

# ROBO-SAPIENS AND THE CONFLICTS IN HUMAN COMMUNICATION RELATED DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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## Abstract

Extant literature supports the fact that the advent of the new media of communication continues to further human communication and development aspirations. However, less is known of the distortions that this phenomenon has introduced and the implications for sustainable development. Hence, in this study, we examined the conflicts between new media (man's creation) and man, over the social problems that arise as a result of the increasing use of the new media in the human development processes. We adopted the Dialectical Research and Documentary Analysis Procedure (DR & DAP) and argue that, in almost every human activity, Robo-sapiens (New media) are changing how humans interact with their environment and a lot of distortions are introduced thus disrupting the old 'safe' order (professionalism, privacy, ethics and responsible usage, etc). We note that, while it cannot be denied that new media have aided human communication and development, our findings show that new media have introduced negative social changes and clogs to the wheel of human progress. We suggested that all users (professional and non-professionals) should be sober and responsible in the use of new media, if the development gains must be sustained.

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***Keywords:*** *Robo-Sapiens, Homo-Sapiens, Conflicts, Human Development, Dialectical, Social Problems.*

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## Introduction

This paper seeks to contribute to a critical understanding of the problems that arise in the development of communication technology and communication content. A historical analysis of human communication shows that it began with the oral or spoken tradition and through the course of history, the dissemination of messages progressed from simply the oral tradition, to script, print, wired electronics, wireless electronics and finally digital communication. The greatest change in message dissemination in recent history occurred with the introduction of computers and the Internet in the early 1990s. Since then, this drastic change of communication medium

has significantly affected humans' perception of the media, the usage of time and space, and the reachability and control of the media.

The contributions of new media to development is well documented (Gerhards & Schaefer, 2009; Langley & Broek, 2010; Reilly, & Weirup, 2010; Okorom, 2012). Okorom, analysed its impact on journalism practice and notes that, an important promise of new media is the democratization of the creation, publishing, distribution and consumption of media content. New media is a broad concept used to describe all the communicative experiences that are undertaken through the instrumentality of the internet and its affiliated tools. This is a catchall term that is

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used to describe all that is related to the internet and the interplay between technology, images and sound. They are all the interactive forms of communication that use the internet, including Really Simple Syndication (RSS) Feeds, social networks, text messaging system, wikis, virtual worlds and more. All these innovations in digital media, or so-called new media, have changed and continue to change the way we think, act, and live. For example, digitalization, as a hybridization of print and electronic media in a binary code, converts analog to digital that requires a completely different mode of production and distribution. He suggests further that, new media holds out the possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device as well interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content (pp.2-5).

Most technologies described as new media are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, dense, compressible and interactive. What distinguishes new media from traditional media is the digitizing of content into bits. There is also a dynamic aspect of content production which can be done in real time. "Wikipedia is an example, combining internet accessible digital text, images and video with web-links, creative participation of contributors, interactive feedback of users and formation of a participant community of editors and donors for the benefit of non-community readers. Facebook is an example of the social media model in which most users are participants. Gerhards & Schaefer (2009) suggest that a substantial change in the media landscape is greatly important. Alongside the often criticized 'old' media such as newspapers, radio and television, the internet has become a 'new', significant medium. It is becoming ever more accessible to more people, is used more often, increasingly considered as legitimate

information source and is, in part, superseding the old mass media in these respects.

One of the sectors where the new media has impacted most is the information and communication sector. The new media accounts for the tremendous developments witnessed in this area. But we point out here that there is need for caution in shouting 'Uhuru'. This is because, as laudable as development is its sustainability more important and far exceeds any benefit derivable from it in the present (Chike-Obi, 2012). He has argued that the concept of development as understood by policy makers and the public sector in third world countries is self-defeating and detrimental to their development cause. He pointed out that there is need to also examine the problems caused by this agent of development, in this case, new media. We align our thoughts to his, and argue that, new media have created more issues that may erode contributions they have made to development. In this argument, we situate our pontification within Feenberg's (1992) critical theory of technology, which posits that automation, which characterizes the technological economy, has unpalatable implications for global interaction and universal commerce and industry.

