MASS MEDIA AND CULTURAL IMPERIALISM: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract
The article focuses on mass media and cultural imperialism: the Nigerian experience. Culture comprises the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, intellectual and emotional features that characterize society, our thought about life, and our ideas. Culture shape the way we see world, it has capacity to bring about the change of attitudes needed to ensure peace and sustainable development which we know form the only possible way forward for life on planet earth. This paper examined increasing in cultural dominance that one culture exerts over another as a function of the relation of both overall deficiencies, in the sense that flood of cultural elements pour from dominant culture on the dominated. Mass media was studied under the two theories: cultural imperialism and media dependency theory. Mass media is found to represents one of the most significant institutions, the powerful tool for socialization as well as cultural domination. Domination here means holding superiority or mastery in strength and to suppress or overshadow in dominance, recognition and prestige. It involves the exercise of great influence in the society as well as political and economic influence. The work suggests that, powerful measure to combat the aggression of the global media dependence should be based on selective acceptance and dissemination of local contents to satisfy audience needs. To ensuring a bright future for Nigeria cultural heritage, there is a need to continually promote her heritage through the various media.

Keywords: Mass media, Cultural imperialism, Nigeria and Experience.

INTRODUCTION

Man is a social being, and as such cannot live outside his society and other agents that conduct the affairs of his existence such as culture. As an imitative animal, Aminu (1994), observed that man, often changes his style, speech, foods, dressing, political and economic structure or behaviour through the imitation of patterns of those around him or those with whom he has experienced association. As with individuals, so it is with peoples and societies. When a people with its characteristic ways of life come into association with another people with different and distinguishing ways of life, culture contact has taken place because two different cultures have met. Mkpa (2001) explained that this association may result in either party adjusting its characteristic ways of life based on those of the other side. Awareness is extended either unconsciously or deliberately, each side or one side learns and assimilates new education system, language, social skills (like those used in government and leadership) entertainment, technical skills and a new hierarchy of values.

The culture of a people is their identity as it affords them due recognition. It is their underlying distinguishing factor from other peoples cultures. In fact, all societies across the globe have various divergent cultures which they cherish and practice nevertheless, no two cultures, when juxtaposed are absolutely identical as attested by ethnographers. In order for a society to operate functionally and effectively, they must ensure and maintain strict and constant adherence to the various components of their culture.
Tylor (2000) asserted, that "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, customs, laws and other capabilities which are learned, shared by men as members of society, and transmitted from one generation to another". Any laxity, lassitude, and levity exhibited by its custodians would result in rapid erosion and disappearance of uniqueness of the people and their culture. Since the genesis of culture, is as old as man himself, without it, man is reduced to an animal. Culture therefore can either be learned and second or shared.
On the other hand, cultural imperialism is a situation where there is a spread of western popular culture to the rest of the world. "Imperialism" further assumes that western institutions have been introduced in a context of western political and economic dominance and as a result, both intentional "we're superior" and unintentional "we're just helping", adopting western culture more generally becomes an important way of reaping the political and economic benefits of collaboration with people already associated with those western institutions. An example could be any western agencies promoting democracy/good governance/structural adjustment etc with the assumption that it is already done correctly in the home country of the people promoting this. Imperialism seeks to break down by force if needed, barriers to economic competition so the stronger nation can dominate local markets and sell its products/culture.
For instance, Nigeria is a West African nation, regarded as the giant of Africa, and having over 360 ethnic groups, with over 460 languages. It is the most populous black nation in the world. Nigeria got independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963, but yet the media, culture, and economy may have lost its taste of independence as they are indirectly dependent to the colonial giants of colonization. The subjective nature of Nigerian economy to the European world, the north Americans, Asia and other world powers may

however be compared as little to its media and cultural dependency which may in turn be regarded as cultural imperialism. Statistics declared that 72% of Nigerian parents do not teach their wards the norms and values of Nigerian society as observed by Ugboajah, (2005). It is parthetic how we complain of the demise of our culture daily, yet we fold our hands and watch it hastened to death. The question is how many of the Nigerian citizens are ready to uphold the culture.

