Full Length Research Paper

Nigeria and the crisis of cultural identity in the era of globalization.

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This paper examines the crisis in the Nigerian cultural environment as a result of globalization. Globalization, referred to as the inter-dependence of countries, peoples, races and institutions in politics, economics, arts, science and technology, is equally responsible for inter-cultural exchanges and the coming together of people of diverse persuasions. In place of previous prejudices, biases and misunderstandings, globalization has led to greater appreciation of peoples, the breaking down of barriers and the building of bridges of understanding and communication among nations. People no longer see each other as strange bedfellows, but as individuals with common feelings, common understanding and common worldview. This has resulted in increase in human knowledge, better education and advancement in science and technology. Nigeria as part of this process also shares in the benefits of globalization as well as its negative effects. The paper takes a cursory look at various influences of globalization on Nigeria, particularly in the area of culture, and concludes that with adoption of appropriate strategies, the country can reap the full benefits of this phenomenon.

Key words: Culture, colonialism, globalization, Nigerian cultural identity.

INTRODUCTION

Before the advent of Western colonialism, Nigeria had consisted of over 450 linguistic or ethnic groups, each of which was independent of the other, having its own mores, culture, religion, politics and economic activity. None of these groups had anything to do with the others. It was the British colonialists that brought these disparate groups together under one political umbrella and called it "Nigeria" (Nnoli, 1978:35-105).

In order that these disparate groups could live together in harmony so as to enable the colonialists comfortably exploit the natural resources of the territory without disturbance, the British imposed on the people their mores, culture, education, art, language and religion. Nigerian cultural and social values were presented as archaic and anachronistic, which must be discarded and replaced with European culture. This made the people to abandon their culture and replace it with Western culture.

The current phase of globalization has further alienated the people from their roots as a result of the impact of information and communication technology. Through the globalized media, people all over the world are being made to look the same, profess the same faith, speak the same language, wear the same type of dress, enjoy the same type of music, and eat the same type of food. To find out how Nigeria is coping with this cultural onslaught in the face of the high technology employed by the advanced countries of Europe and the United States of America has necessitated this study.

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METHODOLOGY

The methods adopted in this work are historical, analytical, expository and critical. Concepts related to culture, globalization, and Nigerian cultural identity were explained and analyzed in order to sharpen their meanings for better understanding. We also adopted historical and expository methods, which enabled us to look back, compare, evaluate and synthesize both the Nigerian and Western cultures. In the collection of data for the paper, we depended in the main, on relevant literatures. We thus consulted books, journals and other literary sources. We further sourced information via the internet in order to attend comprehensively to our research problem.

RESULTS

It was found out in the study that globalization has put many Nigerians in conflicting situation over what constitutes their real cultural identity. This was because since many of them were led to believe that their culture was inferior to that of the Europeans, they abandoned their culture to assume European culture. The result was the Nigerian who is neither wholly indigenous nor totally foreign. He is a split personality. With the growing cultural awareness among Nigerians, however, the people have begun to export Nigerian culture to Europe and America through the movie industry, the popular *Nollywood.*

Conceptual clarifications

For a better understanding and appreciation of our subject matter, it becomes necessary to clarify some key concepts in the study, like culture and globalization.

Culture

Culture means the totality of a people's way of life, which is expressed in their history, language, art, philosophy, religion, politics, economics, music, food and dressing. Culture involves knowledge, beliefs, values, customs, arrangements and skills that are available to members of a society. Culture is the summation of the way of life of a particular group of people. It is the totality of a group behavior derived from the whole range of human activity.

As distinct from mere social organization, culture is the "shared ways of thinking, perceiving and evaluation" (Broom and Selznich, 1977: 55-57). Fanon also sees it "…as a combination of motor and mental behavior patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow man" (Fanon, 1967:32). Culture is what makes a people unique or distinct from others. It is what distinguishes one group of people from other groups.

Since no two distinct groups of people are exactly the same, so also are no two cultures the same. Culture acquires the meaning of a tradition. It creates frontiers and boundaries, since through cultural practices one human society differs from others and insists on its unique identity and autonomy over and against others. Culture is not static. It is dynamic. Culture changes in time and circumstance and from age to age.

