

EVALUATION OF LOCAL CONTENT PROGRAMMING AND CULTURAL IMPERIALISM IN NIGERIAN BROADCAST MEDIA.

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Abstract

This paper investigated the local content programming and cultural imperialism in the Nigerian broadcast media with a view to determining the extent to which cultural imperialism influences radio and television stations in Nigeria local content programming and the impact of their programmes on the indigenous culture. The theories of cultural imperialism and cultivation Analysis were employed to underpin or support the study. A survey method was used to gather data for the study. Based on the empirical data obtained, it was revealed that broadcast stations in Nigeria are involved in local content programming but the extent is not significant as foreign programmes still take the lead in our broadcast stations. Even most of the programmes that are regarded as indigenous in our broadcast stations, are in most case, dominated by the content of foreign materials. This to a large extent has contributed to cultural imperialism as our indigenous programmes are in most cases relegated to the background even by the indigenous viewers. Findings also revealed that the reasons for this horrible and hideous situation is lack of finance for local programming, lack of digitalized equipment which constitutes poor quality programming and lack of austere monitoring by the NBC. The study concludes that broadcast media in Nigeria is still infantile as well as juvenile in terms of local content programming, thereby opening wider fissure for foreign programmes to fill in. The study recommends that the broadcast media in Nigeria should come back to the drawing board and pay keen attention to local programming as this is the only way our core values as a people and

nation can be promoted. NBC must not relent in ensuring compliance and sanctioning violators of the local content provisions.

Keywords: *Broadcasting, regulation, culture, cultural imperialism.*

Introduction

The relevance of information and the need for people to be informed has led to the upsurge and proliferation of mass media institutions across the globe. The world is surrounded by the mass media institutions such that it is very doubtful to imagine which part of the world is cut off from the mass media products. That means the world is connected through the mass media. Onabajo (2005, p.93) acknowledges that in this modern day we are surrounded by the mass media. As a result of the explosive growth of the mass media in the recent past, they have become a natural part of life. Onabajo (2005) maintains that the mass media should not merely be accepted as natural; each person should become aware of how they influence the shaping of his or her own being and the environment in which he or she lives. The mass media are important forces in our society. They provide information and entertainment and, at the same time, have persuasive powers that are capable of effecting radical changes. For this reason, the role of the mass media in the development and promotion of our culture, moral and community life cannot be overestimated.

Many social changes evident today are at least partially attributable to the mass media. The electronic media in particular provide a global view that has allowed us to become involved in concerns far beyond the scope of earlier generations. Cultural, moral and community opinions have been changed largely by the fact that the mass media can provide seemingly uninterrupted news that has influenced community life, indigenous culture and morals as well. The role of the media, particularly the broadcast media in preserving the cultural values of the people remains so paramount that preserving the cultural ethics and ethos of a country contributes a great deal to its growth and national development. Sustainable development cannot occur without the integration of the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of life. The following expression is relevant to why our indigenous culture must be promoted and integrated into our lifestyles:

*A person who gets deculturalized - and I nearly was, so
I know the danger-loses his self-confidence. He suffers*

from a sense of deprivation. For optimum performance, a man must know himself and the world ... I may speak the English language better than the Chinese language because I learnt English early in life. But I will never be an Englishman in a thousand generations and I have not got the Western value system inside; mine is an Eastern value system (Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore, 1978, in Pennycook 1994, p.247).

This indicates that culture of the people is very important because it gives someone confidence for himself and the environment. The media is a “cultural instruments which supply the cultural fare and shape the cultural experience of many people in the modern world”. This reveals the inevitably symbolic relationship which exists between the media and the cultural development of every given society.

Following the deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria in 1992 allowing for private ownership of both radio and television stations, the National Broadcasting Decree 38 was signed into law. This decree established and empowered a National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to regulate the broadcast industry; through issuance of broadcast licenses to qualified private broadcast media, regulating broadcast operations and ensuring compliance to the stipulation of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code. One of the most important areas of the code for which broadcast organizations must comply is the area of what programming (broadcast contents) should be. The NBC Code clearly states that broadcasting in Nigeria should be a conscious effort towards the realization of the cultural objectives for which the industry was established to fulfill in Section 1.5.2 of its Code which reads thus. Broadcasting shall, among others:

- a. Seek, identify, preserve and promote Nigeria’s diverse cultures;
- b. Select, critically, the positive aspects of foreign cultures for the purpose of enriching the Nigerian culture;
- c. Develop and promote the application of indigenous aesthetic values;
- d. Promote the development of a high level of intellectual and artistic creativity.
- e. Foster generally acceptable moral, ennobling and spiritual values (Nigeria Broadcasting Code, 2002 p.14).

