A Discursive Engagement of the Media as Agent of Socialization in Nigeria

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Abstract

In this paper, a theoretical framework for understanding the media as agent of socialization is espoused. The starting point is in the statistics and earlier media influence literature, which show that the media is a strong influencer of negative behaviour. This paper assumes such underlying mechanisms; causing discriminatory understanding of the media could naturalize and make invisible tlie positive influence of the media especially in the development process of the Third World countries. The paper's concern is that all agents of socialization, irrespective of genre have the same chance to influence socialization process of any society. This is both a moral and also a political challenge. The framework developed in this paper is an alternative approach to studying the mass media compared to the traditional media influence literature. It aims at revealing the "natural and taken-for-granted" cultural mechanisms behind discriminatory analysis against the mass media. The framework is based on a critical discursive approach, which draws on ideas of how negative media influence becomes symbolically represented and constructed in discursive practices. These symbolic constructions, which are mediated through language, often have an ideological loading which positions the media and its identity in ways that can help to legitimize corruption and bad practices in the media which have consequently affected the way development communication is done in Africa.

Keywords: development, socialization, media, Africa and communication

Introduction

The media versions of reality have a significant influence on the way in which politics, culture and society are generally understood (Jacobs, 2011). Vice versa, the society realities have great significance on the way the media is understood. It is therefore logical to arrive at a declaration that the understanding of both the media and the society as different institutions with great impact on human existence are social constructs. These constructs are man-made, not natural but mechanical to the total interaction of man with his environment for his survival. Experiences and representation are two critical elements of language and meaning that have shaped the socialization process of man. Man's attempt to represent his experiences through physical or abstract entity constitutes the larger pail of his socialization.

For instance, Jacobs (2011) admits that the pervasive and routine consumption of the media in social life acts to perpetuate stereotypes and homogenize cultural differences. Conventionally, media representations of asylum seekers, especially from Africa have produced explicit ethnic stereotyping and racist ideologies among the developed countries. Lingering 'mentifacts' of this racial binary gives rise to elements of continuity of the hegemonic construction of asylum seekers as the 'other' in American and European media.

Media dissemination is a crucial dimension of group vitality... [in] that media can function as a means to support the subordination of disadvantaged groups (Harwood and Giles,2005). This subordination is further instilled into the commercial framework of the mass media, as exemplified through the application of the macro world perspective of the 'Marxist Media Theory'. Marxist's view the industrialized capitalist society as one of class domain within which the media acts as "an ideological arena...socializing and internalizing the norms of the dominant culture" (Curren et al., 1982). The mass media are, in classical Marxist terms, a 'means of production' which in capitalist society are in the ownership of the ruling class. According to the classical Marxist position, the mass media simply disseminate the ideas and world views of the ruling class, and deny or defuse alternative ideas. This is summed up in Marx's argument that:

> The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology,* cited in Curran *et al.* 1982: 22).

As an ideological agency of conflict, designed to maintain social hierarehies and systems of inequality between a cross-cultural perspectives of the human race, this theory argues that the mass media plays an intrinsic role in the continuation of stereotypes. Due to their extensive influence and affluence, the media as an institution has incredible coercive ability and lobbying potential (Lynch, 2005). The great power of the media gives it great responsibility but Bowen (2012), concluded that "it would not be unjust to suggest that the media abuses its power at times out of convenience".

Many writers, for instance, Lynch (2005) have echoed one of the opinions of this paper; that discursively, media corruption can be in the form of backing governments, criticizing politicians, lobbying for change or any number of self-beneficial causes. Such examples from the Australian media corruption include the 1999 and 2004 *'Cash for Comment'* scandal involving *2UE's* John Laws and Alan Jones taking payment from corporate clientele in exchange for positive on-air radio comments (WSWS 1999). Similarly, the 2001 *'Children*

Overboard' scandal was manipulated by the media to falsely portray asylum seekers in the lead up to Howard's re-election (Marr and Wilkinson, 2003:194-210). Such examples represent a slight proportion of media scandals whereby their power has been misused.

In Nigeria, citing Okoosi (1993), Ismail and Tenuche (2012), also agreed that the many cases of comrplion among public officers between 1986 and 1993 were not accurately or properly reported by the Nigerian media. The corrupt cases were only exposed after the demise of the administrations that perpetrated them (See *African Guardian,* 1 November 1993; *The Guardian,* 18 October 1993; *Newswatch,* 29 October 1993; *The Guardian,* 13 October 1993; 6 November 1993; *and African Concord, 1* Mareh 1994). Such dismal display of 'implied' support for corrupt governments should not be justified on the problem of lack of evidence.

Jiboand Okoosi (2003) believed that the above cases were evidences of lack of agreement among the media on how such cases should be handled due to the politics of North-South divide that pervades social interaction in Nigeria (see also Jibo, 1976; Kukah, 1993 on how the Nigerian print media managed the Dabohr.v Tarka case in 1974). Accordingly, Jibo and Okoosi,(2003) reported that the Nigerian media publicized the allegations widely but was inconsistent in its stand on it.Where as the Southern-based *Daily Times* urged Chief Tarka to resign from government because of these allegations, the *New Nigerian* that had been established to protect northern interests did not pressurize him to do so. Instead, it devoteoVa great deal of its columns to attacking "the Southern interests" that it believed were behind Daboh. Thus, the media left the unfortunate impression that corruption could divide it; depending on who was accused of it.

Infact, since 1999, the Nigerian media have been found wanting again in one way or the order concerning how they have been reporting political, economic, cultural and religious issues in the new found democracy. The role of the media in the fight against corruption is also hampered by its tendency to prejudice the public against personalities and interests from certain parts of the country. According to Olukotun (2000: 136), the problem of partisan, biased or ethnic reporting is a deep one and goes back to the days of the anti-colonial press, when the nationalist press often turned against itself as it fractured along ethnic and party lines. Profiling the instances of such ugly situation is not within the purview of this paper, but the truth remains that the media, either in Nigeria or anywhere in the world have been found guilty of negatively influencing socialization processes and systems.

