

GLOBAL MEDIA HEGEMONY AND THE TRANSFORMATION BLISS IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA: REAL INDEPENDENCE OR MERE CHANGE OF MASTERS?

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This article presents a conceptual analysis of the relationship between global media hegemony and transformation trajectories within post-colonial African states. It acknowledges that, following the attainment of independence, most African governments adopted the 'developmental state' paradigm to redress erstwhile colonial practices in anticipation of a new progressive social order. In many contexts, this ushered noble structural changes that promised stable institutions, constitutionality and good governance. In the contrary, the past two decades have witnessed evidence of weak political and socio-economic systems, largely blamed on *inter alia*, dictatorship, maladministration and poor implementation of policies. Regardless of these dynamics, this article argues that the success of any transformation process is a product of a mediated dialogue built on an organic communication modal system. Suffice to say, most former African colonial states ignored this element upon attaining freedom or simply entrusted it to bureaucrats who covetously protected the communication infrastructure from 'posterities' of western indoctrination. Thus, the removal of the colonial project from the echelons of political power, did little to alter the skewed media ownership and control market structure in the continent. Propositions within the Electronic Colonialism Theory (ECT) and World System Theory (WST) are explicit on how the global media have continued to be agents of the former colonial powers facilitating sustained 'barrages' of divisive neo-liberalist content to an uncritical mass of African audiences. While African states must rely on the latter for communitarian accomplice or buy-in to achieve transformation, African audiences remain fragmented on ideological enclaves producing perpetual victims of the "next election-gimmick and opportunism" that has yielded no more than superfluous political enthusiasts. Hence, there is a need for a counter policy thrust to challenge the current global communication trends through mobilisation of organic intellectual capital to thwart western hegemony among African states.

Key words: Global media, hegemony, post-colonial state, transformation, media market structure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regardless of the socio-cultural, economic and political context within which they operate, the media, in their diverse forms have remained critically significant in determining the publics' ability to participate in the affairs of governments globally. Complementary to the execution of authority and power, they have a mutual responsibility to advance the political, economic and social development of humanity (O' Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2005). Nonetheless, they are expected to do this in ways consistent with institutionalised principles of the society in which they operate. In most modern states, these operations are guided by Press Codes which are designed to promote professional journalistic practice through objective pursuance of fact-based and full substantiation of the events they report on (Martin, 2017; Nyamnjoh, 2005). In their formulation and aspirations, media operators and stakeholders alike, are usually hopeful that the operational context within which the media function will progressively yield a viable and enabling socio-economic and political order. In western democracies and elsewhere in the world, this approach has created well informed societies whose subsequent meaningful participation in the governance of their countries has produced and even sustained working democracies. This has earned the press the adage that they are the "fourth" arm of the State, complementing the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary as key statutory elements of government (Hadland, 2005; Voltmer, 2013). Thus, given this noble position and mandate to function optimally, the media could, in fact, facilitate transformation, promote good governance and strengthen democratic practice among African states.

Notwithstanding, when most African states attained independence during the last half of the 20th century, their pre-occupation with power and the politics of redress as characterised by electoral and judicial reforms dominated the transition period from colonialism to independence (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Key among these issues was the pressure on the newly elected African leaders to rebrand and join the bandwagon as complaisant nationalists in order to court favour with the international community. Often, this was done with oversight from international bodies such as the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement and/or direct influence from former colonial masters, chiefly the French and the British. The situation was premised and compounded by existence of conditional

demands clandestinely attached to the so much needed donor support and provision of funding towards post-war reconstruction and rural development efforts (Makuwira, 2017). As in the colonial past, the western media were the major carriers and interpreters of these transition-transformation discourses, albeit located within the western paradigm or dominant ideology. Hence, the paper focuses on interrogating the hegemonic tendencies of the global media as key role players, particularly in “communicating and creating legitimacy for those in power” (Stevens, 2003:52).

