
INDIGENIZATION OF MEDIA IN NIGERIA AND CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION: MUTUAL BEDFELLOWS OR IMPLACABLE FOES?

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Globalization has arguably been associated with a myriad of contentious phenomena including cultural syncretism and cultural imperialism which a number of conservative nations – notably the Third World African countries – have attempted to resist with an arsenal which ranges from the creation of nation-states to the adoption of the indigenization model of state administration. The adoption of the indigenization paradigm in most African countries, including Nigeria, has confronted various reviews. While some Afro-centric critics have non-hesitantly acclaimed the model, critical observers have pertinently highlighted some of its weaknesses. Based on semi-structured interviews with experts and secondary data, this paper presents the prospects of the indigenization model of media production and the avalanche of challenges that seriously impends its [the model's] effective implementation in Nigeria. The paper further shows to what extent the indigenization model is not perfectly compatible with the present globalization era. It argues that, though a pertinent tool to combat western cultural imperialism, the indigenization paradigm has relatively weak chances of being seriously upheld in a setting and context which are very much governed by the forces of Americanization/ westernization. A seemingly less 'retrograde' option is the glocalization paradigm which gives Nigerian artists and media producers the opportunity to both embrace modernity (globalization) and promote relevant and core aspects of Nigerian cultures.

Keywords: *cultural globalization, indigenization, glocalization, Nigerian Media Production.*

Introduction

Globalization has been construed by a good number of critics as a facet of cultural imperialism (one of the multiple faces of Americanization/westernization). These critics relatively equate the phenomenon to an indomitable predator to 'weaker' cultures of the globe and therefore, as a threat to the cultural systems of most Third World nations of the world (Endong 2014; Koblowe and Madu 2012; Salawu 2006; Iyorza 2008). A good number of culturalists have argued that though globalization has the potential to increase international trade thereby promoting material prosperity, it 'comes with a high spiritual and cultural cost, running roughshod over the world's distinctive cultures and threatening to turn the globe into one big tawdry strip mall' (Tyler 2010: 3). This indicates that globalization is inextricably linked to culture. In line with this thesis, three

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dominant paradigms have sought to situate the relationship between globalization and cultures. The first is predicated on the territory, language or biology and inevitably leads to a conflict between cultures, since immutable and very rigid cultural entities are bound to resist their merger. The second paradigm is predicated on creolization or hybridization. It is anchored on the idea of 'travelling cultures' which, in turn, is born from the belief that cultural boundaries are fuzzy and indeterminate. Hybridization and creolization have thus been regarded as being subversive of phenomena such as ethnicity and race as they indicate the existence of a growing number of people of mixed heritage (Cohen 2007; Eriksen 2003; Tanjong 2006).

The third paradigm is grounded on the idea that the progressive connectivity between world cultures will engender standardization and uniformity. This paradigm particularly stresses that numerous auxiliary-processes such as increasing connectivity between world cultures and standardization will inevitably lead to the emergence of a 'global culture'. The idea of a 'global culture' has been criticized on multiple grounds. One of the arguments against it is that, globalization could cause a situation whereby local cultures may see themselves in relation to other cultures and to a global culture. Such an inevitable reflexivity could engender a negative assessment of the global culture and a re-evaluation/re-assertion of the local in a very complex way. Furthermore, the complex process of cultural globalization could equally disturb the *groundedness*, fixity and location of certain 'fragile' cultures (Tomlinson 1999: 29–31; Cohen 2007: 4; Fuchs 2014; Endong and Essoh 2013). These facts have fuelled negative perceptions of globalization. The phenomenon has been equated to a serious threat to the cultural stability of most Third World countries. This threat has, in turn, motivated a good number of states to adopt protective measures and to conceive more or less rigid counter models – such as the nation-state and the indigenization philosophy – for the preservation of their cultures (Endong 2014; Chibuike 2011; Chukus 2010; Tania 2007; Weightman 2006; Tanjong 2006; Mosco 2008, 2009; Hamelink 1996; Garham 1979).

