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The effect of globalization on international and inter-cultural communication

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Abstract
Researchers have noted a variety of effects resulting from media globalization. Some of these observed effects are open to interpretation while others are acknowledged by most communication scholars. Certain researchers tie their observations to their own perspectives which attempt to explain certain observed effects. This paper focuses on media globalization phenomenon on international and inter-cultural communication and examines the economic, democratic, cultural and technological aspect of media globalization.

Keywords: Globalization, media, culture, technology and imperialism

Introduction

Whether we like it or not, whether we are ready for it or not, the phenomenon of globalization is more actual than ever. Needless to say that there are different ways to approach this hot topic, different levels of debate, different points of view. What is certain is that globalization is intimately connected to sharing information, media (especially new media) often being regarded as the main vehicle for its rapid expansion.

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research on the topic of globalization. Traditional definitions of globalization focus on economics and the effects of multinational corporations. In the book Alternatives to Economic Globalization, authors Cavanaugh and Mader (2002:19) [1] referred to a number of factors that are identified with the term globalization. These factors are: hyper-growth and exploitation of the environment, privatization of public services, global cultural homogenization, promotion of consumerism, integration of national economies, corporate deregulation, and displacement of traditional nation-sates by global corporate bureaucracies.

The world now is in the information age. The development of mass media at the contemporary stage has assumed truly gigantic proportion. Media have become powerful instrument for influencing minds of millions of people. Mass communication nowadays become an arena for bitter struggle between the forces of peace, progress and imperialistic reaction.

The paper is trying to achieve the following objectives
1. Understanding media globalisation
2. Understand the economic aspect of globalization
3. The democratic aspect of globalisation by the media.
4. Cultural aspect of globalisation
5. And technological innovation in it.

Meanwhile, before make a further attempt let's conceptualised the following terms in order to avoid the mistakes of overgeneralization or misrepresentation: globalisation, culture, inter-culture, communication and international communication.

Globalization: has been defined in various ways, but is most typically defined in reference to the interconnectedness of political entities, economic relationships, or even computer networks. In the context of our discourse Globalization refers primarily to the ways in which economic and industrial institutions (such as industries or corporations) interact in various locations throughout the world, with primacy given to no specific geographic location.

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Culture: Some scholars defined culture as the wider framework of belief, ideology among others of the society. In the paper, culture with reference to custom, practice and meaning associated with communication.

Inter-culture: Is a process of transferring culture from one place to another place.

Communication: Is a process by which communication technologies have transformed economic and social relations to such an extent that cultural and economic barriers are minimized.

International communication: Is a process involving the passing custom, practice and meaning to diverse and scatter audience through the media of mass communication across frontiers or boundaries.

Globalization

In both scholarly work and public debate on globalization, the influence of media and particularly electronic media on social change is considered to be of importance. In sociological and cultural analyses of globalization, media such as satellite television, the Internet, computers, mobile phones etc. are often thought to be among the primary forces behind current restructuration of social and cultural geography. Electronic media facilitate an increased interconnectedness across vast distances and a temporal flexibility in social interaction. Furthermore, development, imperialism and globalization are three ideas which have been designed to interpret and change the world (McChesney, 2005) [5]. They can frequently be seen rubbing shoulders in discussions of international questions in the social sciences but what they mean to each other is often anything but clear. The concept of globalization is one of the most debated issues since the collapse of communism. Most discourse on globalization acknowledge that it is an 'uneven' process. Its effects and consequences are not uniformly experienced everywhere in the world and there is a 'power geometry' of globalization in which 'some people are more in charge of than others; some initiate flows and movement, other's don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it and there is going to be an imbalance of power when dealing with two nations. The rapid acceleration of globalization has for long been associated with technological advancement and the international market. On the one hand there is the tendency towards homogeneity, synchronization, integration, unity and universalism. On the other hand, there is the propensity for localization, heterogeneity, differentiation, diversity and particularism detrimental to development. These processes are intricately interwoven and represent - in reality - two faces of the same coin. Thus the term "globalizations" is sometimes used to indicate that globalization is not an ubiquitous or uniform process, but involves various terrains, manifests differently in various contexts and has different effects for people in different contexts (Friedman, 1999) [11].

The modern epoch opened as an era of globalization. Most of the critics portray this term as a world with permeable borders. The concept of globalisation is global and dominant in the world and it was not handed down from heaven, it was not decreed by the Pope, it did not emerge spontaneously. It was created by the dominant social forces in the world today to serve their specific interests. Simultaneously these social forces gave themselves a new ideological name the - "international community" - to go with the idea of globalisation (Kaul, 2011) [4]. The critics argue that today's globalisation is only superficially different from the old fashioned colonialism. Resistance to globalization is also not new; China has been resisting globalization since the Opium War in which Britain arm-twisted the Middle Kingdom for the right to sell Indian opium in the mainland. How is this any different from US pressure on Beijing on WTO (World Trade Organisation? The British saw India and Nigeria as a source of raw materials for the empire, and a market for cotton. Today India and Nigeria are the source of cheap labour in the sweatshops of the information technology industry, and a huge market for consumer goods. Globalization is just imperialism in disguise, it has the same motive: control over resources and the right of might.