It is well documented in many news reports and communication researehes that through media manipulation, public option is heavily skewed. Such degeneracy in the Nigerian media has been the concern of international organizations as well. For instance, the World Bank Regional Communication Adviser, Akin Fatoyinbo, emphasized in 2001 that Nigerian journalists needed to always check information for accuracy before disseminating *(Sunday Vanguard, 22* July 2001: 17). In a communication researeh paper, Akpan (2001: 17) observed that journalism practice in Nigeria has been reduced by a good number of its practitioners to something akin to black-mail journalism where investigative journalism, to a large extent, has been dethroned to the detriment of a healthy, responsible and reliable media practice.

These reports have serious effect on the image of the media as a socialization agent. For instance, myths and misconceptions regarding African refugees are rife throughout society fuelled by the media's false representation on the issue. In Australia, through such media manipulation, myths are appropriated by the government in an attempt to form public opinions. This can be seen through common myths circulated by the Australian media, which

have been out-rightly disputed by academics in humanitarian communication (Pickering 2012). Published over multiple sources, (Gel Up! 2009). it appears these 'myths' are commonly held throughout all socio-economic levels of society.

Published academic literature on the subject of asylum seekers is unified in its approach: the problem society has with asylum seekers is fabricated and formed by the media (Bowen, 2012). This recognition undermines the fascist approach taken by media corporations which set out to portray African asylum seekers in a negative light. In the recent time, there have been selective use of derogatory terms by politicians in the hope to demonise or dehumanize oppositions in Nigerian politics. Words like 'wailers', *'losers' 'alarmists'* used by politicians to describe their opponents are more evident than tiie media's terminology in attempting to form public opinion.

Review of Literature

By utilizing particular vocabularies within their message, *political entrepreneurs* are able to create favourable or negative attitudes to certain social ideas (Simon and Jcrit 2007:255). For example, *'Illegal Immigrants'* was a term popularly used by the Liberal government under John Howard *(1996 - 2007)* in an attempt to demonizc and criminalize asylum seekers. This term was then used by the media in an attempt to form public opinion.

This worked on the basis that "...political discourse essentially determines public opinion". (Simon and Jerit 2007:254) Likewise the term *Boat People* was popularly used in an attempt to dehumanize asylum seekers in Australia. In doing so, did the media hope the public would be subservient to media discourse in denying asylum seekers universal human rights, essentially ignoring Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established by the UN in 1948 (United Nations 1948)? Major themes throughout the literature have suggested a strong link between the media's framing of asylum seekers, and the government's ability to form and lead public opinion in Europe, Asia and the United States of America.

Thus, essentially, the media become a tool utilized by the government to manipulate and lead public opinion. Popular belief within a democratic society however, often holds the opposite misconception; that public opinion leads government decisions, but according to academic articles, this could not be further from the truth (Simon and Jerit 2007:254). The *Guardian* (Nigeria) newspaper recently published a report *'Militants Blow up another Pipeline in Delia* 'where it quoted the militant group as saying:

> "We have been patient and reasonable all along, hence, our choice to restrict our activities to mild operation that were not aimed at causing critical damages, but it has now become crystal clear that we are dealing with *devious* and *incorrigible* people. Therefore, we serve this as a notice to the Nigerian government and its conniving multinationals...." *(The Guardian,* Sunday, October 15, 2016:2).

The words *'devious'* and *'incorrigible'* as reportedly used by the militants would not ordinarily be changed by the media! One then wonders if the media should be blamed for reporting 'hard news'.

Meanwhile, this report could be used by analysts to assess the disposition of the paper towards the Federal Nigerian handling of the Niger Delta crises. The *Guardian* may be tagged anti-government or pro-Niger Delta. This is why the aspect of the 'media effects'

theories which negatively place (especially the mass media in the negative in the process of socialization) has been heavily disputed by many scholars who believed the media does not necessarily develop people negatively.

Again, the President Mohammadu Buhari's response to some comments allegedly made by his wife, Aisha during an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) over the crisis in the ruling party APC, and the President's handling of major political appointments have generated a lot of reactions from Nigerians, especially women who have taken the President's remarks – "My *wife belongs to the kitchen and other room"* to be a spite on the right of women and the girl child to enjoy equal attention in governance, education and other social matters.

According to a Human Right Activist, Fyneface Dumnamene, "Buhari's comments re-echoes the saying that 'women's education ends in the kitchen". *(The Guardian,* Sunday, October 15, 2016:15).It has become something of a cliche to observe that despite many decades of researeh and hundreds of studies, the connections between people's consumption of the mass media and their subsequent behaviour have remained persistently elusive. Indeed, researehers have enjoyed an unusual degree of patience from both their scholarly and more public audiences. But the time has come when we must take a step back from this cloudy lack of consensus and ask why there are no clear answers on media effects especially as agents of socialization.

Interestingly, the David Gauntlcu's (1998) observation that, many decades of researeh and hundreds of studies have not been able to create strong connections between people's consumption of ihc mass media content and their subsequent behavior in the society has helped this paper to perfectly present the media not as a one sided socialization agent through the discursive approach.

Gauntlett has explored the second possibility: that the media effects researeh has quite consistently taken the *wrong approach* to the mass media [even as agents of socialization], its audiences, and the society in general. This misdirection has taken a number of forms which were explained as ten fundamental flaws of the effects theories of the media. They are that:

i) The effects model tackles social problems 'backwards'

Thus, to report or explain the problem of violence in society, reporters and communication researehers should begin with social violence and explain it with reference, quite obviously, to those who engage in it: their identity, background, character and so on. But in many cases, communication researehes and news analyses, usually apply the 'media effects[1] approach backwards, by starting with the media and then trying to loop connections from there on to social beings, rather than the other way around. This makes the media more notorious than other socialization agents in the presentation or analysis of 'anti-social' acts in modem Nigeria.

ii) The effects model treats children as inadequate

The individualism of the psychological discipline has also had a significant impact on the way children are regarded in effects researeh. Whilst sociology in recent decades has typically regarded childhood as a social construction, demareated by attitudes, traditions and rituals which vary between different societies and different time periods (Aries, 1962; Jenks, 1982, 1996), 'developmental psychology' is firmer on the idea of a universal individual who must develop through particular stages before reaching adult maturity, as established by Piaget (e.g. 1926, 1929).