Similarly imperialism is in seen in the adoption of western religion while considering the traditional religion as evil. The question is "do Nigerians even realize that what is being practice is another man's culture.   The interrelated nature of cultural institutions can also be seen in the effects of changing roles for Nigerian women since the mid-21st century. As they have moved into the work force outside the home, it has given them financial independence and has altered traditional roles within the family. Men are less essential as bread winners and less accepted as patriarchs. They have begun to take on more children rearing and other domestic household responsibilities previously defined as "women's work". Divorce has become an economically variable alternative for women in unhappy marriages. There also has been a marked decrease in frequency of mother-child interaction. Nigerian children have increasingly risen by non-family in child care centers and schools.

In the same way media being regarded as the fourth estate of the realm and being capable of social, economic, political, religious, and cultural change that harness growth and development in any developing nation like Nigeria through its form of communication directed towards development (developmental communication) may have lost its choice of achieving this obligation due to its colonization by other developed nations dramatizing their ego through the screen and pages of indigenous media who were meant to mirror and sustain the socio-cultural philosophy and ideology of its indigenous society (Nigeria). The process by which these changes in culture occur is known as acculturation or culture transfer. All the world's greatest nations learnt or borrowed something from others. African media have for a long time based their communication function on western philosophy of information, education and entertainment. These functions have universal application but the problem lies in the mindless adoption of the western way of informing, educating and entertaining regardless of our peculiar circumstances Ugboajah, (2005) asserts that illiteracy for instance is a major problem in Africa and that no less than sixty per cent of Africans are illiterate rural dwellers. Therefore, the media must device their own means of carrying out their functions to suit the circumstances affecting their audiences.

Theoretical framework

This study is based on Cultural Imperialism theory propounded by Herbert Schiller in 1973. The nature of media (i.e., print, radio and television), at that time, promoted a one-way, top-down transmission system from dominant country to dominated country that theoretically gave rise to a passive audience and a powerful media (Sengupta and Frith, 1997 cited in White, 2001). This situation created imbalance in the global news flow scene and cries of media/cultural imperialism/marginalization. These cries, inevitably, led to calls for a New World Information and Communication Order. After a critical analysis of the arguments put forward by most of the theorists and other scholars who have written on the subject of cultural imperialism, the major proposition could be summarized in the work of Schiller (1976), that cultural imperialism proposes that a society is brought into the

modem world system when its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes it is bribed into shaping its social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system. The theory explain that the essence of cultural imperialism is the domination by one nation by another and the environment for this is created by transnational media organizations.

Another assumption of cultural imperialism, according to White (2001) citing Tomlison (1991) is that: media play a central role in creating culture. This axiom is linked to the interchangeable use of various terms to refer to cultural imperialism. Writers who talk about "cultural imperialism" as "media imperialism," treating the two terms as synonyms, bring into question the centrality of the media in claims of cultural imperialism. This practice implies that the media have such an overwhelming role in the process referred. White (2001) further notes that cultural imperialism theory also presumes a centralized approach to the development, diffusion and distribution of media products. The assumption here is that all media products originate from only centre nations that have devious ulterior motives of deliberately wanting to dominate the media of periphery nations. Theory is value-neutral and objective. It does not matter what beliefs the people of the Third World may already hold, the television programmes from the Western World will communicate the same message and affect them in the same way (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008). This theory is relevant to this study because it explains Western World influence on media content in third world country and it adverse effect on cultural values.

Similarly, Dependency theory of Ball Roacheach and De Fleur, postulated in 1976 is another theory that finds expression in this study. The theory stipulates that people depend on the media to achieve certain goals. Further more people do not depend on all media equally. Two factors influence the degree of media dependence:

- People become more dependent on the media that meet a number of their needs than the media that provides just a few.
- The more a person is dependent on the media, the more that media will be important to the person. Since the media is important to the person; it will have influence over the person. This explains the penchant most people have for anything foreign, be it information, fashion, entertainment and so on. This theory is therefore relevant to this study because it explains how people are dependent on the media for information which adversely influence their perception and way of life.

Conceptual Review
In order to appreciate the subject properly, it is necessary to explain the following concepts.