The essence for these cultural objectives was and still is to ensure that broadcast media, radio inclusive in Nigeria is a conduit for cultural learning; through which the mass society are constantly reminded of their cultural heritage. In order to ensure the realization of these objectives, television and radio programmes must be local content centered. Daily broadcast should constitute at least 70% local content which are programmes produced by: a broadcast licensee or individual with the intention to promote the development and sustenance of the diverse cultures, moral and community life of the Nigerian people through broadcasting (Nigerian Broadcasting Code, 2002 p.53). This study therefore is aimed at evaluating local content programming on radio and television stations in Nigeria with a view to determining the extent to which the broadcast media in Nigeria are committed to local content programming free from the cultural imperialism. The discourse for the paper is based on the following thematic approaches. Introduction, review of concepts, research objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, reviews of related literature, review of empirical works, conclusion and recommendations.

Research Objectives

The following objectives were accomplished at in the study:

- a. Ascertain the level of compliance to local content provision by Television and Radio stations in Nigeria.
- b. Determine the consequences of the non compliance to the local content provision for the broadcast media in Nigeria.
- c. Find out the challenges in broadcast local content programming among broadcast stations in Nigeria.
- d. Ascertain the level of cultural imperialism in the local programmes of radio

Research Questions

This work is guided by the following research questions:

- a. What are the Approaches to broadcast media regulation?
- b. What is the level of compliance to local content provision by Television and Radio stations in Nigeria?
- c. What are the effects of the non compliance to the local content provision for the broadcast media in Nigeria?
- d. What are the challenges in local content programming among broadcast stations in Nigeria?

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RESEARCH

Review of Concepts Broadcasting

Broadcasting is a creative medium, characterized by professionalism, choice and innovation, to serve the interest of the general public. Its utilization of audio and video technology makes it capable of reaching the audience simultaneously, availing mankind with the best means of information dissemination and reception. It also enables the individual to share in and contribute, to the best of his ability, to the world around him (National Broadcasting Commission, 2010, p.5).

Broadcasting shall influence society positively, setting the agenda for the social, cultural, economic, political and technological development of a nation, for the public good. By means of broadcasting, every Nigerian is expected to partake in sharing of ideas and experiences that will enrich his or her life and help him or her live in a complex, dynamic and humane society, as envisaged in Chapter two of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution) (NBC, 2010, P.5). Nigerian broadcasting shall essentially match the best in the profession anywhere in the world, yet be distinctly Nigerian, projecting the best and discouraging the worst in the society. In other words, the cardinal responsibility of broadcasting to inform, educate and entertain shall not be at the expense of national interest, unity and cohesion of Nigeria's diverse social, cultural, economic, political and religious configurations (NBC, 2010, P.5). Therefore, no broadcast shall intentionally encourage or incite to crime, lead to public disorder, be repugnant to public feeling or contain an offensive reference to any person, alive or dead, or generally, be disrespectful to human dignity (NBC, 2010). Beitung (2006, p.1) states:

With the natural backdrop of three vegetation zones and a varied colourful topography, Nigeria has an impressive historical location, traditional festivals and durbars, which provide a rich tapestry and backdrop for television and radio production. There is also a rich multi-cultural setting of about 400 indigenous cultures to fertilize creation and creativity in the area of programming.

Historically, therefore, the coming of BBC Empire service in 1932 marked the beginning of broadcasting in Nigeria. The Empire service which

utilized radio signal Re-diffusion Service, RDS, was designed to enhance economic, political and cultural relationship between Britain and its colonies. The outfit became Nigeria Broadcasting service, NBS, in 1951 (Ihechu and Okugo, 2013, p.14).

Furthermore, ordinance No. 39 of 1956 enabled the conversion of NBS to Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation NBC, in April 1, 1957. The same act provided for the external service of NBC, the Voice of Nigeria, which began operation in January 1, 1962. However, the three regions established TV stations as follows: West (WNTV: 1959); East (ENBS-TV: 1960); and North (RKTV: 1962). In 1979, all the regional radio stations came under one umbrella: Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (Betiang 2006, p.1). Prior to that time the regional TV stations were harmonized to become Nigerian Television Authority, NTA, in 1976 (Owuamalam, 2006, p.10).

All along the ownership, control and operation of broadcasting in Nigeria were preserved exclusively for the various governments – Federal, Regional, and State (Media Rights Agenda, MRA, 2001, p.7). In 1992, the Deregulation of Broadcasting Decree No.38 was promulgated by the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. The expression of that presidential ipse dixit which established the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, also created a new pattern of ownership and control as well as injected competition in the broadcast industry. Corroborating, NBC (2009, p.2) submits that “as a result of the revolution in the Nigeria broadcast industry, the number of broadcasting stations in Nigeria has, at the last count, risen to 394, from less than 30 before deregulation”.

