analogue switch-off (ASO) brings an end to analogue transmission with the consideration that the majority of households can receive digital signals. On 30 April 2016, the pilot phase of the digital switchover was carried out in the city of Jos, Plateau State, the central region of Nigeria, marking the switch-on of the DSO process. At the same time, the simulcast period began in April 2016 but the projected ASO for June 2017 could not materialise due to the policy inconsistency in the implementation of the DSO process.

**Figure 7.2 Digital migration phases in Nigeria**



**Source:** Author based on publicly available documents

Countries embarking on DSO either adopt a policy-driven approach with a firm nationwide ASO or a phased approach ensuring that there is no conflict with other national activities. In countries like the USA, Netherlands and Denmark where a national approach was adopted, ASO services were ended simultaneously across the country (Idachaba, 2018) and viewers were expected to enjoy equal access to digital services. The majority of the countries around the world adopted a phased ASO strategy because it allowed “for an iterative deployment” (GSMA, 2017, p.18) that is, the implementation experience from one region could be employed to improve the process in another region. The strategy of the government to commence the switch-on in Jos may be attributed to the policy of the government to carry out a pilot scheme in a less populated city so as to be able to manage costs and learn from the

experience (Lai Mohammed's speech, June 2017). The buy-in of all stakeholders across the ecosystem was crucial to the digital migration process (Adeyemi Adepotun, 2017), therefore, at the switch-on in Jos, critical actors appeared to be carried along; the NBC, DigiTeam, broadcasters, STB Manufacturers and middleware providers. ITS, one of the licensed signal carriers (BSD) provided the signal distribution.

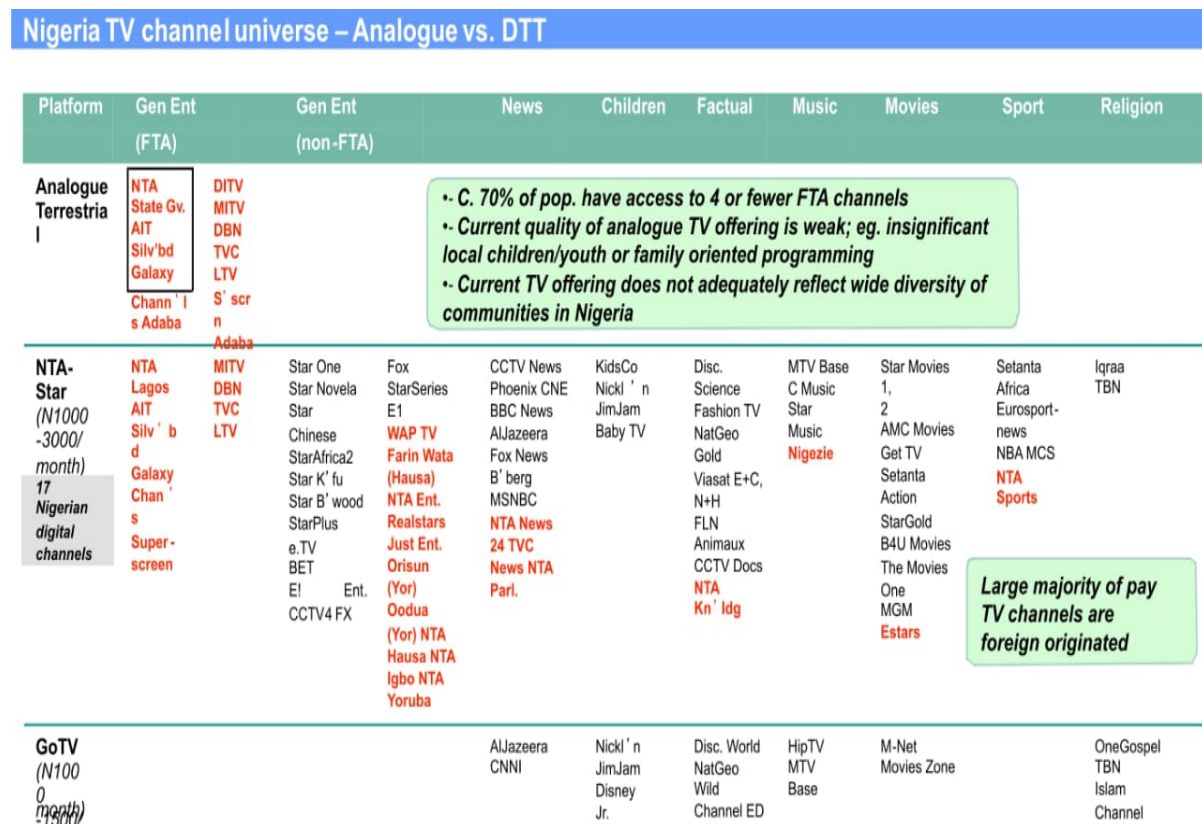
Governments encourage the uptake of DTT services so that the radio spectrum used in analogue broadcasting could be freed as quickly as possible for other uses. As a policy, the Nigerian government decided to subsidise STB at the initial stage. Out of the 850,000 STBs that were imported for the Jos switch-on, over 200,000 STBs were distributed to the 'common man' as field research to assist in gathering data for effective uptake of the DTT. According to the then Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed in a report on The Eagle Online, 2016:

We want the box [STB] to reach those who actually deserve it, the common man who has a television set and who in exchange for the box will give us data in planning for the eventual mapping and digitisation of the state, (Lai Mohammed speech, 2016).

Digitisation improves the viewing experience with better sound and picture quality, and a wider selection of channels (Nwoga et al. 2022, p.231). The switch-on in Jos marked the introduction of digital terrestrial television (DTT) service named *FreeTV* in Nigeria. Before the switch-on, viewers in Nigeria had access to limited free analogue television channels. According to the research carried out by Mediaator (2014) on Nigeria's DSO process in 2014, the analogue TV content offered was relatively weak: about 70% of the population had access to 4 or fewer free-to-air (FTA) channels with insignificant local children /youth or family-oriented programming. The content offered did not adequately reflect the wide diversity of communities in Nigeria. As Figure 7.3 below shows, the pay DTT platforms, NTA-Star and GoTV offered a few new digital-only Nigeria channels and were primarily in

entertainment. The policy of the government in digital broadcasting was to implement a change in the television viewing of the citizens and reinvigorate public service broadcasting (PSB) with the introduction of the FreeTV platform (Emeka Mba, presentation at the NBC retreat 2015), similar to what was obtainable in the UK. With the FreeTV platform, the government promised up to 60+ channels including the ‘must-carry’ channels at the launch of the second phase of the DSO in Lagos in 2021 (Lai Muhammed speech 29/04/2021).

**Figure 7.3 illustrating the status of analogue TV offerings in Nigeria**



Source: Mediaator 2014

The experience from the switch-on in Jos was useful and ‘applied’ (Kawu, 2018) in the take-off of the first phase of the DSO in the FCT Abuja on 22 December 2016.

### 7.2.5 One sack too many: replacement of the NBC bosses (2016-2020)

After Nigeria missed the ITU deadline of June 2015, it adopted the West African sub-region ASO date of June 2017. Still, the country was confronted with financial constraints to implement the DSO. As previously mentioned, NBC raised N34 billion (equivalent to USD\$171 million) intending to use the proceeds to fund the DSO process, as recommended by the policy document (White Paper 2012, section 18.4). However, the sales of the spectrum resulted in debates among some stakeholders who insisted that due process and best practices were not followed. They claimed that there were no public announcements made prior to the sales, which rendered the entire process non-transparent (Balancing Act, 2016).

There were various allegations against Emeka Mba-led NBC about the misappropriation of funds concerning the sales of the spectrum to MTN. Nigeria's anti-corruption agency, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) was invited to investigate. The EFCC arrested Emeka Mba and his director of Finance over 15 counts charge of money laundering (John Chuks Azu, 2017). Consequently, the account of the Commission was frozen causing a further delay in the DSO process. The government intervened by relieving Emeka Mba of his position and appointed Mallam Is'haq Modibbo Kawu as the new DG in May 2016.

Before Mallam Is'haq Modibbo Kawu settled to work, he had to deal with a lawsuit confronting the Commission. Pinnacle Communications Limited (PCL) had won the bid as the second broadcast signal distributor (BSD) in September 2014 but the NBC under Emeka Mba had licensed three other signal carriers namely MTS Communications Limited and the two existing DTT operators StarTimes and GoTV (Balancing Act, 2015). PCL filed a lawsuit in November 2014 to challenge the additional BSD licences because they argued the licences awarded were contradictory to the reference of the policy document. The white paper recommended up to three BSDs: one government-owned, one private-owned and a third BSD

could be added when exigency demanded. Court cases have been known to stall the DSO process as was observed in Kenya's digital migration where some stakeholders challenged the broadcasting signal distribution licensing process, which resulted in a three-year delay in the DSO process (GSMA, 2017). The lawsuit filed by PCL was one of the reasons Nigeria missed the ITU deadline of June 2015.

According to an article in the Guardian Newspaper by Adeyemi Adepetun (2019), in 2016, PCL announced that it had reached an out-of-court settlement with NBC over the lawsuit. The details of the settlement were not made known to the public. However, on 22 December 2016, phase 1 of the DSO was launched in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja with PCL as the signal carrier. After the launch in Abuja, NBC decided to adopt the city-to-city launch of the DSO; a state at a time within the six geo-political zones of the country (Kawu, 2018). Thereafter, the DSO was launched in four states: Kwara State in the North Central on 20 December 2017, Kaduna State in the Northwest, on 22 December 2017, Enugu State in the Southeast on 12 February 2018 and Osun State in the Southwest on 23 February 2018. According to the then DG of NBC, Modibbo Kawu, the switch-on in Kwara State was particularly significant because the state shares its border with the Republic of Benin, a neighbouring country. Therefore, the switch-on in Kwara State enabled Nigeria to test its digital signals for possible interference. As noted in Chapter 6, ITU had encouraged that there should be negotiation and harmonisation of frequency between countries to avoid signal interference.

Analysts observe the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) is significant in the DSO process. However, their inclusion in the digital migration in Nigeria was minimal (Abikanlu, 2018). The Modibbo Kawu-led NBC made a payment of N2.5 billion (equivalent to USD\$

8.3 million) to PCL as a seed grant for the DSO. The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), a pro-transparency NGO challenged the disbursement of public funds to PCL, a private-owned company without following the due process (Eric Ikhilae, 2020). Besides, the payment to PCL was outside of the recommendation of the policy document, which only allowed seed grants to companies owned 100% by the government. The N2.5 billion (equivalent to USD\$ 8.3 million) was allegedly traced to private accounts of individuals. Modibbo Kawu and two individuals from PCL, Lucky Omoluwa and Dipo Onifade, were arraigned in court on a 12-count charge bordering on abuse of office and fraud on 02 May 2020 (Eric Ikhilae, 2020). Again, the government intervened by removing Modibbo Kawu and replacing him with Armstrong Idachaba in an acting capacity in February 2020.

As illustrated in Table 7.2 below, Nigeria has had three different administrations, four ministers and five DGs of the NBC from 2008 up to the time of writing (October 2023). The first two administrations; Yar'Adua (2007-2010) and Jonathan (2010-2015) lacked the political will to fund the DSO while the administration of Buhari (2015-2023) kick-started the DSO process with a non-inclusive approach to the implementation of the DSO policy. Later on in the chapter, further analysis will demonstrate the excessive control the executive had over the regulatory body as empowered by the laws setting up the NBC.

**Table 7.2 Changes of state actors concerned with the DSO**

Office	Year	Impact on DSO	Reason for change
Nos of Presidents (X3)	2007-2015	Lacked political will to fund DSO	Deceased Change of government

	2015-2023	Exclusive approach to DSO	Incumbent
Nos of Ministers (X4)	2007-2015		Resignation (X2)
	2015-2023	Interference in the DSO process	Diff political affiliation Incumbent
Nos of DGs (X5)	2009-2013	Supervised the set up of DigiTeam and the release of white paper	Political influence
	2013-2016	Set up the ground policy norms and the implementation strategy Completed the ground work on the DSO pilot scheme launched in Jos	Funds misappropriation
	2016-2020	Began the national rollout of the DSO in 6 states	Funds misappropriation
	2020-2021	Ensured the release of the DSO time-table Launched DSO in two states	Political influence
	2021-2023	Launched DSO in one state Negotiated the signing of the MoU between ITS and NTA-Star	Incumbent

**Source:** Author based on news reports and other publicly accessed documents.

### ***7.2.6 A change in the DSO strategy: another task force and the release of the DSO timetable (2020-2023)***

García Leiva (2010, p.25) posits, “no country has attempted to achieve an entirely ‘hands-off’ digital switchover process”; in other words, it takes the cooperation between government and main stakeholders to deliver a successful DSO. The various interventions of the Nigerian government portrayed a ‘hands-on’ approach that excluded the decisions of stakeholders and also lacked public debates on decisions taken. The challenge with this approach of the government was that it became more “difficult to break the typical vicious cycle that has negatively influenced the introduction of DTT service” (García Leiva 2010, p.22) in Nigeria.



The first intervention of the government on the DSO after a three-year hiatus (2018-2021) came on 23 February 2021 with an announcement by the then Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed of a 14-man Ministerial Task Force (MTF) with himself as the chair. The MTF was expected to accelerate the implementation of the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting; this responsibility was assigned to DigiTeam by the policy document.

The composition of the MTF included 6 members from government institutions, 2 members from DigiTeam, 2 members from BSD and one each from broadcasting, middleware, advertising and STB manufacturers (Idachaba, 2018).

However, the Minister of Information through inter-ministerial ‘lobbying’ was able to secure N9.4 billion (equivalent to USD\$24.7 million as of 2021) from the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in 2021 for the conclusion of the DSO. The fund was meant to offset outstanding indebtedness to stakeholders, which had “constituted a roadblock to the entire process in the past three years,” (Lai Mohammed speech 23/02/2021). See below in Figure 7.4 the indebtedness of the NBC to critical stakeholders as of 2021.

**Figure 7.4 Indebtedness of NBC to critical stakeholders**

S/N	Name of Company	NBC Approved Contract Sum (₦)	BPP Reviewed Contract Sum (₦)
1	Inview Nigeria Limited	908,489,000.00	908,489,000.00
2	Pinnacle Communications limited	2,287,100,000.00	1,936,572,305
3	Integrated Television Services	4,465,143,000.00	3,773,046,764
4	The Outsource Company:	281,940,000.00	276,270,000.00
5.	SES( Satellite services): (from April 1, 2016 to March 31st 2020 @ CBN rate of N196.5 to a \$ as at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 (USD 7,570,092.24)  And for 1st April 2020 to March 31st 2021 @ CBN rate of N360.5 to a \$ as at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020 (USD 1,836,792.00)	2, 148, 768, 245. 16	2, 148, 768, 245. 16)
	TOTAL	10,091,440,245.16	9, 043, 146, 314.16

**Source:** Being part of the presentation by the DG NBC Prof Armstrong Idachaba at the retreat of the House of Representative Committee on information, national orientation, ethics and values on 26/05/2021).

The second intervention of the government after three years of non-decision was the announcement of a comprehensive timetable on 23 February 2021 for the conclusion of the DSO process. After the government adopted the phased approach back in 2012 (White Paper, 2012), it did not present a clear timetable to indicate its policy implementation. According to Idachaba (2018, p.51), “in a phased approach, planners must consider the total number of phases necessary and the length of each phase”, so they can determine how long it may take a given market to complete the process. For instance, Kenya planned its switch-off in three phases (Phase1: 31 December 2014, phase 2: 02 February 2015 and Phase 3: 30 March 2015) (GSMA, 2017) while the switch-off in Tanzania occurred in many phases from December 2012 to October 2014 (Idachaba 2018). The MTF released the new ASO timetable on 23 February 2021 (see Table 7.2 below).

**Table 7.3 Timetable of the DSO in Nigeria released by NBC on 23 February 2021**

S/N	STATE	DTT SWITCHON	ATT SWITCH OFF
<b>PHASE 1</b>			
1	FCT	LIVE	26/05/2021
2	PLATEAU	LIVE	17/06/2021
3.	KADUNA	LIVE	30/06/2021
4.	KWARA	LIVE	03/08/2021
5.	ENUGU	LIVE	01/09/2021
6.	OSUN	LIVE	30/09/2021
<b>PHASE 2</b>			
7.	LAGOS	29/04/2021&22/7/21	27/10/2021
8.	KANO	03/06/2021	17/11/2021
9.	RIVERS	08/07/2021	24/11/2021
10.	YOBE	15/07/2021	15/12/2021
11.	GOMBE	12/08/2021	15/12/2021
12.	IMO	24/08/2021	19/01/2022
13.	AKWA IBOM	31/08/2021	19/01/2022
14.	OYO	09/09/2021	16/02/2022
15.	JIGAWA	23/09/2021	16/02/2022
16.	EBONYI	07/10/2021	09/03/2022
17.	KATSINA	21/10/2021	13/04/2022
18.	ANAMBRA	04/11/2021	13/04/2022
19.	DELTA	18/11/2021	13/04/2022
<b>PHASE 3</b>			
20.	BORNO	02/12/2021	18/05/2022
21.	EKITI	14/12/2021	18/05/2022
22.	OGUN	21/12/2021	18/05/2022
23.	ONDO	06/01/2022	22/06/2022
24.	BAYELSA	18/01/2022	22/06/2022
25.	CROSSRIVER	08/02/2022	13/07/2022
26.	EDO	22/02/2022	13/07/2022
27.	ABIA	08/03/2022	17/08/2022
28.	BENUE	15/03/2022	17/08/2022
29.	KOGI	29/03/2022	17/08/2022
30.	NASARAWA	12/04/2022	14/09/2022
31.	NIGER	26/04/2022	14/09/2022
32.	KEBBI	17/05/2022	19/10/2022
33.	SOKOTO	24/05/2022	19/10/2022
34.	ZAMFARA	07/06/2022	16/11/2022
35.	ADAMAWA	21/06/2022	16/11/2022
36.	BAUCHI	05/07/2022	07/12/2022
37.	TARABA	19/07/2021	07/12/2022

**Source:** Being part of the presentation by the DG NBC, Prof Armstrong Idachaba at the retreat of the House of Representative Committee on information, national orientation, ethics and values on 26/05/2021).