Indigenization, as a cultural philosophy, is presently embraced by many Third World African countries including Nigeria. It can be seen in almost all the sensitive sectors of these countries notably in the economy, education, petroleum, the law and media among others sectors. It is following this philosophy that the Nigerian Federation has adopted a media policy with strongly protective cultural objectives. The media policy spelt out by the Nigerian Broadcasting Code (NBC) imposes a 60–40 percent ratio for local-foreign content in the media programming of all media outlets operating in the country. The institutional indigenization of Nigerian media content has enjoyed many acclaims from a number of critics. Nevertheless, its validity is not generally recognized. A number of questions – bordering on its capacity to survive a number of threats among which should be mentioned cultural globalization/imperialism – continue to persist and beg for attention. This paper attempts at exploring some of the exploits and challenges of the indigenization model of media broadcast in Nigeria and goes further to show how it can hardly be compatible with this era of intensive – and seemingly invincible/eternal – cultural globalization.

Theoretical Framework

This paper hinges on two theories, namely, the modernization theory and the culturalism theory. The first is liberal in nature and is associated with the concept of 'mass media'. It argues that Africa's state of underdevelopment is a product of Africans' limited nay complete lack of access to literacy and media technology. According to this theory, most African states continue to rely on archaic and outdated technologies for their development. It suggests that the unique and salutary path to Africa's development is 'de-oralization' that is, the transfer of technology from the West to Africa. It is hoped that such a transfer of technology will ultimately permit Africans to catch up with the modernized world. In line with this position, globalization is viewed by the modernists as a vector of socio-cultural and political development (Dominick 2011; Watson 2003; Branston and Stafford 2006; Curran 2000). In line with this, Ifeoma and Ifeanyi (2012: 108–109) note that western cultural philosophies will always have their influence on the cultural systems of the Third World countries since many societies have adopted and accepted them as the 'modern (or better, the best)' cultural model in the world. They succinctly argue that:

Many countries, especially some of the developing countries have lost their cultural uniqueness and identities due to western-inspired model ways of doing things. Many countries have lost their model ways of doing things. Many countries desire to be progressive and successful in order to meet up with the fast changes of modern times; therefore, the desire and fascination for change and transformation is inevitable.

The cultural theory on the other hand argues that the transfer of technology to Africa is a threat or obstacle to the development of the Black Continent. The theory underscores the prior establishment of a pure African culture grounded on African languages, indigenous technologies and local social networks for development. In the absence of such a cultural framework, there are fears that the western culture, media and technology will rather under-develop Africa. This theory more or less endorses cultural essentialism, rigidity and purism (Essoh and Endong 2014; Omoh 2010; Endong 2014; Ifeoma and Ifeanyi 2012; Kerr 2011; Iyorza 2008; Salawu 2006).

Indigenization of Media Broadcast in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges

As earlier mentioned, the indigenization of media content is instituted by the Nigerian Broadcasting Code which stipulates a 60 per cent local media content in the programming of all media outlets based in Nigeria. The NBC Code further discloses its culturally protectionist inclinations when it states its cultural objectives to be '(i) [to] seek, identify, preserve and promote Nigeria's diverse cultures; (ii) to critically select the positive aspects of foreign cultures for the purpose of enriching the Nigerian culture, and (iii) to develop and promote the application of indigenous aesthetic values' (NBC Code 2010: 12–13).

A number of Nigerian critics believe that thanks to this model of broadcasting, Nigerian's contribution to the international communication is bound to remarkably increase. It has equally been suggested that the model offers a strong and strategic approach to combat cultural/media imperialism. In a study aimed at assessing the pro-

gramming of three prominent Nigerian audio-visual media (Nigerian Television Authority [NTA], Silverbird Television [STV] and African independent television [AIT]) with respect to the indigenization requisite of the NBC code, Koblwe and Madu (2012: 83) contend that it is interesting to observe that the Nigerian broadcast media are more inclined to local programming. This is an indisputable indicator of a drastic shift from media imperialism to indigenization. In effect, the results of their study point to the fact that the Nigerian television programming generally has a very high local content (84.8 per cent) as against only 15.2 per cent foreign programmes aired by the three stations studied. Koblwe and Madu (2010: 87) further praise this model of broadcast, presenting it as an antithetical force to cultural imperialism.

Television was Nigeria's foremost medium of cultural and media imperialism but the recent trend in programming presents a paradigm shift as it is now a transmitter of indigenous items that are packaged by people with traditional knowledge. This development is a product of the regulations of NBC, its monitoring role, the appreciation of Nigerian cultural heritage by broadcasters, among others. Such indigenous consciousness has improved the sector and reduced the unidirectional flow of information from the West to developing nations.

