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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE COUP D'ÉTAT-RADIO BROADCAST NEXUS IN NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE, 1966-1993.

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Abstract

The study conducts a critical analysis on the nexus that lies between coup d'état and radio broadcasts. Historically, Nigeria, after gaining independence from colonial rule have recorded several military coup d'états beginning with the January 15, 1966 coup which brought an end to its first republic down to the 1993 coup which deposed the Interim National Government (ING). Henceforward, the trend of coups and counter coups (mutiny) would later go on to characterized the Nigeria's political landscape. Based on observation, most literatures on military involvements in politics in Nigeria have inadvertently omitted the importance of radio broadcasts during coup processes in Nigerian. Therefore, this study argues that while other variables (i.e. conspirators, guns and ammunitions, among others) are very vital during coup d'état, the role of media, in this case, radio houses/facilities must also be regarded as very crucial assets required during coup execution. The study adopts a historical and narrative analysis methodology, and findings reveal that in the course of strategizing to topple a sitting government, conspirators always brings into their plans the capturing of radio houses which they considered a very vital medium to help spread the philosophy behind their actions to the general public; considering the fact that the radio is a more convenient medium with a fast, cheap and wider audience coverage. In light of the foregone, this study examines how the respective coup plotters employed radio broadcast in shaping the perception of the Nigerian citizenry.

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Introduction:-

As the wave of decolonization began to blow across the African continent during the decades of 1950s and 60s, hope and expectations were high as most colonized states attained independence from colonial rule. The peopling of West Africa envisaged a new era devoid of oppression and subjugation as their respective colonial administrators vacated and handed over power to indigenous nationalists. Like in the case of most British controlled colonies, the pulling down of the Union Jack flag and the hoisting of the newly adopted flag was welcomed with celebration to mark the end of an era characterized with exploitations from external powers. Regrettably, a few years into the 1960s, the hope of West Africans began to diminish as democratically instituted government began to experience military interventions across the sub-region. The first coup d'état was conducted in Togo, on 13 January 1963, in which Sylvanus Olympio was overthrown by Étienne Eyadéma and Emmanuel Bodjolle (Chukwudi 2013).

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Henceforward, other countries within the sub-region began to experience similar contagious aberration. In view of this, Wiking (1983) avers thus:

Military takeovers and military intervention in politics do not constitute isolated or unique events in today's world politics. After World War II more than two thirds of the countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa have experienced varying degrees of military intervention in politics. Violent attempts to overthrow governments have been more frequent than general elections. [9]

Taking the position of Wiking into consideration, Nigeria, barely into her sixth independence anniversary experienced military intervention in her nascent democratic governance on 25 January 1966, as it had been witnessed in Togo. Notably, during the covert planning and overt execution of these coups, outside the use of guns and ammunitions, one other vital instrument employed in coup d'états is the strategy of capturing media houses by these conspirators. Specifically, radio houses has to a large extent been besieged by subsequent coup plotters since it is considered a very crucial component needed if the operation must be a successful one. Though a very portable electronic gadget, the radio seems to be very important during military takeovers since it is the radio that is mostly used by the juntas to transmit or broadcast the ideology behind their actions. Considering the importance of the radio in any given society, Kaye and Popperwell (1992) remarked thus:

Radio is the media genie, small enough to fit into a bottle, big enough to cover a continent...radio has developed into the most intimate of media, the principal one-to-one means of communication. At the same time, in remote agricultural communities the radio receiver may still be the focus of the family life as it was during the Second World War in Europe, gathering people to listen to news that affects all their lives. [11]

Against the foregone background, while several literatures on military interventions in Nigeria have been written, scant attention has been paid on the relevance of the radio (a very powerful media genie) in the conduct of military interventions across Africa in general, and Nigerian in particular. Therefore, While taking a historical voyage on how radio contributed to the success or otherwise of coup d'états in Nigeria, the study will equally discuss in brief, the evolution of radio broadcast as well as how radio broadcast was expanded under military regimes.

