DOMINANT ROLE BY WESTERN MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN PURSUITOF SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA

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ABSTRACT
During the political colonization of Africa by the Europeans, the pristine primordial traditional African communication systems were eroded from the soil of time after the introduction of new media technologies, which the colonial masters were using to pass messages across to their different colonies in Africa and which they used as working instrument to easy all their administrative tasks. For many decades, the study of African colonization has seen a significant development within the context of how Africans were hurt and humiliated by foreigners and book volumes on this subject have been so remarkable. However, the phenomena of colonization have not been given prominence in the content of local African journals and the few African scholars who pursued a career in this area of academic pursuit just grope in their different ways without conceptual clarification of the process used in colonizing and decolonizing African nations. All these have, however, created a yawning gap in knowledge. It is the vacuum that this study attempts to fill. Materials for the study were collected through two basic methods of data gathering: primary and secondary. The primary data were obtained through *case study* method in order to investigate *a situation in real life* that relates to how western media have been dominating the framing in the waves of political, ideological, cultural and economic imperialism of Africa. The secondary data were existing information collected from books, journals, magazines and the Internet. The result revealed that the foreigners have come at different times to oppress, repress and suppress the African nations in many ways through (1) political colonization (2) ideological colonization (3) cultural colonization and (4) economic colonization and western media infiltration and dominance have played significant role in this process. The conclusion is that the only means of overcoming western media dominance in African ways of life is to hijack and decolonize the sites that these western oppressors have infiltrated by adopting Indigenous Development Communication System in African states.

Keywords: Political colonization, African communication systems, African colonization, Western media infiltration, Indigenous development communication

1. INTRODUCTION

> *"Africa as the cradle of civilization, intellectualismand humanity possess the most unique means ofcommunication in the world despite the modern means of communication like the mass media andnew media of the internet and social media of face-book, twitter and others (Osho, 2011:2)"*

In the distant past, Africans have their own *Traditional Communication System*. The traditional African communication system, by means of strength, reinforced and promoted a sense of nationality and nationhood in African states before the advent of political colonialism. This traditional communication system formed the basis for African cultural diffusion network. It is worthy of note that the traditional African media system avoided empty waste in information dissemination contrary to today's western media technologies performances that are complex and costly.Africans employed the cheap and inexpensive Town Crier model for information dissemination in the past through the usage of a metal gong of varying sizes and shapes. In Nigerian culture, for example, the Yoruba call a metal gong *Agogo*, the Hausa call it *Kuge* and the Igbo call it *Ogene*. Apart from information dissemination the metal gong can be used to perform a rhythmic and melodic dance function.   It is worthy of mention that "the traditional African communication system had played significant role in the rescuing, incorporating, preserving and sustaining African interests and cultural values" (Franz, 1998:12). These functions and usages are not limited to Africans' aspirations, but also include other factors that express Africanness in their history and cultural development.

Suffice it to say that "African music and drama are still used as workable media of disseminating information in various African communities till date" (Franz, 1998:13). African music and drama have cultural performance devices for communities that give expression to African reality, aspirations and diverse struggles for survival and growth. For example, African music and drama have been used in accompanying *Performance of Abuse*during*Oke'badan*festival in Ibadan a Yorùbán town of Oyo state in Nigeria. More so, in African societies, dances, dramas, musical performances and oral narratives, among others have also played a key role in the contrive*development communication process* for Africans. All these pristine primordial traditional communication systems were gradually eroded from the soil of time by the foreign colonial masters after their introduction of new media technologies, which they were using to pass messages across to their different colonies in Africa and to easy all their administrative tasks.

For many decades, the study of African colonization has seen a significant development within the context of how Africans were hurt and humiliated by foreigners and book volumes on

this subject have been so remarkable. Reputable foreign scholars have drawn the attention of interested readers to the importance of decolonizing the media for cultural decolonization of colonized countries of the world in reputable academic journals, but most of the scholarly thoughts and ideas in them were coloured with foreign facts and figures while the arguments they put forward in their varied academic discourses portend a strong affinity for study areas outside Africa. More so, the phenomena of colonization have not been given prominence in the content of local African journals and the few African scholars who pursued a career in this area of academic endeavour just grope in their different ways without conceptual clarification of the process in decolonizing African nations. All these have, however, created a yawning gap in knowledge. It is the vacuum that this study attempts to fill.

2. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION
Data for this study were collected through two basic methods of data gathering: primary and secondary. The primary data were obtained through *case study* method in orderto investigate the process used in colonizing African nations within the air space of western media involvement. The secondary data were existing information collected from books, journals, magazines and the Internet. The data were collated into a more manageable size and form and a narrative was constructed around them. Examples were used in the narrative while keeping it concise and interesting. Some numerical information was given to judge trends and not to analyze every piece of the data. All the data were later subjected to scrutiny in order to ascertain their veracity and validity. After verifying and validating the genuineness of these materials, they were then synthesized and interpreted. The analysis for the case study used was more opinion based than statistical method and it provided more realistic results than a purely statistical survey.

3. RESULT

The result revealed that the foreigners have come at different times to oppress, repress and suppress the African nations in many ways through (1) political colonization (2) ideological colonization (3) cultural colonization and (4) economic colonization.In the wave of**first colonization** of Africa the European *Colonial Powers* came and saw a continent that was "vast, rich in minerals and land and very poorly defended and they rushed in to carve it up and steal the land…'This*common stereotype* used by the developed countries of the world' (*emphasis mine),*which has been ravaging Africa is seen in their *interest* in Africa's mineral resources, not in Africans" (Guest, 1991). From 1920s the major European colonists such as Britain, France and Germany were using shortwave radio to reach their colonies in Africa, Asia and Middle East. It is apposite to state, therefore, that the advent of colonialism across the African lands eroded the pristine primordial characteristics of traditional African media system with pains. The good aspect is that these pains eventually translated into gains for Africans while using the new media technologies' systems brought by the Europeans to liberate their minds from coloniality. The local Africans have worked against the colonial presence by strategically opposing and resisting while using the new media technologies to promote ideas of militancy, independence and sovereignty. The sad aspect is that the first coming of Europeans and their looting, pillaging and destruction of African cultural and political systems has, however, denied the African

peoples the opportunity of developing their ways of life, most especially their traditional communication system.

After political emancipation African states were systematically lured into ideological, cultural and economic imperialisms through these same western media technologies. Generally speaking, in the post-independence period, communication and media research received a boost in most African states, but while there were advocacies for development journalism lots of barriers were still mounted against the indigenous African media systems by African leaders and their collaborators in the developed countries of the world. First, there arose a shift from national aspiration to regional politics. Second, the African media took regional and ethnic postures while various African political leaders were establishing government-owned newspapers, radio and television stations to champion their personal interests and political ambitions. Third, the African politicians started to use the western media to develop their political career and to fight opposition groups just after attaining freedom for Africans from foreign dominations. For example in Nigeria, the military government that took over the reins of power from civilian government in 1966 through coup d'état had proven to be detrimental to the political strive towards media activities, democracy, economic struggle, and the livelihood of local Nigerians. In fact, post-political-colonialism had a telling impact on post-independence civilian-military relations in Nigeria.

The wave of second colonization started after the World War II, in the year 1945, when the *Super Powers*: United States of America and Soviet Union began the *Ideological Enslavement* of African states through the currents of their cold wars. First, the World War II brought the United States into the business of international broadcasting…Before then the British had colonial broadcasting system with an external service called BBC World Service, the United Stateslater in the 1940s established the VOA (Voice of America) to counter the enemy's (Germans) propaganda and to disseminate information about America. Second, the Cold War with Soviet Union moved the United States into the forefront of international broadcasting as they tried to counter the Soviet's external service, Radio Moscow, by establishing three additional services: RIAS*Radio in the American Sector* broadcasting in Germany to serve people inside East Berlin; RFE*Radio Free Europe* broadcast to all other communist-bloc in Eastern Europe in their native languages; RL *Radio Liberty* aimed at listeners in the Soviet Union. These Super Powers later used the aforementioned western media technologies to contest for ideological influence in Africa.

