

**INFLUENCE OF GLOBAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY ON THE SOCIAL-POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTS OF NATIONAL MEDIA SYSTEMS**

Kenneth Asor Tsebee
Department of Mass Communication
Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State.
Kenaston4real@gmail.com

and

Akpobo Odorume
Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu, Ile-Ife, Osun State
kpoboghene@gmail.com

Introduction

Global media technology has created greater uncertainty in what has been relatively stable global oligopolistic media, computer and telecommunication markets. Through media convergence the global media system is thought of as part of a converging global communication system. The importance of this development for late global capitalism can hardly be exaggerated. Since the early 1980s there has been a dramatic restructuring of national media industries, along the emergence of a genuinely global commercial media market. According to Herman and McChesney (1997), the newly developing global media system is dominated by three or four dozen large Transnational Corporations (TNCs), with fewer than ten mostly US-based media conglomerates towering over the global market. In addition to concentration of media power, the major feature of the global media order is its thoroughgoing commercialization and an associated market broadcasting and the applicability of public service standards. Such a concentration of global media power in organizations dependent on advertiser support and responsible primarily to shareholders is a clear and present danger to citizens participation in public affairs, understanding of public issues and thus to the effective working of democracy.

Historical Overview of the Rise of Global Media System

Global media market only began in earnest in the late 1980s and did not reach its full potential until the 1990s, the roots of global media system can be traced back decades, even centuries. Thus, the media, global or otherwise, can only be understood in a political, social, economic context with a view to substantiating the relationship of the media to capitalism. Global media came into existence long after the emergence of local and national media. In Western Europe, the first great mass medium, newspapers that dominated through the nineteenth century required several centuries of social, economic and political change following the invention of the printing press to find a hospitable climate. The rise of the press and literacy, and the accompanying emergence of journalism, were integral parts of the democratic evolution and the modern notion of informed self government. The social and political power associated with control of the media have been recognized from the very dawn of publishing; in all societies the questions of who owns and controls the media and for what purposes, have been political issues.

Although the media were entirely local and national phenomena until the twentieth century, modern capitalism has always extended across national boundaries. The outward drive of the new commercial capitalism of the fifteenth century through eighteenth was unrelenting. The movement of peoples (which included massive slave trade), goods and precious metals across the borders in this era was great and had huge consequences. The entire world was brought in the market system, and in the process European traders, ship owners, inventors and pirates generated much of the surplus that laid the foundation for the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. However, the surplus was obtained to a significant degree by the “plundering of the defenceless natives” that brought bankruptcy upon the greater part of the people under European control.

Global media developed haltingly in the nineteenth century. According to Herman and McChesney (1997), newspapers and periodicals were written almost exclusively for domestic audiences, which combined with language problems to limit their potential for export. Infact, to this day, newspapers remain the global media system. The growth and expansion of capitalism encouraged the growth of new transportation and communication technologies to expedite commercial interaction. The coming of the telegraph and underwater cables in the mid-nineteenth century marked the dawning of the telecommunication age: for the first time information could reliably travel faster than people. Increasingly, as global trade grew in importance, there was great commercial news via the wires. Hence, the wire-based international news agencies were the most significant of the global media. The French Havas, German Wolf and British Reuters were commercial news agencies established in the nineteenth century as domestic enterprises, but with particular interest in foreign news. They produced the news and then sold it to newspaper publishers.

From the beginning, global news services have been oriented to the needs and interests of the wealthy nations which provide their revenues. These news agencies were in effect the global media until well into the twentieth century and even after the dawn of broadcasting their importance for global journalism was unsurpassed. Indeed, it was their near monopoly control over international news that stimulated much of the resistance of the existing global media regime by the Third World nations in the 1970s.

The Global Media in the Late 1990s

In the 1990s, while media systems are still primarily national and local, the media that operate across borders continue to strengthen and have a steadily greater impact on indigenous systems. The dominant players treat the media markets as a single global market with local subdivisions. The rapidity of their global expansion is explained in part as equally rapid reduction or elimination of many of the traditional, institutional and legal barriers to cross border transactions. They have also been facilitated by technological changes such as the growth of satellite broadcasting, video-cassette, recorders, fibre, optic and phone systems.