Evolution and Development of Radio Broadcasting In Nigeria:-

The emergence of radio broadcasting in Nigeria can be traced to the establishment of telephone and telegraph communication system by the then British colonial government in 1895, when Britain provided Nigeria with its first telegraph line which the colonial government believed would aid the construction of railway from Lagos to Abeokuta. However, the first recorded use of wireless telegraph occurred in 1913 (Adejunmobi 1974). While the telephone system actually kicked off in 1908 with the grand opening of a 200 line exchange in Lagos, another 50 line board was equally started at Apobo in 1909; over 920 telephones in Nigeria with public exchanges in eleven towns. It was in a bid to set up some regulatory patterns that the British came forth with the British Telegraph Act of 1869 and the control of telecommunication facilities placed under the guide of Nigeria's colonial post office, marking the pattern for regulation of electronic communication in Nigeria (Brown 1972). The actual nexus between the telegraph-telephone operation and the radio came when in 1935, the colonial government issued out an instruction to the Nigeria Post and Telegraph Department to kick start the process. Adejunmobi (1974) captured details of this when he avers thus:

Wired-wireless activities preceded radio broadcasting in Nigeria. The wired-wireless system began in 1935 when the colonial government in Nigeria directed the Nigerian Posts and Telegraphs Department to develop the system. Wired... wireless also called "Wired Radio," "Radio Distribution Service" (RDS), or "Rediffusion"...was a method of distributing programmes by wire to those who subscribe. [40-41]

By December 1935, the first wired-wireless distribution station started operation in Lagos as its service broadcasts was in conjunction with the service of the British Broadcasting Corporations (BBC) and fine-tuned to suit colonial government policies (Mackay 1964). This proves that the philosophical foundations upon which early broadcasting in Nigeria was built was undisguisedly centralist and highly monopolistic in nature. The ethos was created to serve the colonialist's aim which contradicts the tenets of democratic principles. Put differently, from the period of the 1930s when radio broadcasting took shape in Nigeria, it served as the cultural arm of the British colonial government in keeping their territories under check through the broadcasting of what they (colonizer) wanted them (colonized) to hear or be informed about. As a rider to the foregone, Nwanze (2003) espouses thus:

The British colonial government initiated radio broadcasting to link colonial territories with Britain, to serve as a propaganda machinery. The colonial masters used radio broadcasting to propagate and disseminate their alien cultural values, belief and norms. And further consolidate the domination of the colonial territories. [n.a]

Supportive of the above position was the report given by Coker (1967), a press attaché with the Embassy of Nigeria in Washington D.C. and a professional journalist who espoused on the establishment of broadcasting station in Nigeria dating as far back as 1933:

Broadcasting in Nigeria dates back to 1932; in fact, December 1932, when the BBC started what they called the Empire Service, and Lagos was one of the receiving centers. For a short while, Lagos would only receive; it could not re-broadcast, and even then if it had wanted to re-broadcast, there were not many receiving sets. So, between 1932 and 1934, the primary duty of the station was to receive, but the station evolved a system in which it could redistribute BBC news. The program was wholly BBC--nothing local, and in fact until 1951, when the Nigerian Broadcasting Service was inaugurated, most of the programmes on the wireless (because it was under the Posts and Telegraphs Department then) were BBC programmes, with one or two local items. [49]

From the quotations above, it is evident that the growth and development of radio broadcasting in Nigeria stem forth from the crowded activities of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as colonial records, to a very reasonable extent bear proofs that there might have been some kind of wireless reception activities in Lagos in 1932. Further commenting on the evolution of radio broadcasting in Nigeria, it has been reported that with the arrival of a BBC team to the Nigeria Posts and Telegraphs Department, a broadcasting station was established which relayed the ordinary rediffusion programmes on just only shortwaves. And during its operation, it was dubbed "Radio Nigeria", having just a 300-watt transmitter that was not good enough, often more than not, forcing it to go off the air. While it was intended to air only in Nigeria, its signal was sometimes picked in faraway countries such as New Zealand and Sweden (Adejunmobi 1974). However, by 1951, Radio Nigeria would appear to have ceased operation when Nigeria Broadcasting Service (NBS) started operation.