The indigenization philosophy has thus secured the support of a considerable number of critics (mostly culturalists/traditionalists or Afro-centric) who are visibly bent on defending 'Nigerianess' or 'Nigerianity' in all aspects of life. Nigerianess, as a concept and philosophy, has, in multiple ways, been encouraged by many Nigerian elites and policy makers in key sectors of the state's life including education, religion, petroleum, and media. In line with this, Nigeria's Vision 2010 setters for instance fully accorded their attention to the philosophy. Based on this Vision, Idowu (1999: 110) encourages the packaging (production) and re-introduction of specific and interesting radio jingles, television drama and soap opera, such as the *Village Headmaster*, *Iche Oku*, *Hotel de Jordan*, *Masquerade*, *Samaja*, *Cock Crow at Dawn* and other purely Nigerian media/cultural productions, which in the past have caught the attention of audiences. The popularization of such local programs may represent a strategy to disseminate messages of 'Nigerianity' or 'Nigerianess' to the Nigerian audiences.

In the same line of argument, Effiom (2005: 85) recommends that local producers endeavor to tailor their productions to local needs, environment and to attempt even to subtly counter the various foreign cultures that are being imported through education, religion and the like, to distort the Nigerian society and its value system. It is clear that such a task is definitely a big challenge not only to program makers but also to media owners who, according to Effiom (2005), should develop a conscious effort to stem this 'tide which is almost engulfing the society – foreign concepts and traditions which run contrary to positive African values or societal order and sanity'.

Though acclaimed, the indigenization model is really hard to be defined, particularly in the Nigerian context. The concept is consequently more or less viewed as complex, elusive, slippery and thus subject to controversy. This is so, very much because it is associated with other complex neologisms such as Nigerianess, ethnocentrism, localization and the like. These neologisms are fuelling debates. Liwuh Betiang, a media

critic, describes the philosophy of indigenization as being very problematic especially with respect to media programming in Nigeria.

The concept is problematic. How do you define indigenization? A programme might be local but with foreign form. It might be local with foreign content. It might equally be said to be local; but when you look at it critically, the idea driving its conception is not local, but emanates from elsewhere, for instance the famous reality show *Big Brother Africa* is clearly inspired by *Big Brother UK* [...] In such a situation of ambiguity, how do you define indigenization? I strongly think that the concept is highly problematic and subject to multiple subjective interpretations.

As noted by Betiang, the Nigerian Broadcasting Code does not provide a clear and objective definition of indigenization. Its provisions on the subject are susceptible to breed subjective interpretations. Koblowe and Madu (2013: 86) have attempted a definition of indigenous media production. They claim that indigenous programmes are those programmes that are conceived and produced by Nigerians for Nigerians, about Nigeria and featuring Nigerians. This tentative definition however neglects a number of factors among which feature technology and the need to produce such programmes in Nigerian (indigenous) languages. Salawu (2006) on his part passionately decries the fact that this policy visibly relegates the promotion of Nigerian indigenous languages to the background. As he insightfully argues, the Nigerian Broadcasting Code merely institutes the prevalence of local content in media programming without quantitatively defining programs to be produced in indigenous languages. This makes conditions favorable for local media productions to dominantly be in English. Meanwhile, the English language is a vector of Americanization or Westernization since language is a carrier of culture.

In the same vein, A. Esekong (another media critic) denounces the lack of a clear definition given to such a laudable cultural policy. He contends that there is an urgent need to 'explicate what we want to showcase with such a cultural policy (indigenization) to properly orientate activities and strategic actions aimed at reaching its goals [the goals of the indigenization model]'. There is no doubt that indigenization is a pertinent cultural model and an antithesis to cultural imperialism (perceived to result from globalization). The fact that it springs at a period of active cultural globalization raises a number of questions bordering on its capacity to survive the 'aggressive' dynamics of such an era (of active globalization). Indigenization may be viewed as a form of cultural rigidity or purism but the idea that culture is bound to change discredits its cultural protectionist claims.

How is Globalization a Real Threat to Indigenization in Nigeria?

