

Review

## Audience westernisation as a threat to the indigenization model of media broadcast in Nigeria

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Based on semi-structure interviews and secondary data, this paper examines the westernization of audiences - among other phenomena - as a serious challenge to the indigenization paradigm in Nigeria in particular and Africa as a whole. It pragmatically argues that this westernization of local audiences theoretically implies the shaping of media output (programming) according to audience interest which, unarguably, is progressively in favor of foreign content. Though commending the indigenization model – for representing a pertinent strategy for curbing the rampaging awful effects of cultural/media imperialism -, the paper argues that the “cloning” of Nigerian audiences into westerners theoretically calls for the instauration of a model of programming that is rather more inclined to heavy foreign media content. This is in line with the fact that, in principle, audience interest is a more cardinal and decisive factor in shaping media content and programming. The paper goes further to recommend moves towards “de-westernizing” and “(re)enculturating” Nigerian audiences. These moves would consist of a network of well planned cultural activities involving other influential social institutions such as religious and education institutions and the family. Through these activities Nigerian audiences may be sensitized to the necessity of conserving their authentic cultural identity (their “Nigerianness”/ “Nigerianity”) and resist their “cloning” into westerners or Americans. Such resistance would make Nigerian audience ready consumers of local media content.

**Key words:** Westernization, media/cultural imperialism, indigenization model, world information order, audience Interest.

### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of globalization has given birth to a plethora of forces that have, since the second half of the twentieth century, reshaped and redefined cultural models in numerous countries of the world. One of such forces is cultural/media imperialism which is suspiciously viewed by a good number of conservatist critics as a predatory force to weaker cultures of the globe. In fact,

cultural/media imperialism is considered responsible for the progressive erosion of cultures in many Third and Fourth World countries in Africa and around the world. The phenomenon is both evidenced and intensified by the increasingly imbalanced world communication flow. Indeed, for some decades now, most Third World countries have been immensely depending on the West

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for information and entertainment products. This is not surprising, as more than 75% of today's international communication is controlled by some 80 transnational corporations predominantly from the West (Dominick, 2011; Chibuike, 2011; Ayedun-Aluma, 2011; Chuks, 2010; Omoh, 2010; Maphosa, 1999; Ekpang, 2008; Iyora, 2008; Tanjong, 2006; Brandston and Stafford 2006; Salawu, 2006; Watson, 2003; Curran, 2000; Cremer and Yoakam, 1996). According to Harmelink (1996), these corporations include value patterns (in their programs) which on one hand are native to the metropolitan countries, but on the other hand, have no relation to the genuine social needs of the receiving countries. Hamelinks (1996:362) insightfully contends that entertainment is just one of the various tools (the panoply of media) used by western media corporations to control the minds of audiences in Third World countries.

*Entertainment is heavily represented in the one-way traffic of television programs in the world, which leads to a global spreading of cultural values that pervades the soap opera and the crime series produced in the metropolitan nations. The industrial corporations, however, provide more than just television programs, they also graciously entertain the world with films, records, cassettes, women's magazines, and children's comic. Although, the international communication flows tends to consist mainly of entertainment products, the role of international news in transferring values should not be underestimated. The selection few large international news agencies undoubtedly reflects the values of the metropolitan countries.*

Reactions to this media/cultural imperialism have varied from one country to the other. While some developing nations have swiftly reacted to this threat by adopting strategic actions to combat, counter or check its rampaging negative effects, others have helplessly watched the demolition of their core cultural values and the supplanting of their cultures with western culture (Ekpang, 2008:5). Two of such strategies aimed at countering cultural imperialism have been the adoption of the nation-state system and indigenization models of managing various sectors of states notably the economic and the media sectors. In Nigeria, resistance to cultural imperialism can be said to have manifested as far back as in 1976, during the Murtala-Obasanjo administration, with the promulgation of the indigenization decree which led to the nationalization of some multinational corporations, notably Barclays Bank and British Petroleum. This decree therefore, represents one of the country's main attempts to "wrest control of the economy from the hands of foreign elements" (Ekpang 2008: 9) and by extension, to battle against the control by the West of the minds of Nigerians (Salawu 2004; Idowu 1999).