Culture has two focal dimensions. These are enculturation and acculturation. Enculturation is the process by which a person is introduced into the culture of his birth. It is a process by which the values, norms, beliefs and attitudes shared by members of one's society are transmitted from one person to another and from one generation to another.

Acculturation, on the other hand, is the coming into contact of different cultures. It is the process by which cultural elements pass over from one culture to another and which gives rise to new cultural traits in the cultures that meet. The coming into contact of European cultural values with traditional African cultures during the colonial era, for example, had led to the emergence of new cultural behavior in the erstwhile colonial territories.

Acculturation, or cultural pluralism, cultivates a global vision without losing sight of local differences or complexities. It holds that global thought and local action as well as local thought and global action can be harmonized giving rise to the local assimilation of global trends (Madison, 1998a:75). Acculturation is further interpreted to mean inter-cultural association or cross-cultural penetration. It is a marriage of distinct cultures. Proponents of acculturation see it as an elixir for global peace and unity, since it is capable of "leveling cultural differences" (Madison, 1998b:63).

Acculturation is capable of bridging the wall of misunderstanding between peoples, nationalities, races, cultures, tribes and religious beliefs. Through acculturation, ethnic and tribal prejudices, biases and misunderstandings, built over the years, which created barriers among them, were broken down, thus making for harmonious relationships.

Majority of the other ethnic groups in Nigeria, for instance, see the Igbo people as imperialistic and domineering and detest having anything to do with them. It was this ethnic hate, the fear or suspicion that the Igbo would somehow dominate the rest of the country, that led to the Biafran war of 1967 -1970, when these other ethnic groups joined hands to fight the Igbo. The suspicion was given credence by the fact that majority of the ringleaders of the January 1966 military uprising were from the Igbo ethnic group, which was interpreted to mean that the coup was aimed by the Igbo to lord it over the rest of the country. The need to put the Igbo in check and prevent them from attaining their "set goal," led to the Hausa/Fulani counter coup of July 1966 (Eze, 2008:170-204).

It was in order to address this ethnic hate, biases and prejudices, and build a better understanding among Nigerians, that the Yakubu Gowon administration established the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme,

soon after the war in 1973, where young Nigerian graduates were made to serve the nation for one year in states other than their place of birth.

Acculturation is distinct from cultural isolationism or cultural relativism, a conservative or inward looking culture, which questions the possibility of meaningful dialogue or communication among cultures. Acculturation is equally distinct from cultural monism, the one-sided view by which cultures are considered to be fundamentally one, often identified with Western culture.

It was for this reason that some Europeans did not deem it fit to acknowledge that Nigeria, and indeed, Africa, had anything to offer to the outside world prior to Western colonization. That was why Mungo Park had to come all the way from Europe to "discover" the River Niger, because the people living there did not know that the river exists! Similarly, before Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was published in 1958, Western scholars did not believe that there is an African literature, in the same way as African philosophy was merely seen as mysticism and irrational.

Globalization

Globalization refers to the convergence or the coming together of different peoples, races, cultures and institutions. It is a process through which peoples, races and cultures are connected, united, integrated and affected by events all over the world. Globalization is multi-faceted, with political, social, economic, environmental, philosophical and cultural dimensions. Through globalization, distances become drastically reduced as events that take place thousands of kilometers away are instantly brought to the door steps. Through it one can actively participate in events which take place far beyond one's immediate vicinity or environment, such as meetings, seminars and conferences.

The main driving force of this phenomenon is communication, and in particular, information and communication technology. Satellite and fiber optic technologies have allowed the internet to provide access to communication and social networks such as email, facebook, twitter, cell phones, through which people and events are connected, united and integrated, making the world a global village. Since no country can live or survive in isolation, acculturation enables one country to learn and make full use of other countries' achievements in order to enrich its own unique culture and values, without losing its cultural character and national identity. Globalization generally leads to acculturation or the harmonization of local and global cultures.

For Nigeria, globalization began with the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, during which, for over 200 years, between the 16th and 18th centuries, millions of able-bodied men and women were shipped to the United States of America as slaves. The consequence of slavery to Africa, and to Nigeria in particular, was most devastating – the de-population of the territory, thereby weakening it, and making it unable to withstand external aggression. This led to colonization and the milking of Nigeria's mineral and natural resources, as well as the intrusion of foreign cultural values (Rodney, 1972:84-156).