Three dominant paradigms have been advanced to situate the relationship between globalization and cultures. The first hinges on the inevitability of conflict between cultures, the second is predicated on creolization and hybridization and the third is grounded on the emergence of a global culture. From critical observation, it may be argued that the third paradigm is the most dominant, as forces such as McDonaldization and consumerism (manifestation of American/western cultures) are progressively reign-

ing in the world (Endong 2014; Kerr 2011; Ayedun-Aluma 2011; Maphosa 1999; Ekpang 2008). These forces, so to speak, enable a growing connectivity between the various cultures of the globe and facilitate the standardization and uniformity of culture. The resulting 'global culture' is dominantly American or Western; no doubt globalization is viewed as a stage of cultural imperialism. As Tomlinson (1999: 1) insightfully puts it,

Globalization is either just the latest term or latest stage in a process with a long history, a history more or less co-extensive with the history of western imperialism. It is simply the global working through a process of domination in which the west draws all cultures into its ambit.

Americanization/westernization is a palpable phenomenon in many Third World African nations, including Nigeria. With the fact that most key sectors of the life of these states – notably education, economy, judiciary and media – are fashioned according to those in formal colonial powers, most Africans are, from childhood and in almost all aspects of their lives made to embrace the western culture and to bow to such forces as McDonaldization and consumerism. Salawu (2006: 2) passionately notes this tendency in his assertion that the actual motivation of globalization is to re-colonize the world and facilitate the hegemony of the cultural values of the United States-led Western in the world. In other words, 'the culture of the west is being grafted on other peoples of the world, thus making the western culture the universal culture (in the linguistic, social, political, economic and legal system)'.

Nigerians are not exempted from this more or less inevitable socio-cultural 'anomaly'. As Salawu (2006: 3) insightfully contends, many Nigerians 'of the "fringe" cultures, without them knowing it, have, unwittingly, become cloned Americans or Westerners, all this in the name of globalization. For whatever may be said, all we know is that a "cloned" being is never a natural or real being'. This may suggest that globalization has engendered the progressive zombification of Nigerians. This Zombification process is further evidenced by the progressive loss of taste for the local in favor of the exotic (anything western), by most Nigerians. Onwuejeogwu (quoted in Bisina and Henah 2013: 22) captures this view when he succinctly posits that the visible disdain Nigerians exhibit towards their culture is proving a major challenge to the tourism industry in Nigeria.

To most Nigerians, a piece of African arts is a piece of juju wood or a bronze object which Europeans only admire out of curiosity [...] They see traditional African music as a cacophony of barbarous pagan noise and traditional African drama or dances are erroneously perceived as nothing than forms of incoherent or grotesque pagan displays.

While showing a relatively low interest in consuming local production, Nigerian have developed serious appetites for anything foreign, most often in the name of modernization. This is especially evident in the consumerist tendencies, which Ekpang (2008: 11) decries and attributes to Nigeria's colonial experience. Ekpang further notes that consumerism is an aspect of western culture which has seriously taken deep root in Nigeria. 'The elephantine appetites of Nigerians for foreign goods are no doubt a func-

tion of the fact that the country has been designed from the beginning to be a dumping ground for foreign products'. Nigerians' large and sometimes unabashed appetites for everything foreign have been responsible for the high incidence of corruption in the country (Ekpang 2008; Ifeoma and Ifeanyi 2012).

The thesis of Nigerians' preference for the western culture to the detriment of local cultural production is however not generally endorsed. A number of Nigerian critics with a high pride for indigenous cultures, strongly think the reverse is true. Such traditionalist critics argue that the consumption of the local cultural production is rather dominant, especially when it comes to the production and consumption of Nigerian urban music and film (Nollywood movies). One of our informants, Betiang, notes for instance that:

If you inquire from most music and video shops around, you may be surprised that most people are buying Nigerian movies and music. If you listen or watch TV and radio stations that broadcast all African movies or music, you will notice that there is a lot of Nigerian content in their programming and Nigerians watch and listen to these media [...] Also, in most parties organized nowadays in Nigeria, Nigerian music is played from A to Z [...] I think all these have to do with the Nigerian movie and music industries. These industries have done very much to give to the public what is called the Nigerian movies and hip-hop with all what they entail.