The instauration of the indigenization model was not adopted exclusively in the economic sector but was later

extended to other sectors, notably the media sector with the imposition by the Nigerian Broadcasting Code of a minimum of 60% local content in media programming, to be respected by all media houses in the country. However, the indigenization model is bound to survive in a media environment which, in many respects, is "aggressive" to it and which tends to challenge its pertinence, prospect and longevity in Nigeria. One of its greatest threats is the progressive and systematic westernization of Nigerian audiences. This paper explores some of the challenges to the upholding of the indigenization model of broadcast in Nigeria and attempts to show that the westernization of the Nigerian audiences – which is perhaps the most serious threat to this model –, invites to rethink the conceptualization of the model in Nigeria and perhaps in Africa as a whole.

### Theoretical Framework

This paper hinges on two theories namely the uses and gratifications model and the political economy perspective in mass media. The uses and gratification theory borders on the varied uses audiences make of the media in order to satisfy or gratify their needs. It posits that mass media audiences have specific but diverse needs or drives that are satisfied by the mass media. The theory visibly counters the critical theory view that presents audiences as being very passive subjects that are easily brainwashed and made to believe mass media messages, seeming not to have a mind of their own. The uses and gratification theory is equally founded on three main premises:

1. That there is plurality of audiences' responses to media content (message);
2. That audiences are capable of making their own minds up to either accept some messages, reject others or to use the media for variety of reason and
3. That members of audiences may use the media differently at different times (Watson 2003: 62; Dominick 2011: 48; O'Sullivan et al 1994:76; McQuail 1993:16).

The needs satisfied by the mass media are referred to as gratifications. According to Dominick (2011:49-53), these uses and gratifications can be classified into fourfold categories including cognition, diversion, social utility and withdrawal. Watson (2003:63-65) similarly classifies these needs into four categories including diversion. However, he slightly differs from Dominick as he posits that the three other categories of uses and gratifications include personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. (Dominick 1993:50).

The political economy of communication view is - as the term indicates - centered on the concept of political economy which has been captured by a multitude of definitions. Mosco (2009) defines the concept in two distinct ways. In the narrow sense, he views the term as

referring to the study of social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources, including communication resources. The same author further defines the concept as being “the study of control and survival in the social life”, where control is viewed as the specific manner in which a society organizes itself, manages its affairs and adapts, or fails to adapt to the striking and inevitable changes that all societies face. Survival in this context refers to the manner in which a society produces what it needs for its development.

The concept of political economy therefore, encompasses all human activities and human processes including communication. In line with this, political economy of communication can be viewed as a complex social exchange of meaning “whose outcome is the measure or mark of a social relationship”. Viewed from the angle, communication is not only the transmission of data or information but a social production of meaning that constitutes a relationship. Communication is, according to this perspective, the material production of social political and cultural order (Garnham, 1979; Mosco, 2008, 2009, Fuschs, 2010).

According to the political perspective in mass communication, the media are not only politically and ideologically over-determined within many specific conjunctures. They are equally mainly and ultimately determined by the economic. Furthermore, media institutions require analysis in the context of modern imperialism and neo-colonialism, to which they are crucially relevant. As Garnham (1979) insightfully, puts it.