#### **Statement of Research Problem**

The media of communication through the ages have played important role in man's efforts towards better life. Corpus literature exists, emphasising the benefit and contribution of new media of communication in human development aspirations. Others have examined the role of the media content in accelerating advances in ICT- a situation they call *Symbiosis*. (i.e, the content of the media technology, leading to more advanced media technologies). Empirical observation however suggests that more social problems emerge as society

advances. One area which seems to be affected most is the human communication development processes. Therefore we ask the following questions: how have new media challenged how human interact what are the distortions introduced in development by the new media; what are the implications for sustainable development, what extent have new media introduced distortions in the process of development, in what areas of communication are these distortions manifest. These questions, although generally empirically accessible, have not yet been analysed sufficiently. Apart from theoretical debates about the new media's status as the fore runner of democratic and participatory interaction, empirical research on the new media has thus far concentrated on its contributions to development or on the dichotomy it has created between the technologically advanced Western world and the technologically stagnant emergent States of Africa and Asia; a relationship which no doubt is quite convenient for the western world and their cronies. Their intelligentsia and elites have coined '*digital divide*' - a term that re-emphasises their superiority and dominance. As a result of this distraction in focusing only on the contributions of the new media, little or less is known of how the new media have negatively impacted the development endeavors of developing countries like Nigeria. This paper is therefore burdened with the task of identifying the problems (socio-economic) consequent on the emergence of new media and their impact on sustainable development aspirations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Our specific purpose is to examine the distortions introduced by new media in human development and the implications for sustainable development. The following outlined objectives will help keep us focused

on this task:

- i. To examine how new media has changed the way humans interact with their environment
- ii. To identify the distortions introduced by new media in the process.
- iii. Examine the aspects of communication where these distortions are manifest
- iv. Assess the implications of these distortions for Africa's sustainable development

### **Theoretical Framework**

To properly reflect the concepts in this study, two theories easily lend themselves to the discourse on new media and human development. They include the Critical theory of technology and the Technological determinism theory.

The Critical Theory of Technology (CTT), was propounded by Andrew Feenberg in 1991. Andrew Feenberg is Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Technology in the School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, where he directs the [Applied Communication and Technology](#) laboratory. His theory, the critical theory of technology, criticises technology in 3 views: instrumental view of technology; determinist view and substantive view. He postulated that:

The essence of technology is historical on these terms, or rather *epochal*, a dispensation that depends on the particular pattern in which the socially variable dimensions of technology are fused with its unique way of encountering the world. The technocratic evolution of modern societies represents one possible realization of this essence, a realization that I argue is peculiarly

truncated by the demands of power. In applying technical controls to human beings while restricting the breadth of social influences that can affect design, it perpetuates elite power through the structure of technology itself. In the process it mutilates not just human beings and nature, but technology as well. A fuller realization of technology is possible and necessary. In a society completely organized around technology, in which new possibilities of technocratic repression emerge, democratization is necessary to formalize and sustain the informal feedback loop that has always joined technical design to the social world in the past.

Fernberg's philosophical examination of technology, argues that automation, which characterizes the technological economy, has implications for global interaction and universal commerce and industry. He stated further that human reliance on technology has also affected the communicative processes such that technological media of communication have become ends of communication rather than means to an end. Fernberg's primary contribution to the philosophy of technology is his argument for the democratic transformation of technology

What human beings are and will become is decided in the shape of our tools no less than in the action of statesmen and political movements. The design of technology is thus an ontological decision fraught with political consequences. The exclusion of the vast majority from participation in this decision is profoundly undemocratic" (p.3).

Fernberg's postulations find adequate

relevance in this study, which examines the impact of new media in human development. His theory affords a platform on which the Researchers' critical minds could rely on to investigate this role objectively. This theory is therefore applied in this study to examine new media's conflicting role in the development effort of emergent States like Nigeria.