Global Media and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Technology has permeated all aspects of human activities, just as the Medieval period was dominated by religion, the contemporary era is technology driven (Senam, Ntiense and Okorie, 2012). Technologies are conduits through which information more often than is relayed from the production to the reception axis. According to Ohiagu (2013), information and communication technologies are those scientific devices, inventions and innovations through which information and communication messages are transmitted.

The traditional mass media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines), satellites communication, cable television broadcasting and desktop computers are now regarded as older versions of information and communication technologies. The list of new communication technologies is never ending: mobile phones in their various forms (smart phones, blackberry phones, android phones and all manners of iphones) laptops, notebooks, pamphlets, iPad, iPod and so on. These new communication technologies are thus complementing the traditional mass media. For instance, in Broadcasting such new technologies have been found to enhance the performance of the Radio and Television. Contributing in the same vein Nwabueze (2012) says: the term ICTs is used to refer to the (convergence) of audio-visual and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system.

Also, Nwodu (2002) cited in Nwabueze (2012) explains further that: "ICTs are diverse in nature." The concept is a generic term for a number of communication hardwares and social values across the globe. ICTs span through two broad categories which are telecommunications and computer communications.

The marriage of Telecommunication and computers as Gandy (1989, p. 54) observes "is the material force of consistent technology of communication". The import of the foregoing is that ICTs enhance sourcing, collection, processing, documentation, retrieval and accurate dissemination of news, data and lots of useful information between and among global citizens. The basis for ICTs is electromagnetism which is the interface between computers and telecommunications. The introduction of ICT has ushered in greater speed, encouraged to a large extent, interaction and participatory communication among people of the world (Nwodu, 2006). There is no gainsaying the fact that, the global media have been influenced by the resources of ICTs. Some of the consequences are positive, while some are negative. Aziegbu (2005) in Omega (2014), states that "of all the technical changes that have influenced our lives in recent years, it is those in information technology which have the greatest impact. This will continue to be, until the first half."

According to Thussu (2000), communication technologies were crucial in the establishment of European domination of the world during the era of colonial empire. The new technologies of the nineteenth century "shared traditional trade, technology and political

relationships and in their place they laid the foundation for a new global civilization based on Western Technology” (Headrick, 1981). If trains and ships facilitated the movement of manufactured products from one part of the world to another, fibreoptics, satellites and the internet can trade information instantly and across the globe. From telegraph and telephone, from radio to television, from computer and direct dial telephony and DBS to the internet, international communication has been greatly affected by technological innovation.

Thussu (2000) says technological developments, combined with liberalization in trade and telecommunications, have acted as catalysts for e-commerce. This has been made possible as a result of the opening up of global markets in telecommunication services and information technology products that are building blocks for electronic commerce.

Lessons to be Learnt from Technology use in Countries of the Northby Countries of the World South

Although ICTs are becoming more accessible, it is important to note that the deployment of ICTs is widely successful in countries of the North, it is still far more common place in the countries of the South. A few examples will suffice, in most countries of the North Digital technology has successfully being used in broadcasting whereas in countries of the south. This is still an emerging issue. In Mexico, Telesecundaria Project in which began in 1965 as a closed circuit pilot project, today delivers classes designed from 12,000 rural communities enrolling more than 800,000 students. This cannot be said of the countries of the south. Apart from that, in most countries of the North policy makers and educators have begun integrating technology into schools with the primary aim of improving teaching and learning in different subjects and also with the aim of increasing motivation for both students and teachers. In the United States according to UNESCO (1999), the ratio of students per computer has dropped from 63:1 to 6:1 from 1985 to 1997 while the number of schools with internet access has grown from 35% in 1994 to 72 in 1997. In Europe, more than 80% of schools in Slovenia have access to the internet. 93% of secondary schools and 80% of primary schools which is similar to the percentages of developed countries. In the United Kingdom, the pupil to computer ratio is 16:1 in schools while 43% of the schools in the United Kingdom are connected to the internet. In Germany, the *Schulenans Net* = initiative begun in 1996, will connect 10,000 schools to the internet by 1999. In the area of formal and non-formal education too countries of the North are increasingly being equipped with ICT and connected to the internet. At present, about 20% of libraries in the United Kingdom are connected to the internet. In the United States, 73% of the nation’s public libraries offer basic internet access to the public. From the few examples above, it is not in doubt that much is still expected of the countries of the south in the area of ICT deployment for development. This is because most of their primary, secondary and tertiary institutions do not have internet access not to talk of the public libraries.