In his attempt to analyse the press, radio and television services in the west Kashlev (1984) [10] affirms that the communication explosion, being on the whole an objectively inevitable and positive in the development of mankind, has obviously negative aspect under capitalism. It help the ruling class to manipulate public opinion and carry out the ideological conditioning of millions of people in their own country and abroad, contrary to the interest of overwhelming majority of the people. It can be posited that Nigeria is currently affected by this development. With the exploitative spread of GSM/smartphone, contact between members of the counter culture become easy and discrete, the availability of internet gives our youth access to a lots of issues like pornographic sites, cyber-bullying, yahoo boys among others. Cable satellite also offer access to foreign fashions, celebrities and stars especially as propagated by the foreign media like CNN design 360 hollywoodism, Academic Award, Big Brother Africa, BB Naija, Miss world, people in the news and others.

There is no or little gain saying we live in the era of globalization. Yes, it is time when communication made easy courtesy of the information super-highway. Under globalization, time barrier and time zone seem to be collapsing. Information is pass on and received almost instantaneously.

Globalization has ushered in certain undesirable traits that is antithetical to African norms and values. These includes excessive materialism culminating into unbridle corruption, greed, individualism and connivance with the international capital by the elite to further enslave the continent foreign wants and aids others includes certain alien traits like immodesty, nudity, individualism, consumerism and a lazy/parasitic elite group whose life style is any but Africa. A situation has also arisen where poverty and its by-products disease, ignorance, low life expectancy, unemployment, hunger, starvation, collapse of utilities and wars are the loads of Africa in the 21st century change world.

The issues of globalization in Africa is a serious matter of concern. This is because of its impact on the continent, especially the negativity reflected in the cultural pattern of the people. Globalization should be considered as third wave of colonialisation that required anti-globalization campaign.

Some "anti-globalization" groups argue that globalization is necessarily imperialistic, is one of the driving reasons

behind the Iraq war and is forcing savings to flow into the United States rather than developing nations; it can therefore be said that "globalization" is another term for a form of Americanization, as it is believed by some observers that the United States could be one of the few countries (if not the only one) to truly profit from globalization.

Economic Aspects of Globalisation

In economics, globalization engages in various aspects of cross-border transactions, free international capital flows, foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and rapid and widespread diffusion of technology. Proponents of globalization argue that it enhances economic prosperity and leads to more efficient allocation of resources, which, in turn will result in higher output, more employment, lower prices and higher standard of living. However, some critics worry about the resulting outsourcing and off-shoring, which have destroyed the American manufacturing sector.

Economic aspects of globalising trends always have an impact on all other subcategories cultural and technological aspects. The latest economic trends are closely bound up with politics; and among them we can mention implications of the neoliberal economic theory in general, concentration of the media and their ownership and the rationalizing processes. Regarding the technological aspect, we have to stress the process of digitalisation and the increasing multimedialism (World Bank, 2000) [8].

According to many scholars, one of the pillars of today's economic order Neoliberal economic theory and its implications are one of the pillars of today's economic order. Neoliberalism, as the appellation indicates, is new liberalism. Liberalism in its classical form was developing from the 18th century onwards, and its essence was "laissez faire– laissez passer", to let things progress freely. Although the so-called invisible hand, as the guiding principle of the economy was designated as an elementary premise of primal economic theory and political economy, it proved to have some questionable implications and impact on the developments in society. In the period after World War II., since when the outset of current globalisation dates, a new movement has been evolving, one that allows state intervention in the economic process. The rejection of state intervention in the economy, one of the basic liberal principles, remains in place–when that intervention takes the form of the welfare state. But state intervention is allowed to promote the effective functioning of the market mechanism and the related maximization of profits.

But neoliberalism is much more than just an economic theory. It is a political and social theory as well, one that has its social impact, and this impact is of course felt in the field of mass-media communication as well. Everything has to be directed to the satisfaction of the demands of the media-conglomerates owners. This reality does not have to manifest itself as a direct intervention in the form of censorship; what is decisive is the manner in which the journalists operate or in which the print, TV, audio, film or multimedia production occurs in general. Neoliberals promote the opening up of international markets and borders and consequently, support the uncomplicated flow of capital (including that of communication). These phenomena result in the steadily advancing concentration of media ownership, enabled by the breaking up of the barriers in the process of the creation of media mega-conglomerates– the process of

de-regulation (although this process itself goes against the primary postulates of neoliberalism, as it disrupts the basic principle of market mechanism, namely competition). Closely related to this is a tendency of media owners towards monopolisation, integration and establishment of immense media enterprises. Moreover the fewer players there are on the market; the easier it is to dictate prices. But with less competition, the quality of production and the products themselves could decrease. Owners of monopolies are acquiring an even greater economic, political and social power (Kaul, 2011) [4].