However, cultural consumption is not only reflected and limited to media production and consumption. It extends to such domains as imported religious practices, dress code, architecture and the like (Ifeoma and Ifeanyi 2012; O'Sullivan et al 1996; McQuail and Windals 1993; Jarice and Maxcy 1996). A keen observer will easily see that westernization of Nigerians is a palpable phenomenon especially among the youths. It is perceived in their dress code, the way they tend to speak English (sometimes imitating Western accent) and the way they interact with others.

Another clear manifestation of this westernization is the obvious impact globalization has produced on the sport (soccer) culture of most Nigerian youths. The Nigerian football league is no longer patronized by local soccer lovers. Most Nigerians prefer to watch and bet on foreign players, playing in the Italian, German, British and French leagues. Nigerians' preference for foreign cultures is progressively influencing local media producers to copy foreign concept and superimpose them on local production. A good example is the famous reality show '*Big Brother Nigeria*', which is conceptually inspired by '*Big Brother Africa*', in turn inspired by '*Big Brother UK*'. Recently, a local media production organization conceived a Nigerian version of the famous American series *Desperate Wives*. Pasmond Mgbepo, a manager of programmes with the Nigerian Television Authorities (NTA) Calabar, notes the strong and relatively negative influence westernization (in the guise of globalization) has on local cultures and local media production when he contends that

A lot of cultural practices have been abandoned over time because of the influence of western culture. Look at all the programs we produce today, they are not as indigenous as they should be [...] We have departed from our pure indigenous cultures. If you look at our cultures, you will see that the western

civilization has dealt a blow on us (Nigerian cultural production) [...] If the media are a reflection of the entire gamut of cultural heritage, one may say by implication that, the west has eroded what is ours (our Nigerianness).

Mgbepe further associates this phenomenon of cultural imperialism with the forces of foreign media content and western (new and modern) media technologies – notably digital radio and television, motion pictures, the social media – which are totally different from the purely traditional African media (talking drums, town criers, proverbs, among others). He passionately argues that using these new western media technology seems incompatible with fighting media and cultural imperialism from the West. He notes that

Even the western media have seriously dealt a blow on our media. For instance, we had our own media (traditional African media) which seem not to be as functional as they used to be [in the past] or have all been taken away from us today. Today, television and radio have come, and these are Western forms of media and the contents [of local media programs] have been influenced by the same process (media imperialism). And there is no way the western culture would not be reflected in local media production.

A good number of scholars share the interpretation and pessimistic diagnostic of Mgbepe (above mentioned). They strongly believe that the fact that Africans media production is highly dependent on western media technology makes it inevitable for the content of local media production to have a dominantly western content or coloration. Other critics similarly attribute local media producers' penchant in favor of western cultural values to the progressive westernization of the audiences. Local media producers are, in this respect, bent on satisfying local audiences' appetites for what is foreign (western). A media producer who works with NTA Calabar, Evelyn Nkanu notes that:

Nigerian media producers and owners are so engrossed in western programs because the majority of audiences are likely to prefer what is western. Foreign content or local media programs fashioned according to western cultural values are strategies to capture the largest possible number of audiences and attract advertisers [...] You hardly see a media program aired over Nigerian radio or television which is totally indigenous [...] All because they are trying to satisfy an audience which has intensively been westernized. The so praised and recommended indigenization policy is not followed [...] I don't think the Nigerian media have been doing their best. They are not maximizing their potentials as far as encouraging the indigenization media content is concerned.

This and many other facts constitute evidences pointing to an inevitable desertion of indigenization. As Salawu (2006: 2) pointedly argues, to people without any care of cultural pride, localization [indigenization] should be equated to crudity. Meanwhile, localization is antithetical and antagonistic to globalization which is a force aimed at making the world a unidirectional world 'where all acts are mechanistic and zombie-like'. Without doubting the pertinence of Salawu's observation, a fact strikes us: indigenization, though a genuine weapon to combat cultural imperialism, is visibly not compatible with today's era of globalization. As Esekong succinctly argues, 'when you

propagate indigenous ideas, it means you do not want to change'. In line with this, one may view indigenization as a retrograde model advocating a form of cultural essentialism and purism.

Glocalization: A Good Substitute for Indigenization?