Global Media, ICTs and Economic Impact on National Media Systems

According to Sambe (2005), a constant flow of information is vital to economic life. Apart from being an economic force in itself, the news media purvey information necessary for the economic well-being of society. For example, news of the stock exchange market is regularly purveyed by the media. Information is purveyed in minutes all over the world, thus, enabling global buying and selling to easily take place. The role of advertising in buying and selling appears to have reached its zenith with the advancement in mass media technology.

Information and Communication Technologies have both positive and negative impacts on the global media: with the ICT facilities the flow of information is done without restriction or barrier. For instance, according to Nwabueze and Nwabueze (2010), internet advertising or e-advertising is an ICT driver activity which could enhance entrepreneurship especially in the area of globalization. Internet advertising could promote the products of local manufacturer in Nigeria beyond the shores of the nation. This is why Esuh (2006) observes that web advertising needed to bring the market to homes are gradually taking over from traditional markets.

Ogbuoshi (2003) says that internet concentrate on providing valuable information and services as part of efforts to sell products and services. With the internet entrepreneurs or people wishing to venture into new businesses can receive/retrieve electronic data on new product development, take orders and acquire knowledge on how to expand their business horizons. Such practices of electronic business e-buying and selling, e-public relations and others are common in the developed world where there is high level of internet awareness and computer literacy. This trend is growing in the developing nations. The internet provides an avenue for entrepreneurship education and development.

The Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) technology could play a vital role in enhancing entrepreneurship in the global arena. Text messages could be used to inspire people into new business even at the grass root level.

Teleconferencing technology is another facility that could be used to enhance economic activities. With the aid of teleconferencing technology, people in distant places could engage in audio-visual discussions despite geographical barriers. Through such means, successful businessmen in developed societies could engage in interactions with businessmen in developing nations on emerging trends in specific business areas or how to succeed in certain businesses. Corroborating the above view, Omega (2004) states that “Through e-commerce for instance, a businessman in Nigeria today can buy or sell goods and services to anybody in any part of the world through the internet without trade barrier. The internet thus links producers and customers and makes e-commerce possible.”

ICTs also encourage technological exchange between Nigeria and other advanced nations. A particular product can be videoed abroad and the cassettes sent to the Nigerian entrepreneur who studies the whole process and might start operation without overseas tours.

But ICTs also have negative impacts on the global media. Economically, it has created a gap between the rich and the poor in the world. The rate of unemployment is so high because jobs performed by the people manually are done electronically by computers, internet, e-mail, phones and so on.

There is also the problem of disparity or in-equality between the communication technology-haves and have-nots. Digital divide according to Ohiagu (2013) is also called technology gab between those who have access to information. The difference exists between individuals as well as countries. Some nations have better and sophisticated communication technologies and networks just as some persons have greater opportunities to have access to modern information technologies. Some an imaginary and yet “conspicuous” gulf is believed to exist between the technologically haves and have-nots.

There is also the problem of media commercialization which Mcquail (1994) describes as a “process by which media structures and contents come to reflect the profit goals of media industries and are governed by market considerations”.

Another problem is that of interdependence of one nation on another. The under-developed nations now depend on the developed ones for the importation of computers, handsets

and others for survival. In Nigeria, Omego (2014) says the mobile phones used by the people are not manufactured in the country, but are imported from more technologically nations such as America.