2. THE NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF THE GLOBAL MEDIA

2.1 WHAT ARE THE GLOBAL MEDIA?

The global media, also called transnational media are synonymous with big media companies that can be understood in terms of their imperial domination of the world’s cultural industry through the dissemination of cultural products such as news, music, film, cartoons, and other forms of artistic expressions (Herman & McChesney, 2006). While they operate on an institutional outlook, they are not simple companies or government agencies, but are complex organisations with symbolic functions (Stevens, 2003), and turnovers amounting to millions of dollars (Sparks, 2009:157). Their operations comprise technology, politics, economics, culture as well as art. Examples of the global media giants include the British Broadcasting Corporation, Reuters, Sky News, Disney, Time Warner, Media 24 and America Online. Their operational practice often highlight tendencies of media concentration which occurs when the means of production in the media market are owned by few and mostly large groups of companies (Devereux, 2014). This ownership structure usually emanates from mergers that incorporate the ownership of some of the world’s largest media companies to form global networks such as Cable Network News (CNN), TransNational Telecomms (TNT) and Disney cartoon networks. Consequently, fewer and fewer corporations end up dominating the media markets (McPhail, 2006), a situation that often leads to monopolistic (or oligopolistic) tendencies with the potential to undermine the sovereignty and democratic values of smaller states.

2.2 OPERATIONAL FEATURES OF THE TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA

2.2.1 Setting the international agenda

While local forms of the media have played a significant educational and informational role by filling the knowledge gap that most social institutions have not breached (Coronel, 2003), the global media have advanced these matters beyond national borders. They have assumed the role of educational institutions and civic structures of society as purveyors of unfettered information access to millions of people who previously lacked basic information. Daily news reports through the news media alert the international public to the latest events about the larger environment beyond their immediate experiences through multiple technological signals that highlight major global events. Through specific news selection criteria, news editors and programmers re-focus their audiences' attention to influence their perceptions on how to relate to important issues in the world (McCombs, 2013). This confirms the agenda setting role of the news media that intends to influence the salience of particular issues which may not have ordinarily being important to certain sections of society. The process occurs regardless of whether any significant numbers of potential audiences really view the subject in question as worthwhile to hold an opinion about or not. These include news such as the global economic recession, terrorism and celebrities. While many issues compete for public attention, only a few succeed in doing so, confirming that dominant media exert significant influence on media users' view about reality (McCombs, 2004). Therefore, the global media have the power to set the agenda for public thought and discussion wherein their content becomes, to a considerate degree, the agenda of the world's public (Stevens, 2003; McCombs, 2013). It is these pre-determined news and programming dynamics that make global media hegemony an interesting area of study in post-colonial Africa.

2.2.2 Launch-pads for international publicity

Transnational media are considered as one of the principal sources of information about public affairs globally. They possess unprecedented power to shape public ideas and opinions (Stevens, 2003) and those who control them have the power to make or break political reputations and careers (Doyle, 2013). They communicate a host of cues about the relative salience of topics to influence audiences' views about the developed nations' public image globally. As such, this indirectly prescribes societal discourse and influences

opinions regarding matters of importance including the manner in which audiences judge the actions of the powerful nations. Public opinion matters often revolve around specific issues of the moment or the perceived collective will of society that is usually externally constructed. Perspectives on public opinion as a process stress the role of international dialogue and deliberation as core elements in the description and evaluation of public opinion (McCombs, Hubert, Kioussis & Wanta, 2011). Therefore, carefully packaged news frames usually become the source of information for leaders and governments, who use them to interpret the social world for target audiences. This eventually places the media in a potentially powerful position in influencing public opinion in the public sphere (Firmstone, 2013). In this regard, global media play an important role as part of the broad multi-media environment to facilitate international publicity among global citizens. As public opinion shapers, these media giants bring issues of international interest to public attention and affect how global issues are framed, often at the expense of the world populace.

2.2.3 Agents of global capitalism

In economic terms, the global media are powerful forces of capitalism because they are hugely wealthy and they wield political as well as cultural and ideological power (Stevens, 2003). Beyond being modes of economic production, dominant media also play important economic and symbolic roles, including limiting diversity and controlling key economic factors. This is evident in nations such as the United States of America, Britain, France, Canada, and Japan, where the state has traditionally insisted on principles of public service broadcasting. However, developments in the last few decades have seen new entities being run on commercial enterprise modes in the form of “maverick capitalism” (ibid p39). For this reason, the global media have been criticised for perpetuating a “deeply and starkly inegalitarian” process that favours a privileged minority as it compounds the impoverishment of the majority through closure and containment (Golding & Harris, 1997:7). They have achieved this by not only taking control of the global markets but also controlling the global consciousness that encourages a number of monopoly concerns which command a disproportionate share of the global markets (McChesney, 2001). Thus, the neo-liberalist rhetoric has hoodwinked most peripheral nations to function within national and regional policies in tune with the capitalist orientation that minimise countervailing traditions, customs and

expectations (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Arguably, this has given rise to the increase of unpoliced flow of ideologically biased global news that influence local political and economic discourse in poor nations.