The NBS, established on April 1, 1951 was not without problems which threatened its very existence. These myriad of problems ranging from financial (world inflation rate), lack of adequate manpower, lack of technical facilities to political, could only survive the next six years (Mackay 1964 & Grenfell 1950). Changes in radio broadcasting came with the birth of Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in 1957. The theoretical difference between the NBC and its predecessor (NBS) was that while the latter was basically dependent on the colonial government, the former was independent of the colonial government and for the first time, Nigeria had its own radio station to help her communicate on a broader spectrum on issues concerning struggles against colonial rule and the quest for independence. In addition, the Macpherson constitution paved way for regional radio stations to be established as the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS) was set up, followed by the Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service (ENBS) in 1960, and the Broadcasting Corporation of Northern Nigeria (BCN) in 1962, the second phase of radio evolution in Nigeria became fully consolidated (Adejunmobi 1974).

Thus, the foregoing analysis is a critical examination of how radio broadcasting took form in Nigeria. The content have gone to show that its gradual evolution was not without challenges, yet it thrived and had survived till date.

Military Regimes and the Expansion of Radio Broadcasting Activities:-

With the military intervention in 1966, a country (Nigeria) basically structured into four regions, would later be splintered into thirty-six states as a result of crowded events that besieged the country in the first six year of independence. Pointedly, the creation process began with Gen. Yakubu Gowon who around 1967-1976 transformed the Northern, Western, Eastern and Mid-Western Regions into twelve states. And by 1976, Murtala/Obasanjo increased them to nineteenth; Gen. Ibrahim Babangida by 1991 topped the number of states in Nigeria to thirty, whereas, it was Gen. Sani Abacha who added six more states bringing the total number of states to thirty six. Expectedly, with the creation of new state, the number of radio stations across the country grew astronomically since each state got at least, a radio station under the control of the Federal or state government. That is to say that the creations of new states brought about a new wave of consciousness referred to as 'statism' as every new state created wanted the basic required facilities they hoped will aid their own growth and development (Umeh 1989).

In another dimension, military regimes in Nigeria expanded radio broadcasting frontiers in Nigeria when Gen. Ibrahim Babangida realized that there was a need to end the long age practice of shielding radio broadcasting from

the wind of free market forces which military regimes had earlier on ensured that the sector (though expanded by them) remained exclusively a monopoly of the central and state governments. This was in spite of the 1979 constitutional provision for the establishment of private electronic media in Nigeria. The neglect of the constitutional provision is not so much unconnected to the fear of broadcasting as a tool for social reorientation of the people against abrasive rule by the military. Be that as it may, by 1992, the military regime of Gen. Ibrahim Babaginda promulgated decree 38 which deregulated the broadcast industry and also established effectively the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) (Ajibulu 2013). The aim of decree 38 of August 24, 1992 empowered the NBC to regulate the entire broadcast industry in Nigeria, both private and public. The act of Gen. Babangida paved way for collapse of the over fifty years of government monopoly in the broadcast industry in Nigeria. While in socio-economic terms, the act ushered in a massive proliferation of private electronic media as countless entrepreneurs and investors ventured into the industry (Ajubulu 2013). A year after (1993), the first set of licences were handed out (Ajubulu 2013). Thus bringing about 4 radio stations; 15 open TV stations; 13 Cable TV operators. But before deregulation in 1992, statistics shows that there were about 45 radio and 45 Television stations in the country, all owned by either the federal or the state governments (NBC) (Jega 2016).

As the Table below illustrates, the number of broadcasting outfits generally have since increased remarkably owing to the 1992 decree 38 (Jega 2016).

Table 1:- Radio and TV Broadcasting Stations in 2012

S/no.	Ownership	Radio	TV	Total
1.	Federal Government	46	128	
2.	State Governments	107	64	
3.	Private Investors	102	33	
4.	Community	50	Nil	
Total		305	225	

Source: National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), 19/8/16.

By 2016, the number of radio broadcasting outfits issued with license has increased to 453, with the licensing of an additional 100 private radio stations in 2015. There has been an embargo on the creation of additional Television stations (NBC 2016). In sum then, it should be noted that it was the creation of states under military regimes that led to the planting of radio transmitters across the geographical landscape of Nigeria. Whereas the number of transmitters across the country skyrocketed to thirty-two by 1983 (courtesy of the Gowon and Murtala/Obasanjo regimes) the overwhelming increment is not suggestive of the fact that the expansion of radio stations across Nigeria by military leaders should be translated to autonomy of action by these radio stations as they were very much controlled by the successive military governments through a rigid command-type structure which inhibits the freedom of expression and information since these stations had their programme screened to suit the policies of the military juntas in power rather than the Nigeria populace (audience).

