Global Media and Neo-Colonialism in Africa: the Socio-Ecological Model as a solution to Nigeria's development efforts.
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Introduction

Given the robust reputation of Nigeria in Africa, as a continental giant, and the need to harness the potentials of the nation to strategically reposition her economy on the global map in the 21st century, the nation is in dire need of speedy development. With a population of over 160 million, the country is blessed with both human and natural resources. Like other African countries, Nigeria has had her fair share of colonial experience which ended on October 1st, 1960 when the nation was granted independence by the British government. Nigeria's independence is undoubtedly a political phenomenon as the nation still largely depends economically and socially on foreign nations especially developed countries like Britain, America and China.

Nigeria's new era of dependence on foreign nations is what has actually defined neocolonialism. Kwame Nkrumah defines neo-colonialism as:

> …the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it; it means exploitation without redress…a stage in the development of imperialism…more insidious, complex and dangerous than the old colonialism. It not only prevents its victims from developing the economic potential for their own use, but it controls the political life of the country, and supports the indigenous bourgeoisie in perpetuating the oppression and exploitation of the masses (Alapiki, 2004: 48).

The definition of neocolonialism by Kwame Nkrumah underscores Nigeria's staggering development agenda. The most populous country on the African continent has become a strategic investment nerve centre among her peers in the West African sub region. Some European nations, Asian countries and America are major stakeholders of Nigeria's business community in commodities like crude oil, electronics and house hold items. The overall implication of Nigeria's economic dependence on foreign nations is the country's lack of industrial growth and

increased reliance on foreign products and services. Neocolonialism is more evident in the social sector than the economic sector because of its direct connection with colonialism. The social sector deals with human behavior such as patriotism, morals and participation of citizens in society's development as shaped by agents of socialization such as the family, the school and the community. Others are the church and the mass media.

In the global world, the mass media are very influential channels of communication. There is a growing contention in scholarship about the impact of global radio and television stations like CNN, BBC and a host of entertainment channels on the moral behavior of Nigerians. The argument of most African media scholars is that global media have promoted consumerist lifestyles among Nigerians and other Africans. Nigerians have been ushered into the global world more significantly by the global media. These global media contents emanate from countries in Europe and America where the headquarters of the global media stations are located. Western societies occupy core positions on the global economy and determine the political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of nations that occupy peripheral positions on the map of globalization. Nigeria's development challenges are partly caused by the impact of global media activities. Some of the activities include the satellite and cable transmission of adverts on industrial and household products like cars, foreign soaps and clothes. Other programs are foreign movies, foreign sports and foreign educational programs. However, not clear is the extent to which the embrace of foreign cultures disseminated by foreign media programs has influenced Africans' mentality and lifestyles especially in the areas pertaining to the patriotic commitment towards the development of the continent.

Citing Albert Bandura, Dorothea Ross and Sheila Ross's social learning theory, Ike states that, "we learn from observing the behavior of other people and our attitudes are influenced by media content through attention, retention and motivation" (Ike, 2004: 210). The global domination of media production by a small number of Western and transnational conglomerates is known as media imperialism (Redmond, 2001), consequently, this domination raises questions about the growing relationship between media imperialism, cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism in Africa. Media imperialism is considered a phenomenon that sustains neo-colonialism and slows down the pace of economic and socio-cultural development in Nigeria and the rest of Africa. For instance, global advertising, defined as 'the use of the same basic

advertising message in all international markets' (Belch and Belch, 2001: 683), has the tendency to convey the cultures and ideologies of the developed countries through such media outlets as radio, television commercials, newspapers or international magazines. This chapter examines the usefulness of implementing the socio-ecological model of development in neo-colonial Nigeria.

The problem with Nigeria's development efforts

Historically, Nigeria's development plan during the post-colonial period began with 'the first National Development Plan (1962-68). The first national development plan of Nigeria only emphasized development of technical education, agriculture and industry. The second plan (1970-1975) aimed at increasing growth of national income through investments in multiple sectors to improve the distribution of income both among the people and regions. The third plan (1975-1980) sought to develop as rapidly as possible opportunities in education, health and employment and to improve access for citizens to these opportunities. The fourth plan (1981-1985) and the rolling plans era (1990 to date). Each period targeted building a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, as well as a just, egalitarian society and a free democratic Nigeria (Ohale, 2004:150). The implementation of the plans failed since they did not meet the objectives of development including desirable social and economic progress, improvement in living conditions, and industrialization (Alapiki, 2004: 208-225).