In her valuable examination of the way in which academic studies have constructed and maintained a particular perspective on childhood, Christine Griffin (1993) recorded the ways in which studies by psychologists! ended to 'blame the victim', to represent social problems as the consequence of the deficiencies or inadequacies of young people, and to 'psychologize inequalities, obscuring structural relations of domination behind a focus on individual "deficient" working-class young people and/or young people of colour, their families or cultural backgrounds'. Problems such as unemployment and the failure of education systems are therefore reported as individual psychology traits caused by exposure to some media contents.

The same approaches are readily observed in media effects studies in development communication, and news analysis around children which are usually written by reporters without communication background or who are pure psychologists. Many of them, one imagines, having nothing other than benevolent intentions carefully expose the full range of ways in which young media users can be seen as the 'maladroit' victims of media products which are obviously trivial and transparent to adults but 'triggers' off all kinds of children ill-advised behaviour.

But this situation has been technically exposed by researehes which sought to establish what children can, and do understand about, and from the mass media. Such projects have shown thay children can talk intelligently .and indeed cynically about the mass media (Buckingham, 1993. 1996) and that children as young as seven can make thoughtful, critical and 'media literate' video productions themselves (Gauntlctt, 1997).

iii) Assumptions within (lie effects model are characterized by barely-concealed conservative ideology

Today, the systematic mockery of children's resistant capacities is part of the wider conservative view to position the more contemporary and challenging aspects of the mass media, rather than other social factors, as the major menace to social stability. The condemnation of generalized screen 'violence[1] and 'sex' stories by some critics, supported by the 'findings' of the effects studies can often be traced to concerns such as 'disrespect for authority' and 'anti-patriotic sentiments' and 'moral decadence' in modem Nigeria. Television, radio programmes or newspaper which do not necessarily contain any greater *quantity* of violent, sexual or other controversial depictions than others, can be seen to be objected to because they take a more challenging socio-political stance (Barker, 1984, 1989, 1993).

This view, by a section of the public, is clearly reflected in a large number of the effects studies which presume that 'antisocial' behaviour is an objective category which can be observed in numerous programmes and which will negatively affect those children who see them portrayed.This dark view is constructed with the support of content analysis studies almost designed to incriminate the media. This include but not limited to the expensive and avowedly 'scientific[1] content analyses such as the well-publicized US National Television Violence Study (Mcdiascnne, 1996: run by the Universities of California. North Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin). Manyof such studies reflect the continuing willingness of researehers and analysists to impute media *effects* from just the content.

iv) The effects model inadequately defines its own objects of study

The flaws numbered four to six on this list are more straightforwardly methodological, but they are connected to the previous and subsequent points. The first is that effects studies have generally taken for granted the definitions of media material, such as 'antisocial[1] and

'prosocial programming, as well as behaviour in the real world. It is clear lhat these can be ideological value judgements. For example - a media report of sabotage activities at workplace can be interpreted in effects studies as 'antisocial', and not "prosociaP. Some verbal aggressions could be reported as violent acts, just as TV murders.

Such comparison can lead to terrifically and irretrievably murky data in the analysis of media as agent of socialization. It is usually impossible to discern whether very minor or extremely serious acts of "violence" depicted in the media are being said to have led to quite severe or merely trivial acts in the real world. In Nigeria, recently, there has been many media reports of varying degree of dispositions on the legalization of *hijab* (the veil lhat Moslem women wear which covers the head and the chest) in Osun and Lagos states public schools.

A prominent Nigerian columnist, Ray Ekpu, in the Tuesday, June 21, 2016 edition of *The Guardian* cautioned that the issue be handled diplomatically or else the threat by the various groups in Osun State lo send their wards to schools in different colours might bread a riot of school gears which might become epitome of indiscipline. The above situation cannot be said to be caused by the exposure of the governors or policy makers to the media. But many analysts have blamed some media outfits on the way the situation has been reported. What an irony!

v) The effects model is often based on artificial studies

Careful sociological studies of media effects require amounts of time and money which limit their abundance, usually, they are outnumbered by simpler studies with elements of artificiality. Such studies typically take place in a laboratory, or in a 'natural' setting such as a classroom. Thus, where a researcher shous up and instigated activities, neither of which are typical environments, instead of a full and naturally-viewed television diet, researeh subjects are likely to be shown selected or specially-recorded clips which lack the narrative meaning inherent in everyday TV productions. The respondents may then be observed in simulations of real life presented to them as a game as they respond to questionnaire, all of which are unlike interpersonal interaction, are likely to be associated with the previous viewing experience by the subjects, and it may render the study invalid. These type of studies also rely on the idea that subjects will not alter their behaviour or stated attitudes as responses to being observed or questioned.

This naive belief has been shown to be false by researehers such as Bordcn (1975) who have demonstrated that the presence, appearance and gender of are seareher can radically affect children's behaviour. In the case of Nigeria, the series reports of the Chibok Girls abduction have generated doubts from many Nigerians who believed the *#Bring Back Our Girls* is a scam due to different and inconsistent reports by the government. Many equally believed the Buhari government is not transparent with the progress report on the matter. While some dailies have reported that the twenty-one girls released by the Boko Haram on the 14th of October 2016 was as the result of 'negotiation' between the Federal Government and the insurgent which was spearheaded by the International Red Cross, others have said that the release was based on a 'swap' deal between the terrorist group and the government.