Analyzing Coups-Radio Broadcasts Nexus: Insights from Nigeria's Experiences, 1966-93:-

Looking at the history of coup d'états in Nigeria, radio houses have been one critical facility most conspirators go after as have been observed in most of the coups conducted in the chequered history of Nigeria. Radio house can best be described as either a compound, a yard or a secluded building accommodating a radio station and its transmitters. And in the case of Nigeria, The military besieging of radio houses is further accentuated on the belief system that the radio have an overbearing impact index factor on the generality of the population far beyond other media channels such as newspapers, television, among others. And this is no surprise as during the period between 1966 to 1993, the population of Nigerians that may have had access to either a television set or newspaper is very insignificant when compare to those with access to the radio. Moreover, the radio was considered as well to have a wider coverage than both the television and newspaper, since in most remote areas, neither of the latter were to be found as the radio was.

As a rider to the aforementioned, the January 15, 1966 coup orchestrated by ChukwumaNzeogwu, Emmanuel Ifeajuna *et al* (Siollun 2009) could serve as a case in point to show how invading radio houses had in time past served as a very crucial platform for coup plotters to affirming their position after toppling a government. As in the case of the January 15 1966 coup, the conspirators had earlier strategized on carrying out the coup exercise across the three geo-political zones (North, East and West) simultaneously, with each leader of these zones confirming its success through a radio broadcast which will help inform the others of their success and also reorient the people on

the reason behind their action. However, in this case, while Nzeogwu was in a meeting with some local journalists in Kaduna seeking to get information on what was going on, it was later brought to Major Patrick Chukwuma Nzeogwu alias Kaduna's attention that those who executed the Nigeria's first overt bloody coup had not explained the reason behind their motives. As the only much information with regard to the coup was what the British Broadcasting Corporation was disseminating. Report had it that Nzeogwu was surprised as he had expected a radio broadcast from Lagos, a region under Ifeajuna's control. But unknown to Nzeogwu, the operation in Lagos had not gone as planned since the then General Officer Commanding (GOC), Major General J.T.U. Ironsi, tipped off, had rallied troops against Ifeajuna's operation which culminated into its failure and inability to have access to a radio house through which the conspirators would have aired their philosophy behind their deed (Ojiakon.d).

Notwithstanding the calamity that greeted Ifeajuna and his colleagues in Lagos Theater, Nzeogwu after a brief madness over while Ifeajuna did not make adequate plans whatsoever to neutralize Ironsi who was the Commander of the Army, took it upon himself as a matter of necessity, though with the assistance of some yet unidentified persons, hurriedly drafted his speech which was broadcasted on Radio Kaduna sometime around 12 noon (Ojiakon.d). Through the broadcast, Nzeogwu attempts to reorient the hearts and minds of the people of northern region towards the coup action. Take for instance, when declaring martial law, Nzeogwu stated the primary aim of the Revolutionary Council was "to establish a strong, united and prosperous nation free from corruption and internal strife" (Siollun 2009). Siollun (2009) states that Nzeogwu's broadcast on January 15, 1966 was simply spine-chilling and had acquired near legendary status in Nigeria. Below is an excerpt from Nzeogwu's speech:

...our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 percent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds. [227]

Taking a very critical examination of Nzeogwu's January 15, 1966 coup broadcast, it is only right to assert that the Major, through his every comments was doing the needful-orientating the masses-by dishing out the ideology behind the action they took on that very fateful day. As it would appear that using the guns to either eliminate, or threaten potential threats was not enough, but selling the philosophy of the conspirators to the general masses was without doubt an integral part of every coup operation, otherwise such an exercise will be regarded as still birth.

Nonetheless, even though, there are no recorded information on how Nzeogwu took control of the radio house, it is only logical to reconstruct an imaginary picture that such a move, a desperate one at that, would have required the application of military force as it is only normal to suggest that some of the workers at the radio house (Kaduna) might have been rounded up as hostages should they had put up the slightest form of resistance to grant Major Nzeogwu permission to have access to the studio. The case of Dimka (Siollun 2009) could help substantiate our argument here that military might have been employed by Nzeogwu at the Kaduna radio house.