In e-commerce, one of the problems encountered is that one's orders may not be exactly what is ordered. There might be difference in shape, colour variation and texture. This is because the buyer does not have the opportunity of seeing the product he or she is buying physically except a picture of the product.

The banks and the customers involved in on-line shopping run financial risks because the customer's account can be used by another person since it is no longer private and the bank may in some cases be made to pay to their own disadvantage since they make personal payments abroad on behalf of their customers.

Global Media, ICTs and Political Impact on National Media Systems

Nwabueze and Nwabueze (2012) state that in a changing world, it is impossible to advance democratic change and development with old tools. Today's leaders need to understand the role of changing communication technology for politics and society. This is the use of ICTs in the field of governance and political development to increase citizens' participation in the political process. This is the underlying idea behind the concept of "teledemocracy" which Becker (2009) in Nwabueze and Ezebuenyi (2012) describes as "democratically aided, rapid two-way political communication". Teledemocracy simply means the application of modern hardware and software in the overall democratic process with a view to bringing about faster, a reaching, easily accessible and more accurate reports of election results.

Ikem (2011) states that, whereas the dependence on the traditional media for political campaigns will certainly be noticeable and cannot be completely discarded, modern trends of the new media seem to be eroding the gains of the traditional media. Barack Obama's Presidential Campaigns in the US has changed the rules of the political communication and since then electoral campaigns have been more about social networking, using the existing and emerging social media platforms than the traditional media approach which emphasized more of one-way communication with its short coming to generate feedback. Ikem further argues that:

the place of social media to rally political support is no longer in doubt. To advance the conversation and mobilize political support, social media have become a crucial political tool for campaign planners. Facebook, Twitter and other social networks reinforce political messages and build online and offline support that will help drive interesting debates about any politician and political party.

The April, 2011 general elections in Nigeria were characterized by an appreciable use of the new media (ICTs) especially in mobile-short message service (SMS) and face book social medium for political advertising and election campaigns. After a study of the face book campaigns in 2011 presidential election in Nigeria, Hamilton and Daramola (2011) found that, President Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party had the highest number of face book subscribers, followed by Nuhu Ribadu of Action Congress of Nigeria (CAN), Mohammed Buhari of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and Ibrahim Shekarau of All Nigeria's People Party (ANPP).

Global Media, ICTs and Social Impact on National Media Systems

Omego (2014) asserts that computers, internet, fax, photocopiers, cameras, radio, television, satellite and others have both positive and negative social influence on the society. One great advantage is that one can learn a number of new things through them. They encourage interactions among the global community.

Nigerians can interact with those within and outside the country through e-mails, other internet facilities, telephone and so on. They can learn about world problems and diseases, such as AIDS, Bird flu and others through the internet, television etc.

Through the television or internet, the global cultures are also spread and preserved. For instance, people all over the world can learn about Nigerian people and culture without coming down to Nigeria. Most Nigerian artistes especially those of the home video-Nollywood, today are very popular in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada etc and many of these countries have given them awards.

In the educational sphere, ICTs have increased the rate of learning and information dissemination at a high speed. As Okwudishu and Okwudishu (2005) in Omego (2014) observe “Educational systems all over the world are under increasing pressure and communication technology to teach students the knowledge and skills they need in the 21st Century”.

Nigerian students and global scholars alike make extensive use of the internet to obtain useful information. It is now possible to undertake extensive literature searches that have greatly improved access to global information. Information regarding what books are published in specific areas, what journals are available, the conferences being organized, vacancies for job etc can be got from the internet. Students in the tertiary institutions now pay their fees on-line, they also register their courses on-line. Educational issues are discussed on television and radio. Nigerians are taking advantage of this to learn. The Open University and Distant Learning introduced recently in Nigeria are ready tapping on the resources of information and communication technologies.