As indicated in the released timetable above, the government adopted a three-phased approach with the first phase starting in Jos on 30 April 2016. The second phase began with a rollout in Lagos State on 29 April 2021, Kano State on 03 June 2021 and to cover 13 states. The third and final phase was scheduled for Borno State on 02 December 2021 to conclude in Taraba State on 19 July 2022. The timetable indicated that the first Analogue Switch Off (ASO) would occur in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on 26 May 2021 and further projected ASO in phase 1 states - Plateau, Kwara, Kaduna, Enugu and Osun slated between June and September 2021. The then-acting DG, Armstrong Idachaba (2021) in a speech announcing the timetable notes

A two-month period from the release of the DSO timetable has been provided for the public to be prepared for the first switch-off in Abuja. Analogue switch-off for the remaining five locations in Phase 1 is expected to be completed before the end of the year 2021. Following the commencement of Phase 2 rollout, with switch on in Lagos, Kano and Rivers states between April and July 2021; some 4 to 5 months period will be allowed before switch off to allow for adequate public preparedness, (Speech by DG NBC Armstrong Idachaba, 11 March 2021).

The last ASO was expected to conclude in Bauchi State and Taraba State on 07 December 2022 but unfortunately, the MTF could not achieve the objective set out in the new timetable.

The third intervention of the government was a change in strategy. The strategy deployed with the new timeline was a departure from the earlier method of launching in one state of the six geo-political zones in the country at a time (Business Highlights, 2017). The government through the MTF announced in February 2021 a change of strategy due to the effect of

COVID-19 on government revenue and decided to remove subsidies on the STBs and signal carriers. According to Alhaji Lai Mohammed:

We [the government] have studied the trend and it is clear that we have to reduce government involvement in the DSO ecosystem and allow the private sector to take the lead, on purely commercial terms, (Lai Mohammed's speech, 23/02/ 2021).

In keeping with the 'commercial-driven approach' the DSO process was launched in densely populated cities of Lagos and Kano. The policy strategy of the government with this was that the DSO should be able to fund and sustain itself, and by launching in densely populated cities, the policy might be able to achieve the purpose. Especially, the switch-on in Lagos could tap into the 'Lagos State Smart City project' (Toyosi Ogunrinde, 2021), which was heavily reliant on technology to "enhance service delivery in all spheres of life" and particularly, the DSO was meant to revolutionise "television viewing for the 5 million TV households in the state" (Lai Mohammed's speech, 2021). After the launch in Lagos State on 29 April 2021, the DSO process went into a lull majorly because the acting DG of the NBC Armstrong Idachaba was removed from office on 11 June 2021 and replaced by Mallam Balarabe Shehu Ilelah, the fifth DG since the DSO began in 2008.

After six months of inaction on the DSO process, because the newly appointed DG Shehu Ilelah was trying to familiarise himself with the situation, the DSO was launched in Kano State on 02 November 2021. However, the planned DSO launch in Rivers State could not proceed due to the governor feeling that the scheduled timing was not convenient (Okoh Aihe in The News Guru, 2022). Once again, there was a period of inaction until 15 August 2022, which was less than four months before the proposed 07 December 2022 Analogue Switch Off (ASO) for the entire country. During this time, the NBC and the MTF negotiated and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Integrated Television Service (ITS)

and NTA-Star (StarTimes). The agreement was for ITS, the national signal carrier, to take over the structure and facilities of StarTimes, a pay DTT operator.

The MoU between ITS and NTA-Star had two main effects on the DSO process. First, this was in line with the policy document on the implementation of the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting, which stated that broadcasting stations “will no longer be able to operate as both signal distributor and content provider” (Kawu in News Direct, February 2018). This conformed to the licensing regime under the reform regulatory policy that specified different licences for broadcast signal distribution and broadcast content provision. Second, it was supposed to accelerate the rollout of the DSO process even though the government failed to meet the 07 December 2022 ASO date, which would have been a major achievement for the Buhari Regime had the government accomplished the ASO date. (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022).

The MoU between ITS and NTA-Star was possible because they already shared a common belief that birthed a joint venture partnership as the national signal carrier. Maxwell Loko, a director with ITS, expatiated on the new agreement:

Given that ITS cannot or may not be able to go further than the places it is presently transmitting signal because of the paucity of funds, the business model has to change in which case, ITS will ride on the... let's say ride on the infrastructure that already exists as is run by NTA-Star TV Network, but they will still be assumed to be the carrier because ...we cannot say ITS even though those ones [NTA-Star] have the infrastructure, the idea is that they will now cede their infrastructure to ITS in an agreeable terms such that ITS will use their infrastructure to deploy free DTT to actualize the DSO, (Maxwell Loko, personal communication, October 2022)

StarTimes had already covered 85% of the media landscape in Nigeria and if as Maxwell Loko noted in a personal communication in October 2022, GoTV went into partnership with

PCL, the second signal distributor as proposed, this could have assisted the DSO process. The optimism was shared by the then DG of the NBC Shehu Ilela:

We [would] have found an antidote to our challenge of having a simultaneous national rollout with at least 70% signal penetration and coverage of the Nigeria territorial boundaries, (Malam Balarabe Shehu Ilelah's speech, reported by Tunji Oyeyemi, 15 August 2022).

With all the government interventions mentioned above, nothing significant was achieved to move the DSO process forward because the government failed to address the fundamental issues like the infrastructure that would enable the effective rollout of the DSO across the country and the availability/affordability of STBs (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022). The 'missed-steps' in the implementation of the DSO had its effects on the various stakeholders because of the lack of direction coming from the government. Next, the study will identify and examine the interactions of the critical stakeholders and actors in the delivery of the DSO process in Nigeria and demonstrate their differences and logic.

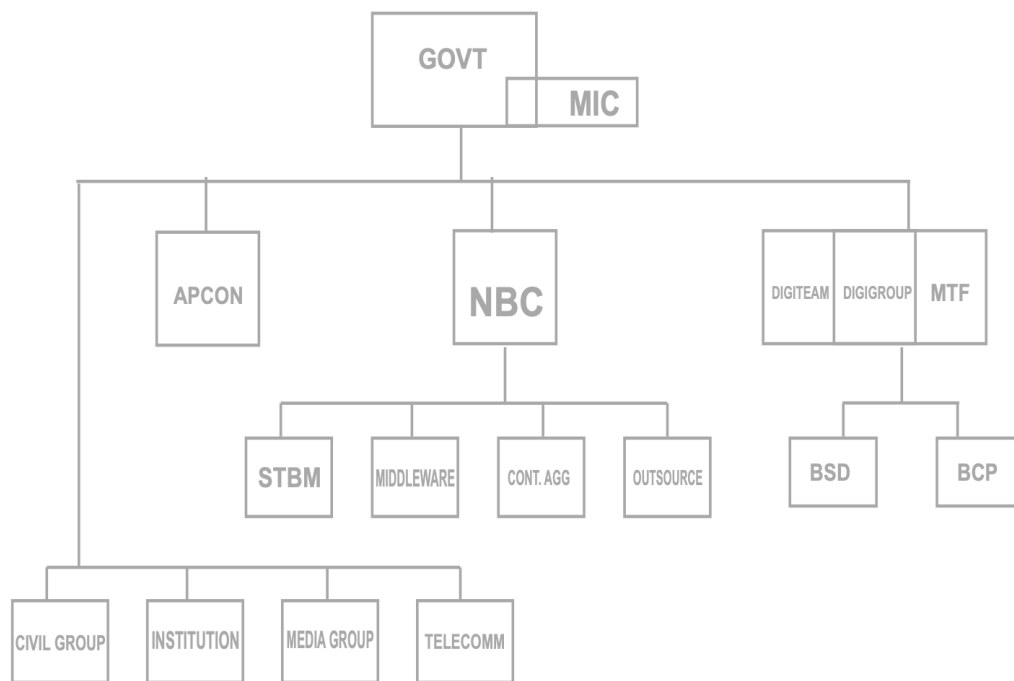
### **7.3 Policy actors and main stakeholders: interests, preferences and power play in the DSO process**

The country missed the opportunity to attain analogue switch-off on 07 December 2022 as it remained in a simulcast period with many unattended issues despite the released DSO timetable. No official statement or reasons were given regarding the missed deadline. This chapter speculates that the government may not have a clear plan for the ASO or may "lack the capacity" (Berger, 2010) to implement the DTT policy in line with global agreements. A similar DSO process scenario was observed in Cameroon (Melouta, 2013) and Ghana (Bedu-addo, 2023), which began digital migration in 2009 and 2010 respectively but remained in the simulcast phase without a clear timeline to complete the transition. Thus, this study finds it necessary to apply the media analytical tools (stakeholder analysis and advocacy coalition framework) established in the conceptual chapter to identify and examine the interactions

between the main stakeholders and the dominant actors in the communication policy arena. In the process of identifying the actors shaping the DSO implementation in Nigeria, the chapter will inform answers to the sub-research question 2: Who were the main stakeholder groups in the domestic policy arena? How effective was each stakeholder group in pursuing its own interests and goals?

According to Hilde Van den Bulck (2012, p.220), “Stakeholders are identified on the basis of who they are/represent/belong to, their stake (or visibility) and their impact (or power)”. The author stated further that stakeholders could also be characterised based on their position on policy issues and the ideas they espouse. Therefore, actors tend to formulate their arguments within political, cultural, technological and economic principles among others. However, this study finds that there were so many actors and stakeholders involved in the DSO in Nigeria, which made the process very unwieldy (Okoh Aihe, personal communication, June 2022). Below in Figure 7.5 were the main stakeholders identified in the DSO process in Nigeria.

**Figure 7.5 DSO main stakeholders in Nigeria**



**Source:** Author based on various publicly available documents.

For this research, the main stakeholders were categorised as state and non-state (Industry and NGO) policy actors. The state actors were further divided into government and sub-government actors. The government actors identified here were four, starting with the two main ministries directly involved with the DSO process, that is, the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy. The others were the Ministry of Finance and the Legislature. The sub-government actors were made up of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the National Frequency Management Council (NFMC), the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), the legal actors (such as the court system), the Ministerial



Task Force (MTF) and the Digital Implementation Committee (DigiTeam) charged with ‘driving’ the DSO process.

The non-state industry actors comprised both domestic and foreign players. The split in the broadcasting infrastructure in Nigeria allowed the entry of new players in the broadcasting value chain such as the broadcast signal distributors (the multiplex operators) and the broadcast content providers (BCP) made up of broadcasting stations (private and government-owned) and independent producers. Other industry actors were the middleware providers and content aggregators responsible for FreeTV; the electronics sector like the set-top box manufacturers and the telecommunication sector.

The non-governmental organisations (NGOs) identified here are non-state and non-industry actors such as media advocacy groups, a coalition of civil society organisations (CSOs) and the international community. What distinguished these actors and stakeholders were their preferences, interests and sought benefits, which this study will investigate next.

### ***7.3.1 The policy state actors: determinative and influential policy-makers***

As highlighted in Chapter 3, the Nigerian government reduced its involvement in the telecommunication and broadcasting sectors following the liberalisation in 1992, and the digital era witnessed an expansion of state actors in the policy arena. The stake of the government in the DSO was to ensure the core principles of democracy as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution where there is

Equity, common participation, total access to information for all citizens, economic empowerment of all participants in the industries and a level playing field for Nigerian companies and entrepreneurs to build viable businesses, (Lai Mohammed’s speech at the launch of DSO in Abuja in 2016).

The government's stake in the DSO in part echoed the UNESCO standard-setting function concerning broadcast media for all member states, which should promote good governance as outlined in Chapter 6. The two main government ministries concerned with the affairs of broadcasting and telecommunication in Nigeria were carved out of the restructured Ministry of Information and Communication. The repositioning of the ministries was prompted by the intervention of the global agreement on digital broadcasting. First, the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy (MCDE) was created in 2011 with a vision to create a robust digital economy that enhances security, increases transparency, and diversifies the Nigerian economy. The MCDE through the department of spectrum management was responsible for the formulation and monitoring of communication policies including international treaties. Therefore, the preference of the Ministry within the DSO process was to ensure that digital dividends were deployed in the telecommunication sector to boost broadband penetration and promote the digital economy.

**Table 7.4 Government /sub-government Actors**

<b>Government</b>	<b>Functions in DSO</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Ministry of Information and Culture	Set the DSO strategy for Nigeria and ensured its success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Approved the DSO strategy</li> <li>*Led government communication and awareness campaign</li> <li>*Ensured the NBC was empowered and directed to deliver the DSO agenda</li> <li>*Liaised with Min. of Finance to ensure the required funding was available</li> <li>*Liaised with Min. of Communication to agree on spectrum usage and scale</li> </ul>
Ministry of Communication & Digital Economy	Boosted ICT and promoted digital economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Created a robust digital economy that enhanced security</li> <li>*Increased transparency</li> <li>*Diversify the national economy</li> </ul>

Ministry of Finance	Ensured the release of funds after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approval	
Legislature: Senate and House of Rep.	Provided legislative framework for the entire DSO programme	Oversee the general DSO programme
National Frequency Management Council (NFMC)	Coordinated the radio frequency spectrum management	*Planned and coordinated bulk trans-sectoral allocation of radio spectrum to the regulatory bodies *Gave advise to the Minister on Nigeria's representation at multi-lateral and international frequency spectrum bodies such as the ITU
Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)	Reallocated freed spectrum for other national use including telecommunication, Aviation, healthcare and digital broadcasting	*Promoted the growth of telecommunication by licensing competitive operator * Removed entry barrier in the telecommunication *Maintained transparent regulatory process
National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)	Managing the delivery of every aspect of the DSO	*Regulated and licence signal distributors, content providers and STB manufacturers *Provided timeline and rollout plan of DSO *Defined roles and responsibilities to all involved in DSO *Arranged funding for ASO under the guide of Hon. Minister
DigiTeam	Drove DSO implementation strategy	* Monitored NBC in their role and management of the DSO *Defined transmission standard *Passed across critical issues to the Hon. Minister promptly *Ensured the timely delivery of the DSO agenda with minimal disruption
Ministerial Task Force (MTF)	Drove DSO implementation strategy (same as DigiTeam)	Same responsibility as DigiTeam
Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON)	Promoted responsible and ethical advertising practice, acting as the conscience of the society and watchdog for the consumers, while managing the needs and interests of the stakeholders in Nigeria's advertising industry	*Implemented key policies to guarantee the advertising income of media houses by creating a healthy environment for media to operate *Ensured the implementation of the audience measurement system to guarantee a sustained stream of revenue from advertising for channels owners and content

		providers to reinvest in the development of compelling content *Enabled zero advertising debts to ensure that revenue from advertising went to the media owners
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**Source:** Authors based on news articles and other publicly available documents.

Secondly, the Ministry of Information and Culture (MIC) was created in 2015 with a mandate to build a positive image for the country and promote national consciousness as well as provide an effective regulatory environment for the media and allied industry. Specifically, the role of the MIC in the digital media environment was to set the DSO strategy that would enable the implementation of the DTT policy. Thus, the policy concern of the MIC was to present a consumer proposition that would deliver crisp picture and quality sound Free-To-Air (FTA) television with an EPG that would make TV viewing an ‘unbeatable experience’. The set-top-box used in the digital television is seen as “ a potential residential hub to a number of information, entertainment and transaction services”, (Galperin 2004, p.10), which was another interest of the MIC to bring governance closer to the consumer. However, to achieve universal access for all citizens in the DSO process, the government insisted as a policy that FTA should remain DTT and not pay-TV.

The other relevant ministry in the DSO process was the Ministry of Finance required to release funds to various ministries following the resolution of the Federal Executive Council (FEC), the highest decision-making body in the country since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999. The legislative arm of government in Nigeria is comprised of the House of Representatives and the Senate and together they provide the legal framework to enforce government policies. As it concerned the DSO, the legislature had not, at the time of writing

(October 2023) provided the required legal framework for the implementation of the DTT policy.

The sub-government actors shared similar preferences with the government on the DSO process. In the digital era, spectrum as a key resource is arguably very vital in broadcast media and telecommunication sectors. The essence of digital migration is for member states to benefit from the digital dividends after broadcasters vacate the analogue spectrum. In Nigeria, the National Frequency Management Council (NFMC), established by Section 26 of the Nigerian Communications Act (NCA) 2003 is the apex body and focal coordinator for radio frequency spectrum management. The interest of the Council within the DSO process is the planning; coordination and bulk trans-sectoral allocation of the radio spectrum to the regulatory bodies that is, the NBC, NCC and the Ministry. The Council currently domiciled within the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy influences the government's frequency spectrum policies and legislation. It advises the Minister on Nigeria's representation at multi-lateral and international frequency spectrum bodies such as the ITU.

Another state actor influential in the communication policy arena is the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). The NCC was established and empowered by NCC decree 75 of 1992 as amended by the Nigerian Communications Act (NCA) 2003 to regulate the telecommunication sector. The NCC develops and publishes radio frequency regulations and standards for the industry. The interest of the NCC in the digital migration is to 'harvest' spectrum released from analogue broadcasting and apply them to other sectors such as telecommunication, healthcare, military, aviation and digital broadcasting.

Directly saddled with the responsibility of the DSO process is the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). NBC assigns broadcasting frequencies it receives from the National Frequency Management Council (NFMC) to both public and private radio/television stations and monitors their compliance through administrative procedures such as the broadcasting code and technical standards. The policy document entrusts NBC to manage the delivery of every aspect of the DSO and to ensure this, the NBC regulates, and licenses broadcast signal distributors (BSDs), broadcast content providers (BCPs), and set top-box (STB) manufacturers. It defines roles and responsibilities to all involved in the DSO and provides the timeline and the rollout plan. Unlike the NCC, the operation of NBC was dependent on the Ministry of Information and Culture enabled by the law setting up the regulatory body.