Barely six months after the January 15, 1966 coup, Nigeria, was once again brought under another rounds of bloodletting when a group of northern officers staged a coup known today in history as the counter-coup of July 29 1966 which ousted Major-General J.T.U AguiyiIronsi, and the killing of many officers and men from the Igbo extraction. However, killing spree and what followed is not necessarily the concern of this study, but the position of radio in its execution. During the 29 July, 1966 counter-coup, a radio broadcast (at exactly 2:30 p.m.) was first employed by Brigadier Ogundipe in an attempt to intimate the general public of certain development which threatens the peace of the nation. The broadcast came on the heels that Ogundipe could not had really asserted authority over these dissidents who owing to one reason or the other were bound on fermenting troubles. The speech of that radio broadcast was as follow:

As a result of some trouble by dissidents in the army, mainly in Ibadan, Abeokuta and Ikeja, the National Military Government has declared a state of emergency in the affected areas. Consequently, the following areas have been declared military areas under the Suppression of Disorder Decree of 1966: Ibadan, Ikeja and Abeokuta. Military tribunals have been considered and accordingly set up. Curfew has been declared in the affected areas from 6:30 p.m. The National Military Government wishes to state that the situation is under control and hopes to restore peace and tranquility very soon. The government appeals to the public for cooperation in its effort to restore law and order in the affected areas (Siollun 2009)

From the above quotation, even though it was not aimed at declaring a martial law, it is clear that the military government was actually intimidating as well as pleading with the general public to exercise patient while the disturbance of public peace that was breached was brought back to normalcy. This goes to show that there is a connecting dot between radio broadcast and military coup-related activities in Nigeria. But taking a panoramic view on the tragedy of 26 July 1966, it would appear or perhaps right to argue that what actually transpired was not really a coup in the real sense of the word, but was rather a mutiny of Igbo officers. Hypothesizing this view, Siollun (2009) avers:

In contrast to the events of January, the July counter-“coup” was not actually a coup at all. It was a mutiny. The revolt lacked the common characteristics of a coup such as the seizure of broadcasting facilities, public announcement of a change of regime and denunciation of the previous regime. Unlike the Majors’ attempted political revolution, the rebellion was a matter of internal army discipline for Northern soldiers, and vengeance against colleagues that had behaved dishonourably by violating their sacred military traditions. This aspect of the revolt was greatly underestimated by the civilian population. [n.p]

The above quotation is a confirmation that officers of the counter-coup exercise had not actually seized any radio house, since it was never a coup by a revenge against the Igbo officers within the Nigeria Army.

By July 29, 1975, a coup took place on the ninth anniversary of the munity which resulted in the killing of Gen. J.T.U. Ironsi and several other military officers of the Igbo extraction (Ojiakon.d). In the process, the seizure of a radio house (i.e. Lagos Radio) was to be witnessed again. The 1976 coup that led to the overthrow of Gen. Yakubu Gowon from the seat of power while attending the *Oraganization of Africa Unity 12th Summit Meeting* in Kampala, Uganda. The coup announcement was read out by a man regarded as one of Gowon’s closest friends, Col. Joe NanvenGarba, Commander of the Elite Guard Brigade, which had prior to the coup time, protected the Chief-of-State in his Lagos Headquarters (Ojiakon.d). Precisely on a Tuesday, July 29, 1975 at exactly 6 a.m., Nigerians woke up to the chilled-scintillating voice of Col. Joseph NanvenGarba announcing the coup broadcast via Lagos Radio. In Garba’s coup speech, some lines portray the usual philosophy sell-out to the general public. Take for instance, Garba, while trying to conscientize the people on pressing issues (student protests, Gowon’s promise and fail approaches to returning Nigeria to civilian rule, amongst others.) that propelled the military action of 1979, stated that “the Nigerian armed forces have decided to effect a change of leadership of the Federal Military Government, and from now General Yakubu Gowon ceases to be the head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria...this has been a bloodless operation and we not want anyone to lose his or her life...anyone caught disturbing public order will be summarily dealt with...” (Ojiakon.d).The statements of Garba can be split into two angle. One is the angle of intimidating the public, while the other angle is issuing of instructions. The coup speech was broadcast repeatedly throughout that Tuesday through radio. Thus, this instance further strengthen the thesis of this study that without radio, radio houses and radio broadcast, a coup cannot be said to have happened.