Today African culture is functionally linked to the western media technologies, since they played prominent role in African struggles against political imperialism and foreign encroachment. These western media such as print media, publishing, the news media, photography, cinema, broadcasting or narrowcasting and advertising are now held as components of indigenous mass communication outlets/industry to store and deliver information or data on the colonialists' agenda. They are equally channels through which news and messages about colonization and decolonization are disseminated to Africans. Sadly, the Superpowers had grossly used these same western media technologies to convince and influence as well as sway the minds of gullible African leaders into accepting their different political ideologies.

In the aftermath of the freedom struggles by African peoples, Satellites and the Internet were introduced to African countries. The introduction of these two western media technologies truly made the world a global village in which information are disseminated across borders within seconds. Suddenly, there emerged the *ideological imperialism* between 1950s and 1960s in which the Soviet Union power backed Marxist despots all over the new African states and the United States government backed the new African leaders who are in favour of capitalism thereby using Africa to fight their proxy wars. Both super powers were strong in the triple sense of "militaro-political power, ideological expansionism and a network of allies" (Shuliz, 1980:433) and "with sufficient doses of ideology, they succeeded in creating a bipolar geo-strategic milieu for African nations" (Lynn-jones, 1991:251). An example is Nigeria where political confrontation, military coups and counter coups, civil war, insurgency and counter insurgency, financial, technical and material insufficiency became the order of the day.

The two western ideological powers: the Soviet Union and the United States had a diverse interest in the new African states. For instance, they held special allure for a developing country like Nigeria that plunged into a civil war with the separatist Biafra in 1967 resultantly from alleged regional persecution, ethno-religious riot in northern Nigeria, a military coup and a counter-coup. The Soviet Union chose pragmatism in the form of "alignment with the Federal Government of Nigeria, over the ideological alternative of support for the separatist region-the Biafrans in the *Eastern Nigeria*" (Stent, 1973:78). The United States and the British's tacit supports for Nigerian side are also abhorrent to regional separatism of Biafra while the French who refused a diplomatic relation with the separatist movement in Biafra still supported it on humanitarian ground; describing the war situation as a genocide. Several years after the civil war came the fall of Berlin wall and end of cold war that changed the political climate of Nigeria. For example, the end of the ideological battles boosted democratization in Nigeria and it brought political and economic freedom to the citizenry as a measure of an interim solution to dangling national questions.

The wave of third colonization of Africa came in form of*Cultural Imperialism*in which the western media channels have been used to seduce Africans and disseminate colonial culture and information to them after the attainment of political freedom from the European*Colonial Powers.* Morrissey and War (1997: 112) gave a succinct overview of this scenario using the United States of America as example:

> *"The US has rich, well developed media industry that is home grown.Many cultures in the third world countrieslook to the USand see affluence,freedom and desirable consumer goods. The USis therefore invited to export films to other partsof the world.It is very much a one-way system,introducing the values and commodities of Americancapitalism"*

The above statement is indicative of a clear case of cultural imperialism in which some cultural values of many third world countries, most especially Africa, were completely/totally immersed

by western values. "This seed of cultural imperialism has been nurtured by the west, using aggressive bombardment of media tools like satellite, the Internet and video, among others, to fill the cultural markets of developing nations with the foreign ones" (Ate, 2007:13). It presupposed that the cultural imperialistic systemhas been used by the Western Powers to debase and destroy African cultural productions and it has brought to the fore the cultural alienation, invasion and disorientation, and control of African wealth and natural resources. These aforementioned factors have made it look obvious that African cultural products are the major attractions of the earlier *Political Imperialism* of Africa.