The effects of the ongoing digital migration process reshaped the advertising practice in Nigeria. In July 2022, the government repealed the Advertising Practitioners Act, Cap A7, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 that established Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (APCON). This was replaced with the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) Act, 2022 to “administer, monitor and enforce compliance by persons and organisations on matters relating to advertisements, advertising and marketing communication in Nigeria” (Florence Utor in *The Guardian Nigeria*, 2022). By this Act, ARCON became a new actor in the policy arena of communication in Nigeria. ARCON had a significant stake in the DSO process, which included ensuring the implementation of the audience measurement system that would guarantee a sustainable stream of revenue from advertising for signal distributors, broadcasters, advertisers, and content providers to reinvest into developing compelling content. Thus, to promote local content and entrench the DTT policy of job creation in the creative industry, the ARCON announced an outright ban on the use of foreign voice-over

artists and models in Nigeria's advertising space effective from 01 October 2022 (Florence Utor, 2022).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, DigiTeam was inaugurated on the recommendation of the policy document to drive the implementation of the DTT policy; however, it could not hit the ground running because there were no provisions (funds) made for it to function effectively. DigiTeam laid down the structure for the implementation of the DSO, but it was ignored by NBC under the leadership of Emeka Mba (see Chapter 8). As it appeared, there was no synergy between NBC and DigiTeam even though the policy document suggested it. The roles and responsibility of DigiTeam was supplemented twice by the establishment of a parallel team; first was the inauguration of DIGIGROUP by Emeka Mba-led NBC and later the establishment of the MTF chaired by the then minister Alhaji Lai Mohammed.

Arguably, the state actors identified here, especially the MIC and to some extent the NBC were the determinative and influential policy-makers in the communication policy arena.

### ***7.3.2 Industry actors: domestic and foreign (broadcasting and telecommunication) players***

The policy document recommended the unbundling of the broadcasting service to “maximize the utilization of broadcast infrastructure and improve on the quality of content creation” (White Paper, 2012, p.9). The implication of this regulatory approach in the digital broadcasting environment in Nigeria would be the cost-effective operation of the stations as cited by Idachaba (2018):

The amount of money spent on salaries and maintenance and infrastructure will reduce because digital technology does not go with bulk equipment. And few people are required for the manipulation of such equipment. It was on this basis that private media practitioners support the cost-effectiveness of digital broadcasting, (Idachaba, 2018, p.5).

Furthermore, the unbundling policy helped to separate broadcasting functions of transmission, multiplexing and content creation as against the vertically integrated approach broadcasters were used to in the analogue system of broadcasting where they took care of a range of responsibilities in the audio-visual value chain (Lai Mohammed speech 29/04/2021). This approach also lowered the entry barriers for new players in content provision and signal carriers/multiplex operators (Ahn, 2006). The unbundling structure resulted in a new licencing regime for broadcast signal distributors (BSDs) and broadcast content providers (BCPs). The DTT policy of the government was to allow the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) to play a significant role as a signal distributor in the DSO environment. Therefore, Integrated Television Service (ITS), a commercial enterprise company, was carved out of NTA and awarded a BSD licence in 2014. A second BSD licence was also awarded to a private firm Pinnacle Communication Limited (PCL). The functions of the BSD were to deliver quality DTT signal at the appropriate time to the agreed population through the provision of signal distribution services for DTT (including FTA), pay-TV, radio and television.

The policy concern of unbundling the broadcasting infrastructure in Nigeria was to allow the broadcasters to concentrate and improve on compelling content offering, which the government believe should drive the uptake of DTT services. The broadcast content providers (BCPs) comprised existing broadcasting stations, both government and private-owned, independent content producers and the pay-TV operators. The goal of the BCP in the DSO was to ensure that quality TV channels were provided for digital distribution and to switch off analogue channels by the NBC schedule. Independent content producers liaised with broadcasting stations by supplying high quality content that promotes indigenous culture. The licensed content aggregator on its part managed channels aggregation and



consumer platform. Its responsibilities also included management of the bandwidth allocation of the Free TV, DTT and DSAT platforms, as agreed with NBC; and provision of content for the service platform including Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) data, information services, public service announcements, advertising, 3rd party application and so on.

Digitisation in broadcasting entails a shift from analogue to digital terrestrial television. Once there is a complete analogue switch off, a viewer would require a digitally compliant TV set or a device that would decode digital signals between his analogue TV set and digital content. For most people, procuring a new TV set that is digitally compliant might be too expensive. For successful digital migration to occur it would have to depend on the voluntary uptake of digital TV by consumers (Starks, 2007) therefore, set-top boxes (STBs) were introduced as 'cheap' devices that would enable consumers to embrace digital migration. The policy document to ensure the transfer of technology recommended the production of the STBs locally instead of importing them. The policy initiative was expected to help create jobs for the teeming unemployed youth and boost the dwindling Nigerian economy. The STB standard adopted for Nigeria's DSO was the DVB T-2 and MPEG-4, which would ensure efficient use of the spectrum. The preference of the STB manufacturers in the digital migration was to provide all consumer equipment necessary to receive digital television by setting up local factories for the manufacturing of all required STBs and accessories, and ensuring produced STBs and accessories met the appropriate tests and approvals.

Digitisation enables convergence and interaction between the viewers and the content providers such as tele-text, emailing and shopping while watching TV. Software technology was required to facilitate these enhanced services. NBC selected Inview Technology Limited, and Renmore as middleware providers. The middleware providers' software was integrated

into the set-top boxes selected for Nigeria DSO and provided additional digital services such as EPG, push video-on-demand, interactive advertisement, and other broadcasting applications like audience Measurement, news and public information.

The standard STB usually deployed in DSO allowed viewers access to digital content for free as in the case of Freeview and Freesat in the UK or Freenet and FreeView in Germany and Australia respectively. The STB approved in Nigeria DSO was the one with a Conditional Access System (CAS) and viewers would have to pay an annual fee to consume digital content on 'FreeTV'. The preference of the middleware providers was to manage all services and technology required to deliver DSO including DTT and DSAT technical platform. To achieve their interest, the middleware providers have to provide STB software for the approved STB manufacturers; issue acceptance certificates for the approved STB manufacturers approved by NBC and manage the FreeTV 'zoo' of the STB. So, Inview Technology managed the outsourced call centres on behalf of NBC. The duties of the Outsource Company included taking complaints from the general public and offering technical and advisory services to the public.

The telecommunication industry would benefit from the digital dividends after the digital migration. The freed-up spectrum would be used to provide broadband penetration, which was needed to support the ICT sector and bridge the digital divide in the country. DTT could not cover the country 100% largely due to the topography of some parts of the country, therefore digital satellite broadcasting (DSB) was required to fill the gap. The preference of the telecommunication sector included deploying Internet facilities to the under-served areas, which would enable the use of Mobile Television (MTV) broadcasting.

#### **Table 7.5 Industry Actors**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Functions in DSO</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Signal distributors	Delivered quality DTT signal at the appropriate time to the agreed population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Delivered DTT coverage regionally in accordance with NBC directive</li> <li>*Converted an agreed number of analogue transmitter to digital in accordance with NBC timescale</li> <li>*Provided signal distribution services for DTT (Inc. FTA) radio &amp; TV, Pay TV.</li> <li>*Provided data services like EPG and advert on behalf of NBC</li> <li>*Achieved quality of service targets to be agreed with the NBC</li> </ul>
Content provision: Broadcasters	Ensured quality TV channels were provided for digital distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Delivery of high quality TV channels</li> <li>*Contributed those channels for distribution</li> <li>*Maintained high quality broadcast standard as defined by NBC</li> <li>*Carried advert that promoted DSO among consumers</li> <li>*To switch off analogue channels in accordance with NBC schedule</li> </ul>
Content provision: Independent producers	Ensured the delivery of high quality content to broadcasting stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Invested in high end production equipment for the production of quality TV content</li> <li>*Delivered such quality TV content to broadcasting stations</li> <li>*Researched and produced high quality local contents for broadcast stations</li> <li>*Promoted indigenous culture through production of local content</li> </ul>
Content aggregator	Channel aggregation and consumer platform management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Developed a compelling line up of NBC licensed channels on the Free TV and DSAT platform</li> <li>*Contract with approved channels, monitor performance on an on-going basis</li> <li>*Contract with the signal distributors to ensure carriage at national, region and state</li> <li>*Contract and manage SES on behalf of the NBC for the provision of satellite bandwidth on the Free TV, DSAT platform</li> <li>*Managed the channels on Free TV and DSAT platform, including issues of LCN</li> <li>*Provision of content for the service platform including EPG data, info services, public service announcements, adverting, 3rd party application and so on</li> <li>*Management of the bandwidth allocation of the Free TV, DTT and DSAT platforms, as agreed with NBC</li> </ul>
Set-top box Manufacturers	Provided all consumer equipment necessary to receive digital TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Set up local factories for the manufacturing of all required STBs and accessories</li> <li>*Produced required quantities of STBs to the agreed specification</li> <li>*Ensured produced STBs and accessories meet appropriate tests and approvals.</li> </ul>

Middleware providers	Managed all services and technology required to deliver DSO including DTT and DSAT technical platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Provided STB software for approved STB manufacturers</li> <li>*Issued acceptance certificate for approved STH manufacturers approved by NBC</li> <li>*Managed Free TV ‘zoo’ of STBs and engineering channels for software upgrades</li> <li>*STB security (manage digital rights of management provider)</li> <li>*Billing and subscriber management system (management of Paywizard)</li> <li>*Collection of DCAF viz STB and direct collection of DCAF from pay TV companies</li> <li>*Managed the Outsource call centres on behalf of the NBC</li> </ul>
Call centre Operator (The Outsource Company)	Offered both technical and other client support and advisory services to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*To receive complaint and inquiries from the general public on the services provided by Free TV</li> <li>*To liaise with middleware company to provide technical services like box activation and DAF collection</li> <li>*To generate data for the industry</li> </ul>
Telecommunication	Provided broadband penetration to support ICT sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Deployed internet facilities to the under-served areas</li> <li>*Ensured the penetration of broadband to bridge information gap</li> <li>*Provided Internet to enable DSB fill the gap where DTT could not cover</li> </ul>

**Source:** Authors based on news articles and other publicly available documents.

### **7.3.3 NGOs: Non-state and non-industry actors**

As mentioned earlier, the NGOs comprised non-state and non-industry actors that included the international community. In Nigeria, the NGOs involved in the DSO process included trade organisations like the Broadcast Organisation of Nigeria (BON), Independent Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (IBAN), Independent Television Practitioners Association of Nigeria (ITPAN) and the Radio, Television, Theatre and Arts Workers Union of Nigeria (RATTAWU). There was also the coalition of civil society such as the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) and the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP). The involvement of CSOs in the digital migration process

has been minimal but they serve as watchdog on the progress and transparency of the DSO process.

The global media industry emerged as global media and telecommunication conglomerates spread their assets and ideology around the world. As such, the ITU at the supranational level in agreements with member states has supposedly taken over the functions previously performed by national governments. As noted in Chapter 6, the international community were able to intervene in the DSO process of national administrations as international regulators. The international community has been able to influence policy decisions that dictate the direction of the DSO process in Nigeria. The thesis argues the interest of some of these exogenous actors was to ensure a quick release of the radio spectrum to be used by industries in developed economies (also see Chapters 3 and 6).

Having identified the main stakeholders in Nigeria's DSO process, the next section will examine the different arguments between domestic and foreign policy stakeholders to highlight some of the disagreements amongst them in the implementation of the DTT policy.

#### ***7.3.4 The different logics and preferences of policy actors and stakeholders: coalition against dominant policy-makers***

The chapter observes disagreements among the policy actors and stakeholders in pursuing their goals within the digital switchover process. The study witnesses a coalition among competing stakeholders who share similar values and agree on what policy should be adopted (Van den Bulck and Donders, 2014a) while the state actors deploy the power within their reach to dominate the communication policy arena. The foreign media conglomerates and domestic actors also argue differently. Three instances of the disagreements are cited below.

First, evident in the empirical research, the interaction between the NBC and the NCC in the digital environment over the sales of freed spectrum sparked a debate. Critics argued, ‘The NBC is charged with the responsibility of driving the freeing up of the 700 MHz spectrum band by the broadcasting industry for its eventual handover to the NCC’ (cited online in Comms Week, 2016 14/03/2021). For this reason, some stakeholders in the telecommunication sector described the sales of the 700 MHz to MTN as illegal and wanted it cancelled because it gave an undue advantage to MTN over other competitors (Comms Week, 2016). But, Emeka Mba, the former DG at NBC argued that the spectrum was sold in the period when it was under the control of the regulatory body and it sought and got approval from the previous government (Jonathan Administration) and the NFMC. Emeka Mba insisted that the spectrum bidding process was transparent and conducted as part of its ‘convergence service’ (Balancing Act, 2016). However, digital convergence has blurred the demarcation between telecommunication and audio-visual services, which was why critics proposed regulatory convergence between the NBC and the NCC to avoid the disagreement illustrated above. Besides, domestic telecommunication players such as MTN were offering triple-play services.

Challenges in regulation as illustrated above may prompt future consideration for a new regulatory framework that would combine services offered. Communication study has shown that it is not an uncommon practice. India merged its infrastructure regulation and content regulation to form the new Communications Commission of India (CCI). In the UK, five existing regulators dealing with communications were united into one regulator, OFCOM and provided with authority in both infrastructure and content questions (Emmanuel Okoegwale, 2008). However, this study notes it would take the political will of the government to achieve

a merger of the regulatory bodies as there were “entrenched interests and the regulators continue to be (naturally) self-protected” (Odufuwa, 2010, p.12). The NCA 2003 Act granted the NCC the sole and exclusive authority to license and regulate frequency spectrum for the telecommunication sector (Balancing Act, 2011). In contrast, the NBC Act constrained the capacity of the regulatory body, making it vulnerable to the influence of its overseeing Ministry (Information and Culture). This had the delayed effect on the DSO process.

Second, NBC’s informal procedure and practices (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013) fuelled disagreement among domestic policy stakeholders. The reform regulatory framework for digital migration splits the broadcasting infrastructure into a signal broadcast distributor and signal broadcast provision. The NBC seized the opportunity to introduce new actors outside the provision of the policy document and against the structure laid down by DigiTeam:

Unfortunately the NBC Management, under Mr. Emeka Mba, chose to ignore the DigiTeam template which was for the signal distributors to deal directly with the stations (content providers) and the STB Manufacturers in consultation with the signal distributors to choose their encryption/middleware to protect their investment in the manufacturing of STBs locally and the activation of the STBs which involves the setting up of call centres. If this template were followed, all the middlemen in the DSO would have been the responsibility of the signal distributors and the content providers, (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022).

Instead, NBC followed the advice of its foreign partners and decided to contract content aggregators, middleware/encryption software providers and call centre operators. The research finds that the services of the new entrants expanded the number of actors; increased the financial burden on the DSO agenda and created friction among some domestic players. The functions of these middleware providers (CCNL, Inview and Renmore) overlapped with those of some stakeholders (Maxwell Loko, personal communication, October 2022). For instance, the licensed middleware companies were the ones responsible for content aggregation, the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG), and the collection of the Digital Access

Fund (DAF). The middleware companies also managed the outsourced company (the ones responsible for call centres), managed the Condition Access System (CAS) embedded in the set-top boxes, and managed the satellite company (SES) responsible for the provision of digital signals. Some critical stakeholders (particularly signal distributors and STB manufacturers) have argued that they could undertake these value-added services so that there would be less friction in the DTT service delivery. According to Maxwell Loko, Managing Director, NTA Enterprise, the middleware providers were taking more than they were investing and some stakeholders who had invested more were getting less than their investment, which was the cause of the ‘friction’. Maxwell Loko stated further:

I [ITS] provide the service as a signal distributor on a daily basis, 24-7. I [ITS] pick a lot of overheads, I pay for satellite, I pay for this and that, and today, it is the middleware that collects the DAF, why should the middleware collect the DAF? (Maxwell Loko, personal communication, May 2022).

Similarly, Inview, a licensed middleware, selected Nagara as the Conditional Access System (CAS) software on the STB approved for the DSO in Nigeria to secure content against piracy and this service added to the cost of the decoder. The STB manufacturers complained against it and a second middleware provider, Renmore, was licensed to provide cheaper software, (Verimatrix) on the STB. Rather than adding actors (middlemen) to the DSO process and populating the value chain, signal distributors (Maxwell Loko, personal communication, May 2022) argue that ‘third parties’ should be eradicated and allow the signal distributors to carry out the task and maximise profit for the sustainability of the DSO. This agitation by signal distributors was glossed over by state policy actors as ‘middlemen’ remained in the DSO value chain. Arguably, policy inadequacy and weak regulatory architecture to cope with the complexity of digital technology in the broadcast sector in Nigeria contributed to the disagreement in the DSO process.



Third, the effect of the weak broadcasting policy is carried on in the discourse of foreign media participation in the domestic media environment. The neoliberal approach to the liberalisation of the broadcast industry in 1992 and the global agreement on the digital switchover process have resulted in different arguments between the government and foreign and domestic stakeholders in the Nigeria digital TV market.

The foreign media conglomerates (MultiChoice and StarTimes) were financed by state capitalism to operate in Nigeria's pay-TV market. As such, they were able to invest in infrastructure and premium content to give them the competitive edge. For this, they increased the subscription fees of their services abruptly and randomly, which may have restricted access of the citizens to only elites who can afford the high subscription fees. There were a few attempts by the government to intervene and protect the interest of the citizens. The then Minister of Information, Alh Lai Mohammed, announced in 2020 that the government was amending the Broadcasting Act to break the monopoly enjoyed particularly by MultiChoice; Mohammed stressed that the "amendments to section 628 of the Broadcasting Act, are in the national interest" (Ripples Nigeria on 01/07/2020 cited 30/08/2023). However, the Nigerian legislature suggested that pay-TV service providers in Nigeria should introduce a 'pay-as-you-watch' subscription package to encourage affordability and for consumers to only pay for what they watch (Sunday Aborishade in Thisday Newspaper, 2022). MultiChoice argued that the pay-as-you-watch model of subscription could only work in telecommunication because DStv (operated by MultiChoice) did not have the technology to pause and resume the payment plan.