### **Technological Determinism theory**

This is a media theory that explains the impact of ICT on how information is consumed, retrieved, and disseminated in contemporary society as posited by Marshal McLuhan and cited in Nwachukwu et. al. (2006:123). The theory postulates that, "changes in communication modes largely determine the course of history. McLuhan's theory aimed at drawing attention to the portent strength of communication technologies". This theory regards the wider dimension of information craze in the society, as a direct result of the information explosion fostered by ICTs. It is therefore safe to assume that the social, historical, economic and cultural changes occurring in human society today could be linked to the invention and development of new technologies. The medium, which the theory emphasizes, has gone ahead to prove that communication technologies are turning the world into an interactive forum. (Odoemelam & Adibe, 2011).

### **Literature Review: Conceptual and Empirical**

- a) Communication, Development and the New Media: A good starting point for this review will be an examination of the concept of development. Even though development discourse has occupied premium position among researchers and policy makers, the arguments

that trail its description remain unabated. In his seminal work, *Development communication: Broadening the Boundaries of communication*, Mefalapolous (2008, p.43) observed that, the issue of development has been highly debated with different perspectives and voices broadly classified into two opposite camps. According to him, in one camp, are those who view development as an effort, and a mission, under the guidance of the richer countries, to defeat poverty and ignorance. The scope was to help poorer countries achieve steady economic growth in order to emerge from their underdevelopment condition. This perspective, which took the center stage of development effort in all developing countries in the late 70's and early 80's, has been frowned at by many elites and intelligentsias of African extraction. Among them is the believe that, such orientation of development has further engendered underdevelopment in Africa and other developing worlds (Rodney, 1972; Chilisa, 2012). These groups from the second camp or opposite perspective are highly critical of such a conception of development. They see this conception of development as an attempt by the rich countries to maintain a dominant position through political and economic predefined models, often ignoring local knowledge, needs and realities in the poorest countries (Mefalapolous, 2008, p.43). He concludes that, whatever the perspective from which development is viewed, it is among the top priorities of the international political agenda and continues to

involve great financial and human resources at the local, national and international levels as shown by the statistics of major international development organizations. For instance, data from Organisation for Economic corporation and development (OECD; [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)) indicate that in 2005, official development assistance by member countries rose by 32 percent to a record high over US 106 billion. In 2006, the lending commitment of the two entities of the World bank group (IBRD and IDA) increased to over US 23 billion ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)). This goes to show the vantage position that development discourse occupies among policymakers and financiers.

Development could also be defined as a positive change from conditions that are no longer considered good enough for the goals and aspirations of society to those that are most likely to meet those goals and aspirations (Moemeka, 2012, p.7; Dauda, 2010, p.241). Okoli (2003) writes that it involves the attainment of an ever shifting but always higher level of equilibrium between the functional and dysfunctional elements within the society and the individual. Abah (2000, cited in Odoemelam, 2011) outlined the indices of development to include

- i. Increased capacity to regulate internal and external relations
- ii. Self sufficiency in food production
- iii. Increase in ability to guard national independence
- iv. High level of employment
- v. Equalization in the distribution of social services
- vi. Self reliance
- vii. Independent control of the economy
- viii. Equal economic opportunity



- ix. Ability to solve internal problems
- x. Greater share of international trade and
- xi. Quality education

However, fair as these indices may be as representation of development, Odoemelam (2011, p. 50-51) has argued that it is rather limited and exclusive. He notes that it does not take into account other indices precedent for ascribing development to an entity. He opines that, the present information economy, has made it quite necessary to include, as a development index, a country's ability to be the sole determinant of her mode of communication, the communication content, the communication infrastructure as well as the type of communication exposure as benchmarks for defining a country's development. His argument proceeds and notes that, economies can only run successfully on a strong information and communication system. This position is supported by Rodman (2006), who notes that, in the developed Western world, the media are strong economic factor, controlling over 65% of all the components of the economy put together. The statement below captures the essence of this discourse:

Look behind the wealth of nations and you will find information. Look behind the poverty of nations and you will find lack of information. We can now appreciate why countries are beginning to compete and fight over control of information, not natural resources...Ovia, 2003 (cited in Agbanu, 2012, p.422)

The new media is a broad term that emerged in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to encompass the amalgamation of the traditional media such as films, images, music, spoken and written words with the interactive

power of computer and communication technologies, computer enabled consumer devices and importantly, the internet (Agbanu, 2012, p.430). The new media holds out a possibility of a demand access to content anytime, anywhere as well as interact life of the new media content and its interactive relationship with the media consumers. Some of these new media are: internet satellites cable system, computers, digital radio and televisions, video text messages etc.

New media has had a profound effect on the most essential categories of society in the twenty-first century: economies, politics and the exchange of ideas. Economically, new media is the globe's commercial skeleton. Fibre optic wiring networks between the world's cities connect one to another. Not only does this make global finance and trade possible, since data between firms and investors are universally accessible, but it also impacts the possibilities and conceptions of so called old commercial enterprises while giving rise to new ones. Every time a customer goes online to shop for a book, an ipod or a digital camera, new media is on both sides of the transaction. New media is not only the product but helps to mould the process of electronic commerce (Okorom, 2012).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of new media has to do with restructuring of research, global economies, social interaction, and the currents of writing and dissemination of information that have accompanied its emergence. Web and blog- writing in particular are not particularly revolutionary because it changes the way people use language or construct basic sentence. It is ground breaking because it allows people to structure and nest information differently. In today's average web/blog post, news articles, op-eds etc. are not only entries in mixed media (photos, writing, video) format, but they are organized according to hyperlink

organization (2012).

It is important to note that new media is characterized by an astonishing level of personal experience and exposure. Online companies and sites can track the content of personal electronic mail and site visits in order to target advertisements on users' sidebars and preferences. There are websites whose sole duty is to compile and share personal data with web surfers. One of such sites is Speokeo.com, a website that uses publically cached information (phone numbers, family members, emails, addresses, even shopping trends) and shares them, albeit sparingly without a membership, to all who wish to search. There are serious concerns over personal privacy in new media and these concerns are legitimate. Perhaps in the fog of shared and linked information across social sites, business networking, as well as electronic mail messages and publically recorded data, personal privacy for those who work with new media technology may be a thing of foggy and distant twentieth century. In reality, there is one all important caveat: do not write or reveal anything on line that you wouldn't want the world to know (Okorom, 2012).

There is something new about new media that is defined by its capability to reach outside of stagnant information pools. Perhaps the term new media is more apt to describe the network of networks that overwrites traditional relationships in exchange for new ones. In many ways, traditional media now rely on new media sources for data and information. What this signals is two- fold: not only do new media enable the average person to engage in political, cultural, social and economic action, but it also suggests that old style reporting and data collection outlets are now secondary and not primary sources for many (Okorom, 2012).

### **Research Design**

In this study, we combined two qualitative methods - the Dialectical research technique and the Documentary Analysis Procedure. As Reinard, (cited in odoemelam et al 2013) notes, Researchers who use qualitative methods often try to interpret the meanings to be found in communication exchanges. Dialectical inquiry or dialectical investigation is a form of qualitative research which utilizes the method of dialectics, aiming to discover truth through examining and interrogating competing ideas, perspectives or arguments. Dialectic research can be seen as a form of exploratory research, in that there is not so much a research hypothesis to be tested, but rather new understanding to be developed. Dialectical research may also be thought of as the opposite of empirical research, in that the researcher deals with arguments and ideas rather than data. Indeed, Berthel Ollman (1993) argues that all research is either dialectical or non dialectical.