In fact, the*Americanization* of theAfrican locally-based media system has brought*cultural colonialism* to African states. In the early period of Nigerian independence, for example, there was high bias-ratio usage of western based film to the detriment of locally based film production at 80:20 degree. The implication is that foreign television programmes aired at prime time formed about 80% of Nigerian television series while local programmes formed just 20%. This bias-ratio negativism brought into Nigerian media space a very high influx of western movies such as Rick Jason and Vic Morrow's *Combat,*Greg Morris'*Mission Impossible,* Roger Moore's *The Saint* andDan Blocker, Parnell Roberts and Lorne Greene's *Family Cartwright.* Also, there were Rocky Graziano and Lee Bowman's *Miami Under Cover,* Garry Pankhurst's *Skippy,* Alan Ladd, Mona Freeman, Charles Bickford and Robert Keith's *Branded*, John Wayne's *Searchers*, Gene Berry and X Brands' *Bat master son,* Clayton Moore *Lone Ranger* and a host of othersin the Nigerian media space. The *Combat* was a film genre concerned with warfare typically about land battles with scenes central to the America's drama. The Nigerian media space of this period received torrents of these western television programmes because of the fact that electronic media project requires a lot of financial wherewithal which was lacking in the Nigerian system. Then, the only alternative was the importation of low-cost Western film productions. This inadequacy in African media management has led Nigeria and other African nations into *Picture Tube Imperialism*. It has been established that marketers of westernized movie products managed to penetrate most African states' market through low cost distribution. Citing the example of Ghana, Franz (1998: 56) has estimated that "an hour of Ghana-produced television programme cost between US$800 and $2,400 while American produced television programme is offered at a cost of $130-150 per one-half"

Observably, most of the western films that found a common ground in the Nigerian media space often featured protagonists such as cowboy, gun slingers and bounty hunters and worst of it all is that the Nigerian peoples depended on their characters for self-fulfillment. In that period, the media became the subject of "compromises between the interests of the new state (Nigeria) and the former colonial master, allowing strong cultural links to persist beyond independence" (Gluck, 2018: 34). By mid-1970s the trends started to change when local producers in Nigeria began to call for cultural protectionism and demanded for ways to decolonize the locally-based Nigerian media. They started *African Development Communication* (DEVCOM) initiative that was termed *Nigerian Media Revolution* by replacing western movie such as the one titled Sesame Street (an American educational children TV series) with locally produced television programme titled Tales by Moonlight (an African TV series in which children are gathered together by moonlight around village fire and tell stories that prepare them for life and teach a lesson or moral). The life span of this*African Development Communication*

(DEVCOM) initiative was cut short when Media Management and Operation became globalized with the emergence of Cable Network Service towards the tail end of the 20th century.

The wave of fourth colonization of Africa hasemerged in the form of *Economic Imperialism*.In this instance, the western powers have been using their advanced media industry first to lure Africans into a complex web of economic relationship through a range of International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans on offer at inflexible negotiation with weak economies of Africa. At the end, there emerged "unsatisfactory situation in relation to conditionality and adjustment" (Stewart, 1987:44), and with this condition the IMF operation and its inflexibility in negotiation had infringed the independent authority and the right to govern African states; alienating the governments from all measures they are supposed to implement. Second, in order to offer funds in form of aids, the western media industry was used to package and present information about development agencies and NGO's to frame African states "in terms of being underdeveloped or in a need of modernization" (Anderson, 2017:23). The western media framers adopted gross languages to dehumanize African states and this dehumanization device is a whole experience of colonialism and its continuity after political independence of Africa in the 1960s.