Traditional Africa had allowed for the existence of different castes and secret societies, which led certain individuals, to be treated less like human beings, in the same way as women were hardly accorded equal recognition with their male counterparts. It is thus globalization that was responsible for the destruction of these "primitive cultural practices" and others such as, bigamy, the killing of twins and the use of human heads in burying notable personalities like kings and queens, which caused "blatant violation of human rights". While globalization is therefore eulogized for bringing "universalism" or belief in the universal validity of the notion of human rights, the same globalization is also blamed for slavery and colonization, which caused the "violation" of the rights of Nigerians and Africans in general.

Acculturation, or cultural globalization, per se, is therefore, not bad since it leads to increase in human knowledge, improvement in science and technology, human development and harmonious relationship among people of diverse races and nationalities. What however is considered objectionable or reprehensible in acculturation is what many people see as the cultural domination of the world by the countries of Western Europe and the United States of America. This is known as "cultural monism," which is the belief that Western culture is fundamentally superior to every other culture, and therefore, should be universally adopted. Critics refer to this view as the "McDonaldization", or the "Cocalization" of the world, (Fukuda, 1995: 9-11).

Acculturation or cultural globalization thus becomes a problem when the crossing of cultural boundaries leads to an intrusion, trespassing on cultures rather than the friendly meeting of cultures. This is referred to as a cultural integration and uniformity that mesmerizes the world with Western culture – language, arts, religion, dressing code, fast food, music and computers.

Prior to the current phase of globalization, Africans had passed through slavery and colonialism, which made them to abandon their cultural values and take up the European way of life. They were told not to look back at their past, their history, and their religion, which were considered bad, ugly and nasty, while the Europeans possessed all that was good. X-raying the Western cultural onslaught on the Africa arising from colonization, Chibueze Udeani lamented that the system had succeeded in the "erosion of the foundation of the African cultural identity" (Udeani 2001:97). The result of this erosion, he explained, was the alienation of Africans from themselves and their world-view, which made them strangers in their own country.

What colonialism had accomplished mainly physically

was fully sealed psychologically and spiritually through missionary activities. Through missionary activities, every constitutive element of African cultural identity was attacked and almost completely destroyed. Such elements included the African world-view, politics, social arrangements, religions, economics, educational system, arts, music, literature, and languages of different African communities. This had affected the African individual who was attacked, oppressed, exploited, robbed of his/her self-worth and reduced to nobody and hence deformed by inferiority complex. Fanon put it thus: "In the man of color there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence" (Fanon, 1967:60).

Globalization and African culture

If colonialism did not completely succeed in uprooting Africans from their roots through the imposition of foreign rule and missionary activities, this task is now being accomplished by globalization. Through the activities of the new media – the internet, email, facebook, twitter, cable and satellite televisions, African cultures are being systematically obliterated or erased from the face of the earth. As a result, Western social mores and values are transmitted to Africa and other third world countries and eulogized as models which Africans must copy and imitate.

While traditional African cultures, for instance, empha-size such values as communalism, the dignity of the human person, respect for elders, hospitality and brotherly love, Africans are being made to come into strong confrontation with values that are in conflict with their own way of life. That is why Nigeria is now being cajoled and blackmailed by the countries of Europe and the United States of America for legislating against gay or same sex marriage, which many Nigerians consider abhorrent. (Vanguard Newspapers, 01/21/2014).

Traditional Africa never recognized the individual as an isolated, self-existent being, who lived by and for himself. It appreciated him as a connecting link in the network of beings in existence so that what affects one equally affects the other. The African was his brother's keeper. As such, he never swam in the ocean of opulence in the midst of his poverty-stricken neighbors.

However, today, the African is a different person. He is made to appreciate and imbibe the values and norms of the European – his individualism, moral depravity and cut-throat competition in business and many other cultural positions introduced by Westerners. The pasting of pictures of half clad women in the social media, in newspapers, and on television screens, has led to in-crease in social vices such as prostitution, rape, cultism, ritual killings, kidnapping or abduction and armed robbery. Acculturation or cultural globalization thus creates conflicting situations, which trespasses on

cultures undermining acculturation and human relations.