While indigenization is associated with the first paradigm which stresses on the inevitability of conflict between cultures, glocalization could be apprehended as one facet of hybridization/creolization as it stresses on the mixing of the local and the foreign. The philosophy of glocalization may be more realistic and more compatible with today's world which, according to some critics, is in a real process of creolization (Eriksen 2003). Cohen (2007: 2) defines creolization as a process occurring when 'participants select particular elements from incoming or inherited cultures, endow these with meanings different from those they possessed in the original cultures and then creatively merge these to create new varieties that supersede the prior forms'. Critics who share the view that the world is in a process of creolization are those who endorse the thesis that the growing connectivity between cultures brings about global interdependency (Ekanem 2004; Idolor 2007; Ekpenyong 2008; Derefaka 2004). These scholars interpret globalization as a give and take affair, and they strongly believe that, far from being passive and uncontributing beneficiaries of globalization, Third World countries, have a comparative advantage when it comes to the cultural content of globalization. Baines in Ekpenyong (2008: 19) corroborates this view thus:

Globalization is not simply a one-way process [...] Africa and the West are engaged in a long conversation of dialogue, which has lasted for more than a century. This interaction has shaped global imagination which is determined by way of articulation of interest, languages, styles and images – an epistemological symbiosis between Africa and Western modernities.

The perceived interdependence between cultures creates a situation whereby local cultures are influenced by foreign ones. The local cultures adopt some aspects of foreign ones for their redefinition, evolution and even enrichment. In line with this, it is believed that the African culture (notably African art, dance and music) including the Nigerian culture has, to an extent, contributed to Western film genre and some other forms of Western cultural productions. The constant appearance of urban African music in some Western films corresponds to an apparent growing success of African urban music in the international market. As Ekpenyong (2008: 21) insightfully points out, this trend has represented and continues to constitute 'Africa's response and contribution to globalization, as the cultural values and ethos of Africans are embedded in these African urban music that gets to the rest of the world'. Similarly, the media production in Nigeria has many foreign influences. In effect, most of the programs considered as 'purely' Nigerian are in reality, most often hybrid in that they incorporate both local and foreign characteristics as far as culture, theme and format are concerned. Another manifestation of glocalization is seen in the contemporary Nigerian urban music which dominantly is hip-hop music with a clear Nigerian touch (Endong 2014; Esoh and Endong 2014). One of the elements of locality in this music is multilingualism (multilin-

gual songs) involving the mixing/switching between indigenous and foreign linguistic codes. Egbo (in Liali 2013: 6) insightfully notes that:

At the turn of the twenty-first century a change began to emerge in the Nigerian music landscape. Nigerians localized the American hip hop brand. They maintained the fast, strong rhythm and fast talk (known as rap) but changed the language from Black American English to Nigerian languages and Nigerian English. This brand of music is variously called *naija* or *gbedu* in Nigerian hip hop parlance.

Glocalization offers Nigerians the possibility to promote their cultures while avoiding to be 'out of tune' that is, viewed as retrograde, with respect to the globalization imperatives. Though the cultural production born out of the globalization philosophy may not be purely Nigerian, the Nigerian cultures stand a chance (through the glocalization model) to survive the onslaught of cultural globalization, a phenomenon which is synonymous to cultural imperialism. Globalization has made the consumption of Western cultures unavoidable to most nations of the globe. Even radically conservatist societies such as communist China, North Korea and the like – which have sometimes resisted Western cultural imperialism – are now, to an extent, bowing to some aspects or manifestations of cultural imperialism such as consumerism and McDonalidization (Ifeoma and Ifeanyi 2012; Liali and Omobowale 2011; Curran 2000; Hamelink 1996). Through glocalization, the foreign concept somehow sold to Africans may be re-fashioned, re-interpreter and developed with an African touch.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to examine the logic of the indigenization philosophy in Nigeria with respect to the media sector. It has presented some challenges of the model and has attempted to show in what way it is not compatible with the present globalization era. Though a good strategy to combat cultural imperialism (brought about by globalization), it has relatively weak chances to be seriously upheld in a setting very much 'infested' by Westernization. Indeed Westernization is already very pronounced in the Nigeria socio-cultural ecology as most Nigerians are – from childhood – made to be 'cloned' Westerners and very much predestined to embrace Western cultures. A better option to indigenization may be glocalization (mixing local with foreign) as it gives Nigerians the opportunity to promote certain aspects of their culture while avoiding to be completely out of tune.

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