2.3 EFFECTS OF TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

2.3.1 Displacement of the public sphere with entertainment

The displacement of the public sphere resonates with the commercialisation of the media where forms of industry regulation based on public interest and public service are replaced by market standards. This has the potential for greater emphasis on the market position and profitability as opposed to universal service to the public in the form of public service broadcasting or news services (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Essentially, this yields an emphasis on marketability and popularity of media content, a situation that compels the production of content that searches for the biggest audience and linkages to revenue generation (Fourie, 2007). Such operations are often conducted at the expense of the founding media imperatives of providing information, education and entertainment as public goods. Ultimately, the media become driven by funding imperatives that are sustained through advertising spend that stresses on consumption as the primary end and individualism as the fundamental desired social condition. In the long run, this value intrusion strengthens materialistic ideals, weakens collectivism and the strength of communal ties (Herman & McChesney, 2006).

The above approach thrives on featuring uncontroversial topics at the expense of critical topical issues such as the land question, scientific research and innovation, and community development issues. Hence, in-depth coverage of hard news, analyses of public affairs, debates, and documentaries tend to disappear from prime time viewing or listening hours (Herman & McChesney, 2006). Thus, the modalities of entertainment have penetrated the residual elements of the public sphere with so called “happy” news, *infotainment*, reality news, talk shows, and magazine shows that stress on personalities/celebrities and exposures of corruption that fits into narrow ideological interests (McPhail, 2006). Such content usually contain subtle political messages that comport with advertiser interests in the form of individualism, importance of consumerism, accumulation of wealth and global corporation (Herman & McChesney,

2006). Ultimately, the remaining content, with modest exceptions, largely represent entertainment and is not informative enough to stimulate political consciousness.

3.2.2 Dependence syndrome

Some media scholars have argued that the economic power of the media and cultural artefacts from the dominant western powers such as the United States of America exert undue influence on the developing world (Steven, 2003; Devereux, 2014:59. This behaviour dominates and puts into a dependence relationship the media and cultures of less economically advanced countries (Herman & McChesney, 2006:53). For several decades, the world situation has been characterised by the dominance of information producing nations and information receiving nations, in the form of a centre-periphery praxis (Fourie, 2007:375). Information receiving nations have been labelled as net importers that depend on the developed world for media content whereas information producing nations are called net exporters known for packaging and distributing content to the poor nations, particularly those in the African continent (Herman & McChesney, 2006). This condition leads to imperial domination of the world's information industry through the dissemination of cultural products such as news, music, film, and cartoons from the developed nations to the developing nations. Despite an increase in the uptake of ICTs in the developing world, there still exists an imbalance in the direction, volume and types of information exchanged between the developed countries and the third world countries. This is compounded by the fact that developing nations “depend on the developed countries for the raw materials of the communication industry such as equipment, hardware, software, infrastructure, training and so on” (Fourie, 2007:375).

3.2.3 Media imperialism and strengthening of conservative forces

Media imperialism mainly focuses on the nature and impact of international media ownership, production and distribution of media content on the global communication environment (Fourie, 2007:392). This entails how international media or transnational media companies impact on local and national media content, consumption, economy, politics, and culture as a result of their activities including news production and distribution (Herman & McChesney, 2006). This is evident through an analysis of the political economy of media conglomerates' dominance of the world's music, film and other popular entertainment industries. Furthermore, this entails the role of global news

agencies and how they impact on the international flow of news and information, communication on culture, technology, operations of non-governmental organisations, and international communication policy. The globalisation of news is an example of how the global media and other forms of transnational media platforms wield influence as major components of the global communication system. Furthermore, their activities can also be measured on the basis of their focus on covering news that is mainly relevant to the former colonial powers and providing less developed countries with more positive information about their own beliefs, cultures and politics (Fourie, 2007). Thus, coverage of peripheral nations focuses on negative news such as civil strife, natural disasters or sensational and bizarre events, whereas there is little reportage, if any good news about the poor regions such as Africa and Latin America (McPhail, 2006).