Regulation

Bringing the concept into perspective, Harvey (1999, p.2) states: Regulation involves intervention by the state in areas of economic, social or cultural life according to whatever political norms are characteristic of that nation state. Regulations may be issued by presidential decree, by religious prescription or by legislative action within a system of representative democracy. Regulations may be administered directly by government, as it was in Nigeria before 1992. It could also be through statutory agencies that enjoy some degree of independence from government. This is exemplified by National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, of Nigeria; the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, of USA; and Independent Television Commission, ITC, of Britain.

At the basic level of broadcasting, regulation involves the issuance of permission, that is, the granting of licence to broadcasting organizations. In most countries like, Nigeria, the licences are costly to acquire by private organizations. For instance, by 2006, the lowest licence fee for private radio was 15 million Naira; as against the lowest for public stations: 10 million Naira (NBC; 2006, p.13). Moreover, broadcasting regulation is dependent on the cultural norms and also “contributes to the shaping of these norms, and can at times have a significant impact on the form and content of programmes” (Harvey; 1999, p.3), thereby affecting the economic and management structures of broadcasting. An appraisal of the philosophy and practice of broadcasting regulation would reveal its impact on the overall broadcasting activities in Nigeria.

Culture

Culture is a social inheritance that consists of ideas which were conceived long before we were born to bring about order and create a process of natural adaptation to one’s environment. It is a frame which mirrors the ‘hard-learned knowledge and experience of generations past’, which are passed on to future generations (Sowell in Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2010 p.24). Culture is an expression of who we are. It exists to bring about order within any given society, make life easier for people, as well as create a process of natural adaptation to one’s surrounding. Therefore, it is important that it is transmitted from one generation to the next through every means possible (Chioma, 2013, p.27). Kluckhohn in Daramola (2005 p.54) defines culture as “a social legacy that an individual acquires from his group”, which comprises of: values, beliefs, customs, religion, technology and the role people play in a society, language, ideas, ideals, emotional and behavioural patterns.

The Cultural Policy of Nigeria in Anyakoroma (2011 p.1), also defines culture as “the totality of the way of life evolved by the people in an attempt to meet the challenge of living in their environment, giving order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization thus distinguishing a people from their neighbors”. In essence, culture is the core of all human existence. We all adopt a culture which may be indigenous to us or otherwise, at every stage of our lives.

Cultural Imperialism

Cultural imperialism is defined as the practice of promoting and imposing a culture, usually of politically powerful nations over less potent societies. It is the cultural hegemony of those industrialized or economically influential countries, which determine general cultural values and standardize civilizations throughout the world. (Herbert Schiller, 1976)

The term is usually used in a pejorative sense, often in conjunction with a call to reject such influence. Cultural imperialism can take various forms, such as an attitude, a formal policy, military action, so long as it reinforces cultural hegemony (Johnston, 2000, p.375). The term as Tomlinson (1991, p.3) notes emerged in the 1960s and has been a focus of research since at least the 1970s. Terms such as "media imperialism", "structural imperialism", "cultural dependency and domination", "cultural synchronization", "electronic colonialism", "ideological imperialism", and "economic imperialism" have all been used to describe the same basic notion of cultural imperialism (Hamm, 2005, p.4). Various academics give various definitions of the term. American media critic Herbert Schiller wrote:

The concept of cultural imperialism today best describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system. The public media are the foremost example of operating enterprises that are used in the penetrative process. For penetration on a significant scale the media themselves must be captured by the dominating/penetrating power. This occurs largely through the commercialization of broadcasting" (Schiller, 1976.p.9-6).

Tom McPhail defined "Electronic colonialism as the dependency relationship established by the importation of communication hardware, foreign-produced software, along with engineers, technicians, and related information protocols that vicariously establish a set of foreign norms, values, and expectations which, in varying degrees, may alter the domestic cultures and socialization processes" (McPhail, 1987, p.19). Sui-Nam Lee observed that "communication imperialism can be defined as the process in

which the ownership and control over the hardware and software of mass media as well as other major forms of communication in one country are singly or together subjugated to the domination of another country with deleterious effects on the indigenous values, norms and culture" (Lee, 1988, p.74). Ogan saw "media imperialism as a process whereby the United States and Western Europe produce most of the media products, make the first profits from domestic sales, and then market the products in Third World countries at costs considerably lower than those the countries would have to bear to produce similar products at home" (Ogan, 1988, p.94).

