

CULTURAL SYNERGY AS PANACEA TO CULTURAL IMPERIALISM IN THE WAKE OF GLOBALISM

Solomon Ojoka Ojomah
Department of Philosophy,
Federal University of Lafia

Abstract

This article discusses and analyzes the negative impact of globalization which is primarily entrenched in cultural imperialism. The problem addressed is the high rate of cultural values of the developing countries that are rendered impotent in the homogenization of Western cultures based on the erroneous perception of Westernization or Americanization as the ideal in the globalized world. This article examines fundamental questions like; what is the relevance of culture in the globalized world? Can there be equality of cultures in a globalized world where certain cultures have higher advantages in terms of the dissemination of their values and ideas? If there is a possibility of cultural synergy, to what extent does such synergy encompass intercultural competence to establish equality of culture? In addressing these questions which dwells on a cultural synergistic approach as a panacea to cultural imperialism in the wake of globalization, dialogue is prioritized as the unavoidable prerequisite to cultural synergy. The importance and the benefit of the cultural synergistic approach lie in the emancipation of cultures of the developing countries and the recovery of the humanness of the oppressed. Hence, cultural synergy is preferred over cultural imperialism because the globalized world is meant for all cultures of the world as the basic tenet of cultural synergy. In all, the main argument is that cultural synergy remains the ideal approach to globalization in the midst of a multiplicity of cultures.

Keywords: Homogenization, Culture, Competence, Africa, Westernization, Americanization

Introduction

This essay is made up of two three sections, the first section addressed a detailed understanding of globalization, culture, the importance of culture to human existence, and cultural imperialism which is regarded as a negative impact of globalization. The second section of this essay focused on cultural synergy as an antidote to the negative impact of cultural imperialism. The third aspect of this essay is based on the evaluation and conclusion of cultural synergy as the ideal approach to globalization and the emancipation of the valuable cultures of the world.

It is worth noting that several views exist as to why globalization is neither Westernization nor homogenization but the glaring evidence of the demise of several cultures in the wake of globalization remains one of the major undeniable factors that reviews the realities of globalization. One must also admit that culture is not static but when a changing culture is towards a direction then it is no longer the necessary change of culture over a long period but a cultural imperialism. Reasons why cultural synergy is preferred as the ideal approach to globalization shall be supported with arguments; the need for cultural synergy remains an imperative.

The Complexity of Culture in the Globalized World

There are vast arrays of definitions of culture. Despite its complexity, one common definition is that

which refers to it as the way of life of a people. Edward Tylor as cited by Hans Gullestrup defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (2006, p.32). In a similar definition by an African author, Culture is referred to as “the product of a complex inheritance constantly submitted to critical scrutiny and the need to adapt, a constant conquest to achieve.” (Mentan, 2014, p.287). The concept of culture as used in this thesis encompasses its complexity as it relates to globalization. Culture as linked to globalization transcends the geographical conception of culture; it is both material and non-material. Globalization entails the flow of the material and non-material aspects of culture.

Every culture is a dynamic combination of qualities even though some of the qualities are well-known in human society. It is, consequently, a unique and transmissible web of symbols that embodies designated wide-ranging qualities of people. As fittingly presented by Oladipo, “culture does not only provide a framework for thought and action in a society, it is also a veritable source of identity” (2009, p. 13). The cultural imperialism components of globalization make the identity of people a mirage because of the extinction of the less powerful culture in the midst of the global flow of advanced and powerful cultures. Omoregbe(2007, pp. 150 – 151) buttressed this when he held that, while globalization could necessarily lead to the extinction of certain cultures of Africa, the extinction of some cultures is necessary while others are not. With regards to those not necessary, he attributes the unnecessary extinction of excellent African culture to be a product of cultural imperialism as a negative aspect of globalization. For Martin Khor (2003, p.5), in his view “globalization is what we in the third world have for several centuries called colonization.” In regarding globalization as neo-colonialism, one should understand that the connotation inherent in colonialism is imperialism. In the view of Kwame Nkrumah as cited by Mazrui, et al (2004, p.19), neo-colonialism is the worst form of imperialism:

For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony, those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism, neither is the case.