For instance, many Nigerians who claim to profess Christianity also resort to some traditional methods of worship. While some of them may attend Church services in the morning, they will go in the night, or send their relations, to consult with native doctors. Similarly, while in Africa nothing happens without some individuals or malevolent spirits being responsible, the new faith, apart from the promised eternal bliss in heaven, makes much meaning since it equally provided opportunity for solving man's multifarious problems. This has accounted for the springing up of several miracle churches, healing centers, and prophetic ministries, which provide emotional relief to millions of Nigerians.

Some critics interpret globalization to mean *"homo-genization"* (Mazrui 1999:4), a system, which leads to similarity in lifestyle, dressing code, social mores and intellectual practices, among peoples of diverse back-grounds. Globalization has equally led to the emergence of a "world culture", often identified with the "Western culture". To participate in this "banquet of the universal", Africans must do away with their historical past, which did not even exist. They must also throw away their customs and tradition, since they are ugly and nasty. They will imitate the European way of life, his culture, language, music and artistic creations.

Mazrui further pointed out that "globalization carries two interrelated consequences whose English words sound similar – *homogenization* (making all of us look similar), and *hegemonization* (making one of us the boss)" which, according to him, were all geared towards the cultural domination of Africans by the Europeans.

In Mazrui's words: "At the end of the 20th century people dress more the same all over the world than they did at the end of the 19th century, but such similarity in dressing code is overwhelmingly Western dress code." Similarly, "while at the end of the 20th century, the human race is closer to having world languages than it was in the 19th century; those world languages at the end of the 20th century were disproportionately European – English, and French".

Thus, while no African language enjoys a universal patronage or spoken at international conferences, Euro-pean languages such as English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, and to some extent, Japanese, Chinese and Russian, are official languages used at international conferences. The globalized media have therefore made the Anglo-Saxon, (British and American culture), and by extension, the European culture in general, the most influential cultures in the world.

European sports, entertainment and relaxation tech-niques are now the toasts of African youths. They parrot European songs and dance European music. They know off hand all the football players and football clubs in Europe and belong to each of these clubs, like the Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Real Madrid, Barcelona and Bayern Munich, but know nothing about

their local football clubs.

On inter-faith relations, African Traditional Religions (ATRs) are regarded as "black magic", sort of a mumbo jumbo, or voodoo, or the equivalent of the devil incarnate. African gods, always with a small 'g', had long been declared dead and buried. Similarly, Islam firmly entrenched in some northern parts of Nigeria long before the advent of Christianity, is now despised and being hunted as "the harbinger of violence and terrorism". Islam is therefore to be touched with a very long spoon.

Christianity, the religion of the Europeans, is therefore acknowledged as the "world religion". It is the only true religion ordained by God, which dogma and moral ethos are to be imposed on the people of Africa. Ironically, the West which brought Christianity to Nigeria has now developed cold feet, as many Nigerian evangelists currently carry the gospel message to countries of Europe and America to evangelize them!

The African is thus torn between the culture of his birth and the domineering influence of Western culture. He loses his personality and is therefore neither wholly African, nor wholly European. He is a split personality. In the midst of that confusion, the African despises his culture and feigns ignorance, or feels shy about his roots. He begins to openly identify with everything foreign. He wears foreign clothes, bears foreign names, watches foreign films and movies, and communicates in foreign languages. In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, in particular, the popular medium of communication is the 'pidgin' language, a mixture of English and some local languages. People there hardly speak their local languages, while most of the indigenes bear foreign names. There was a prediction that in no distant time, most indigenous languages worldwide would go into extinct. That prediction may come true in Nigeria!

The Igbo people of Nigeria are equally entering into the same boat with the Niger Delta people. Unlike their Hausa or Yoruba compatriots, most Igbo people prefer to use the English language in their normal conversations. Some of them who could hardly make one correct sentence in English language would still choose to speak in English. They would speak with their children or wards in English, discuss with their fellow Igbo in English, while they would even beat their chests that their children could neither understand, nor speak the Igbo language! The tragedy of it all is that an average Igbo man can hardly complete one full sentence in the Igbo language without adulterating it with foreign words.