Democracy and Globalisation

Democracy is much broader than a special political form…. It is… a way of life, social and individual. The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed… as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being information of the values that regulate the living of men together: which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals.

To be more particular, Dewey cited in Youzhong (2011) [9] upholds two criteria to measure democracy:

The first signifies not only more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest, but greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control.

The second means not only freer interaction between social groups … but change in social habit – its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse. And these two traits are precisely what characterize the democratically constituted society.

For Dewey, the most secure foundation of democracy is a democratic community in which social inquiry is cooperatively conducted, its conclusions freely distributed, and social institutions flexibly readjusted accordingly.

But how to bring about such a democratic community? Dewey (1925-1927a) [2] writes, "Communication can alone create a great community. Our Babel is not one of tongues but of the signs and symbols without which shared experience is impossible". For one thing, communication enables individuals to share experiences and recognize common interests; for another, as Dewey (1920) put it, "Communication, sharing, joint participation are the only actual ways of universalizing the moral law and end". Through communication, Dewey believes, a self-conscious public is formed that would devote itself to the constant amelioration of the democratic community.

To him, if global democracy can be understood as a democratic community in which individuals and groups of various cultural backgrounds share interests, cooperate to solve the problems facing them, and enrich the meanings of each other's life, then intercultural communication and its "congenial objects" are objects "ultimately worthy of awe, admiration, and loyal appreciation". Dewey (1925) [2] writes, "They are worthy as means, because they are the only means that make life rich and varied in meanings. They are worthy as ends, because in such ends man is lifted from his immediate isolation and shares in a communion of meanings" In this sense, global democracy and democratic intercultural communication are interchangeable terms.

As such, global democracy is not to be achieved within a short period of time through undemocratic means that claim to be immediately effective. Dewey cited in Youzhong

(2011) [9] maintains, "Democratic ends demand democratic methods for their realization. … Democracy can be served only by the slow day by day adoption and contagious diffusion in every phase of our common life of methods that are identical with the ends to be reached…." Global democracy is, therefore, an open-ended process in which intercultural communication is operated democratically on a daily basis.

Cultural aspect of globalisation

It is believed that commercialisation and an oligopolised media structure are definitely a threat to diversity and sovereignty of any nation. The porosity of cultural boundaries engendered by media globalization has given rise to concerns over cultural sovereignty and cultural rights. While such concerns have been dismissed by proponents of globalization as unfounded, for developing countries, the economic reality of which preclude the development of strong local productions and so foster reliance on imported programming, these concerns are quite relevant. Research has shown that where local productions are weak, inroads made by foreign media can be dangerous. Media privatization worsen this reliance and encourages the inflow of imported content on the principle that within a free market system, there should be no barriers erected against the free flow of cultural products across borders. Most importantly, as private media rely heavily on advertising money for economic viability, there is a constant stream of cultural goods that inundate the local scene by way of paid television commercials. These cultural products are rife with images reflecting cultural values and expectations concordant with the countries of origin and are at odds with the cultural and economic realities of receiving countries (United Nation, 1999) [7].

The media have become the chief transmitters of culture. The traditional showcases of culture – museums, theatres, art galleries or libraries – have handed over part of their functions to the cinema screens, television or computers; media where culture has greater distribution and scope, since the images reach broader, more heterogeneous and widespread audiences. Cultural diversity is recognized externally and internally, both by the prevailing institutions of civil society and by the awareness of the group itself as different to the whole in some expressions. The preservation of this diversity is one of the challenges with the homogenizing risk of a globalized world, where uniform cultural patterns are present. According to Kaul (2011) [4] the following measures should be adopted in defence of cultural diversity:

1. The political-social context itself, which plainly requires recognition on the part of cultural minorities, recommends the adoption of measures favouring and facilitating the expression of the different social groups through the media.
2. The rapid expansion of the new technologies, especially the digitalization of the audio - visual media and Internet, offers opportunities for production, distribution, access and participation of the media products which must be urgently exploited.
3. The present situation of the process of European integration, with the prospects of the expansion of the number of its members and the widening of the competencies of the Union, seems an especially opportune moment to bring together the measures

which promote diversity, a real characteristic of the European culture, with the necessary strengthening of identity.

Of course globalization has many impacts on local culture worldwide. One of the positive aspects is that there is a spreading of information, there is cultural exchange and this can lead to a cultural growth worldwide. But there also is another aspect of cultural globalization: many see globalization of culture as an Americanization of different cultures.