*The major modern communication system are now evidently key institutions in advanced capitalist societies that they require the same kind of attention, at least initially, that is given to the institutions of industrial production and distribution. Studies of the ownership and control of the capitalist and state capitalist radio and television interlock, historically and theoretically, with wider analysis of capitalist society, capitalist economy and neo-capitalist state.*

Large scale capitalist economic activities among which features mass-media production cannot be dissociated from cultural production. In line with this, it can be argued that there is a complex link between the political economy of culture and the political economy of mass communication. Garnham (1979) attempts to establish such a link when he contends that the purpose of the first (political economy of culture) is

*to elucidate what Marx and Engels meant in the German ideology by ‘control of the means of mental production’, while stressing that the meaning that they gave to the term was quite clearly historical and therefore shifting and was never meant to be frozen into some simple dichotomy as it has so often been in subsequent Marxist writing. Further, the political economy of mass media is*

*the analysis of a specific historical phase of this general development linked to historically distinct modalities of cultural production and reproduction.*

With the globalization of the field, the political economy of mass communication now has an important international dimension. Most current research works in political economy of mass media have nation-list tendencies. They demonstrate that contemporary media systems are the result of a highly contested history, involving not just dueling capitalists and their allies in government, but such factors as labour unions; citizens groups, consumer cooperatives, religious enthusiasts and social justice institutions of all stripes. (Mosco, 2008; Watson, 2003; Brandston and Stafford, 2006).

### **The indigenization model of broadcast in Nigeria**

The adjectival term “indigenous” has its root in botany (biology) and refers to native plants and species. Indigenization has to do with adapting a concept to fit local environment. The full meaning of the term (concept) very much depends on the specific context in which it is used. In Christian missionary practices for instance, the term “indigenization” describes the process of planting ministries that fit naturally into their environment (Weightman, 2008). Indigenization can therefore, be constructed as a process whereby a concept or practice is adapted or fashioned according to native characteristic (native/indigenous cultural values). It entails infiltrating local customs and other cultural values into the concept or practice (Tania, 2007; Weightman, 2008; Liali, 2012) to make the concept/practice fit the environment. As observed earlier, one way to counter the devastating effects of cultural/media imperialism on Nigerian cultures has been the adoption of the indigenization model of media broadcast in the country. This is evidenced by the promulgation of a Nigerian Broadcasting Code which is glaringly driven by cultural protectionist objectives and which stipulates a 60 to 40 % ratio for local and foreign contents of broadcast station. Some of the Code’s cultural objectives include:

1. [To] seek, identify, preserve and promote Nigeria’s diverse cultures;
2. To critically select the positive aspects of foreign cultures for the purpose of enriching the Nigerian culture,
3. Develop and promote the application of indigenous aesthetic values” (NBC Code 2006: 12-13).

Kolbowe and Madu (2013:83) commend the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) code for instituting the indigenization model of broadcast in Nigeria. In a study involving the content analysis of three prominent electronic media in the country (namely Silverbird Television (STV), Nigerian Television Authorities (NTA) and African Independent Television (AIT), they reveal the

effectiveness of this form of programming in the country media landscape. "It is interesting to note that the Nigerian broadcast media are more inclined to local programming. This shows a drastic shift from media imperialism to indigenization". The results of their study indicate that the Nigerian television programming generally has a very high local content (84.8%) relative to only 15.2% foreign programmes aired by the three stations studied (Kolbowe and Madu 2012: 83). They equally remark "hybridization"/the production of "hybrid" programmes as another functional and dominant trend among some Nigerian media broadcast houses when they add that:

*This does not mean that programmes are completely localized even when foreign ones can complement a message. In other words, although the source is local, media content can be an integration of foreign and local information packaged for the benefit of the Nigerian populace. For instance, an indigenous political programme can contain information about commendable political situations of other foreign nations. This is to ensure a holistic approach to information acquisition, distribution, reception as well as the dissemination of global best practices. (Kolbowe and Madu 2012: 83-84)*

The move toward promoting "Nigerianess" in media content has received many acclaims from culturalists, conservatists and a good number of media critics. Idowu (1999:110) for instance associates the philosophy (of indigenized media content) to Nigeria's Vision 2010 and goes further to enumerate a number of media initiatives that have been in line with this model. He also encourages such a tradition to continually be perpetrated. He recommends that in line with Nigeria's vision 2010, specific radio jingles, television drama and soap opera, such as the *Village Headmaster*, *Iche Oku*, *Hotel de Jordan*, *Masquerade*, *Samaja*, *Cock Crow at Dwan* and the likes, which have at one time or the other caught the attention of viewers be packaged and be re-introduced to the large audience of the country, as a strategy to disseminate messages of "Nigerianity" or "Nigerisness" to the Nigerian audiences as at when necessary.

