MASS
COMMUNICATION

A Book of Readings

Edited by

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Globalization, Media Culture and Socio-Economic Security in Nigeria

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Introduction

Most of the common place debates about the role of the new media technology across all shades of discipline concerns the appraisal of its contributions to socio-economic progress and ultimately its ability to facilitate the management of set of complex human interaction or relationships (Imhonopi and Urim, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Raphael, 2001; Caircross, 1997: Gilder, 1993: Pohlmann, 1992). Rivers et al, (1980), argue that with substantial progress recorded globally, people have become aware of the importance of the media. The most visible part of the media, whether it be print or electronic, is news or making information available to the users (Schaefer, 2003: 162).

There is growing conviction that the media, good or bad, are central to modern society. However, a critical view of the traditional context of such debates evidently shows that the major focus has always centered on the eulogy of the positive contributions of the media, a notion closely linked to its ability to sustain human organizations. This typology of appreciation neglects the unintended divisive or destructive nature inherent in the mis-application of gamut of message trajectory through which the institution impacts the lives of the people. Rather than being satisfied with the intended functions of the media therefore, people are now concerned that unhealthy influences and even crime are taking place

in today's electronic global village and that there are few, if any, control exist to prevent them (Schaefer, 2003: 174).

There is a persistent underplay of the role of the new media especially the internet in crime multiplication globally. The non-recognition of the internet inducement of anti-social behaviors can be attributed to two significant factors. First, the borderless nature of the internet technology provides the convenience needed to learn criminal trade through its educative functions. Second, such technology creates room for secrecy and concealment of criminal acts. Commenting on the use of modern media technologies, Hirsch (1992: 26) observes: "A never-ending drive for improvement of our lives seems to be an intrinsic part of human nature especially as affects the use of the media components." However, the quest for improvement presents a double edged implications for users for two obvious reasons; new media technology remains a facilitator of human progress on the one hand and a harbinger of global socio-economic risk on the other hand. Despite the consequences associated with the above-observed implications, a gap that became clear that this paper intends to fill is the omission linked to extant and current studies.

Most work reviewed did a one-sided job by accounting for the new media as it guarantees social progress without given equal attention to its negative consequences (Castell, 1996). It also became noticeable at the same time that very few studies actually accentuated the role of the medium in the multiplication of crime. Few works on new media/crime interaction shows the multi-dimensional nature of connection between the opportunities offered by new media technology and the increasing rate of crime. Major highlights include the benefits of the medium to terrorists especially through its amplification effect (Combs, 2006: 153); violence against women and pornographic media scripts (Longino, 1980); moral panic and drug escalation (Gonzenbach, 1996; Lichter and Lichter, 1989); Youth violence and media coverage (Muncie, 2004); Children aggression and violence (Imhonopi and Urim, 2004: 23; Robert and Tripp, 1886) and; host of other interactions between media and crime. These studies have not been able to examine how the internet can generate negative

sub-culture and how crime emanating from cultures can affect economies of nations and invariably threaten national security.

Consequently, this paper attempts to fill this gap by considering the threat posed by cyber fraud to economic progress and the effects of other cyber crimes on societal values in Nigeria. It situates this threat under two broad theoretical backgrounds. In addition, it considers other intensifiers of crime by seeking causality in the interaction between Nigeria's socio-economic environment and the media influence/effects. Finally, as part of its conclusions, the paper presents an advocacy for people centered democracy and calls for the total overhauling of the existing social arrangement in order to cater for the poor masses.

Mass Media and Development

Throughout the twentieth century, media proliferated and became extended across the world. Its ubiquity attests to its usefulness as a tool for development. Indeed the media is one of the central mechanism through which the processes of globalization have taken place. This period of media proliferation has been described as a period of information revolution (World Bank, 1997). It is an era when the information economy is viewed as growing far above the global economy. Apart from its global impact, the role of the mass media in socio-economic development has also been widely reported by different scholars and these roles have severally been linked to the life of human society (Macionis and Plummer, 2005; Davison et al, 1982; Rivers et al 1980;). Macionis and Plummer (2005: 578) argue that the history of societies can partially be written as the history of media communication. It is also envisioned that without the existence of the media, no change is possible and as the means of communication change so do social lives.