In addition, a very potent example on this discourse is the Dimka’s attempted coup (a failed coup d’état). In the morning of February 13, 1979, news of Dimka and his co-conspirators attempting a coup which led to the death of the then Military Head of State, Gen. Murtala Ramat Muhammed, but failed to see the end, filled the streets of Lagos. Base on the report of a particular source, some minutes before 8 a.m. on that fateful day, the following curious announcement was heard on Radio Nigeria:

Good morning fellow Nigerians, This is Lt. Col. B. Dimka of the Nigerian Army calling. I bring you good tidings. Murtala Muhammed's deficiency has been detected. His government is now overthrown by the young revolutionaries. All the 19 military governors have no powers over the states they now govern. The states affairs will be run by military brigade commanders until further notice. All commissioners are sacked, except for the armed forces and police commissioners who will be redeployed. All senior military officers should remain calm in their respective spots. No divisional commanders will issue orders or instructions until further notice. Any attempt to foil these plans from any quarters will be met with death. You are warned, it is all over the 19 states. Any acts of looting or raids will be death. Everyone should be calm. Please stay by your radio for further announcements. All borders, air and sea ports are closed until further notice. Curfew is imposed from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thank you. We are all together. (Omoigui n.p)

Critical examination of the broadcast above puts more weight behind the thesis of this discourse which holds that outside the gun, Radio facility is the next vital ingredients needed when executing a coup in Nigeria. In Dimka’s own

words, he had advised the general public to stick to their radio for future instructions. This leaves one to ponder on why radio and not the Television set or newspapers. That is to buttress how powerful the radio can be in situation like coup d'états.

Still on the use of radio facility by Dimka, Siollun gave us a detailed account of what later transpired at the radio house after the morning broadcast. In a bid to quell these conspirators, Col. Ibrahim Babaginda was sent by Lt. Gen. Danjuma to have a *tête-à-tête* with Dimka at the radio house. While at the radio house, Babaginda tried talking Dimka out of his actions and Dimka sarcastically asked if Babaginda has come to play "Chukuma and Nwawo" with him. At the end, Dimka, upon realizing that the coup lacked the much necessary support, asked Babaginda to help relay a message to the Chief of Army Staff, Danjuma, to give a written immunity for all the conspirators of the coup (Siollun 2009). All these conversations rolled out inside the studios where Dimka and his sentries had earlier taken siege.

As was reported by some sources, some hours after Babaginda had left, the radio station became a battle ground for both loyalist soldiers (that is Babaginda, Chris Ugokwe, John Shagaya, and others) and the coup plotters, as for the next ten minutes there were massive exchange of fire shots within the perimeter of the radio house. At the end, the conspirators were overpowered and arrested, however, Dimka managed to escape unscathed and fled (Siollun 2009). While Ojiako recounted summarily that "Dimka's rebel troops remained at the studios [radio house] until mid-afternoon when troops loyal to the Federal Government retook the radio station after about 10 minutes of firing." (Ojiako n.d). Thereafter, "Lagos Radio resumed transmissions with light music which carried on for two hours before the collapse of the coup attempt was officially announced." (Ojiako n.d)

Barely after four years, and three months into the second republic, exactly on 31 December, 1983, Nigeria would come to have another experience of coup d'état which truncated the civilian government of President Shehu Shagari (Othman 1984). It was Brigadier Sani Abacha who was appointed by the conspirators to take care of the radio broadcast. Abacha stated thus:

Fellow countrymen and women..., you are all living witnesses to the grave economic predicament and uncertainty which an inept and corrupt leadership has imposed on our beloved nation for the past four years. I am referring to the harsh, intolerable conditions under which we are now living. Our economy has been hopelessly mismanaged. We have become a debtor and a beggar nation... (Othman 1984)

Thereafter, Major-General Buhari, the new leader, came on air that same day to further elaborate on the previous broadcast given by Brigadier Sani Abacha. All these attempts it would appear were to help create a receptive mindset on the general public to accept the actions of the coup plotters as the right thing to be done in such a trying moment in the country. Highlighting the clause "you all are living witnesses to the grave economic predicament" would suggest that the coup plotters needed a nod from the citizenry for their action which they hoped would bring back the country to normalcy. Unfortunately, the reverse was to be the case as barely two years later, another coup d'état sets in which overthrew Gen. Muhammad Buhari and brought in Gen. Ibrahim Babangida as the new Head of State.

