Globalization and Culture: An Interaction (Nigerian Culture)

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Abstract: This paper examines the interaction of the culture of the Nigerian nation with globalization as a modern global phenomenon. It has attempted to point out the ways that the culture of the Nigerian people has been impacted by globalization. The various concepts of globalization are explored as well as that of culture as the totality of a people's way of life. The paper looks into the challenge of the non-existence of a single or homogeneous culture within the Nigerian nation with emphasis on the shifts the Nigerian cultural space has experienced due to globalization. Factors such as science and technology and the mass media are implicated as the primary driving forces behind globalization. The paper concludes that though globalization has brought the various peoples of the world closer politically, economically, socially and culturally, the significant benefits of globalization favour the developed world more than the third world to which Nigeria is ranked.

Keywords: Globalization, Culture, Nigeria.

1. Introduction
Globalization may appear a very recent phenomenon. However, scholars argue that though the term may be contemporary, the origins are traceable to between 1450-1500 AD (Ogohi 2014). As cited in Ogohi (2014), Amiuwu, (2004) and Scholte (2002) described the period (1450-1500 AD) as the mercantilist period which was marked mainly by the development of trade with the motive of expanding markets by powerful commercial empires. The actualization of this dream has been driven by the significant advancement in transportation and communication. This singular development has contributed in no small measure to establishing what is popularly known and referred to today as the global village.

In examining the ways that globalization has influenced the culture of the Nigerian people, it is very expedient to attempt to understand globalization as a concept that runs through almost every facet of human existence in today's world. Ogohi (2014, P.31) states that "Globalization means different things to different people. For some, it creates positive political, economic and technological progress". He further says that globalization in itself is not a debate about convergence or divergence but a dialectical process which can cause integration or fragmentation, thereby creating both winners and losers.
Therefore, globalization as a concept impacts every aspect of human life and will be defined and understood differently by various groups along certain conceptual lines. Didigwu (2015 P. 9) states that:

Globalization involves economic integration; the transfer of policies across borders; the transmission of knowledge; cultural stability; the reproduction, relations, discourse of power; a global process, a concept; a revolution and an establishment of the global market free from socio-political control. It has helped to liberalize national economics by creating a global market place in which all the nations must participate directly. The existence of global markets leads to growing activities and international investments in different countries.

Shenkar and Luo (2004) in Adesina (2012 P.193) refer to globalization as "the growing economic interdependencies of countries worldwide through the increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services and of international capital flows, as well as through the rapid and widespread diffusion of technology and information". Globalization from the previous involves not just economic activities but deals with social, political, environmental, governance, religious, cultural and many other issues.

1.1. Perspectives to Globalization
Since globalization relates to various aspects of human existence, it is necessary to consider some of the angles here for purposes of clarity.

1.2. Economic
Scholars have extensively discussed globalization from the economic prism focusing on how it represents the changes that are occurring that appear to pull the world together and open it up for trade and other socio-economic activities (Agber 2017). Shangquan (2000 p.1) in his explanation of globalization as an economic concept refers to it as:

“the increasing interdependence of world economies as a result of the growing scale of cross-border trade of commodities and services, flow of international capital and wide and rapid spread of technologies. It reflects the continuing expansion and mutual integration of market frontiers, and is an irreversible trend for the economic development in the whole world at the turn of the millennium”.

On the other hand, Wikipedia describes it as the globalization of production, finance, markets, technology, organizational regimes, institutions, corporations and labour. It further states that this trend has primarily been established through technology. Globalization has enthroned the concept of a free market economy, trade liberalization, deregulation etc. It is in the spirit of globalization that developing countries such as Nigeria crave for Direct Foreign Investments (DFI) as stimuli for economic growth.

The concept on its own supports the flow of capital across borders worldwide. Equally, the idea of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in developing countries demonstrates the spirit of free trade, global markets and international capital flows, which are attributes of the economic side of globalization. Critics frown at the lopsided nature of business transactions in EPZs which are heavily tilted in favour of the foreign investors. The concept of globalization from the economic viewpoint is designed to make all nations active participants. Current trends show that only the developed world are benefiting from it while the less developed countries remain mere dependants and consumers.