3.2.4 Cultural imperialism and erosion of local values

Cultural imperialism refers to a particular type of cultural development which is persuasively and massively communicated to information-receiving nations in a one directional and synchronic mode (Herman & McChesney, 2006). This concept is understood in terms of imperial domination of the world's cultural industry through the dissemination of cultural products such as news, music, film, et cetera. Cultural imperialism entails acknowledging the cultural changes brought about by globalisation and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) at both the macro and micro level which have changed daily routines, experiences and information sharing methods (Sparks, 2009). Nonetheless, according to Herman & McChesney (2006), it is through globalisation of communication that traditional cultures are subdued and this has led to the intrusion of western culture and values such as consumerist patterns into local spheres. The growth of the global media and their socialisation process has a negative effect on the development of indigenous cultures. This has come with the creation of a shared culture that is accompanied by influences based on external perceptions and values churned through big media adventures including the internet, video games and social media (McPhail, 2006). These systems have the potential to displace or even alter existing cultural values, habits, activities or family rituals. This new culture is primarily driven by large multimedia conglomerates who control, reproduce and spread the global flow of text, images and sound in the form of print, film, television and the internet platforms (ibid p23). Their reportage usually espouses lifestyles in the core nations to

the peripheral nations to create perpetual customers for their expanding range of services including internet e-journalism product lines (McPhail, 2006; Devereux, 2014: 258).

3. THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS ON GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

3.1 Electronic Colonialism Theory

Electronic Colonialism Theory (ECT) is better understood as part of the four epochs of global colonisation characterised by military conquests (BC-1000AD, Christian colonialism (1000-1600, Mercantile colonialism (1600-1950), and finally electronic colonialism (1950-present) (McPhail, 2006:18). The ECT represents the dependent relationship of poorer regions on the post industrial nations established by the importation of communication hardware and foreign produced software and related information protocols. This creates a set of foreign norms, values, and expectations that alter the domestic cultures, habits, values, and the socialisation process itself (ibid p19). Ultimately, this new foreign information gives rise to the displacement, rejection, alteration or forgetting of indigenous customs, domestic messages and cultural history. In addition to seeking to control the mind, ECT is aimed at influencing attitudes, desires, beliefs, lifestyles, and consumer behaviour (Stevens, 2003; McPhail, 2006). Essentially, the theory encapsulates the possible long term consequences of exposure to media messages and images in a bid to extend the powerful multinational media empires' markets, power, and influence (McPhail, 2006:23). Assumptions within the ECT are largely inclined to the Marxist theory which explains global communication in terms of market structuralism. The theory further maintains that the international scope and impact of global media communication is largely driven by corporate capitalism that views information as a commodity rather than as a social good that must be shared (Fourie, 2007:374).

Electronic colonialism theory explains how the global media capture the minds and to some extent, the consumer habits of audiences as it focusses on media influence on how people think and act in their daily lives (McPhail, 2006). It accounts for how the mass media influence the mind of users as part of the information revolution that focuses on the consequences concerning global consumer behaviour. Contrary to the historical period when community elders played a central role in creating, transmitting and

transferring culture, today culture is conveyed in a multimedia environment. This has produced a shared global culture that is accompanied by influences based on external perceptions and values churned through big media systems (Devereux, 2014:258). This influence tends to be the output of global communication giants with the potential to impact communities to the detriment of local ethos. Ultimately, the socialisation process has been hijacked to create an “empire of the mind” where people became what they watch, do or listen to (McPhail, 2006:24). Therefore, the poor nations’ development outlooks have become primarily driven by large multimedia conglomerates who control, reproduce and influence the global audiences on how society might be organised (Devereux, 2014:258-259).

3.2 World-System Theory

The World-System Theory (WST) provides the concepts, ideas and language for structuring international communication and is linked to the dependency theory. It states that global economic expansion takes place from a relatively small group of core-zone nations out to two other zones of state-nations, namely the semi-peripheral and peripheral zones (Devereux, 2014:66). Their interaction is based on “economic, political, cultural, media, technical, labour and social levels” following the logic of economic determinism in which market forces prevail to determine the winners or losers whether they are individuals, corporations or nation-states (McPhail, 2006:25). These zones do exhibit unequal economic relations with core nations being the major industrialised western nations that dominate and control the economic environment. This places the semi-periphery and periphery nations in a subordinate position against the core nations that exert control and define the nature and extent of interactions among these nations (ibid).