Similarly, Effiom (2005:85) views indigenization as an imperative and strategic action to be envisaged to effectively curb cultural/media imperialism in media and ensure the survival of Nigerian cultures as well as maintaining a real social order. He posits that, though a complex concept, indigenization should be the driving philosophy of both local producers and media proprietors.

*Local producers should therefore, endeavor to tailor productions to local needs, environment and attempt even to counter these foreign cultures that are being imported to distort the society and its value system. This definitely is a big challenge not only to programme makers but also to proprietors who should develop a*

*conscious effort to stem this "tide which is almost engulfing the society – foreign concepts and traditions which run contrary to positive African values or societal order and sanity.*

As indicated by Effiom (2005), the indigenization of media content is faced with serious challenges and criticisms. One of these criticisms is grounded on the fact that the concepts - as applied in Nigeria - seems to be very elusive, or not to enjoy a definition/conceptualization which satisfies all observers. Kolbowe and Madu's (2012:82-83) have defined the concept, in a comparison with foreign media content thus: "a programme is foreign if it is extracted from one of the foreign stations or has foreign content that was not packaged in Nigeria or by Nigerians. A local programme, on the other hand, is packaged by Nigerians and has Nigerians within it".

Kolbowe and Madu's definition of indigenous program seems not to enjoy a general endorsement among proponents of the indigenization paradigm and Nigerian communication scholars. Salawu (2006:13) for instance decries the inadequate conceptualization of indigenization which visibly does not sufficiently take into consideration the need to promote indigenous (Nigerian) languages. In this vein, he criticizes the lack of precisions and clarifications (in the NBC's provisions) concerning the percentage of local content to be in indigenous languages.

*Even though the Commission stipulates a 60 to 40% ratio for local and foreign contents of broadcast stations, (Not even minding the fact that this is not strictly adhered to), it did not stipulate what percentage of local contents should be in indigenous languages. English has been taken to be a Nigerian language. So if a programme is produced in English, but by Nigerians, it is still a local content. This stance is not helpful to the development of local languages.*

Meanwhile, the English language itself is an instrument and channel of cultural imperialism as it represents "the main carrier of the western hegemonic culture" (Salawu 2006: 13). Similarly, Betiang – a media critic who is one of our informants - stresses on this elusive nature of the concept when he presents the concept of indigenization as being highly problematic and thus subject to deep controversy.

*The concept is problematic. How do you define indigenization? A programme might be local but with foreign form. It might be local with foreign content. It might equally be said to be local; but when you critically look at it, the idea driving its conception is not local, but emanates from elsewhere, for instance the famous reality show Big Brother Africa is clearly inspired by Big Brother UK. In such a situation of ambiguity, how do you define indigenization? I strongly think that the concept is highly problematic.*

Further, apart from form and content, a number of additional dimensions should be considered in defining the concept of indigenization with respect to Nigeria. These dimensions include the technology used in media programming, the man power (in media organizations) as well as the cultural content. Indigenization –as conceived in Nigeria, seems to neglect these dimensions. A number of critics have echoed the need to concretely interpret the various concepts associated to the philosophy of indigenization notably “Nigerian values” “Nigerianess” and the like. In line with this, Ebe, a media producer opines that:

*There is a purported Nigerian value ('Nigerianess'). But how can one define such a concept? There is need to really explicate what we mean by Nigerian value. A lot is said about this [concept]; but how much of what is qualified as Nigerian is really Nigerian? We should really re-examine and re-interpret all these concepts [terms associated to indigenization] to say what they concretely mean because the meanings so far given to them are not clear. The world is such in a state of flux that it is difficult to really associate a definitive interpretation to these concepts.*