Downing and Sreberny-Mohammadi state: "Imperialism is the conquest and control of one country by a more powerful one. Cultural imperialism signifies the dimensions of the process that go beyond economic exploitation or military force. In the history of colonialism, (i.e., the form of imperialism in which the government of the colony is run directly by foreigners), the educational and media systems of many Third World countries have been set up as replicas of those in Britain, France, or the United States and carry their values. Western advertising has made further inroads, as have architectural and fashion styles. Subtly but powerfully, the message has often been insinuated that Western cultures are superior to the cultures of the Third World" (Downing and Ali Mohammadi, 1995, p.482). Needless to say, all these authors agree that cultural imperialism promotes the interests of certain circles within the imperial powers, often to the detriment of the target societies.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored by the theory of cultural imperialism and supported by the cultivation theory.

Cultural Imperialism

Cultural Imperialism Theory addresses western dominance of the media of developing countries. In 1973, Herb Schiller proposed the initial use of the term 'cultural imperialism' in a bid to effectively describe how multinational corporations, especially the media of developed countries dominate developing countries in his work on "Communication and Cultural Domination" (Spring 2000 Theory Workbook in Heman and Atsushi, 2008). The theory describes the nature of the media as such that promotes a one-way; top-down transmission system from a dominant country to a dominated country. According to Wilson in Wilson (2010

p.106), “cultural imperialism is the practice of promoting, distinguishing, separating, or artificially injecting the culture of one society into another...” It refers to either a “forced acculturation of a subject population” or the voluntary embrace of a foreign culture by individuals of their volition.

Over the years, the concept of cultural imperialism has been revisited by various scholars. According to Fleming (2004), the dominance of the media by foreign culture can lead to a process of “cultural mix” – a blend of both local and foreign culture, resulting from consistent exposure to foreign culture. This could lead to the development of a homogenous society whereby the weaker culture conforms to the dominant cultural ideas that are likely to undermine indigenous culture.

Cultural imperialism has placed developing countries (such as Nigeria) in a position of risk as foreign (western) contents constitute cultural frames of reference to viewers who begin to nurse a degrading notion of their indigenous culture. Western media has painted Africa more in the light of stereotypical and negative narrative than in positive light most time, over-exaggerative in their reportage of Africa’s economic, religious and social landscapes. (Nathaniel and Iwuchukwu, 2023: p.493). There is also the issue of what Kinzt (2007) refer to as a deliberate design of local content to reflect “western formula models” through a hybridization of indigenous values and foreign values. Often times, there is a contradiction in the mix of these cultural values, which contradicts the indigenous culture of the viewers.

Cultivation Theory

As cited in Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008:103), Cultivation theory was propounded by George Gabner, L. Gross, M. Morgan, and N. Singorielli in 1976. The theory is based on the assumption that:

- a. Cultivation analysis basically means that heavy television viewers will cultivate the perception of reality portrayed by the television.
- b. People predict their judgments about their actions in the world on the cultivated reality provided by television.
- c. Television major cultural function is to stabilise social patterns; it is a medium of socialisation and acculturation.

Cultivation theory suggests that communication, especially television, cultivates certain beliefs about reality that are held in common by mass communication consumers.

REVIEW OF RELATED WORKS

Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programmes on Indigenous Women's Economic Empowerment in Nigeria: Evidence from Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Nua J. Deedam and Anthony O. Onoja in 2015 conducted a study titled "Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programmes on Indigenous Women's Economic Empowerment in Nigeria: Evidence from Port Harcourt Metropolis". The study was designed to assess the impact of participation of Port Harcourt indigenous women in poverty eradication programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study used a questionnaire to elicit responses from 385 indigenous women who were randomly selected through a multi-stage technique from the study area. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were used to analyze the data collected. Results showed that majority (58.3%) of the women were members of a cooperative society, 63.5% were members of a community based organization (CBO), while 60.9% were members of "Esusu" (rotatory credit schemes). The result further showed that 66.3% of the women had engaged in jobs aimed at poverty alleviation. Only 6.0% identified that they were not members of any poverty alleviation programmes (PAP) by government. It was found that after joining the PAP, 75.5% of them experienced an increase in income of 36.6 per cent. The hypothesis test indicated that statistically significant differences existed in the income of the women from various sources of the economic undertakings after joining poverty alleviation programmes. It was therefore recommended that more programmes designed at alleviating poverty in Rivers State should target indigenous women. In addition to this, the study also recommended the establishment of entrepreneurship capacity-building programmes to enable the women to bring out their optimal input while participating in the poverty eradication programmes.