Even some Royal Fathers, the custodians of the people's culture and tradition, are not left out in this malaise. Take the kola nut, a symbol of Igbo hospitality, for instance. Every Igbo man will tell you that the "kola nut does not understand any foreign language". Yet, some royal fathers, in the course of breaking it, and starting with the accompanying prayers in Igbo language, with still end it with "… through Jesus Christ Our Lord".

The United States of America and the countries of Western Europe do not only seek to dominate the rest of the world with the whole gamut of their culture – language, art, dance, music, religion, dressing code and food. They also attempt to unscrupulously control the world population, by embarking on the propaganda that poverty in Africa and other third world countries was as a result of the growing population of these countries, which they claim is fast outstripping available resources.

So, instead of helping these poor countries find ways to overcome their poverty, a large number of wealthy multi-national organizations such as the Planned Parenthood, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, Family Health International, Pathfinder Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, devote their resources to finance programs euphemistically termed "reproductive health". They openly promote and sponsor abortion and sterilization methods as the best way of controlling the so-called "over-growing" population of these countries (Lopez, 2001:97). No wonder, these countries are now up in arms against African countries that legislated against the so-called gay marriage, whereby men are told to marry their fellow men and women told to marry their fellow women!

Cultural exchange between the developed and the developing countries of the world is therefore, overwhelmingly asymmetric. That is to say, it does not follow a model of dialogue and harmonization, but that of absorption. So, instead of promoting real globalization, it aggravates the distrust and the splits between cultures.

Towards a Nigerian cultural identity

How do we remedy this situation? Or, how do we rescue the Nigerian from this foreign cultural onslaught, which has debased him and made him a stranger in his own country? Are there specific traits or value systems peculiar to Nigeria, which could be found in every part of the country prior to the arrival of the Europeans, and for which Nigerians could aspire to? Is it possible to lift any of these traits or value systems, and graft them into the Nigerian situation and thus enable the people return to their cultural root? And what actually is the cultural identity of Nigeria?

Nigeria was a European creation. It was made up of about 450 disparate groups prior to European colonialism. Each of these groups, though semi autonomous had its linguistic setting, marriage system, pattern of giving names to its children and initiation into adulthood. They equally had their distinct burial rites, festivals, farming techniques, beliefs, status symbols and mode of religious worships.

Then came Islam, the religion of the Arabs, which through conquest, had entrenched itself in some northern parts of the country, and thereby displaced some local customs. European colonialism brought in Christianity to the country along with its social mores, beliefs and value

system and imposed them on the people.

In effect therefore, there are, at present, in Nigeria, three different strands of cultures struggling for the possession of the Nigerian mind. These are the traditional African communalism, which is now neither indigenous nor foreign; the theocratic Arab/Muslim culture, particularly in some northern parts of the country; and the abstract individualism of Christian Europe. Which of these cultural elements could be regarded as the authentic culture of Nigeria? Is it possible to lift any of them and adapt it to the current Nigerian situation, and thereby give the people an authentic cultural identity?

First, the abstract individualism of Christian Europe can hardly conform to Nigeria's socio-cultural arrangement due to inherent communal and kinship ties among the people. In the same way, it will be difficult for the theocratic political system of Arab-Muslim culture to fit into the secular and democratic institutions prevailing throughout the country.

Secondly, it will be extremely difficult to return Nigeria to its pre-colonial communal social setting since most of the elements that make up that society are no longer there, such as a close-knit social arrangement and human relations as well as a non-technical and industrial social and economic structure. Today, a human society comprises not just some few individuals within a specific geographical location, but also comprises millions of peoples from both far and near, who may be connected only by a network of optic fibers. This means that in place of the homogenous or mono-cultural system of the traditional society, we now have a diversity of peoples with different cultural backgrounds all affecting and influencing the others.

Thirdly, whereas the crude implements used in cultivation in pre-colonial era had placed serious limitations on the capacity of production, today's technological improvements and innovations have made production almost limitless, such that the emphasis now is no longer on production, but on consumption and distribution.

How then can the Nigerian come back to his original root? For some people, the only way is for the country to close all its doors and windows and not allow any air from outside to contaminate or foul it. In other words, it is for Nigeria to turn its back completely on everything foreign.