Dialectical research may be applied to certain problems. For instance, Eli Bernker and David McNabb (2006) argue for the application of dialectical research for the study of organizational processes. James page (2006) used a dialectical research method to develop a philosophy of peace education. This method therefore, readily lends itself to the major pursuit of this work since there are polemical stances, as to the regulation of the social media. The controversies include Africa's security concerns and the utility of social media or lack of it. For social media for instance, arguments have been advanced that it is part of the problems of human society and therefore needs some kind of 'taming'. However, Scholars like (David, 2012; Landau, 2011) think social media is part of the solutions of society's political and security concerns. They have argued that once social media is understood as an advanced form of

active citizenship then it can become part of the solution to the problem of abuses of political and media power; not part of the problem to be addressed by regulation.

In the documentary analysis, an in-depth review of literature on subject matter was done based on a sample of empirical research published in English-language, peer-reviewed journals. Inagaki (2006 cited in odoemelam et al 2013) referred to this method as Desk study method of research. The following criteria were used to select articles for review: (1) articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals in the last seven years (2006–2013); (2) articles dealing with new media and technology; Books within the context of information technology and development (3) articles providing substantive evidence linking new media communication distortions in human development process. A systematic procedure was adopted in the selection of literature for review. For the online literature, basic key words from the topic were keyed in to google scholar. With this procedure, several online search engines were used to retrieve studies relevant to this present study. For the print copy of literature relevant to this study, the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, situated at the main campus of the University of Nigeria, served as a useful guide. Inagaki (2006) in his paper, *Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development: Recent Trends in Empirical Research*. adopted his method and examined communication as a causative factor in development,

### **Data and Findings**

Data was collected from a systematic collection of relevant literature. All collected literature were collated and reviewed systematically. Below, we present a meta review of problems caused by new media and their implications for development aspirations in developing African countries like Nigeria:

### **I. Erosion of Professionalism**

This is one of the areas where new media has dealt a great blow on media. Professionalism entails a high standard that is expected from a person who is well trained in a particular job. It comprises great skill and ability. However, the introduction of new media in the communication arena has disrupted this order. One area mostly affected is the retrieval and dissemination of information. The democratic disposition of the new media has made it possible for anyone to be disseminator of information irrespective of how harmful or negative the content and consumption of such information might be. Feenberg's critic of technology in this regard, is well documented in academic literatures (1992, p.43).

The ideas espoused here, are in line with the thoughts of Singer (2012). Her study examined how online news workers fundamentally challenge the already-disputed concept of journalists as professionals. It found that, the people who claim membership in a profession and delineate its attributes do so at least in part to justify inequality of status, as well as to limit and control access to that status. The key role of the professional can be fulfilled only by people with particular training, skills and judgment, and it is crucial that the distinction between practitioner and layperson be clearly recognized by all parties. However, as her study found, new media does not respect this order. Another study found that, the new media has disrupted the professional manner medical trainees interact with educators, colleagues, and the public (Farnan, et al 2009).

In citizen journalism, which is a product of the new media, for instance, information carriers do not abide to the professional guide lines of journalism, hence the market place of ideas has become flooded with lies, half truths and hate speeches. The



implication include an 'informationally' misled society, escalation of distrust, suspicion as a result of hateful and unguided disseminations emanating from unprofessional journalists. Odoemelam (2012) has drawn attention to the use of internet mediated channels for the dissemination of hate and insightful messages by minority groups in Nigeria. As a result, Anyadike et al (2013) has argued for the regulation of the unregulated media.

**ii. Ethical Considerations**

Every positive human endeavour is guided by certain moral principles and rules and communication and its mediation is not an exception. For instance communication is guided against such ethical grids and rules as: falsehood, slander, obscenity, glorification of evil, character defamation, etc. But new media has made it quite easy for defaulters to go around these guides. For instance, the issue of pornography in computer mediated communication is a well known phenomenon. One of the traits of development is the development of a sound mind and character and communication is the major agent of this type of transformation. However, we argue here that, when illicit tastes are fanned by the embers of pornography on our television screens and cell phones, the society becomes depraved and incapable of pursuing noble objectives which accelerate development. the advent of new media has broadened the flow and distribution of pornography and erotica to the masses, making it readily accessible (<http://www.studymode.com/essays/Pornography>). There exists corpus literature addressing the influence of internet mediated pornography on the physical, economic and social lives of the youth.