Culture:
It is a way of life fashioned by a people in their collective endeavour to live and come to terms with their total environment. It is the sum of their art, their science and all the social institutions including their systems of belief and rituals. Shaibu and Puke (2001) define culture as the whole body of knowledge, beliefs, arts, law, norms, moral, customs, values,

habits and all other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. In the same manner, Mkpa (2001) defines culture as the totality of a people's ways of life. Culture refers to the whole gamut of knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions and skil1s that are available to members of a society. They are man-made designs, prescriptions and responses which are deliberately fashioned to guide all aspects of a people's life.

Mass Media:
Obasanjo and Babogunje (1992) refer to mass media as an agency, modem or traditional that operates for the articulation and dissemination of ideas, and information generally with intent to influence or control an audience or institutions that constitute power and authority. Mass media are those channels or vehicles through which information, education, entertainment or general people- oriented messages are conveyed to the masses. Media refers to various channels of communication through which information (messages) are conveyed to audiences. They are the vehicles which transmit messages from the sender (encoder) to the receiver (decoder).

Concept of Imperialism:
Imperialism is from the Latin verb "*impero*" meaning "to rule", "to give orders to", "ruling power" or "command". This is the expression of overbearing tendencies of one country through which social, cultural and economic harsh influences are spread over another country which suffers the harrowing effects of such influences. It is the policy of extending a country's power and influence in the world through political relations or military force. This is the policy whereby powerful nations extend their powers and influence all over the world. In the past centuries, they did this by acquiring colonies. The principal elements of imperialism are domination and dependence. The powerful nations dominate the weaker ones, and the weaker ones become dependent on the powerful nations. Imperialism according to Offiong (1980) has its basic element as the formation of local and international monopolies backed by high tariff barriers in the metropolitan societies. Rodney (1972) analyzing Marxist stages of societal evolution from hunt-gathering society to communalism, to slavery, then to feudalism, then capitalism and finally socialism, places the origin of denomination and dependence in human society within the stage of slavery.
For him, slavery stage was caused by the extension of domineering elements within the family and by some groups being physically overwhelmed by others. Fukuyama (1992) locates the origin of domination and dependence in human society in the ontological nature of humans. He describes it as the desire for recognition. However, the rise of modern imperialism in 19th century came with the acquisition of colonies in Africa and Asia by the West. Colonial imperialism brought both positive and negative effects to Africa and to Nigeria in particular. Nigeria got Western education, religion and civilization. But the adverse effect is pictured in Achebe (1958) when he states that the cord that held Africans together was broken and things fell apart. The new brand of economy that came with imperialism spread hunger and diseases. Christianity and Islam staked their hold on Nigerian culture and tradition stifling the traditional elements of pride and prestige of Nigerians. This affected almost all aspects of Nigerian life: dress, music, language, food, education and most
importantly, media.

Cultural Imperialism:

Cabral (1976) defines cultural imperialism as a situation where foreign culture dominates a local one such that the locals see their own culture as inferior to the foreign one. Best and Kombol (2009), see cultural imperialism as a process that brings societies into modem systems. It is a process in which a dominant culture exerts pressure and force on other cultures that are perceived to be of less significance even by members who belong to that culture. Cultural imperialism is therefore defined as the process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution, or content of the media in any country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected (Boyd-Barrett, 1977). Cultural imperialism could also be described as the subtle manipulation of the mass media of underdeveloped or developing countries by the developed western capitalist nations of Europe and North American, using their advanced and well-developed mass media to control the behaviour, lifestyles, morals, arts, and values of the undeveloped or developing nations through the production and massive exportation of media software to the developing nations. Cultural imperialism is also the subjugation of a local culture and the imposition of an alien culture on the local culture (Ekeanyanwu, 2005:29).