Meanwhile, in swift reactions by the Vice President. Professor Yemi Osinbajo, and the Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed to reports by some international media it was said that the Nigerian government did not enter into a 'swap' deal and 'gave nothing' in exchange for the girls who were released (see *The Guardian,* Friday, October 14th, 2016: Front page). But a report by the *Daily Trust* has said that the Nigerian government was giving out 'ransom' to secure the freedom of the girls. According to the report:

> "...while Shekau had persistently called for the release of his fighters as precondition for the release of the girls, he was told during the recent negotiation process that the fighters were not willing to go back to the bush. It was based on this that he (Shekau) agreed to collect ransom" *(Daily Trust,* Friday, October 14th, 2016:3).

vi) The effects model is often based on studies with misapplied methodology

Many of the studies which do not rely on experimental method may evade the flaws mentioned in the previous 'points hy applying a methodological procedure wrongly, or by drawing inappropriate conclusions from particular methods. For illustration, the widely-cited longitudinal panel study hy Huesmann et al. (1972. 1977), has been less famous for failing to keep to the procedures, such as assessing *'aggressivity'* or TV-Viewing with the same measures at different points in lime, which are necessary for their statistical findings to have any validity (Chaffee, 1972: Kenny et al., 1972).

Surprisingly, the same researehers have also failed to adequately account for why the findings of this Mudy and others (Hucsmanivet al.. 1984) absolutely contradicted each other; with the former concluding that the media has a marginal effect on boys but no effect on girls, and the latter arguing the exact opposite. In their follow-up of the original set of subjects 22 years later, they suggested that a number of biological, developmental and .environmental factors contributed to levels of aggression, whilst the mass media was not even i^iven. a mention (Huesmann. et a1., 1984).

These astounding inconsistencies, unapologetically presented -by perhaps the best-known researehers and journalists in this area, is a cause for uneasiness about the negative effects of the media on the ripe ethnic rivalry apparent in the Nigerian polities and social system. There is a disturbing logical coherence to the idea that many Nigerians, whose behaviours are antisocial and disruptive, have a greater interest in ihe more violent and noisy television programmes; whereas the idea that their behaviour is a product of these programmes cannot be said to be rationally consistent.

vii) The effects model is selective in its criticisms of media depictions of violence

In addition to the point that *antisocial* acts are ideologically defined in effects studies (as noted earlier), it can be stressed that the media depictions of "violence' which the effects model typically condemns are limited to fictional productions. The acts of violence which appear on a daily basis on Nigerian news and serious factual programmes are seen as somehow exempt.

It is not that the depictions of violence in the news especially on murder, kidnapping or ritual killing is condemned in a blink here, but rather, it is used to draw attention to another theoretical inconsistency of the media effects model. If the antisocial acts shown in Nollvwood (Nigerian home video) series and films are expected to have negative effects on the behaviour of viewers, even though such acts are sometimes ultimately punished or have other negative consequences 'for the perpetrator, there is no obvious reason why the antisocial activities like kidnapping, which are always in the news, and which frequently do *not* have such apparent consequences for their agents, should not have similar effects in the existing justice system.

viii) The effects model assumes superiority to the masses

Surveys typically show that whilst a greater proportion of the public feel that the media may cause other people to engage in antisocial behaviour, almost no-one ever says that they have been affected in that way. This view is taken to extremes by researehers and media analysts/reporters who have regular contact with supposedly corrupting media material, but who are unconcerned for their own well-being as they implicitly know that the effects will only be on other people. This is because the *others* are defined as children or certain individuals or groups; it is imperative that analysis of the media as agents of socialization should put more lights on this area.

The idea, that, it is unruly *others* who will be affected -(the uneducated, the working class, the rural people, the political opponents?) -remains at the heart of the media effects paradigm. The point here is not that the content of the mass media must not be criticized, but rather that the mass audience are not well served by studies and news stones which will treat them as potential savages or actual fools.

ix) The effects model makes no attempt to understand meanings of the media

A further fundamental flaw, hinted at in points three and four above is that the effects model *necessarily* rests on reductive assumptions and unjustified stereotypes of media content.

To assert that, say, 'media violence' will bring negative consequences on Nigerian audience is not only to presume that depictions of violence in the media will always be promoting antisocial behaviour, and that such a category exists and makes sense, as noted above, but also assumes that the medium holds a singular message which will be carried un-problernatically to the audience.

The effects model, therefore, performs the double deception of presuming (a) that the media presents a singular and clear-cut ' message', and (b) that the proponents of the effects model are in a position to identify what that message is.

The meanings of media content are ignored, in the simple sense that, assumptions are made based on the appearance of news elements removed from their context (for example, a Nigerian male senator hitting a woman senator, equals violence equals bad). And in the more sophisticated sense, that even *in* context, the meanings may be different for different viewers (woman hitting man equals an unpleasant act of aggression, *or* appropriate sell-defence, *or* a triumphant act of revenge, *or* a refreshing change, *or* is simply uninteresting, *or* any of many further alternative readings).

In-depth qualitative studies have unsuiprisingly given support to the view that media audiences routinely arrive at their own, often heterogeneous, interpretations of everyday media texts (Buckingham, 1993, 1996; Hill, 1997; Schiesinger, et al., 1992; Gray, 1992; Palmer, 1986).

x) The effects model is not grounded in theory

Underlying many of the points made above is the fact that the entire argument of the media 'effects model[7] is substantiated with no theoretical reasoning beyond the patchy assertions that particular kinds of effects are produced by the media. The basic question of *why* the media should induce people to imitate its content has never been adequately tackled beyond the simple idea that particular actions are 'glamorized'. Similarly, the question of how merely seeing or reading an activity in the media would be translated into an actual *motive* which would prompt an individual to behave in a particular way is just as unresolved as the first

one.The lack of firm theory has led to the effects model being based in the variety of assumptions outlined below:

i) That the media (rather than people) is the unproblematic starting-point for researeh on media and socialization; that children will be unable to 'cope' with the media;

ii) That the categories of 'violence' or 'antisocial behaviour' are clear and self-evident; and

iii) That the media effects model's predictions on human socialization and development can be verified by scientific researeh.

It has also been assumed that television fictions/pictures are of more concern, but news pictures are not; that researehers and journalists have the unique capacity to observe and classify social behaviour and its meanings, but that those researehers/journalist need noi attend to the various possible meanings'which media content may have for the audience. Each of these substantial problems has its roots in the failure of the media effects theorists and social anomic analysts to entrench the 'media negativity' in any coherent theory.