1.3. Political
From the political angle, critics and scholars alike characterize globalization as the “third phase of colonization” (Adesina 2015 p.193) which the Western countries are employing to strengthen further the exploitative relationships established centuries back with their former colonies. Moghadam (2005 P. 35) posits that political globalization “refers to an increasing trend towards multilateralism (in which the United Nations plays a key role), toward an emerging “transnational state apparatus”, and toward the emergence of national and international nongovernmental organizations that act as watchdogs over governments and have their activities and influence”. Describing how globalization and politics interact, the Global Policy Forum, an independent policy watchdog that monitors the work of the United Nations and scrutinizes global policymaking submits that:
Under globalization, politics can take place above the state through political integration schemes such as the European Union and intergovernmental organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Political activity can also transcend national borders through global movements and NGOs. Civil society organizations act globally by forming alliances with organizations in other countries, using global communications systems, and lobbying international organizations and other actors directly, instead of working through their national governments.

The other thought shows the extent to which globalization has redefined politics. Countries are now fusing together as blocs to establish and enjoy more socio-political, economic and cultural advantages/benefits beyond their capacities as individual nations. The European Union (EU), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Criminal Court and the G8 are examples in this direction. Most of Europe appears to have fused into one single governance structure with one currency and many trans-border policies regulating the conduct of business, politics and many other activities with less emphasis on the nation-state.

1.4. Social

Historically speaking, social globalization has involved the continuous dispersion of ideas and religious beliefs either by gentle/civil means or by force. It is also characterised by the increase in the association among people from separate parts of the world as well as the diminished affinity between people in the same region (Datko 2012). He further argues that social globalization hinges on human interaction within cultural communities, encompassing issues such as family, religion, work and education. The evidence of social globalization he posits manifests in similarities of social trends between cultures, ranging from consumerism to arts and humanities with examples such as worldwide favourite chain restaurants like McDonald's or other world-class fashion brands.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) on the other hand, examines the social dimension of globalization from its impact on the life and work of people, their families and societies. It considers employment, working conditions, income and social protection. However, outside the world of work, the social dimension of globalization encompasses security, culture and identity inclusion or exclusion and the cohesiveness of families and communities.

Citing Giddens (1990), Georgantzas, Katsamakas and Solowiej (2009 P. 2) refer to social globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa, thereby changing all aspects of our everyday life”. Scholars agree that social globalization is responsible for the deepening of social interactions across the globe in ways and manners that seem to pull the various communities of the world together. All of these have been achieved because of the advancement in transportation, communication and the ever-dominant role of the mass media in diffusing innovation.

1.5. Science and Technology

Science and technology are potent tools through which man can transform his natural world and deal with threats posed by his environment. Science and technology are also credited with having provided the most significant drivers of globalization, particularly in the areas of transportation, communication and recently ICT. Didigwu (2015 p.11) submits that:

Information and communication technology (ICT) is playing a pivotal role in globalization and integration. It is emerging as an essential catalyst for the transformation of business, society and government in the globalizing world. Today ICT forms the backbone of several industries such as airlines, banking and research. It is also a critical value-adding component of consumer products such as vehicles, camera, television, mobile telephone etc. It has improved the transfer of information from the sender to the receiver at a minimal cost and time. That is a person in Nigeria can communicate with his friend in the United Kingdom with less than one hundred Naira and within two minutes.

This assertion accentuated Marshall McLuhan's futuristic position in the late 1960s when he stated that the rapid advancements in technology would eventually make the world “a global village”. The emergence of the internet and what is today referred to as the new media or social media have
Further confirmed the veracity of McLuhan's position. It is evident that technology has dramatically improved transportation thereby lowering cost in that sector which in itself is a significant impetus to the movement of persons, finished goods, commodities etc. across borders which is a solid plank of globalization.

2. Culture and Globalization

Schaefer (2002) cited in Nwegbu, Eze and Asogwa (2011 p. 1) described culture "as the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects and behaviour. It includes the ideas, value, custom and artefacts of a group of people". Culture, as it were, is a pattern of human activities and the symbols that give these activities significance. It is what people eat, how they dress, beliefs they hold and activities they engage in. Culture is the overall way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of an organisation thus distinguishing people from their neighbours (Nwegbu, Eze and Asogwa 2011).

Culture is characterised by several outstanding features such as language (identity), norms, values, symbols, religion and art associated with any given people. Language is a unique feature of the life of any people. Language is an exclusive platform of identity, distinguishing a group from another. It drives interactions and facilitates communication without which society stagnates. Simply put, language is communication by word of mouth. Symbols, on the other hand, represent nonverbal communication, which is clearly understood, applied and adhered to within a given society. Norms are expectations that define what is acceptable or required as rules of social behaviour within a community. They determine what should or should not be done (Schaefer, 2002). Values are guidelines set by a society concerning what is right or wrong and the basis for judgement of what is desirable and correct (Ogohi 2014).