An overview of Nigeria's National Development Plan indicates that the plan ignored basic aspects of social development such as national orientation programs, sensitization workshops for public officers and indigenization of media programs that includes making adverts, health campaigns and campaigns for patriotic citizenship in persuasive local dialects. The lack of social development led to Nigerians becoming socially dependent on foreign cultures by copying the life styles and standards of living of foreign nations regardless of the cost. The major vehicles of transnational cultural communication are the global media. The preference for foreign cultures such as the type of dresses, cars and household items gleaned from the content of foreign global media is recognized as the problem affecting the economic and socio-cultural development of the country.

The preference for foreign lifestyles and cultures further creates the desire of Nigerians to live above their income and float above board. The craving desire lures the citizens into sharp

practices that constitute anti-social behavior in the society. Examples of the anti-social problems in Nigeria include corruption, bribery and advance fee fraud (also known as 419). Others include embezzlement of funds and criminality. The increasingly worsening corruption story of Nigeria today is a mere attestation to this fact. One of the reasons for Nigeria's failure to achieve meaningful development is the lack of the nation's attention to social problems and the lack of will power on the part of leaders and the citizens to shun corrupt practices including crime, bribery, and embezzlement of funds.

Global media impact on Neo-Colonial Nigeria

A state in the grip of neo-colonialism is not master of its own destiny. Under neo-colonialism, the economic systems and political policies of independent territories are managed and manipulated from advanced nations by international monopoly finance capital in league with the indigenous bourgeoisie. Communications, banking, insurance and other key services are controlled by neocolonialists (Nkrumah 1965, cited by Alapiki, 2004). However, the features of neo-colonialism such as indirect management of independent nations' economic and political policies by advanced nations, award of economic aids and foreign loans to third world countries, and global media's transnational marketing and entertainment activities are strangling Nigeria's development efforts. Under the neo-colonial experience, the developed countries sustain their supremacy through capital investments, ideologies, and general patterns of life using the global channels of communication especially foreign news, foreign advertisements and foreign movies.

Global media transmit news, market information, adverts and entertainment in forms of drama, music and sports to audience around the world. Global media are international radio and television stations and newspapers, including the internet, they are mostly based in Europe and America where they evolve programs and transmit them to countries that hardly have such sophisticated communication technology. As these materials are transmitted, western values and interest are transmitted to exert socio-cultural, political and economic hegemony. Continuous consumption of these foreign media in a sense has created a culture of consumerism in Nigeria. Nigerians' modern ways of dressing, eating, playing, loving and general living standards are arguably related to the influence of these global media. The global domination of media production by a small number of Western and transnational media conglomerates is known as media imperialism (Redmond, 2001). By implication, media imperialism involves the global

4

imposition of Western media products on poorer, developing countries that are unable to resist this domination because of power and resource inequalities.

The global media are viewed as agents of neocolonialism and globalization, by globalization is meant "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990: 64 - 68). Offiong also noted that:

> Globalization emphasizes the multiplicity of linkages and interconnectedness that surpasses the nation states which together constitute the modern world system. It sets up a process through which events, decisions and activities in one part of the globe can and do have great consequences for individuals, communications, crime, culture, pollutants, drugs, fashions, entertainments, beliefs, among others, all immediately move across territorial boundaries (Offiong, 2001: 1).

Globalization has created an operational platform for neo-colonialism in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Global marketing is one of the processes of globalization "where a company uses a common marketing plan for all countries in which it operates, thus selling the product in essentially the same way everywhere in the world" (Belch and Belch, 2001:683). Global marketing is further driven by global advertising which is 'the use of the same basic advertising message in all international markets' (Ike, 2005: 94). The global media and their neo-colonial messages have influenced corruption and crime among Nigerians to a very significant extent thereby compounding the development challenges of the nation. First by getting exposed to some foreign adverts on fashion, cosmetics and many other products made available to the country, the global media create a consumerist culture among Nigerians. Second, Nigerians have come to appreciate and copy the lifestyles of actors, actresses and sportsmen that they watch on foreign media. They appreciate foreign standards of living of Europeans and American and employ all corrupt and criminal means of adopting and sustaining such lifestyle.