Community Radio as a Tool for Development: A Case Study of Community Radio Stations in Malawi.

In 2015, Peter Mhagama carried out a study titled "Community Radio as a Tool for Development: A Case Study of Community Radio Stations in Malawi". The study investigated community radio as a tool for development drawing on case studies of Nkhotakota and Mzimba

community radio stations in Malawi. The study employed communication for development and ‘another’ development theories to help understand the role of community radio in development. The research aims were firstly, to investigate the extent and ways in which community radio is used as a tool for development through audience participation; and secondly to examine the extent to which communication for development in community radio in Malawi takes the form of participatory communication. Using the case study approach, the study specifically examined the functions of participation in development through community radio; whether community radio can encourage development through enhancing capabilities and participation even when people do not own and manage the stations; how radio listening Clubs (RLCs) help to expand people’s capabilities; and how the programming of community radio in Malawi is influenced by the agendas of development agencies. The findings showed that community radio in Malawi firstly, affords ordinary people opportunities to participate in the media and in development projects and, secondly informs people about development initiatives from development agencies. Although these functions overlap, the study found out that community radio stations in Malawi concentrate more on the latter. The programming of the stations is influenced by the agenda of development agents who sponsor programmes thereby reducing opportunities for participation. However, it was recommended that although people’s participation in the media is low or reduced, there are other ways in which through the media, people can benefit, enhance their capabilities and through which development agencies can reach their goals. The study argued that the radio stations fit well with an approach to development related to building capabilities because they sometimes give people resources to enhance their capabilities and sometimes act as partners with development agencies and government, facilitating a variety of development goals. The study concluded that community radio in Malawi enables capabilities although very rarely through fully-fledged participation.

Local Content Programming on Radio and Television.

The cultural objectives of broadcasting shall encompass various aspects of community life including aesthetics, religion, ethics, philosophy, language, history and the arts. Therefore, according to NBC (2010), broadcasting shall:

- a. provide, through programming, a service essential to the maintenance and enhancement of national identity and cultural sovereignty;
- b. serve to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabrics of Nigeria;
- c. seek, identify, preserve and promote Nigeria's diverse cultures;
- d. select critically, the positive aspects of foreign cultures for the purpose of enriching the Nigerian culture;
- e. develop and promote the application of indigenous aesthetic values;
- f. promote the development of a high level of intellectual and artistic creativity; and
- g. foster generally acceptable moral, ennobling and spiritual values.

Local content regulation is essentially to;

- a. promote and sustain Nigeria's diverse cultures, mores, folklores and community life;
- b. provide diversity in types of programming content for the widest audience through the limitless variety in the cultural landscape of Nigeria;
- c. promote Nigerian content and encourage the production and projection of Nigerian life within and outside its borders; in essence, strive to attain 100% local content; and
- d. establish a dynamic, creative and economically vibrant Nigerian broadcast production industry (NBC, 2010).

To qualify as local content, a production shall satisfy any of the following:

- a. Made by authors, producers and workers who are Nigerians and residing in Nigeria; or
- b. produced under the creative control of Nigerians; or
- c. the production is supervised and actually controlled by one or more producers established in Nigeria; or
- d. the contribution in a co-production is not controlled by one or more producers based outside Nigeria; or
- e. the production originating from any other country made exclusively by Nigerians or in co-production with non-Nigerians established in that country (NBC, 2010).

According to NBC (2009, p. 3) “Every licence is required to adhere to a minimum of 60% local broadcast content for open television and 80% local broadcast content for radio. The cable/satellite retransmission stations are mandated to reflect a minimum of 20%”. In addition to this, the standard for Nigeria local content specifies that programmes and advertisement for family belt shall be devoid of sex or overt sexual behaviour, nudity, violence, bloodletting, smoking, alcohol, drug abuse, denigration of womanhood, offensive, lewd or vulgar language, expression and presentation, etc. The same provision spelt out family belt to be between the hours of 7pm and 10pm daily (a period when the family as a unit is presumed to be together to watch television).

Level of Compliance to Local Content programming by Broadcast stations in Nigeria

Ihechu and Okugo (2013) observed that the local content provision on content is welcome but the application is in doubt. This is largely blamed for lack of monitoring and control of the broadcast stations by the NBC. Ihechu and Okugo (2013) affirmed that NBC seems to focus on sanctioning the private stations in Nigeria but neglects the public stations and the influx of foreign free-to-air channels. Most of the channels do not cost the viewer any subscription to get exposed to. For instance, there is a provision against religious broadcasting in the broadcasting code but the free-to-air channels churn out religious programmes that tend to represent cultic portrayals. Furthermore, the NBC either by commission or omission relegated its duties by keeping silent over Big Brother Nigeria despite the numerous outcries (Ihechu and Okugo, 2013). Egbunike (2008, p.1) states that “the constant manner in which these inmates are watched is reminiscent of the way children go to watch caged animals in the zoo.” Other concerns had made sinister remarks: Abati (2007) says Big Brother Nigeria involved pornography and money. Uzo (2008) submits that Nigerians do not want Big Brother III. Even the House of Representatives condemned the show.

