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# Cultural Implications of ICTs and Globalization in the Nigerian Society

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## Abstract

The cultural implications of globalization and ICTs on developing societies continue to generate heated arguments. Inferring from data gathered from empirical studies, this paper argues that the potential influence of globalization and ICTs on the culture of the Nigerian society is unduly exaggerated in favour of cultural imperialism arguments. The paper also submits that the major arguments of cultural imperialism are now socially irrelevant, theoretically moribund and conceptually deficient. The paper concludes that globalization and ICTs are helping the growth of local cultures, leading to socio-cultural development of such a society, as against the much touted cultural imperialism.

**Key Words:** Culture, Globalization, ICTs, Cultural Imperialism, Cultural Development, Developing Societies, Nigeria.

## Introduction

Cultural debates that revolve around globalization and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are always controversial and emotionally laden. This is because national cultures are very important to most citizens and their leaders, and so, protecting them is a highly sensitive and politicized issue. The second reason why such debates have remained controversial and relevant in this century is also because the impact of globalization on culture and the impact of culture on globalization merit discussion. The homogenizing influences of globalization that are most often condemned by the new nationalists and by cultural romanticists are positive; globalization promotes integration and the removal not only of cultural barriers but of many of the negative dimensions of culture.

First, what do these issues stand for? Culture is the totality of the complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. Taylor (cited in Ekeanyanwu, 2005) sees it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of that society". The World Book Encyclopedia (2005) also views culture as consisting of all the ideas, objects and ways of doing things created by a group. These include arts, beliefs, customs, innovations, language, technology and tradition. It also consists of learned ways of acting, feeling and thinking rather than biologically determined ways. Culture in this sense includes creative expression (e.g., oral history, language, literature, performing arts, fine arts, and crafts), community practices (e.g., traditional healing methods, traditional natural resource

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management, celebrations, and patterns of social interaction that contribute to group and individual welfare and identity), the traditional remote control mechanisms (from sorcery and witchcraft) and material or built forms such as sites, buildings, historic city centres, landscapes, art, and objects (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

This definition of culture by the World Book Encyclopedia particularly underscores our view that the greater or the more influential part of what makes up culture is acquired or learned, and not in-born or innate. The implication of this is that culture could be learned, acquired, experienced or transferred from one place to another through various ways and means. One of the most influential of these ways is through the mass media. This is where communication and the mass media play a significant role in the transmission of culture (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

Culture is not an abstraction; it is a living, open totality that evolves by constantly integrating individual and collective choices that are taken in interaction with other similar wholes. It expresses itself in diverse ways without being reducible to ordinary works. Culture is the product of a complex inheritance constantly submitted to critical scrutiny and the need to adapt, a constant conquest to achieve.

Globalization, on its own part, is seen as a comprehensive term for the emergence of a global society in which economic, political, environmental, and cultural events in one part of the world quickly come to have significance for people in other parts of the world. Globalization is the result of advances in communication, transportation, and information technologies. It describes the growing economic, political, technological, and cultural linkages that connect individuals, communities, businesses, and governments around the world (Microsoft Encarta Reference Library, 2005). Broadly speaking, globalization refers to trans-border inter-connectedness in all spheres of the economy, politics, trade, culture, industry, services and communication. It indicates a world in which complex economic, political, social and cultural processes operate and interact without any influence of national boundaries and distance (Joseph, 2006). The concept implies that development in any part of the world can have far-reaching consequences in other parts of the world too.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), on the other hand, bring the idea of globalization to a better understanding as it relates to the media. The effects of the revolution in ICTs on modern global information flows are overwhelming. With the onset of the post-industrial age, nation-states are co-players and stakeholders in the process of globalization along with Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on the world political stage. Communication technology is the coordinating platform that links all players and stakeholders in the process of globalization.

Soola (1998) notes that ICT provides near limitless possibilities of increasing the quantity, and enhancing the quality, speed and availability of information in a complex but increasingly interdependent world of business. Adaja (2007) also notes that ICT "is basically the application of modern technologies to information generation, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination to meet the needs and requirements of individuals, groups, organizations, governments and societies. It guarantees accuracy, efficiency, prompt and instantaneous transmission or distribution of information".

Friedman (2005) states that the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be remembered for a whole new world of globalization - a flattening of the world. He seeks to reconfigure the whole globalized world as flat in the sense that the entire world is a level playing field with easy enough exits and entrances. The globalized world is entering a new phase where more people than ever before are going to have access to ICTs facilities as innovators, collaborators, and even as terrorists (Joseph, 2006). Friedman (2005) further argues that every where one turns to, hierarchies are being challenged from below or transforming themselves from top down structures into a more horizontal and collaborative entities.

This flattening process is happening at unusual speed and directly or indirectly touching a lot more people on planet at once.