In the same line of argument, Esekong, another media critic and informant views the scheme as a project to be elaborated with great care, given the fact that we are in an era of cultural globalization, cultural harmonization, cultural standardization and inevitably cultural imperialism, all these brought to life by the more or less “indomitable” and generic phenomenon of globalization. Indigenization to him is more or less a retrograde attitude which is like attempting to define infallible boundaries between cultures of the globe. He notes that:

*It is difficult to create strict boundaries in an era of cultural globalization. The world is, as we can all realised, bound to be a global village. It is virtually impossible to conceive and produce programmes that will completely be indigenous. In the presentation of costumes for instance, you will find both the local and the global. You will find what is compatible with the environment and that which is not. There is for instance a masquerade that I happened to have watched in countless cultural displays in Nigeria. The masquerade used to be mounted with raffia. Meanwhile today, it is made with plastic material because of advancement in technology and difficulties in finding the raffia. Therefore, in defining such a laudable policy [as indigenization], it is good to say what you want to show case. When you propagate indigenous ideas, it means you do not want to change.*

Apart from the above mentioned critiques, the indigenization model is faced with some other colossal challenges. One of these challenges which is true to the situation in most Third World countries is the high cost involved in

producing local media programs compared to the cheap nature of imported canned media products. It has been observed that canned media products from western multinational easily find a market in most Third World countries because of the fact that they are cheaper than locally produced media programs. Consequently, for comparative cost advantages, most local media houses readily prefer imported foreign content to local programs. Hamelink (1996: 357) corroborates this view when he concedes that:

*US television entertainment fills in larger proportions of the airtime in many countries. Moreover, local programs are produced according to US formats, even small television networks in poor countries unquestioningly follow the western example of broadcasting as many hours as possible. Such a practice then pushed these networks into open arms of the Theo Kojak and the Starsky and Hutch, where the production of an authentic local program may cost \$1000, the local station owner may import North American culture for less than \$500.*

The situation described by Hamelink, is true to the Nigerian media landscape. In effect, the electronic media in Nigeria like in some other developing countries, have been so pervaded and inundated with foreign programs and cultures that local producers seem to have allowed themselves to be influenced by these foreign concepts to the detriments of society” (Ayedun-Aluma 2011; Kerr 2011; Effiom 2005).

Cable/satellite television represents another threat to the strict observation of the indigenization imperative as it literally neutralizes local regulations meant to indigenize programs contents in the country. As rightly and succinctly noted by Ekpang (2008:12), they represent “vehicles of globalization and cultural imperialism”. Betiang, one of our informants corroborates this view in his saying that:

*They have deregulated broadcasting. Any foreign broadcaster cannot come and establish here but they have the right to be here through cable. If you are deregulating, it does well for the economy but does it do well for culture? I know culture is not part of economics but the real culture about which we are concerned as creative artists is the spiritual things and material culture that we promote. When these things come [foreign programmes on cable TV] they water down what we call our values. Then why do we insist on local content [indigenization] when we have widely opened our doors to globalization?*

This observation may therefore, suggest that deregulation (indigenization policy) may not very much be compatible with globalization. Cable TV represents a veritable threat to the philosophy of indigenization. Also of very great importance at this stage of our reflection is the phenomenon of westernization of media audiences. This

phenomenon is to be counted among the major challenges to the upholding of the indigenization model of broadcast in Nigeria.