In spite of these, the NBC did not do anything immediately and the show bombarded TV screens for three years. NBC kept silent on a matter that bothered on cultural integrity that one would wonder where the conscience of the commission lies. It will not be hard to deduct that the entire episode were shadowed under a political enclave – showing that the application of some regulatory provision is selective (Ihucho and Okugo, 2013). Or, it

could be as Egbunike (2008, p.2) puts it “Perhaps they are not yet aware of the broadcast, though I rather doubt that.”

Again most of the stations derail in presentation that one will readily find out that most presentations are not well edited. But they are not worried because the NBC’s monitoring strategy is not organized, neither is it comprehensive. This is partly due to the absence of monitoring stations. The commission depends on the complaints of individuals and organizations for it to act.

However, the danger of non compliance to local content programming is the infiltration and intrusion of foreign programmes into our broadcast stations, thereby posing danger of cultural imperialism to our society.

The Broadcast Media and Cultural Imperialism in Nigeria

The major effect of none adhering to local content provision by broadcast media in Nigeria is cultural imperialism. Madhudeep and Meenakshi (2014, p.86) observed that Western civilization produces the majority of the media. The rest of the world purchases those productions because it is cheaper for them to do so rather than produce their own. Therefore, third world countries (Nigeria inclusive) are watching media filled with the western world’s way of living, believing and thinking. People of third world cultures then start to want and do the same things in their countries and destroy their own culture. Thomas Guback argued (1984), the powerful U.S communication industry, including films and television as well as news, exerts influence, sometimes quite considerable, over the cultural life of other nations. These scholars defined the international exchange of television programs and motion pictures as one way flow from the prosperous nations of the west to the countries of the third world or from U.S. to rest of the world. As the larger media corporations begin to take over, smaller media companies are losing their identity.

According to Schiller cited in Madhudeep and meenakshi (2014, p.86), the system of colonization has been replaced by domination of certain power centers, their organizations and control over the modern world system. Together with Herbert Schiller there were few researchers who took up the issue of the international news flow in various. Schiller’s early work speaks about dependency model, a Marxist approach to analyze the international flow and imbalance emanating from it. His dependency theories stated that

imperial powers of the West would like to have economic centers in their own country, and control all the economic activities in the periphery through the modern instruments of mass communication. Fejas (1981) said that “media imperialism shall be used in a broader and general manner to describe the process by which modern communication media have operated to create, maintain and expand system of domination and dependency on world scale”. The terms dominations and dependency are directly drawn from the theoretical interventions of neo-Marxists who sought to think globally and critically. The dependency model vis-à-vis the relationship between developed and developing countries, and developmental goals of developing nations: ‘dependency model’s major conclusion is that the third world countries occupy a subordinate position in the international economic and political which are seen as being structured primarily according to the needs of the developed countries. Oliveira (1986) conducted a survey in the Central American nation of Belize. People in Northern Belize, where television production is non-existent, are able to watch television shows produced in the United States and Mexico. From his interviews regarding television viewing habits (predominantly Mexican or American shows), and product preferences, he found that people who watched more US shows preferred more of US products and less of those produced in Central America. On the other hand, people who watched more Mexican shows preferred Central American products over those produced in the United States. The study revolves around and the best example of the dependency model of communication (Madhudeep and Meenakshi, 2014, p.86).

According to UNSECO, the 75% programs shown in the third world countries are imported. Another report by International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA) has emphasized the centralizing potential of modern communication technology in that it not only gives tremendous power to those who control it but also empowers them to influence and shape people’s images of their fellowmen and women and of the world around them. It has given the access to knowledge towards cultivation of and fulfillment to their aspiration to a better life. The first and most influential interpretation of an event tend to determine our opinion forming. Agence France Press, Associated Press and Reuters, three major world news agencies, have for reasons of resources, organization and distribution “ a quasi-monopoly in providing prime definitions of breaking news in the world periphery” (Ginneken 1998).