Computers and the internet have made possible the documentations of Nigerian languages. In Nigeria for instance, many of the languages are endangered. But by utilizing the resources of the ICTs, we can now document Nigerian languages. Lexicographical work on some Nigerian languages can also be done on-line. Some dictionaries have already been stored in the computer and used by learners. According to Jibril (2005) in Omego (2014) “Dictionaries are also available on-line through the linguistic list website. One of these is the Dictionaries BilingueFrancais-Anglais, a bilingual French-English dictionary”. The media practitioners across the globe also exploit the resources of ICTs. The internet and computers have created new ways of accessing, storing, editing, retrieving and exchanging information. Through the use of the internet, the process of news gathering becomes faster, cheaper and easier. With the internet the mass communicator has the world of information at his feet. He can gain access to the name, e-mail address of other journalists, publishers or media organizations. News production is thus, faster using information and communication technologies. Every Newspaper or magazine publisher is now hooked to the internet and is expected to post his production on the internet. This reduces the cost of transportation and risk involved in transporting materials to different destinations.

ICTs also have some negative effects on global media environment. More crimes and fraud are committed today and these are facilitated by the use of mobile phones and other

electronic gadgets. Many banks have been robbed and businessmen are duped by criminals in the world with the aid of fax machines, phones, e-mails and other internet facilities.

In the electronic world, especially in the use of the internet, there is the fear of Nigerian languages going into extinction because English is the language of the internet. Ndimele (2005) observes that: “Of all world languages, English has become the most attractive. In the internet, the information available on major events and discoveries in science and technology is available in English. Everywhere in the world, people clamour to learn how to speak English as the language of the new information age”.

Challenges of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to Global Media

News agencies ranging from world to national have a lot of challenges that have made many of them dysfunctional. One of the challenges is New Communication Technologies. According to Asadu and Usua (2011), initially, information was wired to subscribers through the technology of telegraphy. Today, even through internet or World Wide Web (www) technology is used to transmit messages by an agency to its subscribers, the same channel allows for mass and quick distribution of information directly to consumers, which affects the operations of the news agencies. It allows for the uploading of information from any part of the globe for free, in most cases. This is what is called e-journalism or blogging.

The e-journalist who may not be well trained journalist publishes information on the net just to attract advertisement from marketers. An example of such is the Sahara reporters, Nairaland, BBC online, CNN on-line and others which can be found on the net. The net has made news an ordinary thing anybody can send. It should be remembered that the case between Miss Okere who was assaulted by naval ratings in Lagos, Nigeria on November 3, 2009 was first recorded with a camera phone by an eye-witness and put on the net from where foreign media houses picked the story.

Some big stations have devised a way of encouraging people from the remotest villages to report the happenings in their environments with the instrumentality of the mobile phone, internet, e-mail and other communication devices described as CNN ireport. According to Thussu (2002) in Asadu and Usua (2011), the growing popularity of on-line journalism, reflected in the proliferation of news portals and consumer news has made traditional foreign correspondence obsolete.

While these innovations in information and communication technology according to Omega (2014) are believed to encourage development, it is also reported that in the United States of America, people are afraid of the electronic world, as a result of the intended effects. According to Harper (1998), publishers in particular are terrified and are rushing to form electronic publishing (or e-publishing) and to find partners in the software business, they have read a thousand times that one day we will all play games, shop, watch movies, read books and do research on all our computers or television. They are also terrified about how CD-Rom and the internet will re-make publishing. The above submission by Harper (1998) is true of the Nigerian Newspaper industry because of dwindling patronage.

Conclusion

From the early 1980s, there has been a dramatic restructuring of the national media industries that is dominated by Transnational Corporations (TNS) and is oriented towards full fledged commercialization. This clearly presents danger to citizens’ participation in public

affairs, understanding of public issues and thus distorts the effective working of democracy. The domination of the national media systems is no doubt facilitated by the resources of ICTs. Like the era of Colonial empire during which communication technologies were crucial in the establishment of European domination; the new technologies have come to lay a foundation for a new global civilization based on western technology. It is premised on the above that, the paper has highlighted the historical overview of the rise of Global Media System, Global Media and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Global Media, ICTs and Economic impact on National Media Systems, Global Media ICTs and political impact on National Media Systems and Global Media, ICTs and social impact on national media systems. The paper has argued that the global media is influenced by the resources of ICTs with its attendant positive and negative consequences.