It is interesting at this point to observe that McLuhan (1964) had predicted 45 years ago the emergence of this situation when he visualized a dispersed media structure "whose centres are everywhere and margins are nowhere". Today, globalization and ICTs have led to the emergence not only of a global village but also of a global family and community now sharing common values, economic cum political ideologies and socio-cultural orientations irrespective of their places of geographical provenance, race, language and socio-economic status (Ekeanyanwu, 2008). Rothkop (1997) in his remarks to justify the place of new communication technologies to today's world states that much has been written about the role of information technologies and services in this process. According to him, 15 major U.S. telecommunications companies, including giants like Motorola, Loral Space & Communications, and Teledesic (a joint project of Microsoft's Bill Gates and cellular pioneer Craig McCaw), offer competing plans that will encircle the globe with a constellation of satellites and will enable anyone anywhere to communicate instantly with anyone elsewhere without an established telecommunications infrastructure on the ground near either the sender or the recipient. Continuing, Rothkop (1997:98) observes that:

Technology no doubt, is not only transforming the world; it is creating its own metaphors as well. Satellites carrying television signals now enable people on opposite sides of the globe to be exposed regularly to a wide range of cultural stimuli. Russian viewers are hooked on Latin soap operas and Middle Eastern leaders have cited CNN as a prime source for even local news.

This paper is about the cultural implications of ICTs and globalization in the Nigerian society. Two schools of thought are clearly distinguishable here; and the third is emerging. Opponents of globalization argue that the playing field is not level. Free trade naturally favours larger economies, they say, and so the predominant western influence stifles the cultures and traditions of the developing world. Free traders also argue that globalization enhances culture, and that, in any event, culture cannot thrive in poverty. Both sides generally agree that subsidies, tariffs and other protectionist policies by developed countries against goods commonly produced in the developing nations (textiles, for example) hamper both culture and economic growth there. Furthermore, globalization's advocates say that free trade and free markets do not dilute or pollute other cultures, they enhance them. Trade creates wealth, they say. Wealth frees the world's poorest people from the daily struggle for survival, and allows them to embrace, celebrate and share the art, music, crafts and literature that might otherwise have been sacrificed to poverty (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

So who is right? Is globalization killing non-western cultures, or is it augmenting and enhancing them? In this controversy, the third school of thought emerges. This school, according to Robertson (1992) attempts to draw a middle ground in the controversy. It believes that globalization could be made more acceptable and meaningful to local or indigenous situations notwithstanding the inherent dangers in it. The proponents of this emerging school of thought, therefore, advocates for glocalization.

From the aspect of worker exploitation, globalization is evil. From the aspects of technological and cultural transfer, globalization is beneficial. And from the middle-of-the-road view, globalization could lead to glocalization, which is acceptable and has the potential to bring the other two opposing viewpoints together. According to Tardif (2002a), the two earlier voices of globalization can be heard throughout the world because they both have an impact and create a tone that strengthens the voice of globalization from pole to pole. Majorities in every nation surveyed report that over the past five years, there has been increased availability of foreign movies, television programs and music. And in more than half of those countries, the globalization of

culture has been intensive, with people saying there is a lot more foreign culture available to them. This trend is particularly evident in Central America, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. Tardiff (2002a:23) provides research statistics to support his claims thus:

Roughly nine-in-ten people see greater availability of foreign pop culture in several countries: Ukraine (94%), Lebanon (92%), Vietnam (92%), Indonesia (90%), Nigeria (89%) and Senegal (88%). In Ukraine, nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) in a recent study say there has been a large increase in the availability of foreign movies, television programs and music.

Continuing, Tardif (2002a) states that countries that are prominent cultural exporters – such as the United States and France – are somewhat less likely to see increased availability of cultural exports from other parts of the world. Overall, about six-in-ten Americans (62%) say foreign movies, television and music have become more available compared with five years before then, but just four-in-ten say they are a lot more available. Roughly the same number in France (64%) sees greater availability of foreign popular culture – the lowest percentage in Western Europe.

Judging the long-term socio-cultural impacts of ICT and globalization is extraordinarily difficult. As Arthur C. Clarke (cited in Cairncross, 2000) once said, people exaggerate the short-run impacts of technological change and underestimate the long-run effects. Really big technological changes permeate our homes, our personal relationships, our daily habits, the way we think and speak. We must note that new technological developments have consequences that nobody could have imagined when they were new. The revolution in communications technologies will have results and consequences that are just pervasive, intimate, and surprising (Cairncross, 2000).

### **Problem Statement**

Globalization and ICTs are two contemporary concepts that have been defining media/cultural related studies since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Globalization seeks to bring all peoples of the world into one large community. It is also seen as a comprehensive term for the emergence of a global society in which economic, political, environmental, and cultural events in one part of the world quickly come to have significance and meaning for people in other parts of the world. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), on the other hand, is the vehicle through which this objective is realized.