Then, the ongoing China-Africa foreign relation that has been concomitantly framed by the media appears as a new form of economic imperialism. It seems that the regenerated foreign relations between China and African nations have a neo-colonial flavour with imperialistic tendencies. However, Bodomo (2018:1) has frowned at the concurrent media framing of China's Africa relations when he flared-up that:

> **"***Framing China's Africa foreign relation policy by using dichotomous and oppositional categoriessuch as those of generous/self-interested; as well as genuine/covetous; cooperative/exploitative, or inclusive/ unilateral, is ill suited to describe not only one of the most complex and successful region-to-region cooperation experiences in contemporaryinternational relations, but also one of the most significant manifestations of the paradigm shiftthat China is bringing to the Global Economic Governance System* (Bodomo, 2018:1)"**

In actuality, the word: imperialism denotes the policy, practice or advocacy of extending the power and dominion of a nation by direct territorial acquisition or by indirectcontrol over the political or economic life of other areas. In trying to be more supportive of the phrases used in framing China-Africa relation policy, the Diplomat (2018:34) vehemently reiterated that "it is pertinent to agree that "Chinese investment approaches in Africa is a network that will underpin African economic development". However, there are myriads of media postulations that China is the new colonial power in Africa as it is attempting to dominate African land and resources. These postulations can be backed up with a fact that they have begun to purchase lands in some parts of Nigeria while at the same time engaging with mineral exploration at the expense of the country's economic growth. According to some observers, even if Africa is becoming entangled in a Beijing-device economic swell the surge is much more harmless than the previous imperialistic attempts by the western world. This is probably because the working relationship

between China and Africa is seemed to be much more about voluntary exchange, about trade, about spread of technology, but the problem of corruption among African leaders is creating easy inroads for this Regional Power that is operating a benignant system of imperial incursion into the African domestic market. There is a dangerous dimension to a good working relationship that may have been intended between China and Africa. The African leaders came dangerously close tobeing encouraged by these framed 'economic imperialists' to sign foreign bills that can benefit them alone. The onus is, therefore, on African watchdogs (the media) to insist on more transparency in the way African leaders deal with them.

Measure against *Economic Imperialism* in Nigeria, for example, has come in form of quick media intervention in which the former Nigerian President OlusegunObasanjo was accused of awarding anAbuja rail project to the Chinese in 2007 without an Engineering Design or Memorandum of Understanding. For instance, the*Daily Post* of February 16, 2016 reported in its news coverage how "Obasanjo and El-Rufai awarded $841.6 rail project without MOU with Chinese firm". Then *TheGuardian* newspaper of February 16, 2016 carried the same story with the down-style headline: Obasanjo awarded Abuja rail, project without design, MOU, says Senate panel. According to the body of the latter story, "the contract was inflated by N2b per kilometer and lawmakers were demanding refund of n392b". Earlier, *The Vanguard* newspaper had carried a related story in November 20, 2014 with the down-style headline: China firm signs 412bn deal to build Nigerian railway. The obligation of the Nigerian media in this period of *Regional Power* incursions into Africa's economic policy should be central to strengthening the country's economic policy now that there isintangible progress in the democratic governance of the country.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion is that the western media were largely used in the campaigns for the new independent Africa in the 1950s and 1960s.Then, after independence, Nigeria and other African states have been forced to subvert their everyday culture through the penetration of westernized and hybridized folk music, television programmes and movies. More so, western media played a big role to sustain the Cold War, between the United States and the Soviet Union, which separated the world into two ideological blocs. The western media technologies have been used by local Africans to galvanize their peoples to throw barbed shafts at the colonial governments and to raise their political consciousness. There is a conclusion that colonialism in Africa is not only territorial, it is a way of thinking and mode of desiring and a set of relations, which implies that attempts at decolonizing other aspects of life after political independence did not end coloniality in Africa. The post-colonialism period of the 1960s is a period when media became a dominant, powerful mind controlling agent and daunting set of representational apparatuses that cannot be easily overturned. The western media became a device for radical confrontation between the metropolises and nationalists' movements and they have also served as agents of compromises between the interests of the new African states and their former colonial masters, allowing strong cultural affinity to continue after political independence. The only means of overcoming western media dominance in African ways of life is to hijack and decolonize the sites that the westerners have infiltrated by adopting Indigenous Development Communication System in African states. The simple solution and a great antidote to the western media dominant

role in cultural imperialism of African states is accepting responsibility for preserving the integrity of African culture by using the indigenous African media for African development. Then, Africans should invent what it means to be human.

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