Local pay-TV actors in Nigeria attempted to challenge DStv's dominance with little success. For instance, Telecoms Satellite Television (TStv), proposed to offer the pay-as-you-watch

services in 2017, but could not come on stream and again re-launched in 2020. There was an attempt by Kwese (another local pay-TV provider) to ‘pry market share from DStv’, unfortunately, its services did not pose any threat to DStv (Yomi Kazeem, 2018). As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the attempt by HiTV to break the monopoly of DStv was frustrated through the restrictive lending framework of the domestic financial institution introduced by the fiscal policy of the World Bank and the IMF. It is safe to argue that unless there is a review of the existing international fiscal policy on financial institutions in Africa, local actors may not stand a chance to compete against well-capitalised foreign media conglomerates and the argument between the key actors may likely remain the same.

## **7.4 Conclusions**

This chapter examined the timeline of digital migration in Nigeria and demonstrated that the delayed DSO process was not peculiar to Nigeria alone. However, the hasty political decision of the government to embark on the second phase of the digital migration in 2021 when the first phase was still ongoing resulted in policy failure and more confusion in the DSO process. It may be helpful to suggest that the government adopts a broader consultative approach before making critical decisions. This underscores the significance of involving a diverse range of stakeholders (not just state actors) in the policy-making process and highlights how policy actors and stakeholders collaborate to influence the outcome of policies in line with the advocacy coalition framework developed in Chapter 2.

The chapter then analysed the critical interactions between the powerful state actors, particularly the MIC and NBC, and the non-state actors including the BSDs, BCP and STB Manufacturers in Nigeria’s broadcasting policy structure. It illustrated how the non-state actors demanded a reform in the communication policy while policy state actors deployed the

power at their disposal to stall the change. As a result, the analogue system of broadcasting persisted in Nigeria's digital environment. This arguably highlights the urgent call for systemic changes to promote a fair and level playing field for all stakeholders in the broadcasting industry in Nigeria.

Finally, the chapter demonstrated that foreign and local actors operate in an unbalanced competitive pay-TV market that was skewed in favour of the foreign media conglomerates because the fiscal policies of intergovernmental institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF have weakened the local actors' participation through a restrictive lending framework of the domestic financial institution. This has enabled the dominance of foreign media conglomerates in Nigeria's pay-DTT market and thus supports the critical political economic argument developed in the conceptual chapter that the neo-liberal ideology and pro-market actors have shaped the DTT towards marketisation and commodification undermining the public interest objectives (social benefits) in the move towards digital switchover in Nigeria.

Next, the study will analyse the policy process in the digital migration. This will build on the chronological account illustrated above and draw on the conceptual framework as reviewed in Chapter 2; particular, non-decision as a form of power that "limit[s] the scope of actual decision-making" (Bachrach and Barataz, 1962, p.952) demonstrated at the early stage of the DSO process in Nigeria. It will also espouse the weak institutional structure of the broadcast regulatory body.

## **Chapter 8: Evaluating the policy process in the digital switchover in Nigeria**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter demonstrated the delay evident in the implementation of the DSO timetable and the various roles played by policy state actors and domestic stakeholders. This chapter deals with the theoretical analysis of the policy process in Nigeria. It begins with the highlights of the weak institutional structure of the regulatory body and its capture by the executive. It illustrates how the laws setting up the regulatory body enabled its capture and the effects this had on the outcome of the DSO process. This chapter also analyses the significance of the strong leadership role necessary to deliver a complex process such as the DSO by the state and its agencies. It appeared the Nigerian government like its neighbour, Cameroon was ‘perplexed’ on the next direction of the DSO process as it struggled with a clear-cut timeline for the ASO, which many critics had attributed to the lack of political will. The disagreement evident in the DSO process in Nigeria demonstrated a lack of cooperation among the key domestic actors.

The chapter shows that a shift in the switchover timetable was not peculiar to developing African countries alone. Studies indicate that advanced economies such as the USA, UK, and Germany did not meet their original switch-off dates and this could be attributed to various factors. For instance, in Bulgaria, the several shifts in the DSO timetable were a result of a “complete absence of unity and cooperation between key institutions and market players” (Rashid, 2015, p.173). In Nigeria, it appeared the unilateral action by the executive to score a political achievement for the Buhari administration (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022) led to hasty decision-making to embark on a second phase of the

DSO when the first phase was inconclusive. The result was more delays and confusion among critical stakeholders and this is in keeping with García Leiva's (2010, p.22) observation that where consensus is not stable and the introduction of DTT [strategy] is decided unilaterally by political motives or without every stakeholder's involvement, the likelihood of disruption is higher.

The last section of this chapter reviews the neglect of public service broadcasting (PSB) by the government since the liberalisation of the media sector in 1992 as illustrated in Chapter 4. It observes how the government adopted a non-inclusive strategy in an attempt to roll out the DSO process by excluding the incumbent pay DTT and DTV operators from the initial planning stage. This chapter argues the exclusive policy approach of the government to allow the PSB to play a central role in a democratic society, recommended by UNESCO, was a ploy by the government to exert control on the media ecosystem as it had enjoyed in the past. It also argues that the policy drive was mere lip service.

## **8.2 The capture of NBC: a path to weak institutional capacity**

The bulk of the work on the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting rested on the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) as the regulatory body for broadcast media in Nigeria and the body had a myriad of challenges confronting it before the DSO agenda. Communication policy analysts observe institutions either enable or constrain actor's behaviour "through formal and informal rules, practices, ideas and narratives" (Lowndes, 2002; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013 cited in Rashid, 2015, p.28). This chapter finds out that NBC was constrained as an agency of government institution in carrying out its primary functions, which had a repercussion on the digital migration agenda.

The law setting up the NBC (decree 38 of 1992 as amended by Act 55 of the 1999 constitution) gave power and control to the Minister of Information and the Presidency over NBC that constrained it “from appropriately serving the public interest... and participating as an up-to-date regulator in the contemporary global broadcasting landscape” (Akingbulu, 2010, p.63). For instance, Section 2(1)(b) and (c) of the principal Act (Decree 38 of 1992) constrained NBC’s role in the licensing process to “receiving, processing and considering applications” and “recommending applications through the Minister to the President” who approved at his discretion. Again, the licensing process was shrouded in secrecy; applicants often waited for several years without getting a response and the government was not obliged to give any explanation. Besides, “there is no provision for appeal if a license is withheld and unsuccessful applicants have not been going to court to seek redress” (Akingbulu, 2010, p.57). For instance, the emergence of Pinnacle Communication Limited (PCL) as the second signal distributor was controversial. Apart from outbidding the other contenders financially, Phase 3 Telecoms Limited’s representative (one of the contenders) argued that PCL ought to have been disqualified for failure to present two vital documents at the technical screening (Emmanuel Elebeke, 2014) and the issue was allowed to rest without seeking redress in court.

The decision-making body of NBC was composed of a Chairman, Director General, and 10 other members, which included representatives of the Ministry of Information and State Security Service; the President on the recommendation of the Minister appointed all members. The inclusion of representatives of the ministry and state security as members reinforced the government’s intimidation and ability to control NBC’s decision-making process. As Akingbulu (2010, p.55) notes, “the absence of provisions in the law regarding the process by which constituencies ought to be represented [in the decision-making of NBC]

and to make inputs into appointments does not make for transparency.” As it were, the law made the office of the DG as well as the Commission susceptible to political manipulation and influences and this is backed by Section 5 (5) of the NBC Act that stipulates “the Director-General shall hold office in the first instance for a period of five years and shall be eligible for re-appointment for such further periods as the President may, from time to time, determine”. At the time of writing (October 2023), the Commission had witnessed five changes in DGs since the implementation of the DSO process began in 2008 (as illustrated above in Chapter 7), all of them without completing their term of five years in the first place. The law also empowered the President to remove any member of the Commission “if he is satisfied that it is not in the interest of the Commission or in the interest of the public that the member should continue in office.” Again, only the government determined what was in the best interest of the public even though the civil society did not have a representative in the decision-making body of NBC. Yomi Bolarinwa was appointed DG in 2009 by the Yar’Adua administration and removed in 2013 after 4 years by the Jonathan administration without completing the mandatory 5 years. His removal may be for political reasons or no reason at all since the law placed such discretionary powers at the disposal of the President. Emeka Mba took over in 2013 and was removed in 2016 following an allegation of misappropriation of funds. Emeka Mba’s successor, Modibbo Kawu after 4 years (2016-2020) was removed in similar circumstances. However, Armstrong Idachaba remained in an acting capacity for one year (2020-2021) before Balarabe Sheu Ilela replaced him in 2021. The instability of leadership at NBC impaired its capacity to perform a complex task as the digital migration. This also contributed to the delay and the “stop and start” approach to the DSO process.

The various superintending powers given to the Information Minister over NBC constituted an institutional constraint, particularly section 6, which empowered the Minister to give a

“directive of a general character” to the commission, and stated that “it shall be the duty of the Commission to comply with such directive” (Akingbulu, 2010, p.54). Armstrong Idachaba, the former Acting DG of NBC, noted that the government’s input in the DSO process was “too involving, rather than supervisory it begets participatory”, which was counter-productive for the DSO process (Armstrong Idachaba, personal communication, June 2022).

Furthermore, then Minister Alhaji Lai Mohammed announced in March 2021 a 14-man Ministerial Task Force (MTF) that should drive the DSO process to the end with himself as the chair of the task force. This further deepened the involvement of the government in the DSO with minimal roles given to the critical stakeholders. Besides, the constituted MTF was outside of the recommendation of the policy document which stipulated DigiTeam as the body to implement the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting. Therefore, the role of the MTF appeared to be an extension of the Ministry of Information and Culture with an overlap function. The chairman of DigiTeam, Edward Amana in a personal communication in June 2022 noted the overlap thus,

To some extent it did, [MTF overlaps the function of DigiTeam] although DigiTeam was represented on the Ministerial Task Force. However, this is not the first time DigiTeam found itself in this situation. When Mr. Emeka Mba was the Director General of NBC, he too set up a parallel body he called DigiGroup, comprising some Broadcast Industry Representatives, DigiTeam and some Foreign Contractors he brought in, (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022).

Therefore, constant interference from policy state actors has been identified in this chapter as a contributing factor to the haphazardness in the implementation of the DSO process such that the domestic actors who were looking to government(s) for direction were left confused. This also demonstrates the weakened capacity of the regulatory body to take full charge of the digital migration process.



### **8.3 The lack of clear direction on the DSO: policy of silence**

Many times government's motive and rationale behind digital switchover were not entirely understood and trusted by the citizens especially when the DSO process appeared not to be transparent (Iosifidis, 2005, p.2). In such a circumstance, the DSO becomes an unpopular policy that citizens often perceive as coercive. The DSO process in Nigeria has been halted many times because the government failed to establish a clear policy direction on the implementation of the policy document (Abikanlu, 2018) or appeared to be politicising the decision-making process. This chapter then argues that the 'politics' of the digital switchover policy has contributed to the haphazard handling of the entire process. Therefore, some critical stakeholders clamoured for the political will and strong leadership displayed in the international communication policy arena (Maxwell Loko, personal communication, June 2022) on the part of the government to see the DSO process through to the end.

As demonstrated in the chronological accounts of the digital switchover process in Chapter 7, the government's delay in presenting the reports of the PAC for public scrutiny (Akinreti et al. 2013) until more than two years later resulted in confusion among the main stakeholders. No reason was given nor were the stakeholders carried along. Thus, the loud 'silence' of the government conformed to policy 'inaction' (Lukes, 1974; Freedman, 2014) or what Freedman (2014) describes as 'policy silences'. The inaction on the part of the government continued well after the White Paper drafting committee was constituted and the report was delayed for 8 months before it was made public in April 2012 (Edward Amana, personal communication June 2022). The persistent inaction on the part of the Jonathan administration may have set the political tone and demonstrated the lack of priority given to the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting, which delayed the DSO process. The policy inertia gave NBC the impetus to grant DTT licences to two foreign media conglomerates

StarTimes and GoTV, which enabled them to gain dominance in the DTT market; although they have the financial capacity to build infrastructure across the country.

Analysts have opined the deployment of DSO infrastructure needed an adequate and reliable source of funding and therefore, it required the government to take a leadership role and decide how to fund the DSO process. Policy analysts identify funding as one of the critical challenges impeding digital migration in the Sub-Saharan Africa region (Berger, 2010).

According to the African Union Commission document, *Guidelines on the harmonized use of the digital dividend in Africa* (2016, p.9) some of the sources identified in funding the DSO in Africa include:

- I) National budgetary allocation
- II) External financing through loans from institutions like the World Bank
- III) Universal service funds
- IV) Public-private partnerships (PPPs)
- V) Auctioning of the planned digital dividend frequencies and using the proceeds to fund the DSO process

Some African countries such as Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, and Tanzania mixed the options of funding to address the shortfall (GSMA, 2022). The Nigerian government's non-inclusive approach to implementing the DSO suggests that it wants to take sole responsibility for funding. The policy document recommended that the spectrum released should be auctioned to supplement the shortfall in funding the DSO process (White Paper, 2012); yet, the government could not muster the political will to make funds available such that it did not make any budgetary allocation for the digital migration in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 national budget (Idachaba 2018 and Edward Amana personal communication June 2022). This

underscores the *state-centric* culture of power in Nigeria reminiscent of colonial rule where major decisions were centred on the state to exert control.

In some other national administrations, funds were budgeted for digital migration and revenue was made in return. For instance, the Australian government to achieve the digital switchover expended a total of USD\$1.5 billion and the digital dividend accrued after the transition was USD\$2.5 billion (Idachaba, 2021 presentation at NBC retreat). Again, South Korea (Idachaba, 2021 presentation at NBC retreat) appropriated about 2.9 trillion Korean Won (USD\$2.5 billion) between 2009 to 2013 to accomplish digital switchover (including infrastructure, STBs subsidy, and public awareness) while the UK government spent over £4.6 billion on Digital Tick scheme, Digital AI (the robot), the Switchover help scheme, Switchover roadshows, marketing and technical infrastructure change (Armstrong Idachaba, 2021 presentation at NBC retreat).

As it were, the policy of silence on the release of funds for the DSO process in Nigeria justifies the views of Bachrach and Baratz (1962) on power at the disposal of state actors to dominate the visible policy process, which highlights the lack of commitment and political will to implement the DTT policy. Therefore, the lack of commitment demonstrated by the government contributed to Nigeria missing the initial PAC switch-off date of June 2012 resulting in the adoption of the ITU switch-off date of 17 June 2015 (Ihechu and Uche, 2012).

Again, the subtle power of negative action to promote the hegemonic interest (Freedman, 2010) of the Nigerian government in the DTT policy was at play. One of the recommendations of the White Paper (2012) was the formulation of a new policy and

regulatory framework in the broadcast ecosystem to accommodate the challenges of the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting (Nwoga et al. 2022). As a result of that, NBC Act No. 38, 1992 (as amended by Act 55, 1999) was to be further amended to give the new policy its legal and legislative backing (White Paper, 2012). The former acting DG of NBC, Armstrong Idachaba, during one of the retreats organised by the Commission in May 2021 noted that the NBC bill was still awaiting passage at the National Assembly (NASS). At the time of writing (October 2023), the legal framework of the new policy was not made public. This again suggests the political decision of the government not to act to ensure that NBC maintains its regulatory status quo, which made the regulatory body answerable by law to the Minister as its supervisor.

Meanwhile, NBC behaved to the institutional environment in which it operates (March and Olsen, 2004) and thought it was appropriate to preemptively award two DTT licences while awaiting the release of the policy document. The operating licence awarded to the two media conglomerates, StarTimes and MultiChoice covered broadcasting and signal transmission of their content. This brought confusion in the DTT policy implementation as the policy document came up with a new licencing regime that no single station could broadcast and carry their signal at the same time (Idachaba, 2018). However, the new licencing regime constituted a disruption in the broadcasting ecosystem particularly when it was evident that the newly licensed signal distributors (ITS and PCL) did not have enough capacity to cover the entire country. Apparently, after three years (2017-2020) of adopting city-to-city DSO launch (Kawu, 2018), the approach did not yield the anticipated result as the two licensed BSDs could only cover six out of the thirty-six states (10%) in Nigeria and the coverage was inadequate to facilitate a compelling FTA take up. Armstrong Idachaba, the former acting

DG of NBC in May 2021 noted the inadequate coverage in the six states where the DSO was switched:

1. Plateau State – covering 9 out of the 17 Local Government
2. Kwara state – covering 7 out of 15 Local Government Areas
3. Enugu State – covering 4 out of 17 Local Government Areas
4. Osun State – covering 14 out of the 30 Local Government Areas
5. Abuja – covers most of the Municipal area. No signal in Bwari, Kwali, Abaji and Nyanya
6. Kaduna has yet to carry out Field Strength Measurements but coverage is also limited

(Armstrong Idachaba, May 2021 NBC DG presentation at the retreat of the House of Representative Committee on Information).

The insufficient signal coverage of the entire country by the two licensed signal carriers indicated the inadequate communication policy and buttressed Berger's (2010) view about the narrow communication policy concern in the sub-Saharan African countries to meet up with the GE-06 agreement which, exposed the weak pre-existing policy framework to cope with the complexities and challenges of DTT policy (Berger, 2010, p.26).

On the other hand, StarTimes and MultiChoice had established infrastructure right across the country and together they covered about “85% of the Nigerian TV landscape” (Maxwell Loko, personal communication, October 2022). The then Minister of Information opined that for ASO to happen in Nigeria, the government would need to have covered at least “70% of the country with digital terrestrial television (DTT) signal and then deploy Direct-To-Home

(DTH) to provide 30% signal to areas in difficult terrains such as riverine and mountainous areas” (speech by Lai Mohammed, August 2022). Although the policy document was silent on the role of the existing DTT operators in the DSO process, the government chose not to ride on the infrastructure backbone of the incumbent pay DTT operators to facilitate a quick rollout of the DSO process. Instead, the government kept applying ‘the rule of thumb’ in interpreting the policy document, which was complicating rather than simplifying the process.