Discussions

Principles of the discursive approach

In the discursive approaches, the social world is viewed as a construction of meanings which social actors produce, maintain and transform through the use of language and communication. The approaches draw much on the social constructionist perspective (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) but also on a wide range of other schools of thought (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough andWodak, 1997; Parker, 1992; Potter and Wetherell, 1998).

In general, the traditions (schools of thought) share two basic features: they are interested in the constructive effects of texts, and they are necessarily interpretative (Hardy and Phillips,1999: 2). The ideas in this paper are based on a critical .discursive approach that not only describes different discursive practices but also shows how discourse is shaped by ideologies and indicates the constructive effects that discourse has on social relations and practices and on social identities (Fairclough, 1992) - like the one tagged to media influence.
In other words, the assumption here is that discursive practices can have major ideologically-based effects, and they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations, for example, between the genders through the way they represent and position people in social system. The ideological loading of certain ways of using language and the power relations which underlie them are often invisible, taken for granted, and seen as "natural" to people. That is why they need to be made visible in researeh and [news analysis] (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).Hence, a critical discursive approach openly declares its emancipatory interests. It aims to open up the often invisible and taken-for-granted assumptions and, thus, has a moral loading.

This paper considers the discursive approach as a theoretical framework, although it can also be regarded as a method of researeh (Potter and Wetherell, 1998). The distinction is, however, often blurred. In the following, the basic concepts of the framework are defined: discourse and ideology. First, is the focus on the concept of culture, since discourses constitute society and culture as well as are constituted by them. Foucault (1972), for example, argued that 'discourses make it possible for certain statements but not others to occur in particular times, places and institutional locations (see Fairclough, 1992:40).Consequently, language and communication are not operating in a "vacuum". They always maintain and transform the social and cultural practices from which they emerge,

although the links between language and society and culture are complex, and, according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), are best seen as indirect and mediated rather than as direct.

The traditional definition of the concept of culture, based on the work of the anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1874), refers to a combination of conventional courses of action, values, norms, behaviour, and symbols, which develop in a particular place and time, and which influence the functioning of the people of the culture in question. Cultural dimensions manifest themselves in several overt features (people's behaviour, symbolic artefacts such as logos and trademarks in business organizations, the physical environment, and so on), values (for example, how societal responsibilities and relationships are understood), and self-evident basic assumptions which deal with worldviews, humankind and individuality (Leach, 1982; Sintonen, l999; Aaltio-Marjosola, 1992:60-64; Alvesson and Berg, 1992: 61-64, 97-107).

From this paper's point of view, the important issue in the concept of culture is that it contains ideas, beliefs and symbolic conceptions about the essence and course of action of those belonging to that culture. In this sense, culture is understood as a network of meanings which have linguistic and discursive dimensions. Furthermore, all these ideas and conceptions become manifest in material, visible and practical features. Culture, however, is not unchanging. It is dynamic and has a temporal dimension. Like 'tradition' in general, (Ricoeur, 1984, 68-70), culture is subject to the processes of sedimentation and innovation. The dynamic character of tradition and culturelies in the fact that some features are stabilized, and that these stable, sedimented features make innovation possible.

Consequently, a culture consists of habitualized ways of thinking and patterns of ideas, which at the same time, restrain and open-up challenges for change. The relationship between culture and languageis a dialectical one, and this entails that every instance of language use makes its contribution to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations (Fairclough, 1998; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

Basically, that is the power of discourse. The continuity of inter-generational prejudice is secured through the media's role as a fundamental agent of socialization. The media does not influence people; its major effect is the reinforcement of existing attitudes (Scheufele, 2008). The frame is reliant on something resident in the surrounding culture and therefore shapes information based on culturally accepted beliefs, values and norms. This context dependency within frames has been defined as "cultural resonance," Ndhlovu (2008), a term used to describe the way issues are framed to reinforce entrenched social perspectives.

Understanding the media and socialization: A theoretical conceptualization

What role do the media play in forming public opinion and socialization? The media industry incorporates television, film, magazine publications, newspapers, radio and social media. With such a mass coverage and several mediums, the media's audience and readership is extensive. Due to their extensive influence and potential, the media as a social institution has incredible reach ability and lobbying potential (Lynch, 2005). With great power comes great responsibility, but it would not unjust to suggest that the media abuses its power all the time. But how great or often docs the media industry form public opinion and influence socialization process ahead other institutions like home, peer group, traditions and religion?

On the global scene, through the analysis of researehes published regarding asylum seekers, this paper has demonstrated the media's ability to frame issues to suit their interests; lead public opinion through the portrayal of statistics; and encourage society into induced xenophobic indignation. Thus, media corruption can be in the form of backing governments,

criticizing politicians, lobbying for change or any number of self-beneficial causes (Lynch, 2005). Such examples from the Australian media corruption include the 1999 and 2004 *'Cash for Comment'* scandal involving *2UE's* John Laws and Alan Jones taking payment from corporate clientele in exchange for positive on-air radio comments (WSWS, 1999).

Similarly, the 2001 *'Children Overboard'* scandal was manipulated by the media to falsely portray asylum seekers in the lead up to Howard's reelection (Marr and Wilkinson, 2003:194-210). Such examples represent a slight proportion of media scandals whereby their power has been misused.

Thus, critical comparison of media's portrayal and the actual facts of socialization process is what is needed to implement the Nigeria media relatively into the broader spectrum of their role as agents of socialization. The mass media can play a significant role in shaping the social attitudes and social behaviors of children and adolescents (Donbach, 2008).