The major developments in human culture and consciousness are linked to changes in our mode of communication. In essence, development has been

viewed as an all-embracing concept with its social, political and economic facets (Odiba, 2005: 213). Oladipo (1996: 13) conceives of development as a process of economic and social advancement which enables people to realize their potentials, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment. It is a process aimed at freeing people from evil of want, ignorance, social injustice and economic exploitation. Soola, (2002) argues that the media possess the potentials both to serve as catalyst and to act as drag in the wheel of development and progress. With the influence of the media, the transformation of human societies as been gradual and in phases: from the oral, to writing and from print to electronic cultures. Social outlook has been tremendously altered through the impact created along this progression line. It should be noticed that it is not only that we spend more and more time talking about and living around various media (television, video, DVD), but media has stretched human progress to include relating with personal computers, the laptop, web domains (occasioning the use of the internet) and the mobile phones thereby generating information that are more and more central to socio-economic advancement but this is not without its negative consequences. In a way, we come to live in the media and it is both changing our internal and external realities.

Theoretical Framework

Media research in the 60's engaged the investigations of the media power in relations to the social context of media consumptions birthing and nurturing crime. The diversion during this period, led to a visible paradigm shift in the explanation of crime causative factors. Notable schools explore sociological approaches to the study of crime and most prominent among these schools include Chicago and Colombia; with the contribution of the later more relevant to our current discourse. One of the prominent scholars of this school R.K Merton (1938) developed strain theory with the intention of portraying the conditions through which the society induces crime and how sub-cultural groups emerge to unleash terror on significant others.

Traditional societies in Merton's view were noted for communalism and peaceful co-existence but the coming of modernity lately represented in globalization occasioned alienation and disorder. Situating this within Durkheim's description, Merton use the word anomie to explain the conditions associated with modernity. Anomie draws attention to the goals that people are encouraged to aspire to, such as comfortable level of wealth or status (Jewkes, 2004). Strain is generated in the course of striking a balance between the social goals and the means available for its attainment. The lacuna created by the society is represented in the disjunction between what the citizenry were made to want and what appear realizable within the human social structure; a condition which explains the existence of myriads of crime in all societies. The gap created because of mal-adjustment to both socially approved standards and acceptable means towards reaching the goals will by necessity cause five adaptation modes. These five modes of adaptation include conformism, innovatism, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion.

The most applicable to this paper is innovatism. In this context, more emphasis is placed on making wealth and being gratified, but far less emphasis on the appropriate means of achieving these desired states. It is this imbalance that can lead some individuals who Merton termed 'innovators' to pursue non-conformist or illegal paths to generate wealth (Adler et al, 2004; Jewkes, 2004; Lilly et al 2002). Consequently, one of the key structures implicated in the internalization of social goals is the mass media, an institution that instills in people the needs and desires that may not be gratifiable by means other than criminal (Jewkes, 2004). This is closely tied to the existence of appetite driven towards conspicuous consumption and the desire for social approval which is rife among Nigerians. Cyber criminality draws inspirations from anomic gratification represented in innovation mode. Criminal within this category are supposedly to be under pressure to pursue peer/social approval, sexual gratification, economic success or wealth through illicit means; feats considered realizable through the surfing of the internet.

New media technology in essence increases the opportunity of gratifying reckless appetites commonly found among cyber criminals. Just as Merton attempts to find explanations to the causative elements in crime; few other scholars also consider the roles played by modern technology in the expansion of crime. The contribution of this set of scholars finds expression in the second theory adopted for this paper. The most central argument in this context revolves around the modernization thesis with major focus on—risk analysis in technological age. In sociological discourse, two theoretical directions can be regarded as the major contending forces in the field of risk and the risk society today. Competing and conflicting at both epistemological and theoretical level, they are not uniform position. This is more so as risk is portrayed as the result of unavoidable dilemmas or paradoxical social situation in which the self-interested actions of the rationally calculating actors create conditions potentially affecting all the participants in a negative way.

The tracing of modern risks to technology in this regard finds expression in the work of Burns and Dietz, (1997). In their submission, technology, negative social practices as well as structural conditions such as economic closure, media influence and unemployment form the major bedrock of risk. Risk involves reflexive modernism with emphasis on the consequences of modernity for individuals, groups and nations. It also featured prominently in the works of Beck, 1992; 1998, Giddens, (1991, 1994; 1999) and; Eder (1996). Considering the nature of risk in modern age therefore, major emphasis can be linked to Becks 1992 and further insights can be drawn from Giddens, (1991, 1994, and 1999). The ultimate aim of rallying together variety of strands in risk analysis is to provide many opportunities towards establishing the vulnerability of media technology in a rapidly globalizing and non-predictable society. Foucault, (1991) posits that risk is not something in reality, but rather a category of the mind whereby human beings understand and order reality.