### **The westernization of Nigerian audiences**

Heavy and constant exposure to foreign programs and active consumption of foreign programs (content) from satellite/cable TV have turned out to orchestrate the progressive and deplorable westernization of media audiences in Nigeria. Salawu (2006:3) corroborates this view when he describes these channels (media houses) as veritable agents of "cloning". He posits that "most people of the 'finge' culture without them knowing it, have, unwittingly become cloned Americans or Westerners, all in the name of globalization or modernization. For whatever may be said, all we know is that a 'cloned' being is never a natural or real being". The process of "cloning" is an old phenomenon which has been going on for years and is now rebellious to corrective efforts. It (the cloning) is equally a complex process which starts from early age as young Nigerians (especially those in the metropolis) are, right from childhood often socialized into embracing western cultural values (Ezeafulukwe, 2012). Achebe (1983) endorses this line of argument when he insightfully posits that "we are at cosmopolitan centers and the predominant cultures of these centres are from Europe. And so, whatever your political or ideological positions might be, you will soon discover that your child is inheriting all kind of nefarious ideas".

It can be inferred that most Nigerians have veritably lost their cultural identity, by 'unknowingly and unwittingly' embracing western values. This is evidenced by the fact that, popular culture among the youth of the country is indicative of a progressive disdain for what is local and that, they very often exhibit a voracious appetite for what is foreign. Bisina and Henah (2013:22) cite Onwuejuogwu who notes a wide spread negative attitudes by Nigerians towards their culture. He insightfully concedes that:

*To most Nigerians, a piece of African arts is a piece of juju wood or a bronze object which Europeans only admire out of curiosity. They see traditional African music as a cacophony of barbarous pagan noise and traditional African drama or dances are erroneously perceived as nothing than forms of incoherent or grotesque pagan displays.*

Ekpang (2008:13) notes similar tendency among the youth, but with respect to football. He observes a new football culture especially among the youths which have sidelined and abandoned the Nigerian football league in favor of western sports cultures. He attributes this regrettable tendency to the growing satellite TV viewing culture which is now widespread among the youths.

*The days are long gone when the Nigerian football*

*league used to be vibrant and heavily patronized by soccer lovers. But not anymore. Soccer fan now prefer to watch and bet on foreign players playing in the English, Italian, Spanish, and German leagues. Ask an average Nigerian soccer fan for the name of the captain of Rangers Inter-national of Enugu or any other local team for that matter and you would be amazed at his utter helplessness. But same soccer fan will reel out a list of all the players in Arsenal, Real Madrid, AC Milan, Bayern Munich, etc, without stress. It is so tragic that even in remote villages in Nigeria there are satellite television viewing centers where fans of foreign leagues flock every weekend to watch their favorite stars.*

Nigerian audiences' preference for foreign media content is progressively influencing local producers to adopt foreign concepts that are destructive/detrimental to local societal values; all this for capitalistic (profit making) reasons. (Liali and Omobowale 2011; Effiom 2005: 85; Ekpan 2008: 12-13). Ekpan (2008: 13) goes further to illustrate this new tendency when he notes the pervasion and inundation of the Nigerian film industry with some foreign concepts which producers are fond of superimposing on cultural production. He laments that "recently the madness caught up with the Nigerian movie industry with the release of a film titled "Liverpool VS Chelsea" all in a bid, I suppose, to exploit this new-fangled habit to their advantage". Another way of superimposing foreign concepts on the cultural production in Nigerian media content is the tendency of Americanizing or westernizing the presentation of such cultural production. Henshaw, a media producer with NTA (The Nigerian Television Authority) notes that:

*There are numerous Nigerian radio stations staffed with presenters who are fond of Americanizing the English language they use on air. While on air, such media personnel speak Americana or simply Americanized native names as if they were born in the West or as if they have not even grown up in this part of the world. They don't speak English language the way we Nigerians speak English. They may have good programmes but with such style of presentation, can we say such programmes are local or foreign? With such purely Americanized programmes, can we say they are effectively reaching the grass root audiences?*