Background of Cultural Imperialism in Nigeria - pre-colonial era experience

There are two major factors that influences cultural imperialism in Nigeria. First, Obi-Ani (2004) observed that Nigeria was-divided into two major geographical regions, the North and the South. The north was influenced by Arabic and the south by Europeans. Nigeria's experience with culture contact with continents outside Africa was on the platform of trade. Kano in northern Nigeria was for over a hundred years the terminus which reached the Mediterranean through North Africa. The Trans-Sahara route facilitated trade and culture contacts with the Sahelian regions and the Middle East. Islam came to Northern Nigeria through the Middle East and Islam being a way of life (culture) replaced much of the indigenous cultures in Northern Nigeria. The Portuguese relationship with Benin in Southern Nigeria is important because it made a deliberate attempt to culture transfers. Missionaries introduced Christianity to Benin. Culture contact with Britain had the greatest and the largest abiding effect in Nigeria. Economy was at the heart of that contact. It was the British economic interest which propelled Britain into its dominant role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. In the words of Obi-Ani (2004) it was the white man's greed that had propelled the trade, their insatiable acquisitiveness, ruthless exploitation and callous indifference to the feelings of others that have kept Nigeria perpetually underdeveloped.

After the abolition of slave trade, it was British economic interest that sent British merchants/adventurers to look for raw material. Christianity also helped the penetration of foreign culture by projecting new perspectives and prospects to life through evangelization which though was never the prime motive as was clearly stated by Lugard (1926): Let it be admitted at the onset that European brains, capital and energy-have not been and will never be expended in developing the resources of Africa (from motives of pure philanthropy) that Europe was in African for the mutual benefits of her own industrial class. The media in use in the pre-colonial era were the traditional modes of communication which Wilson (1998) cited in Kur (2009) classifies as "instrumental media, demonstrative media, iconographic media, visual media, extra-mundane media and institution-al media".

Their significance and the special role they played could be examined in terms of (i) oral and literary tradition which involved the use of folk culture expressed either in stories poems, plays, songs, proverbs, customs, rituals or rights. (ii) In terms of the field of myths, legends and folk lore and (iii) in terms of puppet operas, comedians and similar art forms (Kid, 1976).

Communication between the people and the colonial masters was through these various channels with the aid of local interpreters. The use of folk media helped to animate critical awareness, communication and cultural activity among the rural people even though they were unable to reach large audience.

Media And Cultural Challenges In The Global Era

The role of mass media on the issue of cultural crisis in the society, which itself is the inevitable by-product of globalization, has become vitally important. The subject of globalization and the function of mass media are so intertwined that it is impossible to imagine globalization without the presence of media. The information and communication revolution and the emergence of new technologies have redefined the meaning and realm of politics and power structure within societies. Thus, power is entrusted to those who produce, control and disseminate information more effectively (Mowlana, 1998).

Some theoreticians (such as those who propounded theories of the press) hold that power magnates and moguls prepare the news, information, science and political decisions at the national and international levels and then inject them to the societies through the media. Therefore, mass media is an instrument in the hand of the ruling class that not only justifies its authority it gains the support of its audiences. On the other hand, it is impossible to ignore the great transformation and evolution taking place in international telecommunication during the era of globalization including centralization and integration of mass media and the advent of giant media tycoons. This new ownership of mass media has greatly influenced the content and dissemination of news as well as the commercial nature of cultural products.

However, some scholars promoting globalization praise the positive impact of mass media, there are many experts who criticize the negative role of media in weakening the cultural identity in Nigeria. For instance Uduaak (2012), argue that the media has deprived humanity from its intellectual capacities and flexibility and has reduced mankind to a single dimensioned and isolated entity. Meanwhile, Khaniki (2001) explains this subject as the creation of one-dimensional man. Men and women involved in this powerful media network, contribute to a society in which its members do not have strong links with each other and do not play a part in the stability of the social order in any meaningful form (Khaniki, 2001).

Similarly, many other scholars argue that one of the prominent tasks of the media in the globalization process has been its pursuit in developing a single cultural world. The culture sponsored by the western media is a culture, which dictates to the society what to eat, what to wear, how to live, what to think and what to know. This enormous chain of global communication institutions and its allies in the camp of capitalism have transformed the

majority of ordinary people into obedient consumers of media messages, without cultural identity .