References

Asadu, C. A. and Usua, N. J. (2011). *Fundamentals of International Communication*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

Aziegbe, M. E. (2005). Making French Language in Nigeria in 21st Century Globalised Information World. In O. Ndimele (Ed), *Globalization and the Study of Language in Africa*. Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit Communication and Emhai Press.

Becker, T. C. (2009). The Future of Teledemocracy. Accessed from www.utwente.nl/gw/mco/bestanden/the... March 14, 2012.

Emenago, E. N. (2005). ICTs, globalization and the future of human language in O. Ndimele (Ed). *Globalization and the Study of Language in Africa*. Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit Communication and Emhai Press.

Esuh, P. (2006). "ICTs, Globalization and Multinational Advertising: Imperatives for Advertising Industry in Nigeria" in *the Nigerian Journal of Communications*. 4(1):109-118.

Gandy, H. O. (1989). "The Surveillance Society: Information Technology bureaucratic social control; 'The Information Gap'" *Journal of Mass Communication*. 1.

Hamilton, K. and Daramola, Y. (2011). "New Media and Democracy: A study of President Goodluck Jonathan's 2011 Political Campaign on Face Book." A paper presented at the Professor Nwuneli International Conference, Awka, Anambra State.

Headrick, D. (1991). *The invisible weapon: telecommunications and international politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Herman, E. S. and Machesney, R. W. (1997). *The Global Media: The missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*. London: Continuum.

Ikem, V. (2011). Responses to Social Media and the New Dimension to Nigerian Politics. ikemvctr@yahoo.com Accessed 10th March, 2012.

Jubril, M. (2005). Nigerian Languages and Linguistics in the era of Information and Communication Technology. In O. Ndimele (Ed), *Globalization and the Study of Language in Africa*. Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit Communication and Emhai Press.

Mcquail, D. (1994), *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*. 3rd Ed. London: Sage Publications.

Ndimele, O. (2005). Globalization and the Vanishing Voices of Africa: Any glimmer of hope at this turbulent sea? In O. Ndimele (Ed), in *Globalization and study of languages in Africa*. Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit and Emhai Press.

Nwabueze, C. and Ezebuenyi, E. (2012) "Appraising the Relevance of ICTs in Awareness Creation during Elections" in *Journal of Linguistics and Communication Studies*. 2(1): p. 294-299.

Nwabueze, C. and Nwabueze, C. (2010). "Enhancing Entrepreneurship through the use of ICTs: Implications to Food Security in Nigeria" in O.A. Okwilagwe (Ed) *Nigeria Stirling-Harden Encyclopedia of Mass Media and Communication Technological Imperatives*. Vol. 4. Ibadan: Stirling Harden Publishers Ltd. P.146

Nwodu, L. C. (2006). "Research and ICTs Relevance in Innovation, Diffusion in Nigerian" *Journal of Communications*. 4(1&2) pp.5, 31

Ogbusishi, L. I. (2003). "The use of Internet as Communication Tool in International Marketing: A Pilot Survey of the Opinions of Selected Computer-Literate Nigerians." *The Nigerian Journal of Communication*. (1) July: 110-116.

Ohiagu, O. P. (2013). "Information and Communication Technologies: Widening or Bridging the Digital Divide" in *Journal of Linguistics and Communication Studies*. 3(1):87.

Okwudishu, C. O. and Okwudishu, A. U. (2005). Integrating ICTs into the Teaching and Learning of Nigerian Languages. In O. Ndimele (Ed) *Globalization and the Study of Languages in Africa*. Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit and Emhai Press. P.292

Omego, C. U. (2014). "Impact of Information and Communication Technologies on Nigeria's Social, Economic and Political Environments" in S. B. Okon and O. P. Ohiagu (Eds). *ICT, Communication and Society Trends and Issues. A book of Readings*. Vol. 1, Port Harcourt: Accuracy Prints. Pp. 288 – 289, 293.

Thussu, D. K. (2000). *International Communication Continuity and Change*, London: Arnold. P.96