The complexity of culture in the global age to a large extent is inherent in the cultural imperialism component of globalization. It is important to note that the complexity of culture in the globalization epoch is embedded in the extremism of cultural dominance. Hence, “there is no human culture on earth which has never learned anything from another. Learning from other cultures is a natural phenomenon and there is nothing wrong with it (Ito, 1988, p.198). What is wrong with a culture (Western or American) in the epoch of globalization is that it transcends learning or being influenced by other cultures to the point of dominance and extinction of cultural values that are admirable. The dominance to the point of extinction has made culture a complex entity in the globalized world. Hence discussions on globalization necessarily concerns culture to a large extent. Culture has been referred to as the ambiance of globalization.

Between Culture and Globalization

There are multiplicities of definitions of globalization just as there are myriads of definitions of culture. Despite the numerous definitions of globalization, one certain fact about globalization is that the concept of a global village is embedded in the various definitions in one way or the other. Global village is the term used to define how the modern technological advancement in

telecommunication, internet, transportation, trade, and other means linked the world so closely that access to different parts of the world in terms of culture, politics, economics, social and other areas are as possible as it is in a common village setting. This term was coined by Marshall McLuhan, its usage does not necessarily mean that the world is a village but has similarities with the type of access and linkages that exist in the common notion of village.

As Tomlinson (1996, p. 22) argues, globalization as a social process literally refers to “the rapidly developing process of complex interconnections between societies, cultures, institutions, and individuals worldwide.” The critical point to note in this definition is that the increased global interconnectedness involves multiple linkages varying from “the social institutional relationships that are proliferating between individuals and collectivities worldwide, to the idea of the increasing 'flow' of goods, information, people and practices across national borders, to the more 'concrete' modalities of connection provided by technological developments such as the international system of rapid air transport and the more literal 'wiredness' of electronic communications systems” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 2). In all these definitions of globalization, it is obvious that globalization involves a common construction of meaning based on the uniformity it tends to create. However, “the most valuable feature of the concept of culture is the concept of difference...” (Appadurai, 1996, p.12). With the construction of common meaning, difference as a valuable concept that defines cultures of the various groups is devalued in favour of the dominant culture.

In a more specific term, culture in its globalization display may be described as the process of the world turning towards the creation of a cultural unit for all:

Economic and technological transformations since the 1970s have led to an unprecedented flow of capital, goods, ideas, and people across state and continental borders. These flows, in turn, have contributed to the demise of institutions of power, notably the state. Our times are thus marked by the incapacity of state-built or state-sponsored boundaries (borders, citizenship, ethnicity) to regiment populations and affect cultural practices and identities. In short, the world is fast turning into a single cultural unit (Trouillot, 2002, p.4).

This single cultural unit is based on the five dimensions of the global cultural flows that define cultural globalization in Appadurai's analysis. These are ethnoscaples; the flows of people, technoscapes; the flows of technology, mediascapes; the flow of information, financescapes; the flows of capital, ideoscapes; the flows of ideologies (Appadurai, 33-36). These dimensions of global flows define culture in terms of globalization and as such justify the argument that culture is the crux of globalization. With this understanding, the various dimensions of globalization; the political, the economical and others are subsumed in cultural globalization. This point is buttressed by Tomlinson (1999, p.1) as follows; “globalization lies at the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization.” The place of culture as central to globalization is further supported by an economic Marxist Fredric Jameson's view that “today even economic has become cultural” (El-Ojeili, and Hayden, 2006, p.134). This understanding of culture as the crux of globalization signals a more complex understanding of culture that transcends arts, images, clothing, music, and the like. “The huge transformative processes of our time that globalization describes cannot be properly understood until they are grasped through the conceptual vocabulary of culture; likewise, . . . these transformations change the very fabric of cultural experience and, indeed, affect our sense of what culture actually is in the modern world” (Tomlinson, 1999, p.1). The sense of what culture is can be identified in the various flows that define cultural globalization.

The strong ties between culture and globalization are epitomized in cultural imperialism which promotes and justifies a culture as a world culture. The description of globalization as being

tantamount to Americanization or Westernization hinges on the fact of their dominance and the concept of a global village where its culture is the Western or American culture. Even though one can easily argue that it is not only American or Western culture that has exhibited global outreach in the contemporary world; it is important to note that the determinant of global outreach is the influence on other cultures and the policies that the government of other nations are inculcating into their system based on this influence. This influence has been explained in these terms:

United States has unparalleled access to the means of producing and disseminating its ideas and life-style around the world, and in part because the United States possesses a unique set of cultural and historical attributes that are enablers of this dissemination... that in more and more corners of the world American culture must be reckoned with on a regular basis, as an element alongside local culture (*Rosendorf, 2000, p.112*).