The cultural implications of globalization aided by ICTs in the Nigerian society raise an interesting debate and also pose a challenge to 21<sup>st</sup> century scholars of media/cultural tradition. Scholars such as Hamelink (1983), Schiller (1992), Huntington (1996), and Bienefeld (2005), are of the opinion that globalization and ICT are gradually eroding local cultural values and replacing them with alien values while Reich (1992), Wang (1996), Wilson (1998) and Zwizwai (1999) and others are of the opinion that globalization and ICT have actually enriched local cultural values with positive foreign influences. Both sides have always provided facts to argue their cases and the controversy generated by them remains fluid.

The controversial nature of these issues cannot be isolated from their peculiar influence, which affects peoples' lifestyles and their total way of life-culture. Technology has now created the possibility and even the likelihood of a global culture. The Internet, fax machines, satellites, and cable TV are sweeping away cultural boundaries. Global entertainment companies shape the perceptions and dreams of ordinary citizens, wherever they live. This spread of values, norms, and culture, no doubt, tends to promote western ideals of capitalism. Will local cultures, therefore, inevitably fall victim to this global "consumer" culture? Will English language, for instance, eradicate all other languages? Will consumer values overwhelm peoples' sense of communal living and social solidarity? Or, on the contrary, will a common culture lead the way to greater shared

values and political unity encapsulated in a global culture? Opinions on these questions differ and so, the problems raised by them will form the basis for the further enquiry into the subject.

### **Study Objectives**

The major aim of this study is to find out the cultural implications of globalization and ICTs on developing societies. The study also aims to highlight the major issues in the ICTs-culture debate and explore all the possibilities inherent in globalization and ICTs. Furthermore, this study will attempt to determine whether Nigerian media professionals prefer the media industry in the pre – ICTs and globalization era or they prefer the industry in the era of ICTs. It is also one of the major aims of this study to examine whether globalization and ICTs have the capacity to enrich local cultures or help to disintegrate and erode local cultural values.

### **Research Questions**

To place the problems of this study into proper perspective, four research questions were raised.

1. How true is the assumption that most Nigerian media professionals trained in Nigeria in the 20<sup>th</sup> century still prefer the use of conventional media technologies to the new media technologies because of negative cultural implications?
2. How convincing are the facts which suggest that communication technologies are major carriers of culture?
3. Will globalization and the use of ICTs lead to the displacement and/or disintegration of Nigerian indigenous cultural values and practices?
4. Are globalization and ICTs tools promoting cultural development in the Nigerian society or cultural imperialism?

### **Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

The cultural implications of globalization and ICTs in the Nigerian society could be argued from diverse theoretical perspectives. Such perspectives come from the diverse positions taken by different schools of thought who have argued differently on the potential influence of globalization and ICT on the culture of developing societies. Some of these theoretical models include intercultural communication theory, international flow of information theory, knowledge gap hypothesis, cultural imperialism theory, media dependency theory, information society theory etc (Ekeanyanwu, 2008). However, Technological Determinism and the Individual Differences theories were used to clarify the writers' position on the emerging issues.

Technological determinism as a term was first used by Innis (1950) before McLuhan (1964) elaborated on it and built a theory out of it. According to Innis (1950), the nature of media technology prevailing in a society at a particular point in time greatly influences how the members of that society think, act and behave. Books and other print media, for example, are said to promote cause-effect thinking in societies where print dominate, because the technology of print forces a linear form of presentation either across or up down a page. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) therefore state that from McLuhan's thinking, television should be characterized as a "cool" medium because of its capacity for rich configurations of audiovisual stimuli, which elicits high but passive audience participation. From the technological determinist's perspective, the most important characteristic of the audience-media encounter is the technological properties of the medium. Thus, McLuhan asserts, "The medium is the message" (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982).

McLuhan in this theory believes that all social, economic, political and cultural changes are innately based on the development and diffusion of technology. This argument draws the attention of media audience to the hidden effects/influence of communications technologies. This theory in essence regards our present cultural challenges as a direct result of the information explosion fostered by the television, computer and the Internet (Griffins, 1991). This theory, therefore, suggests that the historical, economic, and cultural changes in the world are traceable to the invention, development and diffusion of ICTs. According to DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982:185), most people would reject McLuhan's claim that the content of media messages have no impact on audiences. Essentially, media theorists reject the extreme form of technological determinism put forth by McLuhan for two reasons. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982:185) summarized these reasons thus:

Social scientists generally reject the idea that any single factor - be it technology, the economy, or chromosomes - can be the single cause of social behaviour. This distrust of single-factor theories is buttressed by theory and research developments that demonstrate the influence of both psychological and social factors on the individual's or group's encounters with the mass media.