Notwithstanding it is possible to divide the mass media in the globalization era into two categories, namely the aggressive media and the resistive media. The aggressive media provide a diverse range of news and information, they pursue a limited set of objectives. These objectives include entertainment for leisure and pleasure as well as education for greater uniformity and harmony of audiences. Jospin (2001), explain that these institutions tend to remove spatial and temporal boundaries in order to eliminate identity barriers. The successful implementation of this task would pave the way for the strategic goal of the capitalist tycoons and giant industrialists to conquer the world market through exploitation of minds, the draining of brains in the developing countries and injecting a superficial sense of happiness and satisfaction.

Meanwhile, the resistive media on the other hand, tends to utilize the open atmosphere in the global information system in order to disseminate its own culture and ideology. However, these information institutions generally do not comprehend the depth and dimensions of the prevailing tragedy and insist on promoting their local and national aspirations instead of finding a broader message for the vast global audiences. Thus, they always fail to compete with the aggressive media in absorbing potential audiences.

It is fair to assume that with the rapid development and expansion of globalization, the dominance of a prevalent culture and the ensuing consequences are inevitable. At the same time it is irrefutable that such dominance will result in cultural disorders and upheavals in value systems, especially in Nigeria. The most effective method of combating the aggressive cultures and preserving the cultural identity of nations is to rationally utilize the new telecommunication technologies and have a clear plan of action for peaceful coexistence with other cultures, races and nations.

Giddens(1999), assert that nations are bound to redefine and review their identities in the modern age. It is essential to renovate the old institutions or establish new ones worthy of the globalization era. There is a need to strive in order to gain more control over world events. This objective is only attainable through an effective and timely response to the incoming challenges. Since globalization is a lasting trend, Nigeria media cannot ignore the changes and cannot continue doing business as usual.

The Extent of Media Effect

 By media effects, it means exposure to the media, which changes people's behaviour or beliefs, then the first task is to see whether significant correlations exist between levels of exposure and variations in behaviour or beliefs. Most research does show such a correlation (Signorelli & Morgan, 1990), albeit a small and not always consistent one. The next question concerns the direction of causality. For example, having shown that those who watch more violent television tend to be more aggressive (Huesmann, 1982), there is a need to ask whether more aggressive people choose to watch violent programmes (i.e. selective exposure), whether violent programmes make viewers aggressive (i.e. media effects), or whether certain social circumstances both make people more aggressive and lead them to watch more violent television .

To resolve this issue, the effects tradition has generally adopted an experimental approach, arguing that only in controlled experiments can people be randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions, thereby controlling for any other variables in the

situation. Only then can causal inferences be drawn concerning any observed correlation between the experimental manipulation (generally media exposure) and resultant behaviour. In research on media violence, some researchers offer a bidirectional argument, concluding that there is evidence for both selective viewing and media effects .

Undoubtedly, many viewers choose selectively to watch violent or stereotyped programmes (after all there has always been a market for violent images). However, it does not necessarily follow that there are no effects of viewing such programmes or that motivated viewers can successfully undermine any possible effects. Many remain concerned especially for the effects of violent programmes on children and so-called vulnerable individuals, irrespective of whether they chose to watch them.

It is also important to put in to consideration that media effect is quantifiable and can be measured. Therefore, the influence of media or a media message can be gauged. This assumption is true whether the message has any effect on its audience or not. Nevertheless, there is a need to be must be mindful that media effect is dependent on several causes, such as psychological characteristics and audience demographics. Such effects can be either be positive or negative, unexpected or measured, temporary or lifelong. It is also very important to note that not all effects will blossom into change, but may perhaps simply strengthen a prevailing credence.

Big Brother Africa on DSTV

The show casing of the programme "Big Brother Africa" has done more harm than good as far as the intrusion of foreign culture into Africa is concerned. A good reflection of the decay in the family structure could be easily captured by this television programme. According to ode (2009) most family members, males, females, husbands, wives become addicted to watching and applauding the decadence and rapid erosion of Africa's cherished moral values. The programme depicts an attitude inconsistent with our values and in the views of Ode "it is either a reflection of the spirit of post modernism which is fast replacing traditional or even "modern cultures which if nothing else were stable, predictable and safe".

Films

Films have been blamed for the intrusion of alien cultures in Nigeria. Foreign films have made most of our young ones ignore their culture to imbibe alien culture. The consequent psychological effects these have on these young ones in particular have created a people who are not proud of their cultures and only feel fulfilled in life when they ape the west. The brainwashed youths and even adults copy western languages, fashion, music and skin bleaching.