In effect, Nigerian audiences' preference or relatively high exposure to foreign programmes may be due to a plethora of marginal and more or less negligible factors including socio-economic dynamics and technical quality of programmes. Esekong (informant) suggests for instance that the tendency by Nigerian audiences to prefer foreign to local content "should not be surprising as most foreign programmes often showcase a better technical quality. They exhibit proper finishing as compared to the one produced by local producers. However, the two

assumptions or thesis stipulating that Nigerian audiences are exhibiting a voracious appetite for foreign content and that local producers are fond of copying foreign concepts (cultural content) to super-imposed them on their media productions are not generally endorsed among media critics. Some media critics offer series of counter arguments (Kerr, 2011, Iyorza, 2008). Betiang (informant) for instance rejects the two views when he concedes that:

*It may be wrong to say that there is no local content in most Nigerian media production, notably in Nigerian films. If you inquire from most music and video shops around, you may be surprised that most people are buying Nigerian movies and music. If you listen or watch TV and radio stations that broadcast all African movies or music, you will notice that there is a lot of Nigerian content in their programming. Also, in most parties organized nowadays in Nigeria, Nigerian music is played from A to Z. I think all these have to do with the Nigerian movie and music industries. These industries have done very much to give to the public what is called the Nigerian movies and hip-hop with all what they entail.*

There is no doubt that the indigenization model is appraisable and definitely instrumental for the survival of African cultures and African media's contribution to the world communication flow. As Kolbowe and Madu (2012:87) insightfully concede, this model facilitates the promotion and exportation of the Nigerian culture. They passionately enumerate the virtues of indigenization when they note that the philosophy has so much awakened the African consciousness and limited foreign programme content. Further, the concept has profoundly promoted indigenization, and enhanced the two-way communication and information flow as well as has led to the appreciation of the local cultural value systems. With such a repositioning of African states, international broadcasting is affected as Africa in general and Nigeria in particular now ceases to be, quasi-exclusively, the dumping ground of western media contents. Communication is no longer approached through its former linear, one-way mechanism but as an evolving transactional approach wherein both indigenous and foreign media can simultaneously assume sender and receiver elements of media contents.

However, the progressive westernization of audiences somehow creates avenue to probing into the pertinence of the indigenization philosophy. The phenomenon (westernization of audiences) actually challenges its longevity as we all know that the media landscape has become a market space wherein audiences are "kings" and their interests are, to a great extent, strong determining forces. The audience has power to sanction programming that does not rime with its interests by simply stopping to patronize media houses that offer such unattractive and unwanted content and going to those that offer attractive option (gratifications). Dominick

(2011:23) corroborates this view in his assertion that:

*Audience members are more in charge of what they want to see and/or hear and when they want to do it. Let's take television as an example. For many years, viewers had to watch programs broadcast by local stations and the Major networks according to the media's schedule. However, recent technological advances have given more power to the consumer being that the audience is gaining more control over the mass media process. As one expert put it, mass communication has gone from a sit-down dinner with a fixed menu to a Vegas-style buffet.*

In the same line of thought, Liali and Omobowale (2011: 475) suggest that given the fact that the ideology of capitalism is presently ruling in the media production in Nigeria - just as in many other African countries - most producers "want to offer what will sell" and since foreign content aligns with youths' orientations, it is logical to offer what sells. It is clear that failure to do this may just cause media houses to suffer desertion from audiences in favor of Cable TV. This is in line with Dominick's (2011:17) observation that "since the audience is the source of profits, mass communication organizations compete with one another to attract audience". Therefore the fear arises that, if the Nigerian media (that are bent on the strict observation of the indigenization model) do not give the audiences the dominant foreign content they seem to want/prefer, the audience will go to cable TV or will resort to a media mix which, might still not favor local Nigerian media houses. Dominick (2011) further shows the power of audience when he presents them as active and prominent controllers of media content and programming. He describes pragmatic mass media messages as always shaped according to audiences' taste. Whether dealing with specialized or mass audience, the media programmer is bound to consider audience interest and somehow "dance to their tune".