Continuing, DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) note that Innis's thesis need not be rejected out of hand stating that most media theorists would accept the proposition that the technological characteristics of a mass medium may be one of many factors that should be taken into account. However, others see technology as more or less neutral and claim that the way people use technology is what gives it significance and meaning. This school of thought accepts technology as one of the many factors that shape economic and cultural change; technology's influence is ultimately determined by how much power it is given by the people and cultures that use it (Baran, 2002). Baran's position reflects the views of the present researchers necessitating the adoption of the theory as a theoretical framework for the study. In furtherance of his views, Baran (2002:22) raises a fundamental question:

Are we more or less powerless in the wake of advances like the Internet, the World Wide Web, instant global audio and visual communication? If we are at the mercy of technology, the culture that surrounds us will not be of our making, and the best we can hope to do is to make our way reasonably well in a world outside our own control. But if these technologies are indeed neutral and their power resides in how we choose to use them, we can utilize them responsively and thoughtfully to construct and maintain whatever kind of culture we want.

If we further analyze Baran's position here, it will mean that the accusation leveled against globalization and ICTs that they are leading to cultural imperialism is misleading and misrepresentative. The power of technology is in the use to which it is put, not in its very nature. Therefore, we can apply it to suit our cultural needs; not it compelling us to follow its own dictates or the dictates of the owners of such technology as suggested by some anti-western media scholars who always argue in favour of cultural imperialism as the main result of the influence of globalization and the role of new communication technologies.

The second theory that will help us argue our position in this paper is the Individual Differences Theory. The theory, according to DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982), explains why individuals are likely going to selectively and actively attend to media messages or content that particularly relate to their interests, consistent with their attitudes, congruent with their beliefs, and supportive of their values. They also note that responses to such messages are usually modified by the psychological makeup of the individual exposed to the media messages. These selective processes are usually analyzed under the auspices of the Individual Differences Theory.

Rather than being uniform among the mass audience, the manner in which audience members are exposed to media content could now be seen as varying from person to person because of individual differences in psychological structure. According to Udofia (2001), further investigations about this theory reveal that people only selected information which is consistent with their attitudes and frames of reference, thus rendering the Hypodermic Needle/Bullet model not only illogical but also simplistic. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) also note that human beings varied greatly in their personnel-psychological organization. These variations in part began with differential biological endowment, but they were due in greater measure to differential learning. From these learning environments they acquired a set of attitudes, values, and beliefs that constituted their cognitive makeup and set each person somewhat different from others.

Added to this increasing recognition of human psychological modifiability and differentiation was the recognition that personality variables acquired from the social milieu provided a basis for individual differences in perception. The experimental study of human perception had revealed that values, needs, beliefs, and attitudes played an influential role in determining how stimuli are selected from the environment, and how meaning is attributed to those stimuli. Consequently, perception differed systematically from one person to another according to the nature of individual personality structure. Subsequently, the principle of selective attention and perception was formulated as a fundamental proposition regarding the way ordinary persons confronted the content of the mass media (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982).

Following from this review of supportive theories, the literature review will be brief. Globalization's advocates argue that wealth invigorates culture, and that trade and access to international markets are the best ways to create wealth. They point out that the Internet, for example, has given developing peoples all over the world a low-cost way of bringing crafts, textiles, and art to western consumers. However, there are some scholars who maintain that a global culture is on the rise. The idea goes back to Marshall McLuhan's slippery concept of the "global village" (McLuhan 1964; McLuhan and Fiore 1967), later picked up by some influential marketing researchers (Levitt, 1983) who argue that the world is increasingly populated by cosmopolitan consumers. Leslie (1991) writes that a "culture-ideology of consumerism", driven by symbols, images, and the aesthetic of the lifestyle and the self-image, has spread throughout the world and is having some momentous effects, including the standardization of tastes and desires, and even the fall of the Soviet order.

Sociologists have argued that the emergence of a global-culture has the capacity to bind society and individuals together. This according to Meyer *et. al.* (1997:162) could be done "by rationalized systems of (imperfectly) egalitarian justice and participatory representation, in the economy, polity, culture, and social interaction". Critics of world-society theory agree on this count in that there is no such thing as a "global civil society." Communication and transportation technology is not enough to account for the rise of cross-border advocacy groups (Keck and Sikkink 1998), although "global governance" of major aspects of transportation and communication has been on the rise since 1850 (Murphy, 1994).

Political and social theorists and historians have noted the rise of what modernists would call "particularistic" identities as evidence against the rise of a global culture. Cox (1996:27) writes about globalization producing a "resurgent affirmation of identities," while Waters (1995:124) contrasts a cultural and "religious mosaic" with global cultural production and consumption of music, images and information. Mazlish (1993:14) notes, "Ethnic feeling is a powerful bond," and skeptically asked, "What counterpart can there be on the global level?" Yashar (1999), cited in (<http://www.glocalforum.org>) rejects the "global culture" and "global citizenship" concepts but also finds fault with the argument that globalization has induced the proliferation of ethnic movements. In her comparison



of indigenous movements in Latin America, Yashar clearly demonstrates that no aspect of globalization: economic, political, social or normative, can account for the rise of ethnic-based activism since the 1960s. Rather, globalization changes the characteristics of the states that activists face in making their claims.