On the view of globalization as being tantamount to Americanization, several claims exist in this regard; Henry Kissinger, a former secretary of the state in his lecture at the trinity college in Dublin held that “what is called globalization is really another name for the dominant role of the United States... The world had no alternative but to accept American ideas, values and way of life”(as cited in Dobrescu&Durach, 2022, p.67). This position is one among several positions that portray globalization as Americanization. It is in this regard that several scholars regard cultural globalization as Western cultural imperialism. To those who regard globalization as homogenization, Malcolm Waters does not view such understanding as erroneous: “The concept of globalization is an obvious target for ideological suspicion because, like modernization, a predecessor and related concept, it appears to justify the spread of Western culture and of capitalist society by suggesting that there are forces operating beyond human control that are transforming the world” (Waters, 2013, p.6). On this basis of the contents of globalization that encompasses cultural imperialism, it signals the enthronement of a lack of intercultural competence on a large scale. A cultural competent mode of globalization would necessarily entail cultural synergy and not imperialism.

Cultural Imperialism as Entrenched in Globalization

The description of Globalization as cultural imperialism is primarily based on the dominance of some cultures over others, in order to understand to what extent globalization is tantamount to cultural imperialism; an explication of the term is required as follows:

Cultural imperialism is said to involve the domination of one culture by another and is usually thought of as a set of processes involving the ascendancy of one nation and/or the global domination of consumer capitalism. This argument stresses a loss of cultural autonomy for the 'dominated' nation and the worldwide growth of cultural homogeneity or 'sameness'... Consequently, cultural imperialism as domination is regarded as the outcome of a set of economic and cultural processes implicated in the reproduction of global capitalism (*Barker, 2004, p.38*).

The domination inherent in cultural imperialism is meant to establish homogenization. To this end, globalization is perceived as a force that is driving the world towards uniformity of the various cultures of the world in favour of the Western culture or American culture. O'Connor defines cultural homogenization as the ubiquitous view of globalization as “the process by which local cultures are transformed or absorbed by a dominant outside culture” (O'Connor, 2006, p.391). In this regard, the dominant outside culture is often identified as Western culture, thus, the components of globalization are often associated with the various forms of cultural flow identified by Appadurai; technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes, ethnoscapes, and mediascapes.

The cultural flow that turns globalization into homogenization in the cultural imperialistic move is encapsulated in terms like McDonaldization, Coca-colonization, Americanization, or Westernization. McDonaldization is defined “as the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society, as well as the rest of the world... McDonaldization is a force in global cultural homogenization” (Ritzer and Dean, 2015, p.223). The aim of McDonaldization is cultural imperialism through its effect of eclipsing human creativity and the dehumanization of social relations. Moreover, McDonaldization is a form of Westernization and Americanization, all in the name of globalization. However, “consumer capitalism of this type has been built upon a standardized brand image, mass advertising, and the high status given by many Third World populations to Western products and services” (Holton, 2000, p.142). By giving such status to Western products, the focus is on Western products and their neither culture, not their own products nor culture because the mass advertising has worked on their psychology to the point of having low value for their culture and locally made products.

The underlining function of homogenization terms like McDonaldization and Coca-colonization is the creation of global consumerism, in the American film industry; Hollywood plays the same role. Information technology as evidenced by the internet is one of the strengths of these agents of global consumerism. “The main consumers are young, mostly under thirty. The messages are complex, sometimes subliminal. They offer an idea of freedom and disdain for authority. They catalyze consumption; reinforce 'we are the world' identity” (Firouzeh, 2004, p.237). In all homogenization via consumer goods create a new form of identity alien to the original identity, aimed at establishing a common culture entrenched in cultural imperialism.

The adoption of certain languages by different countries of the world is another area of this dimension of cultural globalization. This process has led to the demise of several languages, the place of language as a means of identity amongst different cultural groups cannot be emphasized. The logic of a common language is that once people of different cultural backgrounds can adopt the foreign language then they can easily accept the value of the origin of such language. However, acceptance of a language is not synonymous with the acceptance of the values and practices associated with the native speaker of such language. To the unlearned, the acceptance of another language as the primary means of communication encompasses the absolute acceptance of all the carriers of such language can offer. The acceptance of a common language is also connected to the education system whereby a network of the elite is created based on Western society's values.