Further, at exactly 6 a.m. on August 27, 1985, Nigerians would once again woke up to the familiar cycle of martial music interspersed with a radio announcement made by an unfamiliar voice – it was Joshua Dongonyaro's. Among other things, the coup speech on a radio broadcast given out by Dongoyaro read thus:

Fellow countrymen, the intervention of the military at the end of 1983 was welcomed by the nation with unprecedented enthusiasm. Nigerians were unified in accepting the intervention and looked forward hopefully to progressive changes for the better. Almost two years later, it has become clear that the fulfilment of expectations is not forthcoming... 'A small group of individuals in the Supreme Military Council had abused their power and failed to listen to the advice of their colleagues or the public, about tackling the country's economic problems. (Omoigui n.p)

Hence, a critical evaluation of the lines above depicts a collective acceptance of the previous coup that heralded Gen. Mohammad Buhari, only for the entire populace (civilian and military) to get disappointed just after twenty-four months of truncating Shagari's regime since Buhari government as reported blatantly refused to listen to the advice of his colleagues and the public. The statements given by the officer in charge of broadcasting the aim and

visions of the 1985 intervention was indicative of the fact that the general public must be carried along through radio broadcast otherwise, it would be assumed that such an exercise was not deemed to be refer to as a coup rather it was a mutiny. Thus, radio broadcast is as essential as other variables in coup d'états.

In another development, shortly after dawn broke on April 22, 1990, five years after Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babaginda had been in power, the country would yet experience another coup attempt, when a broadcast was heard over the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in Lagos. In the course of strategizing the coup, Major. Gideon Gwarzo Orkar was tasked with the responsibility of leading men to take over the FRCN and ensure that the mission statement was broadcast to the nation promptly at 0600 hours on April 22, 1990 (Tolofari 2004). It should be noted that even though, Orkar was brave and intelligent and was able to perform his duties, he was not the main brain behind the *putsch* (Tolofari 2004). The Gideon Orkar coup of 1990, just like the failed coup of Dimka, shows how important radio houses, and radio broadcast had been in military takeovers in Nigeria. During the execution of the coup which sought to unseat Gen. Ibrahim Babaginda, a lot of events surrounding the radio house in Lagos was noted as it would appear that at a point, the radio house became a refuge for the coup plotters who see it as their only medium to crave the indulgence of the general public in sympathizing with their course – *putsch*. Recounting the coup speech as aired on that fateful day, Orkar related to the public via a radio broadcast in which he said the following:

Fellow Nigerian citizens, on behalf of the patriotic and well-meaning people of the Middle Belt and southern parts of this country, I, Major Gideon GwarzoOrkar, wish to happily inform you of the successful ousting of the dictatorial, sadistic, corrupt, drug-baronish, inhuman, deceitful, homosexually centered, oligarchistic and unpatriotic administration of Gen. Ibrahim Babaginda...we have equally commenced their trial for unabated corruption, mismanagement of the nation's economy, the murder of Dele Giwa...and other human rights violations...this is not just another coup, but a well conceived, planned and executed revolution of the marginalized and enslaved people of the Middle Belt and the South, with a view to freeing ourselves and children yet unborn, from eternal slavery and colonization by a clique of this country...anything that has a beginning must have an end...all Nigerians with no skeletons in their cupboards need not be afraid of this change...those with skeletons in their cupboards have all reasons to fear, because the time for reckoning has come...for the avoidance of doubt, we wish to state the primary reasons why we have decided to oust the satanic Babaginda administration...A curfew is hereby imposed from 8.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. until further notice...All unlawful and criminal acts by those attempting to cause chaos will be ruthlessly crushed...Be warned, as we are prepared at all cost to defend the new order. All radio stations are hereby advised to hook up permanently to the national network programme until further notice. Long live all true patriots of this great country of ours. May God and Allah through His bountiful mercies bless us all (Tolofari 2004).