In electronic media CNN is carrying on the job, it has “power to mould the international public opinion. Its version of world events is likely to define the worldwide of millions of viewers around the globe” (Thuss, 2000). Sado, (2007) attests that television has become a potent weapon of cultural colonialism in Africa as seen in locally produced movies, which often times project Western influence on African societies to the detriment of indigenous cultural expressions. There is also the issue of what Kinzt (2007) refer to as a deliberate design of local content to reflect “western formula models” through a hybridization of indigenous values and foreign values. Often times, there is a contradiction in the mix of these cultural values, which contradicts Nigerian culture. Programmes such as Big Brother Africa, where young people are expected to live together in a house for three months and often times the viewing audience can see their nudity, is grossly offensive in Nigerian culture.

The broadcast of local content through the television media, serves as a re-enforcement of the mother tongue especially for the youth. There is a shift in the attitude and use of the mother tongue by the younger generation as compared to the older generation who are proficient in communicating in their mother tongue, (Ihemere (2006) in Chioma (2011). Studies have shown that to a large extent, these cultural objectives are not adequately reflected through local content.

Adegoju (2011 p.1), in his study on “Strengthening African Language Pedagogy via the NTA”, explored the potential of the NTA as a tool for enhancing mother tongue literacy in Nigeria. He states that “the teaching of local languages by TV, incorporating both formal and informal education engenders comprehensive language teaching essential for revitalizing indigenous languages”. Likewise, Obono and Madu (2010, p.90), in a content analysis of the programme content of three major television stations in Nigeria; Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), African Independent Television (AIT) and Silverbird Television (STV) concludes that “more indigenous content to be integrated into the media...the media should not therefore be a channel of cultural alienation but enhancers of traditional values”. Therefore the communication policy of Nigeria should not only specific the percentage of local content but also stipulate the percentage of the local content which should promote cultural development. For one, attaining cultural development in Nigeria through television broadcasting seems to be a far-fetched task. The focus of television content (especially

on privately owned stations) today is clearly to broadcast programmes that will attract the young viewers and advertisers. As a result, stations source for highly entertaining programmes (mostly foreign) to meet this aim.

There is also the issue of what Kinzt (2007) refer to as a deliberate design of local content to reflect “western formula models” through a hybridization of indigenous values and foreign values. Often times, there is a contradiction in the mix of these cultural values, which contradicts Nigerian culture. Programmes such as Big Brother Africa, where young people are expected to live together in a house for three months and often times the viewing audience can see their nudity, is grossly offensive in Nigerian indigenous culture.

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.

Reasons for Cultural Imperialism

There are a lot of reasons for cultural imperialism in broadcast media in Nigeria. The first fact is finance. The economy of the country is not in a good shape due to mismanagement and outright corruption. The financial crunch resulting from the bad economy acts like an incubus on television especially with regard to such programmes that involve huge financial stakes. Mid January, 2006, ten (10) broadcasting organizations (including some television stations) were closed down by the NBC for failure to fulfill their financial obligations to the commission, to enable the renewal of their broadcast licenses (Osakue and Elo, 2010). According to Silas Yisa (then

Director General of the Commission) “after a mutually agreed decision in which the affected broadcasters were to pay half of the amount owed, most of them still refused to pay their debt, some as old as the day the stations commenced operations” (personal communication, January 19, 2006, cited in Osakue and Elo, 2010).

In a situation like this, the broadcast media may find it impossible to do their own programmes. They make do with foreign programmes which are cheaper to obtain. They may also find it difficult, if not impossible to send correspondents to places to get news. It is no surprise then that the likes of CNN and BBC will continue to be the imperial sources of news for Nigerian television organizations. The fact of the paucity of funds to make programmes was acknowledged by Ben Murray – Bruce (then Director General of the NTA and now Chairman Silverbird TV) at the South African organized Sithengi Film and Broadcast Festival in 2000. In a remark to the Nigerian delegation to the festival, he said: But more importantly, let us see how we can work together to produce a full feature film, how we can produce programmes. You don’t have any problem with scripts and artistes. Your problems are in funding and equipment (Cited in Aihe, 2000). This factor, noted in 2000, is still a significant factor till date.

Another factor mentioned by Murray – Bruce is equipment. Virtually all foreign stations of note have adopted satellite broadcasting. Among the organizations (NTA, HiTv and AIT) involved in satellite broadcasting in Nigeria, AIT remains the most vibrant. Locally, signals from most stations cannot be received more than fifty kilometres from their transmitters. So they cannot even send correspondents to far places to gather news. And when they do, such news cannot be broadcast instantly. To obviate the problem of broadcasting stale news, resort has to be made to foreign stations whose news items are relayed without editing.