In summary, the global media have significantly constituted a threat to national culture and development (Fukuda- Parr, Gosh and Pettinato, 2004). Many Nigerians who are exposed to global media are lured into patronizing foreign goods and lifestyles. The greatest impact on Nigeria is derailed development. Nigerians have almost lost interest in the patronage of home made products such as local fabrics and cosmetics, while local industries have almost lost the

zeal to operate due to lack of target markets. Development continues to suffer industrial setback in the light of preference for foreign products. Again lifestyles of Nigerians are patterned unconsciously after the demands of these foreign goods including clothes, shoes, foods and cars. For instance, Nigerians now wear foreign clothes at the expense of their traditional wears that are accompanied by the beautiful reflections of the Nigerian culture. The impact extends to the need for Nigerians who newly adopted these lifestyles to sustain them with financial prowess and where it becomes tough; corruption and criminality are urgent escape routes to sustain the patronage of the foreign products and lifestyles.

The Application of the Socio-ecological Model of development

The application of the socio-ecologial model to Nigeria's development effort is an alternative and contributive factor to solving behavioral challenges of the leadership and followership of the country. The socio-ecological model is influenced by the ecological model of human behavior created by early childhood development scholar Urie Brofenbrenner in the late 1970s (Oswalt, 2008). The socio-ecological model is premised on the understanding that individual behavior within a social context may work positively at influencing and changing a citizen for good. Some theorists such as Murray Bookchin (1993), Kenneth McLeroy et al. (1988) and Daniel Stokols (1996) recognize that while individual-level change is important, all individuals exist within a larger "ecology" that includes the natural environment and social institutions including the family, the media and the community.

The 'self' represents the individual or every citizen. The wellbeing, hard–work and readiness of every citizen to defend their constitutional rights can drive the development of a nation. When development is absent, it is obvious that the citizens are directly and negatively affected. The 'partners, family and peers' possess the power to encourage and influence their fellow citizens towards development through daily interaction, family meetings and informal associations. The individual citizens are also influenced by their 'local community, services, products' by the 'leaders and providers' at one level and the 'national enabling environment and leaders' at a higher level.

The socio-ecological model describes the relationship between the individual and environmental factors. In development, the model describes the place of the individual or citizen's potentials at the personal level, at the group level or at the community, regional and national levels. The socio-ecological framework has gained increased recognition and applicability in the field of health promotion. The model has been applied to investigations of
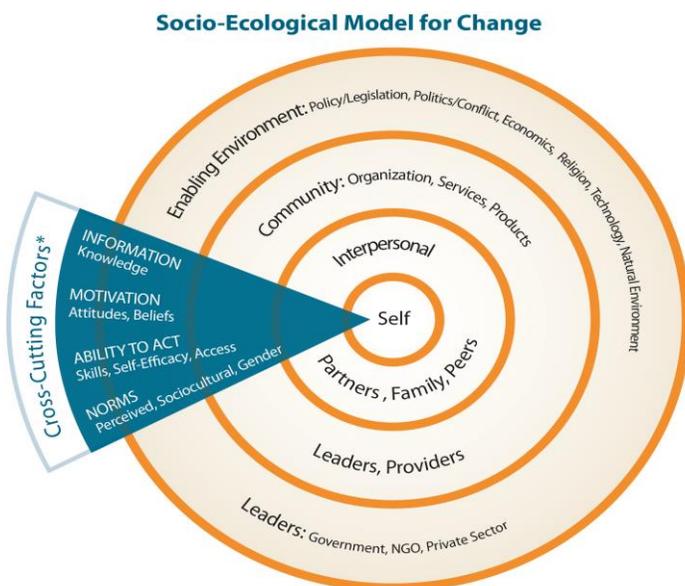
Figure 1

many different health issues and community based interventions such as prevention of unsafe sex and risky sex behavior, prevention of alcohol, tobacco drug abuse and related risky behavior. In the United States of America, the Socio-ecological model was applied to reduce the rate of

7

Americans who were having unprotected sexual intercourse and result showed a decrease in unprotected sexual intercourse from 47% to 26% of men who were reached (UNAIDS, 1999). In rural Thailand, the socio-ecological model was applied to a community based program for motorcycle rider education to reduce the risk behavior and motorcycle-related injuries among the motor cycle riders. After the intervention, the annual number and rate of fatal motorcycle-related injuries decreased significantly (Swaddiwudhipong et al., 1998:767).