The World-system theory is useful in examining cultural industries, mass media systems, knowledge and activities of big global shareholders which pursue interrelated strategies to maximise corporate growth, market share, and profits (McPhail, 2006). This is fulfilled through economic values conveyed through advertising as well as dissemination of content produced for mass media export. Central to these relationships is a mass communication system that allows the transfer of media materials to create a broadly based popular culture for a mass market or niche markets to encourage imports of specific media products or services (Stevens, 2003). Essentially, in as much as World-

system theory elaborates that capitalist ideologies are necessary for the working and expansion of the global economy, the major multimedia conglomerates have a parallel goal of directly enhancing the performance of the former. This is achieved through promoting and endorsing core capitalist mechanisms and values within the two subordinate zones. Thus, World-system theory carries an implied belief that prosperity will accrue if the developing world or subordinate zones become more pro-capitalist and expand their markets to include the core nations' corporate interests (McPhail, 2006: 29).

4. GLOBAL MEDIA HEGEMONY AND THE TRANSFORMATION BLISS

This section interprets how the global media reflect power dynamics in African societies as carriers of ideas and frames that constitute hegemonic behaviour. This power is not limited to direct political control, but is one where dominance is maintained through the creation and communication of a particular world viewpoint. In this context, hegemony is a form of rule that operates through the consent of citizens with African nations conforming to particular stereotypes or ideological frames created by the global media systems (Stevens, 2003).

4.1 Promoters of *access* rather than *processes* of media production

During the transition from colonialism to independence, the global mass media joined the bandwagon in cascading former African nationalist leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Mobutu Seseko, Samora Machel, Kenneth Kaunda, Nelson Mandela and others in heroic celebrity styles. This coverage was responsive to the enactment of new regulatory frameworks that lifted censorship laws and facilitated open access to the media including airplay of formerly banned music, indigenous drama and relative talk-show programming. Given the colonial past in which the freedom of expression and access to the media were not guaranteed (Nyamnjoh, 2005), this coverage gave the new African states an impression that the media had ideologically changed their focus to embrace the progressive paradigm towards nation-building. Subsequently, the mood created an assortment of *frenzy* where the transformation narrative through the media was predominantly reconfigured to represent *access to the media* rather than the transformed ownership and control *of the processes* of media production including content development. Thus, the new African States' failure to harness the media as change agents in the initial stages of the post-colonial African state

produced a tendency towards universalism, particularly in broadcasting (Nyamnjoh, 2005). This yielded some kind of pattern maintenance where there were been no considerable shifts in the professional values, programme formats, styles and scheduling between the African media and that of their former colonial masters (ibid). As such, African states have continued to use media platforms that have no direct resonance and relevance to the nature of their historic challenges in terms of their political, economic and socio-cultural needs that must be transformed.

4.2 Perpetuators of the neo-liberalist ideology

In thinking about the dominant media, it is important to consider not only their size and international reach, but also their cultural, economic and political influence (Stevens, 2003). Since they usually serve the interests of the dominant class, this sits well with the mandate of financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF which prefer the rhetoric of “uncriticised and ideolized models of liberal democracy, the market and civil society” (Berman, 1998:307). Due to their ability to control and justify this order through the media, hegemony becomes achievable as the power of the dominant group is made to appear natural and legitimate (Stevens, 2003). This form of power is not exerted through direct political control but is maintained through the ideological construction of a particular world view that seems to be based on common sense to the audiences. This works through the dissemination of cultural products such as news, documentaries, and entertainment that provide a frame for the understanding of the current policies in the context of an indispensable status quo. Hence, the dominant media continue to foster a way of defining the boundaries of political debate and reinforcement of the economic orthodoxy of neo-liberalism (Stevens, 2003; Yousaf & Rahman, 2014), against the winds of change in post-colonial Africa.