Engagement in crime because of technological opportunity offered by the internet in essence is a rational attempt towards ordering unpredictable reality of human social environment. Risk revolves around fear and the fatalistic

assumption that future is unknowable. Risk environment is generated by increase social complexity, contingency, ignorance and uncertainty, with modernity constituting unpredictable and uncontrollable evolution of reality (Strydom, 2002). In Beck's assertion, the optimism attendant upon scientific and technological discoveries has to be rewritten, redefined and reinvented (Beck, 1998). Contrary to the eulogistic posture and the celebration of a transitional world often referred to as a flat world, Giddens and Beck assert that modern society is pervaded by risk consciousness and the increased awareness of living in an environment of risk and insecurity nurtured by assumed transformation. People are beginning to realize that failure to take decisive step may possibly generate catastrophic consequences since human society is continually characterized by increasing vulnerability to the unpredictable, unfamiliar and unprecedented risks that may be assuaged through the illicit manipulations of the internet a notion popularly conceived by those within the category of new media crime (Ekberg, 2007).

The tempo of global movement leaves no one in doubt that life's current possesses the tendency of sweeping one under the carpet of social relevance. Society is transforming or assuming what Hiskes (1998) and Lupton (1999) describes as socially constructed risk arena. In this form of society, man is left with no other option than to make choices about self identity (often fatalistic in approach and with grievous consequences), determine and calculate this relations with others and adopt strategies that allow them to get along in an environment seen as excruciating in relation to his quest for survival. Taking risk or venturing is akin to taking one's destiny in one's hand and making resolution to make it against all odds. The situation is characterized by an open field for all fights, with the ends justifying the means. The non-venturing individual loses out while risk-taking men carry the day (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

The theory of the risk society therefore explains the danger and threats directed towards human identity, acute individuation and the defacing or demeaning of being and the onslaught against social values and institutions required for the

ordering of social relationships. Modern media technology therefore provides an avenue for dowsing the tensions inherent in human society. The surfing of the internet brings succor to diverse yearnings of different categories of anti-social beings. The boundariless nature of internet medium both create and assuage individuals of risk—creating risk for those being defrauded and assuaging risks for those creating wealth and deriving gratification through illegal means.

The Role of the Internet in Crime Expansion

Every new technology has brought the promise of a better world, challenging our imagination and enhancing our expectations. In this sense, the internet has been no different and, just as with other technologies of the past, this promise has generated a lot of dilemma for many. However beyond the appreciation of its usefulness, the relationship between internet technology and human social structure has proven not to be metaphysical but quite materialistic instead (Kalathil and Boas, 2003). This is more so as the internet rather than remaining a tool for the enhancement of global economy tend to birth, nurture and reinforce the intensity of risk and insecurity in socio-economic interaction globally. By 1990's, cyberspace had become established as one of the fastest growing sites of crime and transgression (Thomas and Loader, 2000).

The internet has provided wider horizon and more numerous technical means to commit computer crimes. Internet crime has skyrocketed notably in most Third World countries. Crime domain in internet use include illegal intrusion into others' computer facilities, spreading viruses through the internet, stealing or modifying commercial secrets, unlawful transfer of others funds and intentional destruction of parts of the networks by using computer programs (Imhonopi and Urim, 2004: 89). The internet has featured widely among other media technologies as the trading post for prostitution and exploitation,, for the selling of children, and for the tactics of attack amongst much more, and provide hang out space for all sort of people whose 'deviant' or criminal proclivities

might make it difficult for them to place an ad in the local classified column (Brown, 2003). It is a rallying center for all forms of crime. The growth in crime attributable to internet use has been linked to differences in the possession of knowledge relating to the manipulation of the medium. George (2005) assertion on this best captioned Nigeria's situation, "country with lower penetration levels of a technology may, paradoxically, exhibit superior utilization of that medium than a country with higher penetration. Put succinctly, the originating country of a technology may be deluded of its divergent manipulability not until it gets to the reach of technologically deficient nation(s) such as Nigeria who reconfigures its potentials for undetected functioning or at best non-conventional usage." The existence of cyberspace therefore creates an avenue for the perpetration of crime. Internet becomes the domain of crime simply because there is no central authority which checks the volume of interaction going on in the cyberspace (Dawson, 2003). The mechanism is and can be easily manipulated, aggravate risk and renders its users vulnerable. What compounds the current problem is that the cyberspace constitutes a site of disjunction, (a realm which cannot adequately fit into what is traditionally known in the field of criminology) which makes it difficult for crime analysts to arrive at timely and accurate analogies, predictions and solutions owning to the elusive nature of crime perpetrators and the ambiguity in defining characteristics of the media driven types of crime (Morieros, 1993; Karnow, 1994).