While religion stands for a system of beliefs that answer questions about the meaning of life, art points to the ways the people entertain themselves, the stories they tell and how they dance. Culture can be transmitted or acquired via information or symbols. In other words, culture can be transmitted laterally or inherited from one generation to another, which is generally referred to as cultural heritage. It can also be horizontally transmitted from one society to another through processes such as globalization (Omekwu 2003).

Nigeria, as a nation boasts of a diversity of cultures. However, her colonial experience attempted to pull all the multiplicity of cultures into one single entity. To that extent, it may be challenging to identify what may be described as the Nigerian culture going by the various definitions of culture. The first time all the cultures of Nigeria came together under one roof was during the FESTAC hosted by Nigeria in 1977. FESTAC, apart from showcasing the cultures of other black people worldwide attempted to put the cultures of Nigeria in one basket for the first time.

2.1. Influence of Globalization on the Nigerian Culture

The advocates of globalization insist that it will lead to many positives while its critics argue that it is antagonistic and unfriendly to the poor and weak among many other demerits. It, therefore, indicates that globalization has both the positive and negative sides. In terms of how it has influenced the culture of Nigerian people, a two-dimensional approach should be applied. Ogohi (2014) highlights the positive influence of globalization on the Nigerian culture focusing on

a. Integration of Nigerian culture: Globalization operates in a borderless manner while culture is restricted within a defined space, the globalization process serves as an instrument of integrating the diversity inherent in the Nigerian cultural setting thereby making it both locally and globally accepted, appreciated and with opportunities to be transmitted to other societies. One example in this regard is the acceptance of the unique Nigeria fashion, music and films. All of these were made possible through globalization.

b. Fast/speedy Access: Globalization, which is mainly driven by ICT and the media provide rapid/quick access to probably all critical components of life in Nigeria today. From business to governance, the way of life of Nigerians is receiving tremendous transformation. Most activities
are fast transmuting from the slow and time-wasting analogue methods to some fast and digital processes. This trend, no doubt, will keep impacting the culture of the country in every sense.

c. **Digitization:** Globalization has spread the digital age, which has equally impacted every facet of life. The culture of Nigerians is gravitating towards the dictates of the era of digitization. The economic, social, political, religious and cultural sectors of the Nigerian society are being affected by the application of one form of digital operation or the other from cashless banking services to even digital artistic works; everyone is now involved.

d. **Improved Transportation and Communication:** These are notable features of globalization, and they are very much alive in Nigeria and have impacted the way people live, relate, communicate, do business, move around etc. The social media is an offshoot of globalization, which has also transformed the way and manner Nigerians communicate, interact and shape their worldview and perception of one another.

Fukuyama, a critic of globalization, stated that it is merely a triumph of western ideas and values as well as a celebration of capitalism on a global scale (Fukuyama 1992). Didigwu (2015) strongly agrees by stating that:

Globalization tends to transmit the cultural pattern of developed countries to the rest of the world. In Nigeria today, our youths imitate the European and American consumption patterns, modes of transport, modes of dressing, method of communication, including their music. They are on the verge of neglecting our cultural heritage.

There is a myriad of notions and positions critics of globalization hold against it, especially as it relates to its influence on the culture of the Nigerian people.

2.2. Language

Yusuf (2013) argues that globalization has made the English language a predator language, thereby endangering indigenous languages in Nigeria. McKenzie (2014) further states that globalization marginalizes languages and may even cause them to die out stressing that the English language is widely used as a second or third language which helps with the globalization of business and negatively affects indigenous languages as language is an important component of culture. Ogohi (2014) posits that the use of the English language as the official language of Nigeria has diminished the effective use of local languages in communication, teaching and the conduct of official business.

2.3. Consumerism

This is another factor critics of globalization say has negatively impacted the people. Through the media, Africa and of course, Nigeria has become consumers of all manners of the output of globalization ranging from finished goods to media content. Yakubu (1999) posits that young people in the third world countries account for the largest consumers of global culture. The mass media is identified as the strongest channel of this trend while policies that are inspired by globalization such the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the Babangida administration removed all barriers to foreign trade and further weakened the productive capacities of the manufacturing sector of the Nigerian economy. The economy of Nigeria has not recovered fully from that policy.