This chapter observes the ‘legitimate’ policy concern of the government behind the decision not to include the participation of Pay DTT service providers insisting that DTT remain as FTA and not pay-TV. The former DG of NBC Emeka Mba notes:

Terrestrial Free to Air (FTA) broadcasting shall continue to play a key role in national social cohesion, and the NBC will do whatever it takes to ensure this, (Emeka Mba at NBC retreat in 2015).

However, this chapter argues that beyond the public interest rationale, the real motivation was the government perceived that pay-TV had the potential to challenge government hegemony in the broadcasting environment by outputting more content, necessitating the government’s policy intention. Additionally, pay-TV posed a threat of replacing PSB’s main source of income because FTA was largely propelled by advertising revenue (Lai Mohammed speech 29/04/2021). According to research by Statista (2023), the Nigerian advertising market was valued at USD\$425 million in 2017, with television advertising remaining strong. Between 2015 and 2019, MultiChoice invested USD\$428 million into local content production and developing local creativity (Marketing Edge, 2020). In 2023, MultiChoice made USD\$235 million from Nigeria (Samson Akintaro, 2023), While Nigeria FreeTV service faced challenges in gaining traction. This highlights the growing influence of

foreign media conglomerates in Nigeria's digital market, with neoliberal policies allowing them to capitalise on local challenges.

Perhaps, the other policy intention of the Nigerian government not to involve the pay DTT service providers early in the implementation of DSO could be an attempt to reintroduce the moribund public service broadcasting (PSB) (Idachaba, 2018) in the form of FTA to drive the rollout of DTT services as was in the case of the BBC in the UK (Iosifidis, 2005). Without an effective analogue switch-off strategy put in place (García Leiva and Stark, 2009), it might be difficult for the government to reposition the PSB to serve as an impetus for DTT service uptake. This sort of situation was what Maxwell Loko, Managing Director, NTA Enterprise (personal interview October 2022) described as a 'catch-22'. He believed that for the government to enforce the DSO directive and for broadcasters to comply, policy actors should have ensured that an effective plan was in place: the switch-on and switch-off should occur simultaneously.

That is what we are asking the government to ensure as quickly as possible, you [Government] must simultaneously enforce ASO as you do DSO. As digital switch-on is done, there must be an analogue switch-off (Maxwell Loko personal interview May 2022).

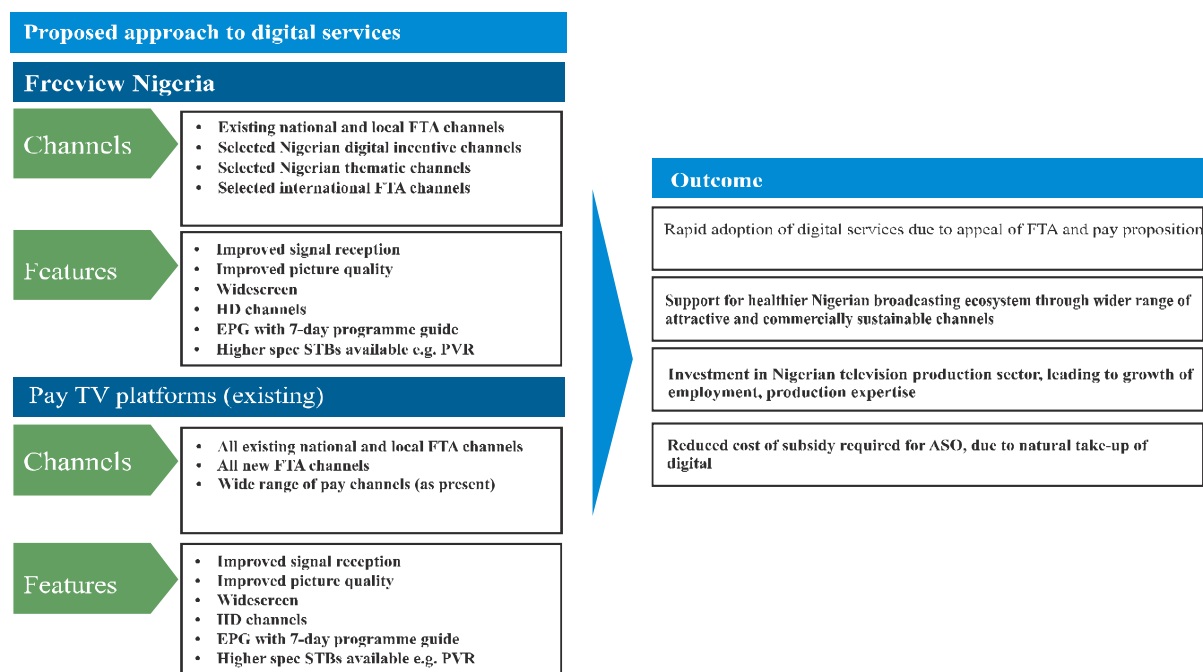
Another policy decision of the government that delayed the DSO process was not allowing cross-network accessibility on the STBs of the incumbent pay-TV operators in the DTT. The STB approved for the DSO in Nigeria was limited to FreeTV channels and not compatible with the existing pay-TV 'decoders' in the Nigerian market (Abikanlu, 2018). The reason advanced by the government not to allow cross-network accessibility on the STBs in DTT broadcasting was for the protection of investment of licensed STB manufacturers and their content (Tunde Adegbola, personal communication, June 2022). Therefore, two middleware companies, Inview and Renmore, were licensed to encrypt conditional access system (CAS)

software as standard for the STB approved for the DSO in Nigeria. There were over 30 million TV households in Nigeria and the DSO would require about the same amount of STBs produced before ASO can occur. Although the policy document recommended that 3 local STB manufacturers should be licensed, the government approved 13 local manufacturers (Edward Amana, personal communication, June 2022) out of which only 7 established their factory in the country and only 1 (Gospell Digital Technology) was actively engaged in the production of the STBs (Margaret Nwantok, 2018). Therefore, there was a shortage of the STBs required for the DSO process. Maxwell Loko, in a personal communication (October 2022) suggested since StarTimes and GoTV had already covered over 80% of the media landscape and market penetration of about 10 million pay-TV subscribers in Nigeria, it would appear logical for the government to allow a cross-network accessibility of the pay DTT decoders with the approved standard STBs to fast track the DSO rollout.

Rather, the government exerted *full control* over the DSO process and would not include pay-TV operators in its planning because the government believed that leaving the market to decide which objective and targets to achieve would likely result in market failure. Besides, the position of the government was that “a digital pay proposition alone will not convert sufficient households to digital to enable ASO” (Emeka Mba, NBC 2015, Calabar retreat). Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the government was convinced that a compelling free-to-air (FTA) proposition should play a major role such as in the case of BBC in the UK (Iosifidis, 2005) to facilitate digital switchover in Nigeria (see Figure 8.1 below).



**Figure 8.1 Proposed approach to digital services**



**Source:** Emeka Mba’s presentation at NBC 2015 Calabar retreat

The discussion above illustrated that the government failed to give a clear policy direction on the DTT implementation. Instead, the government played ‘politics’ and centralised decision-making to the detriment of some key domestic stakeholders who called for reform in the broadcasting regulatory framework.

### **8.4 Failure of the state to capture the ‘jointness of interest’ of domestic policy stakeholders**

As analysed in the previous sections in this chapter, the capture of NBC and the lack of clear direction demonstrated by the government had effects on the direction of the DSO process and the entire value chain. Domestic actors were less motivated, which contributed to a stall in the DSO process. In a situation like this, stakeholder analysts (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Freeman, 2008; Freeman et al., 2010) suggest three critical factors should be considered to redirect the interest of stakeholders. First of all, going by the argument of

Donaldson and Preston (1995), every stakeholder with *legitimate interest* participates in an enterprise [DSO] with the sole purpose of obtaining benefit. As it were, the Nigerian government and the middleware providers (Inview and Renmore) appeared to be the only stakeholders benefitting from the digital migration process while the other actors were thrown into disarray. For example, the government realised proceeds from the licences issued to the signal distributor(s), set-top box manufacturers, and broadcasters and the N34 billion (equivalent to USD\$171 million as of 2015) accrued from the sale of the freed 700 MHz band to MTN while the DSO implementation process was starved of necessary funds. Although the government in February 2021 agreed to settle the ‘legacy debt’ of some critical stakeholders and released N9.4 billion (equivalent to USD\$24.7 million as of 2021), the DSO agenda remained comatose.

Secondly, Freeman (2008) and Freeman et al. (2010) argue that the maximisation of benefits by a stakeholder [Nigeria government] was not possible without the creation of value for all primary stakeholders, including the consumer who should be encouraged to take up the DTT service. Freeman (2008, p.165) argues that to prompt the uptake of DTT, its services should attract the interest of the consumers. Given the challenges confronting the DSO process in Nigeria, the DTT policy cannot be said to attract the interest of the consumers at the moment (Wale Bakare, personal communication June 2022). One of the key policies of the government to boost the uptake of DTT in Nigeria was to facilitate the production of ‘compelling content’. This study observes that the compelling content critical to deciding viewership for DTT in Nigeria was not sufficient; pay-TV operators provided more content, including premium ones. The promised digital channels on FreeTV (15 channels at the switch-on in Jos, 30 channels in Abuja and 60+ channels in Lagos) were yet to be fully realised. This situation was similar to what was observed in Botswana where the absence of

attractive free-to-air content offerings discouraged consumers from switching to DTT, instead, the middle and high-income groups preferred to use the services of the pay-TV operators (GSMA, 2022). Again, a critical component that would enable DTT in Nigeria, that is, the STB was not readily available in places where the DSO was launched. Where the STB was available, it was restricted to the urban area and the cost was not affordable for the ‘common man’ since the government removed subsidy (Binta, 2020). Besides, signals from the signal distributors often experienced downtime (Wale Bakare, personal communication June 2022) therefore, it can be argued that the desired effect of the digital migration was not achieved and the general public has been so far short-changed.

Finally, the Nigerian government appeared not to have captured the ‘jointness of interests’ (Freeman, 2008) of all stakeholders necessary to create and sustain value for the DSO agenda. There was disgruntle and dissatisfaction evident among domestic stakeholders who felt the implementation of the policy process on the one hand, constrained those of them who have invested infrastructure, committed financial resources and skilled manpower, and on the other hand enabled some stakeholders with minimal investment to reap maximum benefits (Maxwell Loko, personal communication, May 2022).

Given the scenarios in this section, it is suggested that the government has not successfully reconciled the competing interests of actors involved in the implementation of the DTT policy and as such, the digital migration process witnessed a disinterest of relevant stakeholders, which has contributed to stalling the DSO process. As a result, the efforts of the government to revamp the PSB and give it a central role in the uptake of DTT services might have hit a brick wall.

## **8.5 Assessing the Nigerian public service broadcasting in the DTT environment**

As has been established in Chapter 4, the PSB in Nigeria was modelled after the BBC and the cardinal of public broadcasting in Britain emphasises the public interest model. Therefore, the PSB was conceived to be “in the forefront of promoting human development, democracy, peaceful coexistence, transparency, rule of law and serving as mediators” (Ibrahim et al. 2019 p.1). It appears in Nigeria, the PSB has not been successful in carrying out its role due to the government interference (see Chapter 4).

Public service broadcasting as a public service supposedly enables every citizen to see themselves as stakeholders in society. Furthermore, PSB could be important in the functioning of a democratic society such that it “plays an irreplaceable role in providing citizens with information, education and entertainment free of commercial, State or political influences” (UNESCO 2001, p.iii). Arguably, this model of PSB may be found in a society where broadcasting is allowed to play its vital role as an inclusive medium where everyone’s views are accommodated regardless of status, race, or religious inclination. As illustrated in Chapter 4, Jega (2016) observed that the nature of PSB, as practised in Nigeria right from the Colonial era deviated from the norm as obtained in developed democratic society media practices such as found in the Voice of America (VOA) in America, BBC in Britain or Deutsch Walle in Germany. Jega (2016) further observes that broadcast media in Nigeria has always been under the firm grip of government, whether in the hands of federal, regional or state to achieve their aspiration or propagate their innate agenda. The government’s control made the PSB weak to carry out its primary functions to the public. According to Jega (2016, p.10),

The values of free, independent, and accessible press [broadcast media] were not engrained in the evolution of broadcasting in Colonial Nigeria. Rather, government control was instituted, not just in licensing, but also especially at the operational level; which set the tone of the relationship between public broadcasting agencies and the governments in the post-colonial period.

In the post-colonial era, two interventions by the international community helped to shape the direction of the television market globally and locally in Nigeria. First was the liberalisation of the broadcasting industry in Nigeria in 1992, which shifted the focus of PBS. The deregulation, liberalisation and commercialisation of broadcast media and telecommunication sectors prompted by intergovernmental institutions like the IMF and the World Bank following the global economic recession of the 1980s had implications on the customary role of PSB in Nigeria. The argument by the Bretton Woods institutions for deregulation was framed on market-driven policies, which should supposedly, “reduce state-funded wastages and lead to economic prosperity, diversity and ascendancy of market-driven democracy of choice” (Ibrahim et al. 2019, p.1). The broadcasting policy changed from wholly government control to accommodating other players; changing the media ownership structure and introducing plurality in the broadcasting media landscape in the country. There was a change in the licensing regime that allowed foreign media conglomerates to participate in the broadcasting media environment. Therefore, MultiChoice was licensed in 1994 to operate a subscription-based TV and enjoyed the monopoly of the pay-TV market to the detriment of the domestic players as highlighted in Chapter 6. The second intervention that continued to shape the direction of the television market in Nigeria was the global agreement on digital migration that began in 2006, which this thesis has been investigating. Both interventions continued to have an immeasurable impact on the PSB in Nigeria as it continued to underserve the general public with programming and content.

The neo-liberal ideology enabled by the intergovernmental institutions is market-driven and to enjoy a larger market share, broadcasting stations, including government-owned are expected to invest in content that would attract consumers. Therefore, private stations began to invest in content that the consumers “want rather than what they need” (Oketumbi, 2007, p.8). In light of this, critics have argued that the profit-driven motives of private broadcasters may have restricted access and participation of some consumers in the DTT environment as broadcasting services in Nigeria were largely elitist and heavily commercialised in their programming and content. For this reason, the digitisation of broadcast media in Nigeria had an “unintended negative effect on how public broadcast media was perceived by the audience” (Ibrahim et al. 2019, p.1).

Therefore, in the digital era, the government in its DTT policy decided to take the lead and ensured more channels on FreeTV were made available at no ‘extra cost’ beyond the once-a-year low-access fee paid by consumers. But, at the time of writing (October 2023) consumers were yet to feel the impact of this policy as the promised multiple channels were yet to be delivered.

The primary objective of PSB is to address the need of the mass public however, in the digital environment; the fragmentation of the audience has been accelerated because of the multiplicity of channels available. Meanwhile, PSB was expected to compete significantly with commercial broadcasting on the new digital platform. The challenge PSB might have would be inadequate funding to match the quality of content served by commercial broadcast media. According to UNESCO standard-setting, there are three basic principles peculiar to PSB that must be maintained in the face of media fragmentation. These principles are Universality, Diversity, and Independence.

Firstly, with the principle of Universality, public broadcast in the digital era is expected to be accessible to every citizen in the country. Universality “forces the public broadcaster to address the entire population and seek to be ‘used’ by the largest possible number” (UNESCO, 2001, p. 11). In the case of Nigeria, digital broadcasting was concentrated in urban areas without much consideration for rural dwellers. This could not be said to reflect the Universality of a public service broadcasting. The protracted DSO process in Nigeria was concentrated in the urban centres; the DSO was launched in the capital cities of 8 states: Plateau, Kwara, Kaduna, Lagos, Osun, Enugu, Kano, and the Federal capital territory, Abuja. Therefore, people in rural areas were disenfranchised and more likely, the information gap would be widened and the overarching objective of DTT to remain, as PSB would appear defeated.

Secondly, according to UNESCO’s standard-setting structure in the digital era, public service broadcasting should be diverse in three ways; through the genre of content it presented, the audiences it should reach and the subject it should deliberate on. UNESCO (2001, p.12) states further that

Public broadcasting must reflect the diversity of public interests by offering different types of programs, from newscasts to light programs. Some programs may be aimed at only part of the public, whose expectations are varied. In the end, public broadcasting should reach everyone, not through each program, but through all programs and their diversity. Finally, through the diversity of the subjects discussed, public broadcasting can also seek to respond to the varied interests of the public and so reflect the whole range of current issues in society.

Arguably, diversity as an intrinsic part of public broadcasting is not reflected in public broadcasting in Nigeria post-liberalisation and the digital era. To corroborate this, Vincent Maduka, former DG of NTA, notes that “the enabling laws of the [Nigerian Television

Authority] NTA (1977) and [Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria] FRCN (1978) did not give specific guidelines on the media's involvement in the promotion of Nigerian cultural values and entertainment, but rather concentrated more on news, politics, and other controversial matters" (Vincent Maduka cited in Betiang, 2010, p.5). The Diversity of content on the FTA platform in Nigeria appeared to have become more unattainable with digitisation where broadcast media filled their airtime with foreign programmes because it was much too expensive to produce local content for the diverse audiences in the country. Although the broadcasting policy specified 70:30 ratios for local over foreign content in Nigeria media space, this policy has not been adequately enforced.

The third principle of Independence emphasises freedom of public broadcasting; by this, broadcast media was free to express its opinion and criticism. Public broadcasting was expected to hold its own editorial opinion against its proprietor, whether government or private-owned (UNESCO, 2001, p. 12). When the study examines the UNESCO standard-setting principle against public service broadcasting practice in Nigeria, it argues that public broadcasting meant to protect the public interest does not exist. As evident in Chapter 4, especially during the brutish General Abacha regime (1993-1998), the public as well as the private broadcasting stations was too afraid to criticise the government policies for fear of brutal reprisal. Another example was the manipulation of broadcast media space by the Buhari regime (2015-2023) when it amended the broadcasting code (the addendum to the NBC code 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 2020) without any input from the critical stakeholders.