A former Nigerian Minister, Mazi Mbonu Ojike, was inclined to this thinking. Popularly known as the "Boycott King", Mbonu Ojike stood for the total rejection of foreign cultures – "boycott the *boycottables*". He campaigned against imitating the European way of life, the ubiquitous presence in Africa, and insisted that Africans should content themselves with what they have. As a practical demonstration of his commitment to indigenous culture, Ojike threw away his foreign name, refused to wear foreign cloths, and counseled against worshipping any foreign God.

In the former Congo Leopoldville, former Colonel Joseph Desire Mobutu, on assumption of office as President, came up with his *"Authenticity"* campaign which he believed would return Congo to its cultural past. He replaced all places in the country bearing foreign names with African names, changed Congo's name to Zaire, changed his own name to *"Mobutu Sese Seko,"* and ordered all Congolese bearing foreign names to do the same. In spite of this "authenticity" campaign, Mobutu however turned to the West, particularly, the United States and France, for all his needs.

The apostles of Negritude, Amie Cesaire and Leopold Senghor, through their literary outbursts, poems and scholarly articles, sought to recapture the lost identity of the black man by affirming that "Africans have a distinct culture and separate identity, which are in no way inferior to the colonizer". As students in far away Paris, who were uprooted from their roots and "planted" into the French society, culture and institutions through the French policy of assimilation, Cesaire and Senghor were pained that the blacks were portrayed as people without history or culture. The philosophy of Negritude was invented to debunk this negative attribution, and to assert that the blacks, indeed, had a history and culture. In Cesaire's words, "Africans have a history which contains certain cultural elements of great value" (Pinkhan, 1972:72).

The genuine intention of these proposals aimed at leading Africa to the Promised Land, their shortcomings notwithstanding, it may be pertinent to caution against attempts to imprison Africa in the past in the name of cultural revival. In other words, while rejecting foreign cultural impositions, Nigerians should, at the same time resist the temptation of throwing away the baby with the bath water. They should recognize the weaknesses or limitations of the communal society, its cleavages and differentiations, such as the multiplicity of castes, status, secret cults, professional and religious groups. Thus, while refusing to be sandwiched by foreign cultures, Nigerians should know that it is not everything that comes from inside that is good, while it is not everything that comes from outside that is bad. It is in their interest therefore, to be wise enough to make right judgment.

Way forward

What therefore is the way forward? First, Nigeria must come to terms with her own subjectivity by modifying traditional and foreign cultural values in conformity with the realities and exigencies of the day. The modification of these values will yield a system of cultural values that are peculiar to her, but open to all societies. Accordingly, the Nigerian must discard or kick against traditional
norms or practices that could render him increasingly weak, or could imprison him in the past. He should however be able to draw strength from the tradition of his ancestors, provided he does so within the ambit of a new dynamism.

African traditions are community-centered, and they

have a moral tone in spite of their narrow scope. This narrowness notwithstanding, African communities can, through an organizing mind, still be receptive to European moral values, once these (European) values shelve off their ideological toga. It is through this reception that the passage from communal conscience to collective conscience occurs.

Thus, Nigerians should assimilate aspects of European cultural values which are progressive in nature. They should however avoid the rigidity associated with them as it is based on a social conservatism rooted in the exploitation of man by man. Nigeria, in the era of globalization, should not see herself as an island, nor a means, but an end.

Accommodation or openness to the other makes it possible to build a society of ends where only reasonable actors will have a respectable place. Nigeria therefore needs to strike a necessary balance between her indigenous cultures and foreign cultural influences to meet with the realities of current globalization. True globalization therefore, affirms mutual inter-exchange of cultures and not isolation, or the domination of one culture by another.

Africa needs not content herself with her glorious past and beautiful culture – that it was Egypt that gave Greece its philosophy through the Egyptian Mystery System, where many Greek philosophers like Thales, Pythagoras and Aristotle, had come to drink from its wisdom, or that a university had existed in Timbuktu, long before Europe came to "civilize" Africa. These were beautiful stories, but they are not enough to take Africa out of poverty and technological backwardness. What Africa, and indeed, Nigeria, need is the transformation of her culture to enable her meet the needs of current realities. In a critique of Negritude, Frantz Fanon contends that "… a national culture is not folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people's true nature. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence" (Fanon, 1965:188).