These effects are distinct from more general media effects that do not involve attitudes toward or behaviors with others, such as purchasing behaviors or teaming educational content, for instance: Advertising as Persuasion; Educational Television and Children's Responses to; *Nickelodeon).*In Africa, traditionally, parents exert the most influence on children; the mass media can be considered secondary agents of socialization. A study has found that mass media use, especially exposure to television, can affect the positive development of children's self-image, attitudes toward others, and interpersonal behaviors.
Researehers have also studied the role of media in youth's development of political attitudes and behaviors. When children view television, they compare themselves to characters and situations and form assessments of themselves (Donbach, 2008). Usually, the effect on children's self-image could be negative. For example, viewing of advertisements is related to lower self-esteem and depression among children who come from low-income families. It is likely that children feel bad about themselves because they cannot have the products that are advertised on television (Nathanson, 2008).

According to the reading, "Socialization and Culture", from the book, *Interdisciplinary English* published in I998by Loretta F. Kasper, socialization group in society. Socialization has four basic agents; family, school, peers arid the mass media. Each one of these agents plays a role in the lives every individual. Therefore, the mass media should not carry the entire burden of influence for individual or societal abnormal behaviors. However, this paper upholds that the idea of naming one single socialization agents as the 'most important' is unrealistic due to the fact that these agents or institutions function dependency on relative environmental and cultural variables.

The Mass Media are the different processes that facilitate communication between the sender of a message and the receiver of that message with the wider coverage in space and time. In fact, there are many types of media with differing level of influences; these include the newspapers, magazines, radio, films, CDs, Internet, and television. These kinds of media, especially the television, affect children and adult's behavior in different ways usually based on society culture and operational environment variable. According to an article, "Socialization: From Infancy to Old Age", (Chapter 3) in *Sociology the Basics,* (10th ed.) by John J. Macion is published in 1977 in Old'Westbury, New York by the Feminist Press and

McGraw-Hill; the average family in the United States has at least one television turned on for at least seven hours a day Donbash, 2008).

Many studies have concluded that because of its ubiquity in Africa and per capita cheapness of radio; it is the best medium of communication among farmers, policy makers, markets and food consumers in Africa where until the 21st century telephony and television were mostly owned and accessed by elites (Neurath, 1962; Nakabugu, 2000, Chapman et al., 2003; Manyozo, 2008).But the reality is that in many African homes, in the rural areas where the members are living below one Dollar per day, the zeal to procure a radio set in order to stay tuned with events and information vital for their survival will be low while spending one hour in front of the television is a tall dream!

Rural poverty is not just a shortage of material goods. It is usually part of a syndrome, which includes low status in community, lack of influence, economic and political dependence and insecure or irregular sources of income. It also involves a limited range of economic and social opportunities and a preoccupation with immediate issues like hunger, shelter and various carnal pleasures (Fabiyi and Idowu, 1999). Every human being belongs to a social unit in a society. Inclusion and participation in groups is achieved through the socialization process that lasts throughout our lifetime. The media are not the most notorious socialization agents in this life time journey.

Through this process, the members of a society are incorporated in the cultural expectations and the anticipated normative structures. In other words, people learn the habits and values of their culture continuously. Central to this process are groups and institutions such as family, education, and media (Katsas, 2012). One of the major scholars of socialization, George Herbert Mead argues that a person's behavior can be understood only in terms of the behavior of the whole social group in which the person belongs. Thus, the social changes created by a society actually affect the philosophies and behaviours of the individuals who may be exposed to the replication of these changes by the media.

While the media may be constructed (through quantitative researeh based on figures generated) as re-enforcer of many of these social variables; discursively, the media cannot be held responsible for their production. The structure of the presentation of the arguments in this paper revolves round three themes: 'social change', 'lawlessness' and 'socialization'. The arguments begin with a reference to the many important social changes in today's societies. With examples from specific institutions, it is argued that all these social changes constitute a paradigm shift in thinking not really produced by the media!

This essentially leads to "social anomie" a condition where the sense of purpose and objective is lost in the overall society and, as a consequence, among its members. Africans live in an era characterized by large and sudden changes mostly from external variables. Changes in social institutions and social structure are experienced in a direct way by more people than others. One could say that this is always the case in Nigeria where ownership of the radio or television is becoming a political tool to distort public information by one political group against the other. The difference is that society believes that these changes are more massive and faster probably with referral materials from the media.

People respond this way precisely because man is in the middle of all the changes and has not figured out how to adapt without any flaw. Starting with the social institution of the family,

people experience changes that tend to relax the previously rigid structures. Today, in Africa the definition of 'family' keeps on changing, including new, non-standard structures. Examples are single parent families, one-person families, or parents of the same sex. Additionally, the typical family in economically developed countries is smaller due to the reduction in the number of births. Another structural change is the increase in the divorce rate and marital violence in modern Nigeria. Continuing with the social institution of religion, (once taken-for-granted levels of faith and support), crumble as a result of major scandalous news stories that come out in the public from this angle so often.

Regardless of the scandals, the role of religious faith and the church/mosque representatives is declining in economically developed countries. In the economic sphere, the structural changes that occur lead to an increase in inequality at the global level, the declining ability for mutual support between generations which are invariably harbingers of greater insecurity. Two other social institutions, education and politics, are being targeted having lost much of their glamour and are increasingly characterized by uncertainty and inability to provide reasonable and safe direction in Nigeria. So, many Nigerians now live in the age of deconstruction of social institutions and habits.

The system itself is self-defeating and places its structures in a process of disbelief. Through these many changes, people in society lose their standard points of reference- the constants that they have used throughout their lives. This period of social change that "'people experience can be characterized as a change of thinking, what has been termed a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 2000). These paradigmatic shifts always occur and are structural components of social change. Consider the 1950s through the 1960's that brought serious challenges in ruling class in Africa through constant encounters of powerful institutions, especially with the colonial regimes.

Later in the 80s, political, military and racial practices that for decades were taken for granted; started being disputed by an average Nigerian. Let us not get too far back. Internationally, the early 1990's brought the challenge of socialism through a paradigm shift that brought huge political, cultural and economic changes that are experienced even today. In all these, the media has played, and continues to play one role or the other. All these examples show that today's economically societies (irrespective of international political ideology) have to manage extremely volatile situations that might lead to personal and social insecurity.