Some of the most persuasive arguments against the idea of the emergence of a global culture come from Clifford Geertz. He observes that the world is “growing more global and more divided, more thoroughly interconnected and more intricately partitioned at the same time.... All these vast connections and intricate interdependence are sometimes referred to, after cultural studies sloganeers, as the ‘global village’, or, after World Bank ones, as ‘borderless capitalism’. But as it has neither solidarity nor tradition, neither edge nor focus, and lacks all wholeness, it is a poor sort of village” (Geertz, 1998:107-108). Similarly, Smith (1980:171) opens his essay on global culture with what he called the “initial problem” with the concept:

Can we speak of ‘culture’ in the singular? If by ‘culture’ is meant a collective mode of life, or a repertoire of beliefs, styles, values and symbols, then we can only speak of cultures, never just culture; for a collective mode of life, or a repertoire of beliefs, etc., presupposes different modes and repertoires in a universe of modes and repertoires. Hence, the idea of a ‘global culture’ is a practical impossibility, except in interplanetary terms.

Appadurai (1996) aptly articulates the anthropological approach to the global. He argues, “Individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern,” and writes about the “global modern.” In his view, the central features of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another and thereby proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular. Drawing on anthropological work and his own research, Portes (1997:3) proposes the term “transnational communities” to refer to cross-border networks of immigrants that are “‘neither here nor there’ but in both places simultaneously” (see also Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt, 1999). Different transnational communities, however, exhibit different origins, features and problems, and certainly do not form a monolithic global class of cosmopolitan citizens.

Similarly to Portes, Friedman (1994) accepts Geertz’s, Smith’s and Appadurai’s basic notion of cultural fragmentation, but argues that in today’s world the existence of tribal societies cannot be correctly understood without explaining how they are embedded in global networks. In his view, cultural diversity must be seen in a global context. There remains the ultimate question about the alleged rise of a global culture: What is the global language? The diffusion of Esperanto has certainly not delivered on early expectations, and the “English-as-global-language” argument seems equally far-fetched and indefensible. As Mazlish (1993:16) observes, “English is becoming a sort of *Lingua Franca* [but] there are serious limitations to the use of English as the daily language of a global culture.” Moreover, English is being challenged as the dominant language in parts of the United States and the United Kingdom. It is also instructive to recall that the most successful world language ever, Latin, evolved into a mosaic of Romance languages after spreading in its various vulgarized forms throughout most of Western and Central Europe, Northwestern Africa and Asia Minor.

Another vital point in favour of globalization and ICTs comes from the argument of the opponents of the cultural development school of thought. They note that with globalization and developments in ICTs, American culture and English language will swamp their cultures and traditional industries. But these fears are unfounded. According to Cairncross (2000: 279):

Electronic media affect language in three main ways. They alter the way language is used, they create a need for a global language that will most likely be filled by English, and they influence the future of other languages. In the last case, one of the main impacts of new communications will be to lower the entry barriers to cultural industries such as television and movie-making.

Critics of the cultural imperialist argument contend that the flow of information from the global North to the global South results in an intermingling of cultures, rather than the dominance of one culture over another. Prior to the Internet, European and Asian countries were concerned about the influence of American television and film, believing that American popular entertainment would undermine the growth of local pop-culture. However, it was found that foreign entertainment often took a secondary place among a domestic audience, especially when language differences require the programmes to be either dubbed or subtitled. European audiences viewed American programming only when they felt that the quality of programming in their local channels was poor (See Thompson on <http://llc.edu/student/globalization.htm>).

Furthermore, the argument that cultural goods impose the values of one culture on another, assumes an audience with a rather passive response to media messages. It also assumes that culture is passive rather than active and dynamic. This view is erroneous with the discarding of the mass society and bullet theory notions. In other words, this idea assumes a "hypodermic" model effect of the media, where audiences are influenced by any media message that is communicated to them. In contrast, most research findings suggest that audiences actually have an active reading to any message - critiquing and analyzing ideological messages, and interpreting them to fit within their own cultural contexts. Studies in the Latin American countries have shown that local cultures 'interact' with foreign ones, creating a hybridization of the two, instead of a subjugation of the local culture by the foreign one.

Tardif (2002b) in another related work notes that globalization's advocates say that free trade and free markets don't dilute or pollute other cultures, they enhance them. Trade creates wealth, they say. Wealth frees the world's poorest people from the daily struggle for survival, and allows them to embrace, celebrate and share the art, music, crafts and literature that might otherwise have been sacrificed to poverty. We must recognize that relationships between cultures and societies are no longer mediated primarily by states. Is it acceptable that they are now submitted to market rules, to the goals of profitability and more oriented to the homogenization of products created in the few huge studios that manufacture the world's dreams? Today it is the media, the primary channels for cultural globalization that are at the heart of issues about cultural pluralism, given their economic power and their influence on our symbolic order. Technological development has made cultural exchanges continuous at planetary level with unprecedented rapidity and amplitude. There are vast new possibilities for the enrichment of different cultures in this (Tardif, 2002b).