The growing trend of media globalisation has continued to strain the pure form of public broadcasting. The BBC's public-service model 'reinvented' itself in the face of the global digital media revolution by embarking on fundamental changes. The BBC responded to the



challenges of digitisation faced by PSB by coming up with “innovative programming, creation of advertising-financed channels, and the commercial-driven BBC Worldwide” (Betiang, 2010, p.5). In the manner of the Indian TV Doordarshan, the BBC also created more local language stations all over the world, buttressing the argument that PSB takes on a vital role in the digital environment and contributes to the recreation of the public sphere (Graham, 1998; Murdock and Golding, 2004 and Iosifidis, 2012). In the Nigerian context, the government was confronted with the challenges of switching over to digital broadcasting and insisted PSB play a vital role in the uptake of DTT services without first addressing the issue of overhauling the communication policy. As this study finds out, no one knew how long it would take before the country completed the DSO process.

Some critics thought that liberalisation, commercialisation and globalisation of broadcasting in Nigeria could democratise communication and increase accessibility and participation for ordinary citizens but the analysis in Chapter 7 on the DSO process in Nigeria has proven otherwise. The STB required to access digital television might be way out of reach of the poor citizens (since the removal of government subsidy) because the price of the decoder was based on the exchange rate of the USA dollar against the falling value of the Naira. As of the time of writing (October 2023), the price of the approved STB for the DSO in Nigeria was far more than the price of the STB for pay TV. Besides, poor citizens would still have to pay a yearly Digital Access Fee (DAF) to watch ‘FreeTV’. Therefore, the poor who cannot afford the price of STB would remain marginalised and excluded, which negates the purpose of public service broadcasting in the digital environment.

Therefore, with the myriads of challenges confronting the DTT implementation in Nigeria, this thesis argues it may be difficult for the government to realise the legitimate policy concern to make PSB play a central role by insisting that FTA remains DTT and not pay-TV.

## **8.6 Conclusions**

This chapter has dealt with the analysis of the complexities of digital migration and underlined that the challenges of DSO were not peculiar to Nigeria alone. It demonstrated the regulatory capture constrained the NBC in carrying out such a complex task as the DSO because of the hands-on approach of the government, which centralised decision-making. By extension, the DigiTeam was also constrained: it was left without funds to carry out its expected duties and was at the ‘mercy’ of NBC to practically function. In the end, a parallel body, the MTF was set up to implement and make decisions on the direction of the DSO.

In this chapter, it was evident the non-decision of the government at the initial stage of the DSO process to act on the report of the PAC and the subsequent political decisions negated the principle of public interest objectives and demonstrated the lack of priority given to the DSO process. After all, the overarching objective of the digital migration was to bridge the information gap and ensure no one was left behind. However, the implementation of the DSO process by the government revealed political decisions around the DSO as dominant traditions and culture about the role of the state (Berger, 2010, p.30) that centralised decision-making and gave minimal or no role to the civil society organisations. As examined in this chapter, the MTF did not have any representative of civil society organizations (CSO) among its members.

Evident in the non-consultative disposition of the government to the DSO process, this chapter then analyses the failure of the government to include the two pay DTT operators (StarTimes and GoTV) who had established market penetration (over 10 million subscribers) and, as communication policy scholars indicate, the government could benefit from the relationship between state and market. This chapter observed that the decision of the government not to involve pay-TV operators in the initial planning of DSO expressed the policy concern that DTT remained FTA and not pay-TV. As a result, the government attempted to ‘force’ StarTimes and GoTV to move on to the digital platforms of the two licensed BSDs (ITS and PCL) by threatening not to renew their broadcasting licences (Kawu, 2018) but the attempt failed, as the threat was not enforced.

Finally, this chapter also discussed the sudden interest of the government in repositioning the PSB in the digital era. The government’s involvement in the PSB after the liberalisation of the broadcasting industry in 1992 was minimal. The government appeared to be promoting a legitimate policy concern to retain PSB as FTA and not pay-TV but when it came to implementation, the government was not doing enough to actualise the policy concern. For instance, the BBC embarked on consumer awareness and information to promote the digital uptake leading to the switchover in the UK (Iosifidis, 2005) whereas, in the Nigerian context, the public awareness among consumers had been observed by critics to be very low. This chapter argued the sudden government policy interest in PSB to play a central role in the DTT services may be seen as an opportunity for the state to exert control over the digital switchover process.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusions**

### **9.1 Introduction**

This chapter recaps the main arguments of the study as well as discusses some of the outcomes of the challenges of implementing the DTT policy in Nigeria. Following the historical perspective on broadcast media and telecommunication, the literature reviews and the analysis of decision-making in the policy arena, the chapter explores the protracted DSO process in Nigeria. The study argues that the policy approach of the government among other factors contributed to the missed opportunities experienced in the attempt to transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section reviews the main arguments of the thesis and provides answers to the research questions. The second section discusses the non-inclusive policy response of the government to the DTT implementation that contributed to the delays and disruption of the DSO timetable. It underscores the significance of a broad-based communication policy to tackle the challenges of digitisation. It also discusses the lack of public awareness, which contributed to the slow uptake of the DTT services. This lack demonstrates the policy failure of the non-inclusive approach of government, as the public constitutes a critical part of the stakeholders in the DTT policy. The inadequate government policy on public awareness failed to encourage the uptake of the DTT services such that the analogue spectrum was not freed and as a consequence, the stakeholders could not maximise the benefit of digital dividends. The ITU recommended that countries should adopt a regulatory framework to facilitate the DTT migration process. However, Nigeria failed to adopt a legal framework for the policy document, which resulted in the insufficient implementation of the digital migration process, leading to many challenges. The third section examines the likely implications of Nigeria not completing the digital migration. These implications were observed from three perspectives:

political, economic and social. The fourth and fifth sections draw the thesis' conclusion and reveal the limitations of this research, particularly as it was an ongoing DSO process. The final section is the contribution to knowledge and offers suggestions for further study.

## **9.2 Summary of the main arguments and response to the research questions**

The protracted digital switchover process was not peculiar to Nigeria only; this study has indicated that other African countries such as Cameroon, Ghana and Senegal were in similar circumstances. As observed in Chapter 3, most of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) DSO process status was marked 'ongoing' as of December 2022 (Balancing Act, 2022). However, what was peculiar to the DSO in Nigeria was the size of the television households (over 30 million), which was the largest in Africa; this contributed to the delays and delivery of the DTT services to the consumers. Given the complexity of the DSO process in Nigeria, the study enumerates the main arguments of the thesis thus:

- i. The GE-06 global agreement allowed the Nigerian government to review its role in the broadcast media and telecommunication sectors. It appeared that the policy concern of the government was to maintain the moribund PSB as FTA. The policy intention of the government was for the PSB to take a lead in encouraging the uptake of the DTT services as against leaving it to the 'dictate' of pay DTT and DTV service providers, which might result in market failure (Emeka Mba, 2015). The government perceived leaving the uptake of the DTT services to pay DTT alone could challenge the power enjoyed by the government in the pre-digital -the government hegemony in the broadcasting industry- by outputting more content. The thesis then argues that a weakened institutional capacity enabled the government to exert control over the digital migration process.

- ii. This thesis observes that the approach of the government towards the DSO excluded the critical stakeholders such that the process was driven solely by the executive decision as evident in the unilateral action of the government to establish the MTF outside of the policy document. The MTF ended up ‘usurping’ the policy responsibility of the DigiTeam. Arguably, the implementation of the DTT policy became haphazard such that the main stakeholders advocating for broadcasting policy and regulatory reform were made ineffective and left more confused.
  
- iii. The ITU recommended the overhaul of the regulatory policy framework of nation-states due to the challenges posed by digital technology and convergence. Nigeria missed the opportunity to put in place an appropriate policy framework backed by legislation that would enable digital broadcasting. The thesis argues legal backing for the reform regulatory framework could have restored the confidence of the various stakeholders and investors in the DSO process. The Minister of Information was expected to follow up on the passing into law of the legal framework at the National Assembly, which could have enabled the legislature to include the needed funds for the DSO in the national budgetary allocation. Thus, Nigeria operated with the analogue broadcasting policy to try and deliver DTT services, which exposed the policy inadequacy of the existing regulatory framework. It became the argument of this study that the government chose not to pursue the legal framework for the reform regulatory policy to maintain the status quo in the broadcasting sector knowing that the extant NBC Act gave the Minister and the Presidency the power to exert control over the media ecosystem.

The main arguments of the thesis run through and resonate with the responses to the research questions of the study starting with the overarching RQ1: *How has the transition to digital broadcasting in Nigeria been shaped by domestic politics and the global agenda? As*

discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, the development in digital technology and the benefits derived from efficient spectrum use made ITU prompt its member states who were signatories to the 2006 RRC-06 Convention to commence digital migration. Nigeria being a member state joined the DSO process however, it faced a series of challenges due to the approach adopted in the implementation of the GE-06 global agreement. This thesis identified a non-inclusive approach as a strategy adopted by the government, which tends to exclude the main stakeholders in the implementation of the DTT policy. Besides, the process of policy-making and decision taken at the initial stage of the DSO process is in line with Freedman's (2008) assertion of policy inaction which set the political tone on the implementation of the DTT policy: it appeared the GE-06 global agreement was not a priority for the government; the excitement and expectations of the domestic stakeholders about the DTT policy were left to 'fester' as they were kept in the dark about the DSO process. This policy inertia continued with the delay in the release of the policy document, which was to guide the policy process and decision-making in the policy arena such that when it was released, most parts of it were obsolete. As illustrated in Chapter 7, the pre-emptive decision of NBC to award DTT licences to private foreign media conglomerates in 2010 and 2011 (StarTimes and GoTV respectively) while the reform regulatory policy was still evolving further created confusion in the DSO process.

The government and the sub-government actor (NBC) in Nigeria were observed dictating and (mis)interpreting the intention of the policy document and this complicated the DSO process as demonstrated in Chapters 7 and 8. For instance, the DSO process could have been concluded faster if the government had not insisted that PSB as FTA play a central role in the uptake of DTT services and excluded the pay DTT service providers who had established dominance in the market. Again, the government's 'manipulation' of the DTT policy was enabled among other factors by the lack of enabling law backing the policy document. Also,

the weak institutional capacity of the NBC captured by the Presidency derived from the law setting up the regulatory body accounted for constant interference in its operational activities that made it difficult for NBC to carry out such a complex task as the DTT policy. Most significantly, the policy process concerning the introduction of the digital switchover had more government representatives in the composition of the various committees such as the PAC, the White Paper, DigiTeam and MTF, which skewed the decision-making in favour of the government. In the end, the domestic industry players were less enthused about the DSO agenda as noted by Yomi Bolarinwa, the former DG of NBC in a personal communication (November 2022):

It [the apathy] will continue in this trend because I think it is only the regulator, the NBC that believes in the switchover, even the practitioners... don't believe in it. Unfortunately, the politicians have taken it over and they play politics and money with the switchover, (Yomi Bolarinwa, personal communication November 2022).

The second sub-research question, RQ2: *Who were the main stakeholder groups in the democratic policy arena? How effective was each stakeholder group in pursuing its own interests and goals?* is answered in Chapter 7. In line with Van den Bulck's (2012) stakeholder analysis, the main stakeholder groups were identified based on their position on the policy issues and the ideas they espoused. These main stakeholders were categorised into three main actor groups: state, industry and NGO. Furthermore, the state actors were found in the policy arena formulating and influencing policy processes while the industry and NGO actors reacted by criticising prevailing policy and outcomes (Lindquist 2001, p.6 in Van den Bulck, 2012 p.225). In this respect, each stakeholder group effectively pursued their interests and goals in the DSO process. For example, within the state policy actors the Ministry of Information (MIC), the NBC, DigiTeam and the MTF were charged directly with the implementation of the DTT policy and they had a 'common stake' to effectively deliver DTT



services. The weakened institutional capacity of the NBC allowed the MIC to influence the Executive decision and established the MTF to ‘facilitate’ a quick implementation of the DSO. However, this study shows that the functions of the NBC were rendered ineffective due to the supervisory influence of the Minister permitted by law. By extension, the capacity of the DigiTeam assigned by the policy document to drive the DSO implementation was subsumed by the NBC and MTF through informal procedures and practices such that DigiTeam became an extended part of the MIC.

As illustrated in Chapter 7, the collective interest of the non-state industry actors in the DSO process was to maximise the benefit of the digital switchover policy in the interest of their business. In their separate commercial interests, the goals of the BSDs were to ensure the delivery of quality DTT signal at the appropriate time to the agreed population but the two licensed signal carriers (ITS and PCL) were constrained by financial and technical capabilities such that signal transmitted often experience down-time (Wale Bakare, personal communication June 2022) and the infrastructure rolled out only covered 8 states out of the 36 states in Nigeria. The broadcast content providers (broadcasters, independent producers and content aggregators) on their part were interested in ensuring quality TV multi-channels were provided for digital distribution. The uncertainty in the implementation of the DTT policy allowed the BCP to take advantage of the simulcast period by enjoying the digital platform of the BSDs without paying because the rate card (carriage fee) on the digital platform had not been agreed on at the time of writing (October 2023). However, the 60+ channels promised on the platform of the FTA were yet to be delivered and the content offered did not meet the national policy regulatory demand of a 70:30 local-to-foreign content ratio.

In response to RQ3: *To what extent did state actors manage to exert control over the digital switchover process, and through which means?* One of the main arguments of this thesis emphasised that the non-inclusive approach of the government contributed to the delay witnessed in the DSO process. The analysis of the policy process in the digital switchover in Chapter 8 demonstrated how the weak institutional structure of NBC incapacitated the regulatory body. Thus, Alh Lai Mohammed superintended the implementation of the digital migration policy even though there were committees set up to perform the task. The effect of the interference was the haphazard implementation of the DTT policy, which resulted in missed opportunities despite the different ‘interventions’ of the government.

Again, the informal practices of disregard for the reform regulatory framework of the DSO by policy state actors brought confusion in the delivery of the DTT policy. For instance, as illustrated in Chapter 8, NBC ignored the structure laid down by the DigiTeam and introduced new actors such as the middleware providers, content aggregators and foreign satellite providers against the provisions of the policy document. The introduction of the new actors brought about conflict among the domestic actors. Specifically, the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) and the BSDs considered the new actors as middlemen who continue to clog the wheel of the DSO process. The situation remained unchanged as the middleware providers participated in the DSO process, thus NBC was able to exert control that contributed to the stalling in the digital migration process.

The last RQ4 is: *How has the intersection of foreign media/telecommunication conglomerates and local politics in Nigeria influenced the digital migration process? Who stood to lose and who stood to benefit?* The thesis discussed how intergovernmental institutions such as the WTO and the Bretton Woods organisations (the World Bank and the IMF) renewed the neoliberal ideology in the digital era that enabled multinational

corporations (MNCs) to expand their business and continue to accumulate capital in national administrations. This was evident in the direct investment of the two foreign media and telecommunication conglomerates in the Nigerian market backed by state capitalism: the South African and the Chinese governments. The effects of the foreign direct investment of MultiChoice/MTN of South Africa and Star Communication Network (StarTimes) of China on the digital migration process were such that it created an imbalance in the broadcast media and telecommunication market in Nigeria. For instance, the foreign media conglomerates, StarTimes and MultiChoice, were better capitalised than the domestic players and this gave them an edge to rollout infrastructure, invest in premium content and dominate the market in the pay DTT and DTV services. As mentioned in Chapter 6, an attempt by a domestic pay-TV operator, HiTV to compete with the foreign media conglomerates was thwarted by the lending framework of domestic financial institutions. Despite the market penetration of the two foreign media conglomerates, the government excluded them from the initial planning of the DSO process, which disadvantaged the quick rollout of the DTT policy.

A critical consideration with the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting is the question of those who stood to lose and those who stood to benefit from the process of digitisation. As has been discussed in this thesis, digital migration was the agenda of developed economies pushed through a decision made at the ITU to pressure developing economies such as Africa to undergo and conclude digital migration so that the spectrum could be freed sooner than later (Berger, 2010). It has also been argued that developed countries stood to benefit more from early digital migration in the sub-Saharan Africa region because industries in developed economies were relying on the freed spectrum from the UHF band (discussed at length in Chapters 3 and 6).

However, with deliberate implementation, DSO could bring a lot of socio-economic benefits to national administrations such as “greater information pluralism and more diversity, and it could also assist civil society and good governance” (Diana Senghor 2010, cited in Berger 2010, p.5). When the government involves all main stakeholders in the true sense of a consultative approach as demonstrated in a few country contexts cited in this study such as Tanzania and New Zealand, it could lead to a ‘Win-Win’ situation for all (Bolarinwa, 2015, Armstrong Idachaba 2021). As argued in this study, it appears the government and the middleware providers have benefited so far from the DSO process in Nigeria leaving the other stakeholders disenfranchised. On the other hand, the real losers would be the consumers who have not benefited from the digital dividends of multiple channels offered in the DTT, with sound quality and crisp picture content. Beyond the compelling content offering, consumers may miss out on the convergence advantage of DTT, which could enable a greater information revolution. As Berger (2012) argues, the vision of communication development for sub-Saharan Africa could go beyond “the mainstream paradigms, which operate with broadcast-internet silos, and with assumptions about broadcasting being about unidirectional information flow”, (p13). In other words, the STB as a component could be used to facilitate two-way communication that would strengthen democratic participation and inclusion of citizens in good governance.

Having seen the outcome of the government’s exclusive approach to the DSO, the next section will discuss the significance of an inclusive strategy as an alternative response to the implementation of the digital switchover policy in Nigeria.

### **9.3 Discussions: The importance of an inclusive response to the DSO process**

### ***9.3.1 ASO timetable unrealistic***

As illustrated in chapters 1, 4, and 7, Nigeria like some other African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, and Tanzania set an ambitious switchover timeline to beat the GE-06 agreement without adequate consideration for a broad-based communication policy. The result was that Nigeria not only missed several deadlines (both self-imposed and two ITU deadlines) but 15 years (2008-2023) after the national administration began the digital migration, it struggled to complete the DSO process. This research identifies three factors behind the policy failure of the government to achieve the released timetable for the DSO process.