This uncertainty is the result of social anomie that increasingly characterizes societies and indirectly affects how the media is used for human development. Emil Durkheim, the great French sociologist, introduced the concept of anomie to describe a condition of deregulation in society. It refers to the situation where the rules for how people should treat each other break down so people do not know what to expect from one another. Thus, anomie is a condition where the rules or expectations for behavior are unclear or absent. Being preoccupied with the consequences of social change, Durkheim suggests that the lawlessness and lack of social norms leads to deviance (Macionis, 2008).

Purely, deviance is not a clear product of the media, because there are many rural individuals that have not been exposed to much media content as the city people; and are deviant to so many simple practices on healthy and harmonious living for ultimate community development. Durkheim considered that sudden changes in a society cause a state of

lawlessness. As a consequence, lawlessness led to the same result: the collapse of the system, either during a great prosperity or a great depression (Durkheim, i960).

Lawlessness, thus, refers to a breakdown of social norms in a situation where the activities of the members of society are not controlled by evaluative standards. Individuals cannot easily find their rightful place in the society, because there is lack of clear rules for equity. Abruptly, changing conditions and attempting to adapt to an uncertain environment, lead to dissatisfaction, conflict, and delinquent behavior. Durkheim noted that periods of economic recession are accompanied by'greater anomie and higher rates of crime and delinquent behavior (Garficld, 1987).Extending the work of Durkheim, the American sociologist Robert Merton used the term 'structural anomie' to describe deviant behavior. Merton argued that the differences between socially acceptable goals and socially acceptable means to achieve the development objectives create a tension that can lead to deviant behavior. This tension is permanent and refers to the difference between the ideologically expected and the realistically achievable (Mcrton, 1938) which are beyond the jurisdiction of the media to absolutely regulate or manipulate.

Theories of Socialization and the Communication Process

One of the major scholars of socialization, George Herbert Mead argues that a person's behavior can be understood only in terms of the behavior of the whole social group in which the person belongs. This is because the individual acts of a person reflect larger social structures that go beyond the 'self and define it as part of a larger group.

Mead proposed the explanation of the personal experience through the perspective of the society, because the person belongs to a social structure. He argues that the definition of the individual self cannot exist outside society and is defined by it through a perpetual process of interactive communication. This process creates the consciousness of self (Macionis, 2008) which was the pivotal of Freire's pedagogy based on the critical assessment of societal social distortions through collective responsibility and obligation for culturally sensitive development (Freire, 1970). The central idea for Mead is the 'self: the part of a person's personality composed of self-awareness and self-image.

He claims that the 'self docs not exist at birth, but develops through social experience. Given that social experience is the exchange of symbols, people tend to find meaning in every action, thus, how the individual will experience and appreciate the media content. With the limited social experience, infants" self can only develop through imitation. This is where parental guidance becomes apparent. Gradually, children learn to assume the roles of 'many others".

The final stage is the generalized 'other', which refers to the broad cultural norms and values used as a benchmark for the evaluation of 'others' (Mead, 1962).Elaborating Mead's ideas, Lawrence Kohlbcrg suggested the theory of moral development. He argued that people judge situations as right or wrong based on the development of moral rules in three stages of adulthood. The first is the 'pre-conventional' stage where man experiences the world in terms of pain and pleasure. The second stage, the 'conventional scene' occurs during adolescence. The teens learn how to determine what is right and wrong according to the wishes of their parents and be^in to conform to cultural norms which has little to do with the mass media.

In fact, the greatest culprit, at this stage is the 'interpersonal communication' a medium of communication in the purview of every individual in a society. The last stage of moral

development is the 'post-conventional level, where people move autonomously, having internalized the rules of society and the abstract moral principles (Kohlberg, 1981) not only from the mass media but from all the social variables; including cultural institutions.

Socialization and Mass Media

The application of the above is directly tenable for the dissection of the issues of socialization of young people by the media. The increasing presence of media which is said to increase youth involvement with issues of deviance and diversity has been over-flogged in development communication. Media, while presenting anomic situations create phobic people. Consequently, while the media recently developed as a means of socialization, they influence public opinion, shaping the way ourselves and the world around us are seen (Muzzatti, 2007).

To argue that the way that the media present their programs affects the development of self and has a negative impact on the creation and understanding of necessary ethical standards is a tactical enthronement of biases that the ideology behind programme presentation, in the first place, is not the product of the larger social cultural indexes.

Accordingly, the media effect on self-image of children and adolescents is negative, creating persons with problematic socialization (Nathanson. 2008) becomes more pronounced than the underlying societal philosophies of socialization and the intricacies of the theories oi communication cum communication for development.

Socialization, Anomie and the Media

The argument is that a society with a high level of anomie creates problems of socialization for its members. This does not mean that members of the society will not socialize; but it docs mean that socialization will contain the building blocks of a social structure characterized by anomic situations.

To understand how 'anomie' is associated with 'socialization', it is important lo reference two major issues: deviant behavior and the role of the media. The classic sociological concept of anomie has been used as a tool for understanding the relationship between social structures and cultural characteristics and delinquent behavior. The various applications of the term are associated with the European tradition of the 19th century, namely Durkheim for whom delinquent behavior is also the study of social change (Bernburg, 2002). Hence, deviant behaviour can be directly understood in relation to important issues of our time, such as the penetration and influence of ihc economic logic of the market (Block, 1990).

By extension, 'anomie' could be used to comprehend the relativity nature of socialization while specifically explaining problematic socialization in relation lo the role of mass media. The exposure of an individual to media can cause two kinds of effects. First, the short-term effects which include the simple imitation and transfer of enthusiasm. Second, the long-term effects which involves learning, through observation or desensitizalion of emotions. All these have different application according to age, but overall, are very strong on human socialization (Greenwood and Pietromonaco, 2004).

Recent field researehes are mostly on the impact of interactive media such as online gaming, sending and receiving messages among children and adolescents. The results, so far, indicate that although there are differences in age, gender, and motivation, the influence of the Internet is particularly important at younger ages (Lenhart, et al., 2001). The researeh

experiences agree that the way information materials are presented by the media, creates or increases a feeling of anomie among viewers and listeners. Thus, if it is accepted that the media have a key role in shaping the 'self', in socialization, then socialization, especially by the media may not turn out to be an unsurmountable development challenge. It should be seen as an opportunity to reposition the society as alternative to reposition the media.