Another positive effect of globalization is the cross-reference of culture that it promotes around the world. The spread of culture is evident in many aspects of life in many countries. Globalization allows for Americans to eat Italian food, for rural Vietnamese farmers to watch the daily news on television, for Frenchmen and women to eat fast food, for Germans to watch American-made movies, and for Japanese to listen to Scottish music. There are other signs that western "cultural hegemony" might be a bit overstated, too. For example, European anti-globalization activists have long criticized Hollywood and its big-budget studios for monopolizing the world movie industry and, consequently, polluting other cultures with American iconolatry. But according to a worldwide 1999 BBC poll, the most famous movie star in the world is not Ben Affleck or

Julia Roberts, but Amitabh Bachchan, an Indian film star probably unfamiliar to most Americans.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2002) also called on "stakeholders" in countries stretching from North Africa to Central Asia and the subcontinent to embrace globalization and improve human development. In the speech delivered on his behalf at the start of the three-day Dubai Strategy Forum, Annan (2002) notes that the problems plaguing humanity transcends borders and as global interdependence deepens, trade and communications should stitch the human family more closely together. In his conclusion, Annan (2002) says rising to these and other challenges requires a greater sense of shared responsibility and global citizenship (<http://www.globalpolicyforum.org>).

The Pew Research Center (2002) also arrived at the following conclusions in its grand breaking study on the impact of globalization. Overwhelming majorities of those surveyed - at least two-thirds of the public in every country except Jordan and Tanzania - think it is a good thing that their countries are becoming more connected with the world through trade and communication. For the most part, however, enthusiasm for the connected world is tempered. In most countries, majorities surveyed think growing connectedness is at least somewhat good for their nation, not very good. People in Africa, stand out for their strong embrace of globalization. Majorities in seven of ten African nations surveyed have very positive views of increased global trade and communication, including 71% in Uganda and roughly two-thirds in Nigeria and Kenya (68%, 67%) (<http://www.globalpolicyforum.org>).

### **Method of Study**

The survey research design was used in the gathering, analysis and interpretation of data. For the primary population of study, 540 respondents (20% of media professionals) from 20 media organizations based in Lagos, Nigeria were sampled to determine their perception of the cultural implications of globalization and ICTs in the Nigeria society. The secondary sources of data include interviews with media educators in Nigerian higher institutions of learning, observations, focus group discussion with some media audience, and review of relevant literature.

A sample of the media houses was selected using the simple random sampling technique after they were stratified into print and broadcast media organizations. The same simple random sampling technique was also used to select the respondents for the study. A questionnaire was used as the main instrument of data collection. The choice of Lagos, Nigeria, is based on the fact that it today has the most developed, vibrant and dynamic media industry in Africa (African Media Directory, 1996) cited in Ekeanyanwu (2008). In all, five TV stations, five radio stations, six newspaper houses and four newsmagazine organizations were selected and studied. Media professionals were used as primary respondents for this study because they are daily exposed to ICTs in their day-to-day operations. These media professionals include practitioners such as editors, columnists, correspondents, broadcasters, reporters, producers, information technology staff, programme officers, cartoonists, advert officers, and studio operators.

### **Results**

The results presented and discussed below are the summaries of the findings from the survey of media professionals based in Lagos, Nigeria; media educators in Nigerian higher institutions of learning, observations, focus group discussion with some media audience, and review of relevant literature. So, our first research question attempted to find out if the respondents prefer new media technologies to conventional media. The responses are summarized in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Media Professionals' Preference of ICTs to Conventional Media**

Response	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
Disagree	13.7%
Undecided	2.2%
Agree	3.7%
Strongly Agree	80.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
	<b>N=540</b>

The responses from the secondary sources also supported the professionals' views as presented in Table 1. The media professionals were also asked how convincing are the facts which suggest that communication technologies are major carriers of culture? Table 2 represents the responses from the survey.

**Table 2: Perception of Globalization and ICT as Transmitters of Cultural Products**

Responses	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
Disagree	7.4%
Undecided	9.3%
Agree	37.0%
Strongly Agree	46.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
	<b>N=540</b>

To reiterate the position stated in Table 2 above, 95% of the professionals also said they strongly agreed that communication was a major carrier of cultural values. This was against the view of the remaining 5% who said communication might not actually be a major carrier of culture. With this, there is no doubt that the media professionals perceive globalization, ICTs and by implication, communication as major carriers of cultural products. The responses from the secondary participants did not suggest otherwise.

