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# NIGERIAN BROADCAST MEDIA AND POLITICAL PLURALISM: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE 2011 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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## **Abstract.**

The study looks at the role of the broadcast media in creating political pluralism in Nigeria. The Nigerian broadcast media has been largely criticized for its overtly biased and one sided posture in its political reporting. This research x-rays the 2011 polls in Nigeria and shares perspectives on the level of pluralism offered by broadcast stations during the elections. The paper notes that in spite of existing regulatory frameworks, many broadcast stations violated the laws and ethics of the industry with regards to fairness and access. Most guilty are the state-owned broadcast stations and including a few privately-owned stations. The paper concludes that political pluralism is a key element of democracy and Nigerian broadcast stations and regulatory bodies must imbibe and enforce this rule if they are to play their role of promoting democracy.

## **Introduction**

The Nigerian broadcasting industry has come a long way. From the era of the BBC to this era of the deregulation of the industry, the broadcasting industry has played a great role in stimulating development and promoting democracy in Nigeria. Egbon (20) states that communication plays a significant role in the process of political development. It is in view of this imperative that Section 39 of the 1999 Nigerian Federal Constitution categorical states that 'every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference'.

This study examines the crucial dynamics of political pluralism in broadcasting in Nigeria. A pluralistic society, which was only in formation, can be defined as one in which groups of people holding differing political values can coexist and cooperate with other groups on some political issues while continuously differing in others. In a pluralistic society, it is commonly believed that the existing political differences are of a lasting, not of a temporary kind.

The Wikkipeadia (1) argues that political power in society does not lie with the electorate but is distributed between a wide number of groups, they argue then that 'Pluralism' is, in the general sense, the acknowledgment of diversity. Pluralism is often considered by proponents of modern democracy to be in the interests of its citizens, as it offers the citizens opportunities for diverse opportunities and access.

The term pluralism is also used to denote a theoretical standpoint on the ramifications of power; that is between state and power – which to varying degrees suggest that pluralism is an adequate model of how power is distributed in societies. In democratic politics, pluralism is a guiding principle which permits the peaceful coexistence of different interests, convictions and lifestyles (Wikkipaedia, 1).

Quite unlike totalitarianism or authoritarianism, pluralism 'acknowledges' the "diversity" of interests and considers it imperative that members of society accommodate