Apart from the elusive nature of crime perpetrators, it is quite evident that all goalposts within which crime can be conceptualized are now irrevocably moved, and in the process generating difficulties in understanding media crimes and the medium also enhancing the complexity of the old ones. Cyberspace facilitates the improvement in methods of doing or acting out of old crimes (fraud, sabotage, robbery, prostitution, child trafficking etc.), distorts the nature of such crimes

and further conceals the identity of the perpetrators making both old and new crime difficult to control. As the domain of crime (located in world cities) has hitherto exemplify disorderliness and 'ungovernable spaces' so also does the cyberspace in this period of late modernity (Lash and Urry, 1994).

New Media, Crime and Nigeria's Socio- Environment

One way of measuring the success or failure of a state in modern societies is to assess how successful a state is in developing the conditions for satisfying the basic needs of the people they govern. There are varieties of ways through which a state can address the yearnings of her citizens and these are often encapsulated in the provision of quality living standards for the enhancement of individual and group goal realization efforts. Taylor (1992) opines that the ability of the state to help facilitate good living for its citizens is predicated or dependent on the style or approach adopted towards the attainment of such goals. In a way, just as there are manners in which modern state can guarantee good living for the citizens, there are also myriads of factors that can make such lofty goals unrealizable.

Okah, (2002) opines that the factors responsible for ignoring corporate social responsibility in developing countries such as Nigeria, consists of several contradictions that reduce the bargaining power of the state vis-à-vis economic deplorableness, inflation, corruption, none/limited productivity channels, lack of industrial base, absence of basic infrastructures, erratic power supplies etc. These deficiencies attributable to state failure account for the attitudinal change directed towards seeking alternatives ways to making life more bearable among Nigerians. Crime in essence becomes the best option for negligible few as far as the environment is economically bad and the social climate is supportive of negative innovations in which the existence of displaced values became the centerpiece of crime. Consequently, in Nigeria, possession of wealth is celebrated and honour is often conferred on those who did not earn it through the legal means.

The need to remain relevant becomes the driving force triggering rational approach to perceived annihilating situation. The expansion lately recorded in the area of new media crime is a reflection of the overall social decay pervading Nigeria's environment. People arrive at a decision to engage in this new category of crime after assessing the family environment as depicting hopelessness and the state environment not helping matters in most expectable areas.

The perception of belonging to the worse socio-economic predicament and several experiences of scuttled aspirations inform the drove towards internet crime. This medium not only enables perpetuators to wrestle their survival from what they have perceived or evaluated as totally unfriendly society but also confer gratification to many in other areas viewed as important to the definers. The existence of strain caused by economic closure explains the rallying together of crime prone sub-cultural groups and their ultimate resorts to the adoption of social vices as a way of life. The hopelessness generated by Nigeria's socio-economic climate of mass unemployment, deprivation, hunger, starvation and poverty affects the approach severally recorded in the adoption of anti-social behavioral choices. It is very clear that the medium of cyber space creates avenue for money making both legally and illegally and it functions to socialize people towards imbibing the ethos of amoral living. Human resolutions on "what next" carries both positive and negative consequences.

Decision to engage in internet crime for instance consist of the hope that success in this area is capable of warding off predatory factors inherent in economic backwardness of Nigeria It is equally capable of generating self satisfaction among the affected group. The correlation between group members' economic situation (pulling people of similar situation together) and personal need to ameliorate the excruciating economic problems invariably accounts for the adoption of crime as suitable alternative which is driven by quest for personal gains. It also involves the belief that other persons have manipulated the medium and consummates the unlawful opportunities the internet offers. Research as shown that individuals are influenced not only by the behavior of

significant others in the social environment but even more so by the behaviors of those we hold similar attributes and dispositions (Philips, 1980; Philips and Cartensen, 1986).

To this end, people into cyber crime activism engage in it in part because of prevalent norms among the economic battered group and in part to get going under the excruciating socio-economic climate in Nigeria. Studies have revealed that individuals will participate in behaviors that benefit them (Festinger, 1954; Rosenberg, 1961). For fraudsters and hackers, cyber space creates or provides an enterprising environment and for those into pornography and cyber prostitution it supplies the sexual satisfaction required. The benefits accruable through participation in cyber related crime remains the propelling force attracting many unemployed or under-employed people to utilize the medium to ward off financial embarrassment. The ingenuity of significant number of social actors operating undetected and simultaneously amazing wealth becomes a reference point upon which potential fraudsters and cyber criminals base their decision or justify their participation in cyber related crime.