However, the primary concern of the study was to find out if globalization and ICTs have any impact on cultures. The result is presented in Table 3 below:

**Table 3: Do ICTs And Globalization Trends Impact Cultures?**

Responses	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2.6%
Disagree	0.0%
Undecided	10.7%
Agree	74.1%
Strongly Agree	12.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
	<b>N=540</b>

The majority of the professionals also see these foreign cultural products/values as helpful to the indigenous cultures. This conclusion is drawn from the results, which show 63% of the respondents strongly agreeing to the issue in question, 20% were undecided and about 17% disagreed with such view. This is presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Media Professionals' Perception that Foreign Cultural Values in the Media are Helpful to Indigenous Cultures**

Response	Percent
Strongly Disagree	9.3%
Disagree	7.4%
Undecided	20.4%
Agree	0.0%
Strongly Agree	63.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The fourth research question focused on the core essence of this study. Do globalization and ICTs tools promote cultural development in developing societies or cultural imperialism? The result for this particular question is presented on Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Media Professionals' Perception that ICTs and Globalization could lead to the Growth of Indigenous Cultures**

Response	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1.9%
Disagree	7.4%
Undecided	11.1%
Agree	42.6%
Strongly Agree	37.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
	<b>N=540</b>

There is, however, conflicting figures from the secondary participants of the study on this particular question. Their views were at variance with one another but a simple majority of these participants still support the position that globalization and ICTs could lead to cultural development in developing societies.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The controversy surrounding the potential impact of globalization and the application of ICTs continue to generate heated argument whenever the issues are raised. This is common in this area of cultural study because of the sentiments cultural debates evoke. This particular study therefore, set out to identify some of these controversies as well as reach empirical conclusions on each of them.

The major problem of this study, therefore, centred around the influence of globalization and ICTs on indigenous cultures. Many scholars have always argued that the influence results in cultural imperialism while a few others think cultural development could also result from these variables. Media professionals, however, feel

the influence is positive and helpful. The conclusions drawn from the study for the research problem are many. For greater emphasis, however, the global mass media could be exploited for the benefit of even the developing nations. Media globalization is not all about cultural erosion or the transference of foreign cultural values to local societies; it is also about media development vis-à-vis cultural development.

This argument is sustained all through this paper because not every aspect of foreign cultural norm has harmed the local or receiving societies. English language for instance, is foreign to Nigeria but its adoption as a Lingua Franca has not harmed the indigenous languages spoken in that nation. In fact, the over 250 indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria long before English language came have all remained and some are gradually acquiring innovations that will keep them relevant to their speakers even beyond the 50<sup>th</sup> century. There is what we now call "Nigerian English", "Broken English" or "Pidgin English". These are variants of "English English" that was transferred to indigenous societies by foreigners. The cultural implication of this scenario is that the linguistic differences in a pluralistic society like Nigeria are no longer barriers to communication at the national level. This also has enhanced national cohesion, regional integration and unity. All these could only result to cultural growth and development.

Another major conclusion of this study with regard to the research problem is that the disappearance of some aspects of the cultural values of an indigenous society may not be caused by the imperialistic tendencies of developed nations. Such disappearance or the discarding of local cultural norms may be because such local norms no longer measure up to the contemporary needs of the locals who live in such societies. So, the disappearance, discarding or displacement of local values to foreign cultural values and norms is leading to cultural development (Ekeanyanwu, 2008). This conclusion cannot be overemphasized. Twentieth century's barriers like language, colour, race, tribe, religion, socio-political beliefs and geographical provenance are no longer barriers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Technology has reduced these barriers to opportunities so that any cultural value that stands in the way of nationals of a particular society from exploiting these opportunities should be discarded. No nation and her nationals are islands anymore. The need for greater cooperation and interaction at the global level far outweighs its negative consequences. So, cultures must interact because the world is definitely getting flatter every day.

There is also the issue of technology transfer. ICTs constitute a major content of western media culture, so when this is transferred to developing nations, the technology may also be transferred or better still, exploited. However, the developing nations have not really considered this aspect. There is undue emphasis on the cultural impact alone, while every other aspect of western-developing society's interaction is neglected.

The assumption made in this study that most Nigerian media professionals trained in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Nigeria still prefer the use of conventional media technologies is wrong. The result of the study shows a heavy reliance on and preference for new media technologies. This again goes to confirm the views of few Third World scholars that media globalization has come to stay but could be exploited positively by the media professionals in such societies. The heavy dependence or preference on the use of ICTs shown by the professionals indicates that the new media technologies are better. This fact can no longer be hidden but rather the consequence of such heavy reliance on the Nigerian media industry should be re-evaluated in line with other major conclusions of this study.