The above factor is closely connected with the quality of programmes which is far from the standards of the ones from foreign stations. The lack of funds compels stations to rely on obsolete equipment which may not enhance the production of good programmes capable of sustaining viewers’ attention. So, cheap programmes are purchased from foreign stations to fill their air time and most viewers, especially the urban dwellers rue this and respond by acquiring DSTV equipment to watch quality programmes. For example, the African Cup of Nations (Football Championship) hosted by

Ghana in 2008 was seen by DSTV subscribers on Super Sports rather than any of the local stations in Nigeria. And as the financial crunch continues to restrict broadcasting to only urban areas, it makes it worthwhile for those in the rural areas who can afford the DSTV to acquire it for commercial use. It is now a common feature for advertising hoardings to be placed at strategic places advertising upcoming premier league matches to be viewed for a fee. This is a new dimension that may eventually render Nigerian local stations irrelevant, if not redressed. The situation equally leads to indolence on the part of broadcasters who now hide under the façade of lack of funds to remain uncreative. Many of the stations lack the funds to train staff. So, the professionals become abjectly ignorant of current trends or latest equipment as a result. Training amounts to a few in-house workshops and seminars which are not adequate for the onerous job they perform.

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.

A Chat with Media Experts

Nten Ekpang of Television Nigeria Abuja argue that Cultural Imperialism underestimates the free will, choice, and agency of the target audience. It does not acknowledge a person's ability to process information and

interpret that information differently based on their individual background and personal frame of reference. Thus, it also assumes that culture is static and non-fluid, though cultural identity is arguably multidimensional and highly internalised. It also disregards the idea of cultural resistance, where culture can be used to challenge oppressive systems and power holders (Western culture in this case). He further stressed out that in the late 20th century, CNN, and other Western media outlets, dominated the news narrative and only reflected Western views on world events. As a consequence, news outlets around the world were created, like Al Jazeera, which offered a different perspective from the Western one, and gave a voice to previously voiceless cultures. This is called the Al Jazeera Effect, and one could argue that this proves the agency and cultural resistance of those typically subjected to Cultural Imperialism.

In the same vein, Effiong Ekpeyong of the Cross River Broadcasting Corporation (CRBC), pointed out instances where audience were underestimated in the US foreign policy of promoting gay rights globally. The US government has spent over \$350 million since 2012 on supporting gay rights in sub-Saharan Africa, but has been less than successful. He argue that this is Cultural Imperialism as the US government attempts to export their cultural values to countries with very different values and beliefs. In his view, Obama ignored advice of not pushing a ‘gay agenda’ in July 2015, angering Kenyan leaders, who told him that gay rights were a ‘non-issue’ in Kenya. Many also regard the passage of strict anti-gay laws in Nigeria in 2014 as a reaction to US-American pressure on Nigeria to embrace gay rights. This proves that Cultural Imperialism can have negative effects on global communication and relations between countries, as well as that there is free will and cultural resistance in countries where Cultural Imperialism is attempted. The Nigerian people and government were not convinced by the US-American values and therefore reacted strongly against them.

CONCLUSION

The broadcast media are very powerful because they exert a lot of influence on their users. This makes them to perform different functions in the society. One of the functions the broadcast media engage in performing is cultural promotion. This key role of the broadcast media is as a result of the value attach to culture in the society. The NBC in recognition of the importance of culture has established an act to regulate the content of the

broadcast media which is local content provision. The local content provision is aimed at controlling the content of the broadcast media to ensure that it is not dominated with the foreign culture.

However, despite the provision, the issue of cultural intrusion in broadcast stations in Nigeria is still the order of the day; culminating in culture imperialism. One cannot argue the fact that the broadcast media in Nigeria need a kind of re-orientation or re-direction in their activities for the sustenance of our culture. They should play the role of facilitating public debate, decision-making, and reaching public consensus on vital issues of public interest. They should be devoid of undue influence of government and mere agents of imported culture. Cultural redirection, information flow, education, cultural development, political and social mobilization are all numerous uses the media could be put to.

RECOMMENDATION

In strengthening the independence and self-reliance of nation, government should recognize that all individuals and people collectively have an inalienable right to a better life which however conceived, must ensure a social minimum and to ensure total compliance of local content into our television and radio programmes in Nigeria.

Since communication is interwoven with every aspect of life, the future of mass media must be considered of utmost importance in overall social, cultural, moral, economic goals of the nation. In ensuring a bright future for our cultural heritage, therefore, government should take into cognizance the regulation of local content programmes in radio and television and provide the necessary funding for media experts to produce programmes that promote our culture.

We need a revolutionary Nigeria mass media which can present and carry forward revolutionary purpose of promoting our heritage. Government should find out the challenges that our broadcast local content programmes are facing with a view to finding a lasting solution to it.

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