Commenting on the effects of foreign films in Nigeria, Shehu (1997) says that the kind of films to be used in enlightening our societies are not the sex saturated films of the west nor are we going to rely on the Kong fu fighting films of Hong Kong and China. We shall not even ape the 'love and escape' films of the Indians to teach our people our ideals. Although indigenous films dominate the market, yet there are still elements of cultural imperialism even in the indigenous films. A good example is the film titled "Glamour Girls". This film is a story of society girls who made a living in the cities by getting hooked to rich old men for the sake of their money. It also portrayed how jobless young men made money

dubiously through these girls. The film x- rayed high class prostitution among girls in Nigeria thereby encouraging immorality among young women and men. Many girls are no longer bothered about the immorality in prostitution rather they willingly accept it as lucrative profession.

Cable Network News (CNN)
The invasion of the air waves by the Cable Network News has had serious impact on contemporary Nigeria journalism. The CNN is an independent satellite broadcasting station based in Atlanta, Georgia, USA and owned by an America media giant Ted Turner. The presence of CNN has made a lot of impact in mass communication in Nigeria especially in broadcasting stations which depend so much on it for news. These stations have continued to relay CNN programmes to the extent that it is now their major source of news items. This practice has drastically altered the traditional methods of news collection. Many of these stations spend a greater part of their time monitoring CNN programmes and adopting those ones that have been found favourable for relay to the members of the public. In the views of Aminu (1994) "the media houses in Nigeria are characterized by long rows and rows of unwitting reporters with radio cassettes severally tuned to CNN channels to catch the latest world news". This seemed impact of CNN dominance of global news flow is abject media cultural imperialism.

Implications of Media Cultural Imperialism
Consequent upon many years of colonization of Nigeria by Britain, there has been a widening gap in their level of development. While the industrial world grows vibrantly in economic, social and political prosperity and stability, Nigeria has been left to wallow in abject poverty and economic retrogression. Many years after her independence, Nigeria says Agba (1998) has continued to suffer a subtle form of colonialism and economic exploitation by their former colonial masters.
In several ways and through several programmes, the media have continued to introduce distorted perception of values, presenting everything foreign as wise, admirable and civilized and everything local as primitive. Technology is not developed indigenously. Imports from developed nations have created malignant taste for foreign goods. The youths and even some adults construct fashion to mean bastardization of our culture, imitating dressing pattern in their daily lives. Nigerians no longer control the factors that dominate their cultural identity. The media now determines what people value as their culture. The distorted media products beamed to Nigeria have succeeded in undermining our accepted moral values. Nigerian culture is under the battering influence of western imperialism.

Conclusion
Media imperialism connotes the cultural domination arising of one way flow of materials from the developed countries to the developing countries which is an indication of over dependence on western media sources. Therefore, Nigerian culture will not be developed if more foreign media content is placed as priority over local content in the Nigerian media. Thus, Nigerians must value the beauty of our culture which can lead us into remarkable development. This will only happen, if the Nigerian media organisations take it as their full responsibility to always project and properly manage its culture and norms.

However, it has to be emphasized that the local and national media cannot accomplish their objective of preserving national identities unless they can manage to hold on to their traditional audiences and be able to attract new viewers and listeners as well. This objective is

only possible through accentuation of the advantages of their national cultures and enhancement of media coverage of micro-cultures.

Notwithstanding, many scholars believe that one of the most influential means for preservation of territorial integrity and protection of national identity is to establish a special media for specific groups and audiences. The advent and strengthening of media alternatives, represents the capability of various societies in introducing their own needs and point of views through utilization of advanced and up dated technology.

Therefore, powerful measure to combat the aggression of the global media dependence should be based on selective acceptance and dissemination of local contents to satisfy audience needs. Similarly, investment on production and dissemination of local cultural commodities in global markets should not be underestimated. Finally, Nigeria should realize that attainment of western technology is a must. It is possible to masterfully select the right technology in order to provide our audiences with intellectual alternatives and correct choices.

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