The last process that changes the face of media and culture in these times at the turn of the millennium is the so-called cultural imperialism. In assessing this The Latest Globalisation Trends in Media phenomenon, we can start with the encyclopaedia definition–it is the practice of promoting the culture and language of one nation or country in another country. The smaller culture is to be absorbed by the bigger, economically, militarily or politically stronger one. Since the 18th and 19th centuries we can highlight the promotion of the English language culture and the growing power of corporations as the most distinct manifestation of cultural imperialism. Even so, during the course of the 20th century other cases of cultural imperialism occurred as well. As mentioned in the Chinese repression of the Tibetan culture or the actions of the Soviet Union in the former Eastern bloc states. We should stress, however, that these processes were based on completely different premises and were executed in a violent way without the consent of these nations. Today the largest exponents of the "new form of cultural imperialism" are the countries of the West and the U.S. The principle of this phenomenon is the spread and the "gate-keeping" of information as well as the entertainment industry.

Technological aspect of globalisation

Technological change has always been the principal force shaping the evolution of the media. Each of the past revolutions in communications technology created distinct media forms that evolved into their own industries. In the last few years, technological achievements in the context of globalisation of media environments, gained in prominence. Right now the process of digitalisation is one of the fastest moving trends of the current media and represents great challenges, as well as hopes for the future of the electronic media. However, content is becoming increasingly digitalised: whatever the type of signal, it can all become undifferentiated bits of data converged onto the same platform. This trend is bringing sweeping changes and unprecedented levels of complexity to the current media business model. Part of digital broadcasting will be, besides audio and video, other data in the form of text, other audio channels etc. Through digital television you can choose from what camera angle you would like to watch with just a click you can vote in a question poll about the popularity of a government or choose from the eight screens of the Sky News channel (Tomlinson, 2002) [6].

Technologically promising is the growing multi-medialism (connecting several types of media on one platform) and the interactivity of the whole spectrum of today's media. It touches television, multimedia web broadcasting and even print (for example in the online editions of dailies, where there are constantly growing demands on the quality of the work of journalists. They have to write for print editions and

online editions, they have to take photos and record audio files). Interactivity is more dynamic in the new media, which are technologically developed to consider the feedback of recipients. Interactivity in the new media is closely connected with the decentralisation of media communication as the recipient is taking an active part in content production. A crucial interactive medium is the World Wide Web-the Internet. Trends in internet journalism and environment can be generally characterized with three processes: diversification, convergence (merging of several types of media, electronification, computerization and digitalisation of all media–print and audio-visual) and integration within the framework of the Internet. All of these processes create entirely new media with added content value. The technology goes further: the Internet is available on your cell phones, mobile phone operators offer live TV feeds, radio broadcasting etc. Internet combines audio, video, text and the communicant (recipient) can, with his feedback, make up the web content (Kaul, 2011) [4].

Digital technology multiplies the possibilities for the transmission of contents, offering new opportunities for the promotion of cultural diversity. The analysis of the situation cannot be based on a technological determinism dealing exclusively with technical and industrial considerations, and the way in which the new technologies can influence culture in the countries must be taken into account. Without attempting to cover everything, the main tendencies are considered as under:

- Despite the fact that, in the midterm, traditional media will probably continue to have the greatest incidence in the spreading of cultural values, the digitalization of the media opens up perspectives for the distribution of contents which will mean an increase in the cultural diversity of the media. However, there is a tendency towards the implantation of pay media which could mean that access to the contents is restricted for a great part of the society, who do not have sufficient resources. This tendency must be counteracted especially by the public ownership media.
- The digitalization and convergence of the media offer new possibilities for increasing cultural diversity, such as the number of channels, the user's direct access to the contents, the greater possibility for subtitling or dubbing and the new routes for the distribution of contents.
- The Internet is an especially appropriate medium for the transmission of cultural contents, including that for even the smallest minority, given that it notably increases the possibilities for choice for the public and offers immediate access. The Internet can facilitate the presence in society of universities, cultural associations and other organisations of diverse nature, which develop interesting cultural activities.

Conclusion

Considering the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation in the light of the analysis that has been done in the context of this paper, my take is that, globalisation may be inevitable, its consequences are devastating. It is therefore, my argument is that, there is the need for an appropriate response in a view to understanding the dynamics that will hopefully help to evolve measures that will reduce the devastating effects of globalisation. In recent decades, media rhetoric has promoted the vision of a world

in process of unification, largely as a result of technology's power to dissolve borders and speed communication.

The way I see it, globalization is simply the merging of societies be it through economic, social, cultural, intellectual, moral, political, or other foundational aspects. The world as a global village has come to stay. Any institution that fails to meet the challenges of globalization shall remain irrelevant. This is the prize of globalization.

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