Applications and examples are many to establish this argument further. One application is that members of a society do not share the same sense of what is right and what is not, what should and what should not be. This has increased in recent years in Nigeria with the way the media has been presenting the aspect of politics, elections, religious crises and corruption. This has led to the disruption of social cohesion, resulting m the decline of importance that individuals attach to institutionalized rules, focusing on extra-institutional factors such as ethnic philosophy and interest group priorities.

The next application refers to the case that the social rules especially in political, religious and cultural interactions are not consistent with the defined values of cross-cultural existence because most people's behavior does not serve the objectives or worsen community development. One example is the behavior expressed by athletes in a race. Their goal is to win with what this may mean, not necessarily victory through socially acceptable procedures or through lawful means. How do the media produce this? In fact, in many Africa folktales, the tortoise has been credited with such philosophy of outwitting other animals for survival. But such medium also put cautions on board that individual should not emulate such character because of the consequences on persona! sociali/ation and the entire development of the society.

And the mass media have replicated this in many television and radio programmes for children. Examples abound in many episodes of the NTA *Tales by Moonlight,* the *Turtle Tido* and the BBC (Africa) *Radio Drama* which feature stories for children. In fact, in the *Turtle Tido* tortoise has been credited with a tourism character with good disposition to everybody (Nigerians) irrespective of their ethnic group, religion or status. The third case describes the relationship between the construction of norms and that of ideas. The difference between these two creates an anomic situation leading many people to alienation due to inability to participate in the reality presented by the media.

For example, the persistent presentation of a particular lifestyle by the media can lead to loss of goals and anomic among people who are convinced of its value but fail to follow it. That is, it is perceived as a case where society promises something in the beginning but that is denied later - the reality. Meanwhile, participation and gross involvement in the message of the media is of more of personal philosophy and belief. Stories have been used in the African settings to elicit heroism and good conduct among members of the society.

These stories have their ways of taking the individual to cldorado but they are equally powerful to bring people back to the reality. This confirms the conclusion that the mass media is not out-rightly negative because they have earned their credits in this aspect in all parts of the world.

Summary

This presentation attempts a connection between structural characteristics of society and the concept of media and socialization. The central argument used is that because of sudden

social change, a state of anomie is created. This anomie, partly through the role of the media results in problematic socialization.

Emphasizing the exploration of the connection between anomie and socialization, this presentation focuses on the social context and the social structures that define socialization. The term anomie describes the difficulties or shortcomings in finding objectives and direction. In this study, the exploration of the media effects model (which have formed the benchmark for the explanation of human behaviour, or of the media in Nigeria has not shown remarkable answer for why many Nigerians would engage in human trafficking, drug dealing, ritual killing, kidnapping, exam-malpractice, armed robbery, rioting, election rigging, public fund mis-management and other forms of corruption because of their exposure to the print or electronic media content.

Whilst any challenging or apparently illogical theory or model reserves the right to demonstrate its validity through empirical data, the effects model has failed also in that respect. Its continued survival is indefensible and unfortunate. However, the shortcomings of this particular *model* does not mean that the *impact* of the mass media can no longer be considered or investigated. The studies by Greg Philo and Glasgow University Media Group colleagues, for example, have used often imaginative methods to explore the influence of media presentations upon perceptions and interpretations of factual matters (e.g. Philo, 1990: Philo, 1996).

The strength of this type of studies is that they operate on a terrain different from that occupied by the media effects model; that is, on *influences* and *perceptions,* rather than *effects* and *behaviour.* However, whilst such studies may provide valuable reflections on the relationship between mass media and audiences, they should not be seen as challenging the claims made from within the media 'effects model'. Of course, this should also not be seen as a weakness of these types of studies. Thus, the media effects paradigm should be lelt to bury itself whilst prudent communication/media researehers and journalists move on to explore these other areas.

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Conclusion

Any paradigm which is able to avoid the flaws and assumptions which have inevitably and quite rightly ruined the effects model is likely to have some advantages in media and socialization study cum news reporting especially now that the Internal and the New Media are really changing the face and philosophy of journalism in Nigeria. With the rise of qualitative studies which actually listen to media audiences, the advancement of a more forward-thinking, sensible and compassionate view of those who enjoy the mass media is becoming prominent. After decades of stunted and rather irresponsible talk about media 'effects', the emphasis is hopefully changing towards a more sensitive but rational approach to media scholarship especially for development purposes. It is argued that in today's African societies anomie is increasing as a form of serial social challenges confronting developing nations.

In conclusion, socialization problems are not due directly to the character and personality of each individual build by the media but by the cultural, political, economic and religious variables embedded in the socialization process of a given society. The socialization problems are largely the results of structural changes and structural problems in the wider society. This difficulty creates persons with contradictory socialization.

So, starting from weak and anomie social structures, it is concluded that a person who finds it difficult to understand his/her position in the social context may tend to blame the media for his/her woes leaving behind other critical factors that the media is only an accessory to. The paper concludes that the problem is not that there are no moral and traditional values in Nigeria. There always have been. The challenge for development experts how to identify and streamline the values that change (not just through the media) into the explanation of how and why people lose their firm reference points to socialization and social values.

This process is much more pronounced when the level of anomie is high due to many other societal problems like economics, politics, religion and technological advancement: the connection of the three concepts- media and socialization and anomie appears important in the investigation of behavioural change in development communication researeh. However, much remains to be investigated how powerful this is through the quantification of specific characteristics and media content. It is therefore recommended that the Nigerian media do critical assessment of national news worthy events beyond mere writing and editing to fly above unethical reporting of 'hard news'.

It is important also that more space and time are given to 'news analysis[1] to complement whatever the 'hard news' must have divulged to the public, invariably, this will allow the audience and readers have a better understanding of the place of the media in the socialization process beyond the blame game that presently prevails.

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