This situation is not without an imprint of visible or measurable negative implications for human socio-economic interaction. In addition, borrowing from Carey, "All social change is purchased at a price and there are no free lunches, to put in a colloquial way. Securing what we want always entails giving up something we also want. Every gain is simultaneous a loss. Noting is lineal or cumulative" (Carey, 1988). Arguably, the internet has brought significant advancement into the realm of human interactions and one thing that appears certain is that its uses are not without a cost. Quantifying the cost, Fair and Shah (1997: 25) opine that the existence of the new media not only serves as a purveyor of socio-economic progress and a means of overcoming underdevelopment, but also tends to introduce some elements of underdevelopment. The advent of internet technology for example has expanded the rate of insecurity in all spheres of human endeavors introducing different shades of anti-social behaviors encapsulated under the term cyber crime. Cyber

crime involves illegal activities that are aimed at national and international economies as well as political and social relations and structures, thereby jeopardizing and putting at risk not only political and economic life but personal everyday life. The ontology of security is virtually displaced in the operation of global trade.

Victimization level has increased and trust needed to consummate economic benefits both locally and globally is gradually evaporating thus moving it beyond human comprehension. The internet has also made junks the social values we cherish and into which we subscribe as rational beings. Pornography is gradually becoming the norm among Nigeria's youths and prostitution; child trafficking; unleashing terror via the internet and spam messages is fast becoming shared experiences. This is more so as the 'new' man and woman of the 'new age' created by virtual space strikes one as the same mixture of moral decadence, greed, pride, arrogance, and hostility that we encounter in both history and experience (Carey, 2005). Apart from its gains and the eulogies that attended its uses therefore, the latent function of the internet has taught us again of the fragility of politics, the brittleness of economy and the vulnerability of the new world order. Its other side effects represent a quantifiable threat and a direct affront against the mandatory social order required for the functioning of modern society.

Conclusion and Pragmatic Solutions

In considering the role of modern information and communication technologies to development of nations, one should not ignore its numerous benefits to global economic revolution. The transformation of contemporary economies is closely knitted to the advancement in the information society. The major contributions of the new media technology to the evolution of socio-structural patterns across several societies has consistently occasioned the birthing and sustenance of more egalitarian society founded on primacy of new forms of knowledge for meeting life challenges and vastly expanding opportunities for accessing and exchanging information for the overall benefit of people along diverse cultures (Bellamy and Taylor, 2003).

It is quite true that this achievements are not without its shortcomings and this limitations is mostly represented in human factors; but it is also more true to note that media technologies if directed towards its intended function will likely generate many anticipated progress required in modern day society. To achieve this, it is expected that there should be a concerted effort at both macro and micro levels. Just as the government has a role to play, so do the civil society and significant individuals need contribute to sustain the ongoing revolution. Governments for instance must not only put in place high level policy agenda on the use or exploitation of resources accessible within the information superhighways but should also be able to wake-up to the realities that such medium can help reduce the increasing rate of unemployment among the citizens.

In Nigeria for example, it is most likely that new media industries and related professions can absorb significant portion of redundant youths and as well correct the magnitude of under-employment rampaging the labour market. By engaging the educative function of government, instantiated through public sponsored training and after-training marketing of ICT skills both locally and internationally, the possibility of raising the already battered hope; (a syndrome peculiar to Nigeria's youths) tend to reduce the volume of cyber crime in Nigeria. It is obvious that substantial portion of Nigeria's youths know how to manipulate the computers to generate varieties of socio-economic results, that does not foreclose the fact that most youths may possibly not know where such expertise can be marketed and ultimate bring financial rewards outside the already known unconventional sources. The democratic government should be able to direct and to channel the efforts of a lot of these unemployed men and women into more rewarding productive ventures. The democratic institution in Nigeria should also address myriads of factors undermining social values. These will include instituting predictable medium for public accountability, reduction of corruption, sensibility to the plights of the masses, avowed commitment to welfaristic policies, formulating and implementing programmes

that is most likely to cushion the effects of socio-economic challenges presently confronting the nation and exhibit utmost sincerity in dealing with the populace. At the micro level, the civil society, consisting of voluntary and autonomous associations are expected to renew their commitment towards bringing into existence a resettled normative order and help guarantee the furtherance of common good. Their major roles in this regard consist of bringing down the barriers to responsive governance, annihilate corruption by pressurizing accountability and transparency and in the process restore the sanctity of our social values. The right step towards this direction will go a long way in creating a sense of mutual belongingness and social commitment to revered values by those living or operating outside the social expectations.

The need for a national rebirth is also important at the grassroots. It is a call to all and sundries to embrace attitudinal change by developing a sense of trust in the existing social structure and as well co-operate with the democratic government in bringing about the much-desired change. The expected role of the media in this regard is intensification of jingling the news/programmes content that will usher in the anticipated attitudinal change in both government and the people at the grassroots.

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