The socio-ecological model emphasizes that a well informed individual can be easily persuaded to be committed towards a particular course like development. Such an individual can acquire a positive mindset that would launch him into cultivating development tendencies. There exists a strong relationship between the socio-ecological model and Abraham Maslow's Motivation Theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' which postulates five basic levels of human needs, arranged in a hierarchy based on their importance namely: 'physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self actualization needs' (Belch and Belch, 2005:110). The individual needs to satisfy physiological and psychological needs to develop the right mentality and act positively in the desired way. In the political set up, the socio-ecological model works effectively where ecological elements are on ground for the citizens to behave in the socially acceptable manner.

In governance, the application of the socio-ecological model to effective development can be achieved through information and knowledge dissemination to every individual or citizen by motivating positive attitudes towards development and beliefs in the possibility of national growth; through ability of individual citizens to act based on what information and knowledge acquired about development traits at the personal level in the society; and through strong affinity to the norms of the state or the nation (Mcknee, Manoncourt, Chin and Carnegie, 2000). Information, motivation, ability to act and respect for national norms are crosscutting factors that a nation, her leaders and her citizens must embrace at all levels to achieve development.

Conclusion

It is indeed sobering that Nigeria, a nation known as the giant of Africa for its abundant human and material resources with high development potentials, remains poor and struggles through the path of development in the 21st century. Nigeria's development challenges range

from her citizens' colonized and self impoverished mentality to poor standard of living, absolute poverty, inequality, lack of employment opportunities and social and religious crisis. The leadership challenges have even worsened the situation. Nigerian leaders are bereft of leadership qualities. Most of them assume leadership positions through dubious means and employ all strategies to perpetuate themselves in office. Some of them exhibit behaviors that are corrupt and criminal while in office. The desire of such leaders is to acquire wealth and power notwithstanding the vision for development by each administration. They establish a wide gap between themselves and the poor majority. They work hard to live their lives to the best like elites in any part of the world. They consciously or unconsciously succumb to the demands of globalization. In the event, they become the new colonial masters and their 'subjects' strive to be like them.

Nigeria's development efforts have been unquestionably frustrated by the global economy, supported by the persuasive and unavoidable influence of the global media as well as the helpless followership of leaders by the citizens. These activities define yet another era of colonialism known as neo-colonialism which is considered as the worst form of colonialism because it prevents the independent struggle of any nation towards development and challenges the collective existence of Third World nations. In Nigeria, global media have frustrated development strategies but not to any significant extent except that the media channels drive the leaders and citizens' will-power to behave in certain ways and encourage corrupt and criminal activities among them. Meanwhile the leaders and their citizens have what it takes to resist the extremes of neo-colonialism. Nigeria's development efforts therefore need to rethink its paths through behavior change. Communication of vital information about development, motivation of every Nigerian through good standard of living can change the mentality and belief of the citizens and make them act in a desired direction towards development. Both leaders and citizens need to cultivate the natural tendency to act towards development even when not supervised.

Whereas, it is uneasy to turn back the hands of time, Nigeria needs to negotiate a new way forward towards development. Every layer of the Nigerian society (the family, the school, the community, the religious organizations) must apply the socio-ecological model, not as a final solution to Nigeria's development challenges, but as a complement to Nigeria's development efforts in the neo-colonial era. The model emphasizes the role of every citizen in the

development process. The behavioral change communication about attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of every Nigerian should be channeled into the development plan of the nation through adequate information and knowledge dissemination, individual and group mobilization, motivation and ability to act. This has been ignored for too long.

Based on the socio-ecological model, the Federal government should organize seminars for the political leaders more often and encourage interpersonal communication among the citizens on the need to change their corrupt attitude at the micro and macro levels in order to push the country forward. Emphasis at any intervention should be on the impact of gains and challenges of virtues and vices in the development efforts. The leaders need to change their selfish, corrupt and unpatriotic attitudes at the macro level in order to focus on catering to the citizen's needs that would prompt the commitment of the citizens to contribute to development. They must shun corruption and uphold transparency, probity, accountability and respect for the rule of law. They must avoid the sit-tight syndrome that perpetuates them in office and leads to more years of barren development. They must be open to monitoring and evaluation of periodic progress in their offices.

Talking to the citizens of Nigeria should not be a one way television-radio-newspaper opinion and discussion platform activity alone. Since the individual is shaped by the social and ecological elements, the gospel of patriotism should be taught in schools, discussed extensively at home and preached relentlessly even in the church. The families should sit up and talk to their children daily, monitor their activities and evaluate their contributions, not only to the family's well being but also to the society's. Programs like workshops should be organized for peers to discuss their roles in development. The religious organizations need to intensify teachings on morals and dump the craze for preaching prosperity.

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