In other words, Nigeria, and by extension, Africa, was not conquered and later colonized because her history, language, religion, arts or music, were inferior to those of the Europeans. Africa was conquered and later colonized because she possessed inferior material means. It was with this superior material means, the possession of superior fire-power, that Europe was able to conquer Africa and later colonized her. The same superior material means was responsible for the present cultural domination of Africa by countries of Western Europe and the United States, through information and communication technology, even though Nigeria is coming up strongly in her movie industry, popularly known as the Nollywood, which is being showcased all over the world through the communication media.

To free her from this foreign domination, cultural and material means, Nigeria needs not proclaim only flag independence. She needs to develop appropriate technology suited to her people and her environment. As Alexander Animalu affirmed, "it is in the knowledge of technological and scientific development that Europeans excel, and it is in the application that Europeans dominate us" (Animalu, 2001:6).

African traditional societies have for long operated a system of thought largely based on religious and mystical underpinnings. It was a system of thought where every causation, every occurrence, was linked to one malevolent spirit or the other. Nothing happened by chance or accident. There was no verifiable means, laws or hypothesis, establishing why certain events happened, one way or the other.

In such a mystic-religious situation or interpretation of reality, it became extremely difficult, if not impossible, to develop a scientific thought or rational enterprise that is essential for today's technological development or innovation. As such, Africa was consigned to the dustbin of history as an under-developed continent whose people were largely dependent on other nations for their own survival and existence.

But what type of technological innovation or development should Nigeria embark upon? Since no two cultural environments are exactly the same, Nigeria should develop her own indigenous technology or appropriate technology peculiar to her environment. That is to say, Nigeria should embark on technological development consistent or in line with her philosophical outlook. For instance, traditional Africa perceives itself not distinct or in contradiction with nature. It sees itself as part of the totality of nature that is in dynamic process of movement, though on a higher plane. In other words, technology in Africa must be used to serve man. It must be used to improve the welfare of man and his environment. Technology must be in harmony with nature, and so enhance, improve and develop man and his environment. As the creation of man, technology should be under the control of man, and not used to desecrate or destroy nature or the environment. It must not be used to conquer man and his environment.

Oronto Douglas while lamenting the destructive effects of technology in his Niger Delta region area claimed that "… they have not only caused social disintegration of our culture and our tradition, they have led to the introduction of foreign diseases and the destruction of our cultural ethos. They have led to the destabilization of our mainstream economy and livelihood".

Apart from this, "appropriate technology" should recognize the corporate existence of Nigerians, the bond of filial relationship that ties them together, and ensure that no one is left behind in the enterprise. This means that the beneficial outcomes of technology, such as electricity, pipe borne water, health care facilities, communication and transportation systems, should not be limited to only one section of the community, while other sections are

left behind. In other words, the dichotomy in the existential relationship between those in the rural areas and their counterparts in the urban areas, and even among the same urban dwellers, would not be accepted. In essence, technological development for Nigeria should aim at benefiting all sections of the country.

For the African, the universe is never an outside phenomenon. It is "immanent", within, part and parcel of the system. Accordingly, technology must not be imposed from outside. A borrowed technology is like a borrowed garment. It will never fit the borrower. It will either be over-sized or under-sized. The technology appropriate to Nigeria will therefore take expression or develop out of the people's cultural milieu. It will spring from inside. It is a technology that is indigenous and which recognizes the realities of its environment. Thus, in the march towards globalization, Nigeria should develop a technology that is consistent with her cultural realities.

Conclusion

As already seen above, globalization has brought im-mense benefits to the world – greater unity and coope-ration among the nations of the world, mutual exchange of cultures and social values, increase in human relations as well as better appreciation and understanding of peoples. Globalization has led to the leveling up of valleys, the pulling down of hills and barriers of commu-nication and the construction of bridges of understanding among nations, races, cultures and institutions. The net effects there from, are better education, increase in human knowledge and improvement in scientific and technological advancements.

However, all countries of the world do not share equal benefits from globalization. While the developed countries of Europe and America are better placed, and indeed, have cornered most of the benefits of globalization, developing countries like Nigeria are only left to struggle for the crumbs that fell from the process. In some cases, these countries had come out even worse, pauperized, with most of their value systems and institutions virtually destroyed. Nigeria can free herself from this quagmire by adopting appropriate strategies not only to contain the menacing influence of globalization, but more importantly to reap the full benefits of the process.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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