First, the policy rush to set an ambitious timetable exposed the narrow and inadequate communication policy in Nigeria. The research observed in Chapter 1 that Nigeria does not have a single and integrated communication policy but pockets of regulations and codes for prints and electronic media, film and telecommunication, which was a relic of the Colonial administration. In the digital era, Nigeria missed the opportunity to embrace a reform regulatory framework that would enable it to cope with the challenges of digitisation; instead, it chose to apply an inadequate analogue communication policy.

Second, the policy approach of the government towards the DSO has been identified as non-inclusive. This approach allowed the executive to centralise decision-making; any unilateral decision taken without consensus input of all key actors tends to fail (García Leiva 2010). The executive decision to embark on the second phase of the DSO in 2021 when the first phase had not been effectively concluded was an indication that the released DSO timetable was unrealistic for two reasons: one, the executive's constant policy interference in the operations and functions of the regulatory body permitted by the laws setting it up made the

NBC weak and incapacitated to complete the DSO process. Two, the policy decision to set up the MTF appeared to be a unilateral decision of the executive, which enabled the capture of the digital transition and jeopardised the DSO timetable.

Finally, funds needed to facilitate the implementation of the DSO process and actualise the timetable were not made available at crucial points. No administration (Yar'Adua, Jonathan or Buhari) as of the time of writing (October 2023) included the DSO programme in the national budgetary allocation, demonstrating the lack of political priority given to the DSO agenda. The argument here was that members of the parliament were not carried along in the process; therefore no legal framework was approved for the project hence no plan was made for it in the national budget (Idachaba, 2018). Money owed to the critical stakeholders could not be paid constituting a bottleneck on the DSO agenda and making the set timetable unrealistic. Critics opined that unless the government firm up the DTT policy and engage the relevant actors in consultation, achieving the DSO agenda might be a mirage.

### ***9.3.2 The challenge with the new digital policy framework in Nigeria***

In the context of globalisation, media regulation of national administrations appears inadequate to address the development of broadcasting technology. Besides, digital convergence has blurred the boundaries between broadcasting and telecommunication services, which necessitated nation-states to put in place an appropriate policy framework backed by legislation that would enable digital broadcasting. Countries such as the UK, China, the USA and some others in the sub-Saharan African countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and Senegal ensured that they adopted the recommendations of ITU by enabling a reform regulatory framework backed by legislation so that the DTT policy was domesticated in their broadcasting regulatory policy.

However, in the Nigerian context, the laws governing the broadcasting industry are the 1999 Constitution and the National Broadcasting Commission Act Cap N11, laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 (Idachaba, 2018, p.32). These laws were made before the global agreement on the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting in 2006. Therefore, the first recommendation of the PAC final report also contained in the White Paper was the adoption of a new policy and regulatory framework in the broadcasting sector, which the Federal Government approved in 2013 (Idachaba, 2018, p.32). The proposed regulatory framework was to lay a solid foundation for the implementation of the DSO that would enable a far-reaching consequence for the positive development of the broadcasting industry in Nigeria. The new broadcasting policy was meant as an amendment to the NBC Act 2004 and it was the responsibility of the Minister of Information and Culture to ensure it got the legislative backing (Idachaba, 2018). Somehow, the legislative backing for the new policy was not achieved as of the time of writing (October 2023). Some critics have argued that the absence of a legal framework for the new policy constituted a major hindrance to DSO implementation in Nigeria. Critics opined that the policy document, which the government relied on for the implementation of the DSO process, was no more than a policy direction that requires its recommendation to be meshed into an actual law to have any legal effect.

This thesis argues that policy inclusion might benefit the DSO process. Although the policy document did not define a role for the incumbent pay DTT and DTV providers, the policy state actors could have leveraged their infrastructure and market reach (more than 80% of the country had been covered by them) to fast track the national rollout of the DSO. In respect of this, Chapter 7 illustrated the MoU agreement between Integrated Television Service (ITS) and NTA-Star (StarTimes) negotiated by MTF and NBC on 15 August 2022; the agreement

was yet to be implemented. Perhaps the agreement was stalled due to the absence of a legal framework for the policy document. Therefore, this thesis argues that the lack of an enabling law to back the policy document may have accounted for the haphazard implementation of the DSO process.

### ***9.3.3 Inadequate awareness campaign discouraged DTT service uptake***

This study finds out that one of the challenges of implementing the DTT policy in Nigeria was the low level of preparedness and awareness of the digital migration among the different actors: government, industry and the general public. Therefore, the thesis argues for a coordinated approach to the awareness campaign from the government and relevant stakeholders to promote the DSO agenda among the consumers as stipulated in the policy document (White Paper, 2012, section 25.1). The policy document was replete with recommendations for a comprehensive awareness programme both on the part of the government and key players to encourage the uptake of DTT services among consumers. Specifically, section 25.3.i of the policy document recommended, “all [broadcasting] stations should be required to implement a consumer programme, with materials furnished by the regulator as their own contribution to the programme”. The implementation of this policy among broadcasting stations was weak or they displayed a non-compliant attitude. According to the views expressed by former DG of NBC, Yomi Bolarinwa most of the broadcast industry players could not yet ‘comprehend’ the full benefits of the DSO when it would be completed. Yomi Bolarinwa stated further,

If you look at the white paper for the digital switchover in Nigeria, it is very clear, you are either a content provider or you are a signal distributor. If you are a content provider that means you can have multiple channels, which is a benefit to them but unfortunately, they are not yet tapping into that. The truth about it is that tune to any channel you will not find anything about the transition, and for the transition to be successful, the players in the industry must take ownership of it, do everything



humanly possible and be on the same page so that we can have a successful transition, (Yomi Bolarinwa, personal communication, December 2022).

On the contrary, some analysts argued the industry players should not take the blame alone for the non-compliance to the policy awareness of the DTT service; rather government should show leadership and learn from the coordinated approaches of awareness campaigns of some African countries examined in this research. For instance, Tanzania did not rely solely on broadcasting stations in its DSO awareness campaign but explored all relevant advertising avenues including getting the President of the country to participate in the campaign as illustrated in Chapter 7. In the Nigerian context, DigiTeam decried the lack of funds to carry out an awareness campaign for the DSO (Idachaba, 2018).

It may be argued, then, that the assertion of Yomi Bolarinwa, the former DG NBC, is not correct about the broadcast industry players not comprehending the benefits of the DSO process; but the government as well, who pay lip service to completing the digital migration appeared to be short-sighted about the full benefit of the DTT. The DSO implementation evidently was dictated by the unilateral policy decision of the executive that enabled the capture of the digital transition by the then Minister of Information as the Chair of the MTF. Therefore, the tendency of communication policy in Nigeria appeared to be based “on the personality cult of powerful political leaders” (Boafo, 1986, pp. 40-41) who make policy decisions to favour their selfish interest in the implementation of the DSO such as trying to rush through the process to score a political point for the Buhari administration (Edward Amana, personal communication June 2022).

A study carried out by Eze et al. (2017) to assess the level of awareness of the digital migration process among TV consumers in Enugu metropolis, Southeastern Nigeria in 2017,

found that the majority of the respondents were not aware of the DSO process and did not know they had to acquire STB to carry on watching television programmes. The policy inertia of the government on public awareness of the DTT seemed to muffle public debate and in keeping with Freedman's (2014) view on policy silence. A comprehensive awareness campaign became more critical as the majority of Nigerians live in the rural area. In a situation where the policy awareness failed to include a large number of rural consumers, the overarching objective of bridging the information gap may not be accomplished with the DSO process. Therefore, the thesis argues that the public should be involved as domestic policy actors through civil society organisations (CSOs) to determine the outcome of the DTT policy in Nigeria.

#### ***9.3.4 The effects of general infrastructure deficits: inadequate skilled manpower, erratic electricity supply***

This thesis has established that in the digital environment broadcasters required an upgrade of analogue infrastructure or a complete overhaul of broadcasting equipment for the turnkey transition, which would have a knock-on effect on the entire broadcasting value chain: the BSD would require high power transmitters to transmit sharp Cineplex quality sound and picture, the content providers would require digital compliant equipment to produce compelling content that should retain the interest of consumers and the consumers would require either a digital TV tuner or STB to enjoy digital content. In all of this, adequate training was necessary to match the complex and fragile broadcasting equipment, especially with the BSD and content providers. In the digital era, personnel would be required to multi-task to be relevant (Idachaba, 2018). Due to the efficient technology, operating broadcasting equipment requires less but resourceful personnel with multiple skills, and those who may not be able to cope with the fragility of the new technology may lose their jobs (Ihechu and

Uche, 2012). However, different research conducted by analysts (Obot and Inwang, 2017; Eze et al. 2017; Idachaba, 2018) found that the lack of skilled manpower was one of the contributing factors causing the delay in the DSO process in Nigeria. Therefore, analysts advance the need for all key actors to sustain the development of skilled manpower to match the efficient technology in the digital broadcasting era.

Equally crucial in the digital media environment is the issue of energy supply. The performance of the power sector in Nigeria has been described as abysmal (Ihechu and Uche, 2012). The findings of a research conducted by Momoh et al. (2018) on the implication of poor electricity supply on Nigeria's national development " show that poor electricity supply has resulted to decay and collapse infrastructure, closure of industries as well as a rapid decline in the availability of social amenities" (p.31). For over 50 years the performance in the power sector has not improved despite the policy decision of the government to commit financial resources and liberalise and privatise the sector by unbundling through the Electric Power Sector Reform Act 2005 (EPSR) into transmission, generation and distribution companies. Instead, in 2022 alone the fragile national power grid collapsed 6 times dropping power generation and affecting businesses and social lives (Emmanuel Addeh, 2022). The overall impact of the epileptic power supply on the digital migration was the increased cost across the value chain. Like every other business running in the country, broadcast and telecommunication sectors had to resort to alternative sources of power supply by running generators and building diesel tanks on site to ensure a constant supply of electricity. This also had an impact on the cost of producing compelling local content in a media environment struggling to fulfil the regulatory policy of a higher ratio of local (70%) to foreign (30%) content. Power generation constitutes a higher percentage of operation cost to the multiplex operators, telecom service providers and content providers so they pass the cost to the

customers who pay higher tariffs for the services. Although the government deregulated and involved other actors in the power sector, many domestic players expected the government to firm up its policy and address the epileptic power supply in the country, which may contribute to the completion of the DSO process.

#### **9.4 Incomplete DSO process: the implications for Nigeria**

What does Nigeria stand to lose if it does not complete the DSO? From the findings of this thesis, the consequences could be far-reaching if Nigeria does not complete the migration from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting. The effects of inconclusive DSO in Nigeria could manifest in three folds: political, economic, and social.

Politically, Nigeria would not be able to count herself in the comity of nations that had completed the digital migration in line with the global agreement. Unless Nigeria completes the digital transition, the country might not have the capacity to compete with other countries that are compliant with the ITU GE-06 agreement on digital terrestrial broadcasting. Should the neighbouring countries around Nigeria complete their digital migration, the signal interference from the analogue transmitting system would be an issue and ITU would not be in a position to assist analogue signal from Nigeria. Rather ITU in line with its constitution would protect the digital signals and Nigeria may be sanctioned (Nwoga et al. 2022).

Nigeria may lose its position in the digital television market in Africa if it does not complete the digital switchover. With over 30 million TV households, Nigeria was considered the largest digital television market in the sub-Saharan Africa region. Without a complete DSO, there would be no market to attract the various multinational corporations in the broadcasting

and telecommunication sectors such as equipment manufacturers, broadcasters, technicians, and financial institutions.

Nigeria may become a dumping ground for obsolete analogue equipment if the DSO process fails to complete. According to Omale et al. (2016), Nigerians were used to the ‘Tokunbo commodities’ (local parlance for second-hand goods) because there were ready markets for used/obsolete electronics items such as washing machines, television sets, fridges, pressing iron and so on from developed countries, which were shipped down to Nigeria. Before long, “analogue sets from countries that have successfully switched over will be shipped to Nigeria, thereby making Nigeria a dumping ground for such items” (p.156).

It is the findings of this thesis that Nigeria might be impacted economically if it does not conclude the DSO process. As mentioned in the thesis, one of the reasons many countries embarked on the DSO was to be able to supplement their national budget deficit from the digital dividend revenue derivable from the completion of the DSO. Potentially, Nigeria stood to gain over USD\$1 billion as digital dividends from the sales of the spectrum (Idachaba, 2018). Thus far, the government realised N34 billion (equivalent to USD\$171 million) from the lease of part of the 700MHz spectrum, and another USD\$547.2 million from sales of Fifth Generation (5G) spectrum licences to MTN and Mafab Communications in December 2021. Since the beginning of the DSO, the government benefitted from the licences to signal distributors, STB manufacturers, broadcasters, and content aggregators. The TV licence fees were expected to generate a total of N333 billion (equivalent to USD\$1.71 billion) per annum revenue by 2030 (Kawu, 2018).

Advertising is one of the means the broadcast industry could sustain itself. The thesis findings show Nigeria would continue to lose major advertising revenue due to the absence of a Scientific Audience Measurement System (SAMS), which was applicable in the digital broadcasting environment. In the analogue broadcasting system, Nigeria generated USD\$309 million in advertising revenue in 2016 while South Africa grossed USD\$1.3 billion in the same year using SAMS. The media sector in Nigeria was projected to generate an additional USD\$400 million within three years when the digital migration was completed (Lai Mohammed, 2022).

Also, some of the economic benefits of digital migration were that it attracted bigger players in the industry, including multinational corporations and this had the potential of creating jobs and encouraging technology transfer. According to the then Information Minister, Alh Lai Mohammed, the DSO project could generate 1 million jobs within three years (Lai Mohammed, 2021). He noted further,

The manufacturing of set-top boxes or decoders alone is capable of creating between 40 and 50 thousand jobs. TV Production can create 200,000 jobs. Film Production can generate 350,000 to 400,000 jobs. Distribution, which entails supplying the market with Set Top Boxes, TVs and Dongles for the internet, will require at least 100,000 wholesalers, retailers, electricians, installers, marketers and payment solution providers in order to cover the entire country, while TV and Online Advertising can create a further 50,000 jobs: These are just some of the job opportunities from a successful DSO Project, (Lai Mohammed's speech on April 12, 2021).

All of the above-mentioned economic opportunities might be lost without Nigeria completing the DSO process.

Socially, there would be many missed opportunities, as illustrated in the thesis for the citizens, industry, and the government if Nigeria does not conclude the DSO process. Digital broadcasting would enhance the television experience for the consumer due to the efficient

use of the spectrum. Digitisation presents the consumers with better sound quality and pictures as “clear and crisp as a Cineplex feature” (Roadman; 2006, p 268). Digital broadcasting environment promises multiple channels from one station, including niche channels that speak directly to the consumers in the locale, therefore the multiple choice of channels would enhance the “gratification efficiency of broadcasting” (Ihechu and Uche, 2012, p.40). For instance, in the analogue TV ecosystem in Nigeria, viewers enjoyed limited television stations and after the launch of the DSO in Lagos in April 2021, about 60 channels were promised on the FreeTV platform.

Nigeria television viewers might miss out on the convergence opportunity of digital broadcasting if it does not conclude the DSO process because “digital broadcasting enhances media convergence which affords the audience to use TV in conjunction with telephone, computer and other information and communication technologies” (Ihechu and Uche, 2012, p.40). Benefits such as telemarketing and teleshopping, which would make life easier for viewers, would be lost. Also, the DSO was expected to help bridge the communication gap between the government and the citizens due to its enhanced capability. The STB component can facilitate interactions between digital content and consumers, therefore government programmes can easily reach citizens in the comfort of their homes so they can participate in governance hence, bringing the government closer to the people and enhancing democracy.

Some of the spectrum saved was auctioned to the telecommunication sector as evident in this thesis and this was used to facilitate broadband penetration and provided data for multiple uses. For example, small-scale businesses required data to facilitate financial inclusion both in the urban and rural areas where physical banking was not easily accessible. Also, the availability of data encouraged local online streaming services.

The benefits derivable from completing the DSO process were not limited to the ones identified above and countries that have completed the DSO including some countries in the sub-Saharan African region were reaping the benefits of digital dividends.

## **9.5 Conclusions**

Evident from the study, the politics of DTT policy in Nigeria made the DSO process cumbersome as the implementation was carried out from a perceived parochial interest of the state actors. As a result, it became very difficult for the policy state actors to adopt an inclusive approach to achieve the global objective of the DSO, which was to make efficient use of the spectrum to the benefit of government, industry, and the public. As observed in the study, the absence of a legal framework and inadequate communication policy did very little to restore the confidence of the domestic actors in the DSO process such that the MoU agreement between ITS and StarTimes negotiated by MTF and NBC to facilitate a quick national rollout of the DSO remained stalled at the time of writing (October 2023). As it were, the government did not have any certainty over the timing of the switchover, a scenario similar to Cameroon (see Chapter 7).

Despite the influence Nigeria wields in the international policy arena through a consultative approach as illustrated in Chapter 6, it failed to apply the same strategy to capture the jointness of interest (Freeman, 2008) of the domestic actors. Instead, the government applied the rule of thumb to pursue what it considered to be in the interest of the public by insisting that FTA and not pay-DTV drove the uptake of DTT services. However, it did not ensure a strategy to simultaneously switch on and off analogue transmission to enforce the directive for broadcasters to migrate to the digital platforms of the licensed BSDs. Hence, the DSO



process remained in a ‘catch-22’ circumstance where the government failed to make adequate policy decisions to encourage domestic actors to play an active role in the DTT policy. The result was the inconclusive outcome of the DSO process demonstrated in this research: as of October 2023, only 8 states (Plateau, Kwara, Osun, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Lagos and Abuja) out of the 36 states achieved digital switch-on with inadequate signal coverage and limited to the urban settings. STBs were not available in sufficient quantities because the government failed to meet its financial obligation to STB manufacturers. There was a low level of public awareness on the DSO and less involvement of the CSOs resulting in a lack of public debate on the progress of the digital migration, which could have contributed to shaping the direction of the DSO.