On the aspect of the potential threat posed by globalization and ICTs in Nigerian society and cultures, this study has shown that the impact might be exaggerated. It is true that technologies of communication are potential carriers of cultural products. True also that technologies carry with them the cultural values of their producing nations to the consumer societies. However, that these always lead to only cultural imperialism has

been put to question with regard to the results of this investigation (Ekeanyanwu, 2008). The participants in this study are of the opinion that even though media globalization through massive application of ICT in developing nations has the potential of impacting negatively on indigenous cultural development, it could also help to enrich and develop local cultural values and contents as earlier discussed. This negates the issues raised in the cultural imperialism theory and reinforces the view of the proponents of technological determinism and the phenomenistic perspective to media effects. The conclusions drawn from these theories were discussed in the review of literature. However, with these results, both schools of thought for and against the postulations of the theories need to be reconsidered. For technological determinism, the technological properties of the medium could be exploited positively especially for the development of indigenous cultural values.

From available literature on this subject, the western technologies carry western cultural values that are both capable of eroding as well as enriching local cultural values of developing nations like Nigeria. If so, it is therefore expected that developing societies should maximize the inherent enriching capabilities in western technologies and then try to minimize the potential threats by the way or the use to which these technologies will be put to. This may be a moral issue but if the views of media professionals are worth considering, then developing societies have little options left.

Media academics and practitioners could also benefit from the results of this study for so many reasons. First, the results challenge the findings of the works of scholars like Schiller (1992), Huntington (1996), Hamelink (1983), Lechner (2003) and of recent, Bienefeld (2005). A singular factor brings the works of these scholars together. These studies suggest that globalization and ICTs are gradually eroding local cultural values and replacing them with alien values. This point has been well noted and documented in this study and other studies before it. However, to conclude that the interaction of indigenous cultures and an alien one often and always leads to cultural imperialism has been called to question by the analyses of the results of this particular study.

This singular point has remained a sore area in all of the works of the scholars cited above. The gaps identified in the literature in this area as well as the theoretical framework of the study show that some things are wrong with such results. Hamelink (1983) and Schiller (1992) for instance, have continued to argue that nothing good has happened to the culture of developing nations since globalization became a world issue. One, therefore, is tempted to ask questions at this stage. The western-based educational curriculum that these developing societies have continued to implement has it not brought out the best in some individuals in these societies? If it has not, why have they not discarded it a long time before now? Is the socio-political ideologies borrowed from Europe and other western societies not the same ones shaping societies in the developing world? If not, why are they still clamouring for democracy, rule of law, freedom, capitalism etc? Are these philosophies indigenous to these developing societies? Why have these so-called indigenous societies with multi-linguistic differences failed to develop a *Lingua Franca* along the lines of their cultural background? Why use English language if it is the language of domination, exploitation and imperialism? Why are developing nations talking of industrialization as the catalyst to the socio-economic cum political development of their nations? Is industrialization indigenous to third world societies? Or were traditional societies in third world nations industrial societies? Why is communalism not proposed as having the magic wand for the development of third world societies?

We are sure an attempt to answer these questions and many more raised in the literature and theoretical analyses will obviously bring us to the stark reality that globalization and ICTs have not totally imperialized the values and cultures of developing nations. This is a major reason why the studies carried out by Reich (1992),

Wang (1996), Wilson (1998), Zwizwai (1999), and the Pew Research Centre (2002) are well analyzed in this study. The findings of these studies are confirmed in this particular study in so many ways. The opinion that globalization and ICTs could actually enrich local cultural values has been identified earlier by these studies. So, the findings of this current effort now form an additional body of literature in the area of media/cultural studies. This also removes the doubts that characterized initial efforts because such efforts were not processed scientifically neither were they empirically documented. This is a major and unique contribution of this study.

Furthermore, the results of this study stimulate further insights needed to question some strongly held stereotypes on the effect or impact of globalization and ICTs on the culture of indigenous societies. This will obviously improve research efforts in the area of media and cultural studies.

In conclusion, globalization and the application of ICTs carry with them positive values that have changed the practice of mass communication in the Nigerian society. If these changes are not positive, the media professionals could not have preferred them to their indigenous ones. Therefore, the positive values should be further re-evaluated to make more meaning to the developing societies. Discarding aspects of one's indigenous cultural values that are no longer supportive of one's current aspirations should not just be regarded as cultural imperialism. Imperialism connotes some form of force, which is not the case in this cultural displacement. The displacement or loss is as a result of interaction between the local and alien values. These values come face to face and the ones that are no longer current with contemporary ideas just die naturally.

The worry here should not actually be about the displacement of local cultural values but that the right kind of foreign norms or values should be imbibed or copied so as to better our society and make it appeal to the greater percentage of the global citizenship. This paper will, therefore, help refocus media/cultural studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It also has the capacity to enhance the ability of media professionals to maximize the benefits of ICTs and globalization thus, promoting the growth of indigenous cultural values and dousing the persistent fear of the theory of cultural imperialism that has dogged the practice of the social sciences in Africa for a very long time.

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