As key stakeholders in the news production and distribution process, the dominant media also play a significant role in the dissemination of ideological products. Their mandate is “tied closely into a subtle and invisible network of core-based political, ideological and economic elite which uses the communication industry to perpetuate particular needs, tastes, values, and attitudes so as to increase profits” (McPhail, 2006:49). To a large extent, they are driven by expansionist tendencies that determine their corporate structure and behaviour to serve the interest of their funders based in the core nations. Linked to the advertisers’ interests, the global media support neo-liberal

economic policies that serve the corporate community and the general interest of transnational companies, meanwhile undermining social democratic realities. For example, the traditional idea of public service broadcasting is gradually becoming outmoded (Ciaglia, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Steemers, 2017), as competition from these entities gravitate it towards corporatisation amid sustainability imperatives.

4.3 Clandestine arms of the post-colonial State

Owing to the nature of the infrastructure and initial costs needed to establish media entities, public communication is generally an expensive exercise, particularly for small or poor nations. This is so because, any media enterprise entails the development of hardware, software, human capital, and skills as well as instituting production and distribution networks for the finished products. For this reason, some scholars have noted a significant overlap of media owners and managers with the political elite (Curran & Seaton, 2003). In some post-colonial states, the intertwining of political and media elites has shown a growing convergence of state and media interests. This gives corporate media a particularly powerful position to “get their way with politicians” given their ability to use their domination of the news media in a self-serving way” (McChesney, 2001:3; McPhail, 2006). In this case, the media no longer function to communicate or shape ideas and meanings, but operate as powerful agents of the economy, akin to other sectors of the economy (Stevens, 2003) such as agriculture and mining. This results in indirect state ownership and control of the media that plays an ideological role in securing hegemony among citizens. The process stifles and muzzles critical dialogue with deliberate prioritisation of entertainment over information and knowledge (Devereux, 2014), which are prerequisites for the transformation discourse. To circumvent this challenge, most media entities, particularly in democratic systems, have mooted new concepts such as *infortainment* and *edutainment* as a clandestine gesture to dupe the masses to believe that the media are fulfilling their duties of informing and educating society. Hence, such machinations inhibit the media from operating as public platforms that are truly reflective of the transformational needs of African societies.

4.4 Appendages of western professionalism

In spite of the new trends towards liberalisation and deregulation in post-colonial political systems (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003), the requisite professional media

communication skills to effectively use the media platforms as change-agents in Africa has remained inadequate. This has largely been caused by the fact that most professional media personnel in the post-colonial states have been and continue to be educated, trained and offered refresher courses in the core nations. Arguably, this is where they imbibe western media values, attitudes and professional ideologies (Nyamnjoh, 2005). This is evident particularly in local training centres in African institutions, where the arguments advanced by Anglo-Saxon or French theorists serve as reference points without any questioning of their relevance or applicability to different contexts (Mattelart, 1999). Often, this has yielded media content based on imitation, prescription and dogma rather than being based on creativity, innovation and relevance (Eribo & Tanjong, 2002). Subsequently, the current media operations within Africa are largely informed by western notions located within the dominant paradigm of media culture and practice which have not been tailored to suit the needs and aspirations of post-colonial African states. For this reason, the media in many parts of Africa have failed to fulfil their role as change agents in the way the global media have been “missionaries of corporate global capitalism” (Herman & McChesney, 2006: 1-3).

5. CONCLUSION

With the current skewed global media ownership, production and distribution systems, transformation trajectories in post-colonial Africa remain exposed to the ideological midwifery of a communication infrastructure featuring transnational media conglomerates that represent the neo-liberalist views of Africa’s former colonial masters. This leaves ordinary citizens at the mercy of the McDonaldised, standardised news, information, and entertainment burgers served to them in the interest of profit by corporate media (McChesney, 2001; Stevens, 2003). The global media systems have continued to advance corporate commercial interests and values by thriving on a passive and uncritical mass of consumers more prone “to take orders than to make waves” (ibid p7) without questioning the light escapist entertainment content fed to them on a regular basis. This has facilitated sustained barrages of neo-liberalist ideological content that serves the commercial interests of investors, advertisers and elitist consumers within the capitalist mode rather than the post-colonial paradigm. Due to limited ownership and control of the processes of media production, African media entities have not adequately communicated the requisite aggregate democratic consciousness to evoke the

communitarian accomplice and virtue necessary to effectively support transformation ideals. Thus, the dominant media rhetoric continues to thrive in postponing transformation endeavours to futuristic *loci*, meanwhile calculatedly performing agenda-setting antics to reinforce ideological fissures that serve as springboards for further divisive politics among African citizens.

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