**iii. The Problem of Privacy**

Privacy is a cherished human right backed by relevant laws in the constitution. But the advent of the new media has rendered this

hallowed bequeathance ineffective. From economic to social privacy human beings have no more hiding place. Under the guise of security, the state and its agents (police, army, secret services, etc) invade the communication privacy of citizens. Advertisers have, through the use of new media, made life uncomfortable for other new media users. On the cell phone screen, and computer screens, unsolicited adverts invade the privacy of users. This has led to distractions, chaos and disorder. Citizens can no more enjoy the sacredness of privacy. Useful time for meditation and productive reflection can easily be disrupted by an unsolicited privacy invasion by an advert message. As a recent study show, much of the information that people would like to keep secret is already unlawfully in the possession of some company or government entity (DOD, 2005). Another study found that, in the post 9/11 world, the U. S. government utilized computer technology to exert some degree of control over its citizens, rather than protect their privacy (Viegas, 2005). Because of new media, people's privacy has been jeopardized and they cannot not take steps to protect their personal information from being used by others. This was why Feenberg (1992) emphasized that technology was undemocratic and fraught with political consequences in which there is the exclusion of the vast majority from participation (p.3). A study in America noted that, While American adults are concerned about how the government and corporations are centrally collecting data about citizens and consumers, teenagers are freely giving up personal and private information in online journals. Herein lies the privacy paradox (Associated Press, 2006). Similarly, Viégas' research on bloggers, suggests, "there is a disconnect between the way users say they feel about the privacy settings of their blogs and how they react once they experience unanticipated consequences form a breach of privacy" (2005).

**Iv. The Moral Panic**

One other key issue surrounding the use of new media in Africa today is the general heightened moral panic. By this we mean that in this part of the world, there is an increasing fear that the new media technologies promote alien and abhorable false values such as gangsterism, pornography, drug addiction, rape, nudity and semi-nudity, etc. This has been an issue of growing concern in the use of the technology in Africa.

**v. Invasion of Territorial Sovereignty**

The worry here is that as new media continue to promote linkages, interactions and interdependence, a time would come when governments may no longer be able to protect their sovereign jurisdiction from the effects of outside authorities and private actors, and Africa shall be at the receiving end.

**vi. Promotion of Violence**

The issue of concern here is that new media technologies have been widely used to arrange, support and fuel violent protests in many parts of Africa in the first few years of their existence in the continent. Similar to this challenge is that of the increasing use of the technology to spread hate and inciting messages. Adeyaju and Haruna (2011:530) testifies that during the 2011 electioneering period in Nigeria, Facebook and GSM-SMS were massively used to disseminate provocative and inciting messages that eventually culminated in the most unfortunate violence that precipitated the announcement of the election results in some states of the North with some calling on non indigenes to leave.

**vii. The Regulation Issue**

Inability to regulate and monitor the social media technology has remained an issue to worry about. This agrees with the submissions of Kidafa, Odoemelam and Elechi (2011:12) that “regulating traditional media in the face of issues like obscenity,

copyright, right to privacy, etc, was upheaval, but has become more difficult with the emergence of social media”. This is to say that with the great potentials of the technology comes the challenge of monitoring and regulation if our society must not fall beyond the short, nasty and brutish clime described in George Orwells' animal farm that prompted Ekwe, et al (2011) to propose for the anarchical theory of the media. The theory according to him foresees a society in chaos owing to disorder in seeking, receiving and disseminating of unfettered information (Kidafa, Odoemelam and Elechi, 2011:12)

**viii. Uneven Penetration**

There is a growing disparity in the penetration of the technology in the developed and developing nations. Even within Africa, the rural population is still largely excluded from the social media as the technological backwardness in most African countries has restricted the World Wide Web's accessibility to cities, thereby shutting out the rural areas which constitute the greater land area and population of the masses (Adibe 2010:56). Writing on the disparity in the penetration of new technologies and their implications, Ndukwe (2005:23) notes that:

*We live in a global village where technologies have direct impact on a nation's ability to compete globally; we must therefore ask ourselves how we have fared in comparison with other nations of the world in providing access to these vital infrastructure for our people..... While countries like Sweden boasts of about 100 percent access, Nigeria's figure is at a level of less than six percent (6%); even within the African continent, we are still far behind countries like Egypt, South Africa, Botswana, etc...Nigeria remains a “Lilliputian” in the international development index as far as ICTs penetration and usage is concerned.*

- ix. Also, lack of basic infrastructure such as stable power still threatens the use of the new technology in Africa as they are massively dependent on power which in most cases has remained epileptic.
- x. Anonymity of sources makes it difficult for strict regulation, monitoring and prosecution of illicit acts. This makes the technology a vulnerable instrument for perpetuating fraudulent acts.
- xi. The technology promotes piracy; this is partly because the question of copyright and intellectual property is more complex and difficult to define and regulate.
- xii. Similarly, images, sounds and videos can be digitally manipulated and posted or tweeted; so truth and reality are difficult to ascertain with new media.
- xiii. New media technologies are addictive in nature, making work/life balance hard to achieve.
- xiv. With the new technology, we get more than we bargain because of their information overload and social network overload.

### **Discussions**

In our study, we found enough evidence to support the idea that the new media of communication have not only introduced distortions in the development wheel of countries like Nigeria, but have also impacted negatively on development sustainability specially as it relates to value degradation. Some of the affected areas include: professionalism, ethics, privacy, unequal disadvantageous relationship between the developing world and the developed world. This finding is a departure from the held belief that new media of communication only brought good. This statement captures this opinion aptly: "The broad reach of the

new media, however, is by no means a purely positive step; it has already begun to negatively impact its consumers in many ways (<http://www.studymode.com/essays/Pornography>). Kur and Melladu (2007) hold similar view:

It is important to note that the main source of the prophecies of doom are the international media through which most of what the outside world knows about 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries. The latest advances in media technology has not changed the situation in favour of 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries. Rather they now make it easier and faster to collect, process, manipulate and distribute information that is injurious to the image of their worlds. By doing so the advances in mass mediated technologies refuel the feeling of 3<sup>rd</sup> world underdevelopment. This view is supported by Nwodu, who observed that the development has rather than bridge the gap, created a fully between the technological poles environmental degradation.

The argument above formed the major debate between the developed world and the third world countries in the early 80's and seems to remain unabated because of the new forms their relationship has taken, which include neocolonialism and media imperialism (Agbanu, 2012; Kur & Melladu, 2007). They noted significantly that, if unchecked, the new media technology, will eclipse the culture of the less developed nations since the information flow has always been for the benefit of the technologically strong nations.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

With its distinctive features new media has brought human society to a highly interconnected and complex level, but at the same time, it challenges the very existence of human communication and development. New media not only influences the form and content of information/messages, but it also affects how people understand each other in the process of human communication, especially for those from different cultural or

ethnic groups.

In this study, we used the critical perspective situated within Feinberg's critical theory of technological and examined the new media, as a product of advances in technology and the problems, vis -a-vis development in the third world. The aim was to identify the social problems that arise from the use of new media and its clog on the wheels of development. New media disruption in diverse aspects: professional, ethics, privacy and values, were discussed.

We conclude that, while it cannot be derived that new media have aided human communication and development, they have introduced negative social problems. We suggested responsible usage if development gains must be sustained.

#### **Recommendations**

As a result of these findings, we recommend the following:

1. There should be a viable regulatory framework that guides against using technology (new media technology) for criminal purposes. There are concerns that the new media tools could be used to spread misleading information.
2. There is also need to emphasis the development of communication. This comprise the coding of communication content. This aspect is very crucial to the development needs of third world countries.
3. Responsible leadership requires careful stewardship of the potentials of new media as well as addressing development sustainability which is very critical.
4. Developing a vision to foster sustainability and communicating that vision through development communication strategies, is also important.

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