2.4. Moral and Family Values

Critics claim that moral and family values have suffered under the weight of globalization. The socialization process in Nigeria is now significantly affected if not controlled by globalization. The old methods of family/social control mechanisms have given way to new values, especially as communicated through the media. The Nigerian culture relied heavily on the inculcation of moral values, transfer of beliefs etc. via such family/community oriented activities like moonlight story tales etc. The consumption of foreign media content such as cartoons and other satellite television content has gradually eroded the cultural base of Nigeria, especially at the community and family levels. Ogohi (2014 p. 35) observes that “The traditional pattern of subordinating when greeting an elder has changed to “hi”.
2.5. Religion

Religion has equally had its fair share of the negative impact of globalization. Due to the quick and almost easy access to any manner of information through the internet, critics argue that extremism is being fuelled. In Nigeria, the spread of insurgency in the North East has been heavily linked to influences from the mass media and the internet. Hock-Tong (2001) cited in Ogohi (2014) argues that Islamic fundamentalism has in many ways, constituted a strong opposition against modernity. Radical Moslems see the influence of western technology, culture and ideas as being very inimical to traditional Islamic values. However, terrorists in Nigeria and indeed globally use the internet/social media, which are tools of globalization to circulate their radical ideas, recruit members, gather and share intelligence. Nigeria has paid a costly price to insurgency and terrorism due to the influence of globalization because, if ideas, capital flows, businesses, cultures etc. can transcend borders, violence can also.

2.6. Internet and Social Media

Scholars argue that the internet and social media have had a profound impact on the advancement of globalization. Critics of globalization claim that they are the purveyors of everything globalization. They are believed to have introduced a new culture and manner of communication globally, and Nigeria is not excluded. Internet, as well as social media, have also given rise to serious moral issues in Nigeria. The phenomenon is believed to not only have "fuelled or deepened the level of immorality" among the youth population, but it has also introduced "new acts of immorality" Onah, & Nche, (2014).

2.7. Fashion

Fashion is a major component of people's culture. It gives them part of their identity. Globalization has had both a negative and positive effect on the fashion life of the Nigerian people. Firstly, through globalization and its attendant negative impact on the manufacturing sector in Nigeria, almost all the textile industries are moribund. However, the fashion industry still maintains its boom and vibrancy due to the influx of cheap materials from other countries that can manufacture and export the same at a less high price. However, through globalization, the typical traditional Nigerian fashion is fast giving way to western dress style, especially among young people. It is easier to find young people in jeans, branded T-shirts of European football clubs or their favourite movie personalities. The adoption of foreign and indecent dressing style such as sagging and semi-nude apparels are all attributable to globalization.

2.8. Entertainment

This is another aspect where globalization has influenced the culture of the Nigerian people. Due to the ease of accessing information, people in Nigeria are exposed to all manners of content from the traditional and new media. Most Nigerian music videos portray western ideas. Rap and Hip hop music, which are strongly linked to gangsterism, have made a great landfall in Nigeria. A lot of new and upcoming artists have taken to such musical genre because of its global popularity. Meanwhile, the same medium can also be exploited to market/showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Nigerian people.

3. Discussion

So far, it is evident that globalization, as a worldwide phenomenon has impacted almost every facet of human existence in today’s world. The socio-political, economic and cultural implications of globalization indicate that ideas, goods and services, businesses, capital, policies, technology, entertainment and information are a lot more accessible to people despite the physical distance that may be separating them. Governments are evolving into blocs more than single state governance structures with common currencies across many countries. In the wake of all this development, significant transformation in the way and manner people receive, react and consume information has been recorded. This, in itself, has introduced the superimposition of certain cultures on others.

Advocates of globalization strongly highlight the many benefits of the phenomenon to the extent that several improvements in science and technology have provided the impetus for improved living
standards in many countries as well as facilitating smooth interactions among nations. As good as the gains of globalization may appear to its advocates those against it insist that it remains the new phase of colonialism which has perfected capitalist tendencies to operate with less human and material commitment from those who propagate the concept. They further argue that globalization has only favoured the developed countries to the detriment of the less developed ones who remain at the level of consumerism and dependence. Such critics of globalization believe that the concept can only make good sense when there is a level playing field for all participants.

However, how that condition can be attained remains a matter of conjecture as the ways of life of any group of people determine to a considerable extent how they adapt to changes and how they pursue development. In other words, the culture of people will either promote or work against their attainment of developmental goals. If globalization, therefore, is exerting specific negative impacts on the culture of any society, it may not fully benefit from whatever globalization has to offer in a positive sense. For a country like Nigeria, the lack of a single or homogeneous culture exposes her to the sharp edges of the sword of globalization.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, one may safely take the position that despite the threat of globalization swallowing or altering the culture of the various peoples of the entity called Nigeria, it also presents a veritable platform for cultural “nationalization” as well as an excellent opportunity to globalize the cultural heritage. In other words, the possibilities offered by globalization can be harnessed to promote and further the culture of the Nigerian people. However, the transfer of foreign cultures and their acceptance in Nigeria with their attendant consequences, remain issues which critics and scholars consider as some of the significant drawbacks of globalization.

5. References


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