In the end, this research demonstrated that the overarching objective of the DTT policy intention of the government was not achieved. The promised 60+ channels on the FreeTV platform were yet to be delivered at the time of writing (October 2023); consumers patronised pay DTT and DTV service providers who offered more content. The economic benefit of creating over 1 million jobs as a result of embarking on digital migration announced by the government remained an illusion as the DSO process was left in a state of comatose. Broadcasting stations were still on the analogue spectrum that could be put to efficient use to facilitate broadband penetration and further bridge the information gap.

## **9.6 Limitations and suggestions for further study**

This thesis set out to investigate the challenges of implementing the DTT policy in Nigeria in line with the GE-06 global agreement. It demonstrated that the government approach to the delivery of the DTT policy contributed to the delays experienced. However, there were some limitations to the study.

The challenges encountered during the process of researching the protracted digital migration policy in Nigeria may itself constitute a limitation of the study. Due to the ongoing nature of the DSO process, there were several changes in the government's strategy including the introduction of new actors in the policy arena. This research had to constantly reinvestigate and may have missed out on some of the sectoral changes that impacted the implementation of the DSO policy. Another limitation came in the form of restrictions during the interviews with respondents. The pre-test field interviews were conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic. During the lockdown and due to strict COVID-19 restrictions, it became practically impossible to carry out face-to-face interviews in line with the research design method. However, the qualitative research design adopted for this study allowed for flexibility (Creswell, 1994) such as relying on a social media application approved for research design to conduct interviews so that the aim and objectives of the study were achieved. Having said that, there were a few interviews missed from this research that could have been of benefit. The attempt to interview a member of the Nigerian legislature to have better insights into the failure to approve a legal framework was thwarted by endless appointments that were never held.

As has been established in this study, digital convergence has blurred the demarcations between broadcasting, telecommunication and ICT and this has given rise to a new broadcast media platform: the Over-the-Top (OTT) services. The emergence of OTT services has impacted the television market, which also reflected the changing habits of the audience (Baccarne et al. 2013). In other words, traditional terrestrial television and the digital cable and satellite television services were slowly losing their grip on the television market share. The study mostly confined itself to the main platforms such as digital terrestrial broadcasting

and cable/satellite broadcasting. The on-demand services were gaining traction in Nigeria media ecosystem with the participation of domestic players such as iROKO, CongaTV, IbakaTV, NevedabridgeTV, SceneoneTV, Nollywood NamasteTV, LindaikejiTV, ShugabanTV, AirtelTV, NvivoTV, NollylandTV, and DeloniferaTV. There were foreign players operating in Nigeria's media space such as Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, and Amazon (Simon, 2021); however, the OTT services were not covered within the scope of this study.

Although the research was carried out as a country case study of Nigeria's complex digital switchover process, I would suggest a further comparative study of the digital migration process of ECOWAS countries in particular as only two countries (Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso) were able to complete the DSO process at the time of writing (October 2023). This would contribute to filling the knowledge gap in the communication policy process in the African sub-region, taking into account each country's experience. For instance, it would be helpful to understand if the policy failure of adopting a common STB standard had an impact on their DSO process as ECOWAS countries relied on the STB market size of Nigeria to benefit from the economies of scale.

## **9.7 Contribution to knowledge**

Many scholars have contributed works to the field of digital broadcasting, particularly to the global agreement on the implementation of digital switchover in many countries that have completed the digital migration. Although the digital switchover process is ongoing in some countries, there has not been a comprehensive and in-depth analysis focused mainly on the imbroglio of the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting in Nigeria. Most existing publications have been in journal articles, country reports, and descriptive analyses

by journalists on the digital switchover process. Some of these publications have been useful in setting the context for this research.

In the process of this research, two other African country case studies on the DSO policy implementation were discovered: Clever Chirume (2015) examined digital transition and policy implementation in Zimbabwe while Kobina Bedu-addo (2023) analysed the communication policy-making and the challenges of regulating DTT in Ghana. Similar to my research, both country studies investigated an ongoing DSO process and highlighted the lack of adequate communication policy to cope with the challenges of DTT implementation in the national administrations, which is in line with Berger's (2010) views on implementing DSO policy in Africa. Particularly in the contexts of Nigeria and Ghana who missed the opportunities to reposition the broadcasting sector in an agreement with the global television market by not approving a legislative framework for the reform regulatory policy.

Therefore, this research contributes to knowledge in the field of global television study, especially concerning African media communication policy-making by investigating the protracted DTT policy implementation in Nigeria, the largest digital television market in Africa with over 30 million TV homes. The research brings to the fore the exclusive policy approach of the state actors, which undermined the digital migration process. The thesis illustrates the lack of a comprehensive DTT implementation plan and uncoordinated government response to the state and imperative DTT market that evidently contributed to frustrating the DSO process. The thesis also demonstrates how the laws setting up the National Broadcasting Commission enabled its capture by the executive. The capture of the regulatory body echoed the agitation of non-state actors for legal backing of the reform regulatory framework. This may warrant the legislature to appropriate funds for the DSO

agenda in the national budgetary allocation and, restore the confidence of domestic actors and investors in the digital terrestrial television market.

Finally, this study contributes to the paucity of empirical research in scholarship and information on the communication policy formulation in the Global South through critical analysis of the national case study of Nigeria with a focus on the future of digital television to determine the public interest objectives in the move towards digital switchover.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix I

### Information sheet

#### **UNIVERSITY OF**

FORWARD

THINKING

#### **WESTMINSTER**

Communication and Media Research Institute

(CAMRI)

Telephone: +447533572784

Email: [l.sanusi@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:l.sanusi@westminster.ac.uk)

01/24/2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

### The challenges of digital switchover in Nigeria within the global trend in digital broadcasting

My name is Lookman Sanusi, a research candidate with the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI). I am researching the challenges of the digital switchover and media policy in Nigeria. My research intends to investigate the protracted digital migration process to get a better insight into the 'complexities' and contributing new knowledge and understanding to the communication policy in Nigeria and Africa in general.

My preliminary findings indicated that your experience in the field of media and communication and the role your organisation is playing in the DSO process would be of immense value to my research; hence I am contacting you for an interview.

Should you consent to participate in this research, it would involve a semi-structured interview of not more than 45 minutes. The interview guide would be forwarded to you before the agreed interview date and thereafter; a transcribed copy of the interview would be made available to you for factual errors and analysed against other data and conceptual frameworks.

You have my assurance that this research is for academic purposes only and your interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Academic research are public document; this thesis will be accessible through the University of Westminster library therefore, please indicate to the researcher on the consent form if you would like your name and organisation to be mentioned in the thesis.

The thesis is being carried out in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University of Westminster for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the supervision of Dr Alessandro D'Arma who can be contacted at [a.darma@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:a.darma@westminster.ac.uk) and would be willing to discuss any possible concerns.

I want to thank you in anticipation of your positive response.

Yours sincerely,

Lookman Sanusi  
Research candidate  
University of Westminster

## Appendix II

### Consent form

UNIVERSITY OF  
FORWARD  
THINKING  
WESTMINSTER<sup>®</sup>

Communication and Media Research Institute  
(CAMRI)

Telephone: +447533572784

Email: l.sanusi@westminster.ac.uk

### **The challenges of digital switchover in Nigeria within the global trend in digital broadcasting**

I have been given information about the research and had the opportunity to ask questions.

Yes                      No

I understand what is required of me if I agree to participate in the research as a respondent.

Yes                      No

I understand I can withdraw my participation at any time without given a reason.

Yes                      No

I understand if I withdraw my participation it will include the withdrawal of any information I have given should it remain practically achievable.

Yes                      No

I understand that this research will be available in the public domain through the University of Westminster Library.

Yes                      No

I can confirm my willingness to participate in this research.

Yes                      No

I consent to my name and organisation being mentioned in the thesis.

Yes                      No

I consent the data gathered from me may be retained in Achieve.

Yes                      No

I would like to receive a copy of this consent form.

Yes                      No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the completed consent form to l.sanusi@westminster.ac.uk

Lookman Sanusi



## Appendix III

### Interview guide

Interview guide for the former Director General, Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Prof Armstrong Idachaba

1. ITU member states have different DSO experiences in the process of implementing the universal agreement on the DSO. In Nigeria, the Government White paper on the report of the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) on the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting is the policy document drafted to shape the digital migration, yet Nigeria missed two deadlines; are there lapses in the policy document?
2. Transitioning from analogue to digital broadcasting requires adequate funding, which is why the policy document recommended that the implementation committee (DigiTeam), signal distributor, STBs and NBC be funded from the dividend of the freed spectrum. Why is funding a major hindrance?
3. During your tenure as DG of NBC, there was a renewed push in the implementation of the DSO after 3 years of hiatus: the release of the DSO timetable, release of funds (N9.4 Billion), phase approach to the DSO, meetings with stakeholders and so on, would you say this is as a result of government politic will?
4. How has the International Community, ITU, WTO, World Bank and IMF helped shape the direction of the DSO in Nigeria?
5. How is the telecommunication industry benefitting from the DSO agenda?
6. The NBC has witnessed 4 changes in leadership at the Commission, Yomi Bolarinwa, Emeka Mba, Is'haq Modibbo Kawu and Armstrong Idachaba, how much impact is this having on the transition to digital broadcasting?

Interview guide for the Chairman of the Digital Implementation Committee (DigiTeam), Engineer Edward Amana

1. The digital switchover can be cumbersome because it requires a lot of financial and technical resources, which most African countries are contending with. Would you say the global agreement on the DSO agenda was foisted on African countries such that Nigeria missed the switched-off date twice?
2. Nigeria is grouped along Africa, EU, Arab States and CIS in Region 1 of the World Radio Congress, what would you say is the participation of Nigeria in the WRC and how has that influenced her decision in the region?
3. You are the Chair of DigiTeam set up by the previous administration of President Yar'Adua in 2012, what were the challenges that made it difficult to complete the digital migration?

4. In February 2021 after three years of hiatus, the Minister of Information and Culture, Alh. Lai Mohammed announced heading the Ministerial Task Force that will drive the implementation of the DSO to completion, would you consider that as usurping the role of the DigiTeam?
5. Section 18.4 of the Government White Paper recommended that the “Government should consider allocating necessary funds for the implementation of the transition programme”. Were adequate funds not disbursed to implement the DSO process?
6. One of the recommendations of the Government White Paper was the intervention by way of subsidising the STBs and signal carriers, but when the Minister announced the Ministerial Task Force (MTF) on the DSO in February 2020, he said the Government would no longer subsidise the DSO programme but rather will adopt a market-driven approach to complete the programme, is this the best strategy?

Interview guide for the former Director General, Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Engineer Yomi Bolarinwa and Acting Director of Engineering at NBC Engineer Friday Ukwela  
Lookman Sanusi

1. In your opinion, what is the general overview of the DSO process considering that Nigeria missed its set target dates (2012 and 2017) and the ITU switchover dates (2015 and 2020)?
2. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is one of the intergovernmental organizations involved with global communication governance, how would you describe Nigeria’s participation at the World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs) and what was the impact of the country’s participation at these conferences?
3. After the WRC-2012 conference, what role did Nigeria play at the regional level (African Telecommunication Union) to achieve the ceding of 698-790MHz bands for mobile services in Region 1?
4. How was Nigeria’s broadcasting regulator (NBC) able to collaborate with ECOWAS member state regulators to develop and harmonise:
  - i. a common transmission standard for all ECOWAS countries
  - ii. a common minimum standard for set-top boxes/digital receiver
5. How did NBC carry out frequency re-planning to locate the stations in the GE-06 plans that fall within the DD-1 and DD-2?
6. What is the frequency of coordination with your immediate neighbouring countries at the moment for example Niger, Togo, Cameroon and Ghana?
7. How have the media/telecommunication conglomerates influenced the direction of the DSO in Nigeria?

8. Are these media/telecommunication conglomerates under the protection of global governance?
9. How is the telecommunication industry benefitting from the DSO process?
10. Who are the actors who benefit from the DSO process and who are the losers? And who bears the cost?

Interview guide for the 1<sup>st</sup> Signal Distributor, Dr Maxwell Loko of Integrated Television Services (ITS)

1. Integrated Television Services (ITS) was established as a recommendation of the Government White Paper, how has it contributed to the DTT process in Nigeria?
2. As the 1<sup>st</sup> approved signal carrier even though it is a joint venture with another company (StarTimes), what has been the challenges in carrying out your role in the DSO agenda in Nigeria?
3. Are the transmitting infrastructures inherited by ITS from government and private broadcasting stations adequate to provide the necessary services expected of you?
4. How do you quantify the role of StarTime in this partnership?
5. There was seed money provided to support you in your operation as recommended by the policy document, how has that influenced your role in the DSO process?
6. What is the experience so far with the broadcasters on your platform?

Interview guide for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Signal Distributor, Engineer Olusegun Yakubu of Pinnacle Communications Limited (PCL)

1. Can you describe what the bidding process was like before you were selected as the second signal carrier?
2. How would you describe your role in the DSO process in Nigeria?
3. Digital transmission requires financial and technical capability, can you say you are adequately equipped for this role?
4. The DSO process in Nigeria is ongoing, how are you able to sustain yourself given that no broadcast stations are paying for carrying their broadcast signal yet?
5. What are some of the technical issues you are experiencing in places where the DSO have been launched?

6. How realistic do you think the government's rollout timetable for the completion of the digital migration by December 2022?

Interview guide for DR. Tunde Adegbola, Technical Director for DigiTeam and Ministerial Task Force

1. You are a member of DigiTeam set up by the previous administration of President Yar'Adua in 2012, what were the challenges that made it difficult to complete the digital migration?
2. Now let us examine the technical capabilities of the stakeholders in the critical aspect of the DSO, that is, signal distributors, middleware consultants, the outsourcing company, the call centres and set-top box manufacturers and so on. In cities where the DSO was launched consumers are complaining of several technical hitches, how has technical incapacity impacted the DSO process?
3. One of the concerns of not completing the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting is the issue of signal interference. ITU specified that it would protect a member state that is digitally compliant over another that is not, is Nigeria likely going to be cut off from broadcasting signal if her neighbours like Ghana and Togo complete their digital migration before Nigeria?
4. The telecommunication companies are critical stakeholders and beneficiaries of the digital migration, what in your opinion is their role in the DSO process?
5. As a member of the Ministerial Task Force, how realistic is the government's rollout timetable to complete the DSO by the set date of December 2022?

Interview guide for Middleware Company Mr Charles Olojede (Head, Inview Technology Nigeria Limited)

1. In your view, what is the current state of the DSO in Nigeria?
2. What is your role (Inview) in the DSO process in Nigeria?
3. Is there interplay between you and other stakeholders, for instance, NBC, signal distributors, broadcasters, set-top box manufacturers, and consumers?
4. Why was the set-top box with conditional access selected for Nigeria DSO?
5. Some have argued that there is no provision for your role (Middleware Company) in the policy document, are they wrong?

6. In what way are you able to manage the audience measurement on behalf of NBC and broadcasters?
7. One of your roles is to advise the government on Analogue Switch Off (ASO), how realistic is the government's rollout timetable to complete the DSO by the set date of December 2022?

Interview guide for Content Aggregator, Engineer Bawa of Cable Channel Nigeria Limited (CCNL)

1. What is your overview of the DSO process in Nigeria?
2. You managed the FreeTV platform on behalf of NBC, how does it work? How many stations do you have on the platform and do consumers have access to all of them?
3. What is the working relationship between you, the signal distributors, and broadcasters?
4. The Nigerian government has removed subsidy on STB, is this best strategy in your opinion?
5. The government gave the broadcaster a directive to vacate their analogue platform and move on to digital frequency, how is that panning out in the DSO process?
6. How realistic is the government's rollout timetable to complete the DSO by the set date of December 2022?

Interview guide for Femi Odugbemi – Independent TV producer

1. Can you recap the DSO process in Nigeria?
2. What influence do you think the global media governance has on the DSO process in Nigeria? Is it protective of the foreign media and telecommunication conglomerates to the detriment of the domestic players?
3. What role are independent content producers like you playing in the digital migration process in Nigeria?
4. What are the gains of the DSO to the stakeholders and what does Nigeria stand to lose if we don't complete the digital migration?
5. How realistic is the government's rollout timetable to complete the DSO by the set date of December 2022?

Interview guide for Mr Okoh Aihe veteran Journalist documenting the DSO process

1. What is the role of a journalist in the DSO in Nigeria?
2. Can you briefly run through the major timeline in the DSO process in Nigeria to date?
3. What seems to be the challenge confronting the completion of the DSO in Nigeria?
4. How have the foreign media and telecommunication conglomerates influenced the direction of the DSO in Nigeria?
5. How much interference is coming from the Federal Government of Nigeria on the DSO process? For instance, the newly constituted Ministerial Task Force and the DigiTeam, do you consider that hijack of responsibility?

## Appendix IV

### List of interviewees

1. Prof Armstrong Idachaba (Former DG, NBC) personal communication on 31 May 2022 via telephone
2. Engineer Edward Amana (Chair, DigiTeam) personal communication on 22 June 2022 via E-mail
3. Engineer Yomi Bolarinwa (Former DG, NBC) personal communication on 17 November 2022 via telephone
4. Dr Maxwell Loko (MD, Integrated Television Services (ITS) personal communication on 31 May and 16 October 2022 via telephone
5. Engineer Friday Ukweala (Agt. Director Engineering NBC) personal communication on 16 November 2022 via telephone
6. Dr Tunde Adegbola (Technical/Ministerial Task Force) personal communication on 02 June 2022 via telephone
7. Mr Charles Olojede (Head, Inview Technology Nigeria Limited) personal communication on 06 June 2022 via telephone
8. Mr Wale Bakare (member, Set-top box manufacturers) personal communication on 06 June 2022 via telephone
9. Engineer Olusegun Yakubu (Pinnacle Communications Limited) personal communication on 06 June 2022 via telephone
10. Mr Okoh Aihie (Journalist documenting the DSO process) personal communication on 01 June 2022 via telephone

11. Engineer Bawa (Cable Channels Nigeria Limited) personal communication on 01 June 2022 via telephone

12. Femi Odugbemi (Content producer/media consultant) personal communication on 03 June 2022 via telephone