Deductively, the coup speech above indicate how necessary it was to reorient the general public towards military interventions in the country. Orkar reminded the people that their action was on behalf of the entire citizenry and must if necessary be welcomed by all and sundry. In the coup speech, philosophy behind the aberration was equally outline and further instructions dished out.

However, the 1990 coup had a lot to do with radio broadcasts as it was evidently noticed that both the coup plotter and the attempted deposed government of Gen. Babginda had a long range of battle on radio. While the 'coupists' were holding on to their position through radio broadcasts, the incumbent government was countering and assuring the Nigeria populace that all were under control and the conspirators will be brought to book as broadcasted by Lt. Gen. Sani Abacha who was then the Chief of Army Staff (Tolofari 2004). Thus the efficacy of radio broadcasts was once again portrayed during the 1990 failed coup.

Concurrently, November 17, 1993 was a remarkable day in the history of Nigeria as it was a day Gen. Sani Abacha took the reins of power following the 'resignation' of Chief Ernest Shonekan. Nonetheless, this transition in government was regarded in many quarters as a palace coup orchestrated by Abacha (the most senior secretary [Minister] in the ING) himself amidst mixed reaction and feelings (Siollun 2009). For example, Shonekan, while giving his resignation speech states that "it is common knowledge that the ING is a child of circumstance. It was conceived in crisis and born in crisis." (Siollun 2009) In the case of Abacha coming into power after the resignation of Shonekan, there are no strong evidences that it was indeed a coup, neither were there any cases of soldiers forcefully taking over radio houses, but the fact was that, a live broadcast was made by Gen. Abacha as a way of intimating the Nigerian citizenry of his assumption to power when he broadcasted the speeches as follow:

Fellow Nigerians, sequel to the resignation of the former Head of the Interim National Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Chief Ernest Shonekan and my subsequent appointment as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief, I have had extensive consultations within the armed forces hierarchy and other well-meaning Nigerians in a bid to find solutions to the various political, economic and social problems which have engulfed our beloved country and which have made life most difficult for the ordinary citizen of this nation...We required well thought-out and permanent solutions to these problems if we are to emerge stronger for them...This government is a child of necessity with a strong determination...give us the chance to solve our problems in our own ways. (Igbinijesu 2012)

In the case of the 1993 military takeover, while it is yet to be established if Abacha actually applied military force on Ernest Shonekan and his cabinet members to resign, the fact that Shonekan resignation speech and that of Abacha speech were broadcasted both on national radio and television had been substantially supported by evidences. Abacha's broadcast was indeed, a tactful diplomacy to keep the general public apprise of later development at the central level of government *vis a vis* another round of military rule in the country's chequered history of military involvement. Thus, while we cannot really hold claim that the 1993 ousting of the ING was a palace coup, we can at least based on the much available evidences posit strongly that the use of radio broadcast in addressing the nation was employed. Again, towards the end of the speech, Abacha highlighted the need for collective cooperation if the myriad of problems militating against the development of Nigeria must be crush once and for all, as he further pleaded that Nigerians must be allowed to tackle their issues in their own ways. This statements were aimed at the reorientation of the people in accepting the new military government.

Conclusion:-

The study have shown that throughout all the coup exercises conducted in Nigeria's chequered history, media (radio) was very much instrumental. The study, in order to achieve set goals took a historical voyage from the 15 July, 1966 revolutionary coup down to the 'palace coup' of 1993 in order critically examine the employment of media houses by those coup plotters during their operations.

Also, the study posits that the evolution and growth of radio broadcasting in Nigeria took root in the establishment of telephone and telegraph communication system by the then British colonial government as far back as 1895. Henceforward, the spread of radio broadcasting was more rapid under military regimes as it is on record that all thirty-six states in Nigeria were created under military regimes and as each new state was created, so was the establishment of radio houses across these states.

In sum then, the study holds the view that just like guns and ammunitions are vital in conducting a coup d'état, so also is the media, in this case, radio house or generally radio facility, otherwise, such an exercise cannot be term as a coup but a mutiny like the July 29 1966 event.

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