*In the mass audience stage, the potential audience consists of the entire population, with all segments of the society likely to be presented. Media content is designed to appeal to what has been called the "least common denominator" in the audience. The specialized audience stage is typified by fragmented, special interest audience groups. Media content is carefully designed to appeal to distinct and particular audience segment (Dominick 2011: 483).*

Though not insinuating the total rejection or abandoning of the model, this paper argues that the westernization of Nigerian audience is a fact, which rather calls for a programming which is more in favor of a model of programming advocating for a dominant foreign content. If audience interest was to be considered, indigenization would have a less important place in the Nigerian media system. The overall credit of the indigenization model is that it offers chances of resisting cultural imperialism.

However the paradigm is more of a corrective and “therapeutic” approach adopted to eradicate an “evil” (cultural/media imperialism) in a period and circumstance of advanced erosion of the cultures it claims or aims to protect. The audiences in Nigeria are more inclined to foreign content than local content. Though praiseworthy, the indigenization model is indisputably an attempt to go against dominant audience interests. As E. Nkanu, media producer with NTA Calabar observes, it appears more lucrative and practical for Nigerian producers to feed local audiences with more foreign media content.

*Nigerian media producers and owners are so engrossed in western programmes because the majority of audiences are likely to prefer what is western. Foreign content or local media programmes fashioned according to western cultural values are strategies to capture the largest possible number of audiences and attract advertisers [...] You hardly see a media programme aired in Nigerian radio or television which is totally indigenous [...] All because they are trying to satisfy an audience which has intensively been westernized. The so praised and recommended indigenization policy is not respected [...] I don't think the Nigerian media have been doing their best. They are not maximizing their potentials as far as encouraging the indigenization of media content is concerned.*

However, encouraging a dominant foreign media content – though in the name of satisfying the dominant audience interest – is interpretable as a lack of cultural pride. Foreign media content is a veritable threat to the survival of indigenous (Nigerian) cultures and based on this premise, indigenization is a pertinent model. However, for indigenization to be feasible there is need for policy makers and the entire Nigerian society to promote re-enculturation at all the sensitive sectors of the life of the Nigerian nation as a strategy to counter the early and complex westernization of Nigerians. Through (re) enculturation Nigerians may learn the way of life or behaviors of their own culture or society as early as in early formal and informal education (Iyorza 2008:80; Salawu, 2006:7) as well as in other sensitive sectors/institutions such as churches, religious circles, and the like.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper has explored some challenges to the indigenization model of broadcast in Nigeria, enumerating three principal threats to the paradigm, notably:

1. The high cost involved in production of local programs (compared to the relatively cheapness of imported foreign content);

2. Cable TV's popularity in Nigeria and the fact that they neutralize efforts at regulating media content and
3. The westernization of local audiences.

The paper has argued that the progressive and striking “cloning” of audience into westerners/Americans (“westernization”) theoretically calls for a media programming model which is more inclined to foreign content, given the fact that, in principle, audience interest shapes media content and programming. The audience has the power to “sanction” unattractive or unwanted media content by deserting media houses that offer such and by preferring competing channels that will deliver them what they want (what sells). This is true to Nigerians' tendency of preferring Cable TV (inundated with foreign content) to local media houses. The paper however commended the indigenization model as it represents a pertinent strategy for curbing the rampaging effects of globalization, cultural/media imperialism and the widespread cultural erosion. The indigenization model of media broadcast alone might not suffice to combat cultural/media imperialism. Other social forces/institutions such as educational and religious institutions and the family among others should be mobilized to de-westernize the minds of Nigerian mass-media audiences. This can concretely be done through intensifying the indigenization of school curriculum and incorporating more cultural activities/programs in training Nigerian from their tender age both in school and at home; as well as in religious institutions. It is obvious that the effective de-westernization of the minds of Nigerians through a network of cultural activities has potency to influence them to adopt positive attitudes toward local cultures and in turn develop a voracious appetite for local content.

## Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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