Ultimately, the homogenization component of cultural imperialism signals the creation of a new form of identity whereby decisions, institutions, values, and structures of most cultures are focused on becoming like or even changing totally to the Western culture. Several scholars have echoed their voices on the homogenization dimension of cultural globalization, most of these scholars are from third-world countries. African scholars are well known for their contribution to this dimension of globalization based on empirical evidence within their locations. The contents of their arguments regard globalization as Americanization, Westernization, cultural imperialism, and neo-colonization.

In identifying the place of Africa in the current globalization trend, Maduagwu opined that “Africa is uncertain of its place in this American global hegemony... Africa seems to have no place in the globalizing New World Order” (Maduagwu, 2000, pp.221-222). By this declaration of African uncertainty and the description of globalization as American global hegemony, globalization is by implication tantamount to Americanization in Maduagwu's view of globalization. In regarding

globalization as Americanization, Nicolaides argued that in the light of globalization as Americanization, an inferiority complex has been introduced to Africa on a large scale; “American norms, values, and practices are being conveyed across the Atlantic as the suitable mode of behaviour for Africans. As a consequence of this cultural migration, Africa's rich culture is being degraded and is viewed as inferior by many Africans” (Nicolaides, 2012, p.118). Another effect of Americanization noted by Nicolaides transcends the degradation of culture to the absolute loss of African cultural values to Americanization. He further opined that:

Americanization is undoubtedly leading to the cultural homogenization of African society and to a global culture of consumerism in which the poor become poorer and the richer become richer. Africa has in a sense been robbed of the opportunity to define their own socio-political and economic choices (Nicolaides, 2012, p.123).

One of the means of robbing Africa of the opportunity to define her own identity as identified by Omoregbe is the mass media: “Another danger of globalization is that it could become a subtle form of neo-colonization. America is already aggressively doing this through CNN and through its control over the United Nations Organization (UNO) which she mobilizes to fight her enemies who refuse to submit to her” (Omoregbe, 2007, p.156). In this regard, there is an element of force being used primarily for the Americanization of the world.

Furthermore, some African scholars have argued that globalization is tantamount to the Westernization of the world. Some of their arguments for this position are as follows:

The forceful integration of Africa into globalization through slavery and colonialism has led to the problem of personal identity and cultural dilemma for the African. Africa has had to be dependent upon Europe and America ever since for its development...Arguably, globalization is purely an attempt to spread Western culture with its attendant capitalist socio-economic political nuances (Afisi, 1999, p.5).

Nicolaides' argument in this regard can be compared to a mirage, whereby globalization is the mirage that has Westernization as its reality:

The problem arises that while globalization imparts an image of itself as an all-encompassing ideology that will inevitably lead to a cultural global rainbow, it is in practice homogenizing popular culture by inculcating an ethos of a Western, mainly American, cultural industry, which also has roots in Britain and Western Europe (Nicolaides, 2012, p.123).

Maduagwu in his argument regarding globalization positing that globalization is the same as Westernization argued against Malcolm Waters, which to him is a typical representation of the idea of globalization as being tantamount to Westernization. “The concept of globalization, as it is generally being propagated in the West, namely, as [invisible] forces operating beyond human control that is transforming the world”, is deceitful. Propagated in this form, globalization might be an attempt to justify the spread of Western culture and of capitalist society” (Maduagwu, 2000, p. 219). Hence, globalization, as presented to Africans, is devoid of its essence, westernization is not the essence of globalization as presented. Ultimately, Maduagwu argued that globalization is the latest version of Westernization which has gone through colonialism, imperialism, and now globalization. Hence, globalization is tantamount to Westernization.

Another position upheld by some African scholars regarding globalization is the view that equated it with colonization. In re-echoing the words of Martin Khor that globalization is called colonization in Africa, Afisi argued along with others that globalization is more of a curse than a blessing for the

African continent; “what this indicates is that globalization is indeed the engine room for the propagation of neocolonialism and new imperialism on the African soil”(Afisi, 1999, p.4). To this end, Africa remains an underdog because of the planned cultural erosion designed to install Western culture as the ultimate and the failure of Africans to take up the challenge through cultural synergy.

The arguments of African scholars regarding globalization as Americanization, Westernization, or colonization are primarily based on the experience of Africa in the globalized world. Even Western scholars' approach to globalization as Americanization or Westernization is primarily based on the massive influence of the Western world. Neither of the positions is without error. To eliminate the error of the extreme views regarding globalization based on the experience of the dominant culture and the cultures influenced, cultural synergy could be the appropriate approach devoid of the imperialist components of globalization. The positive aspect of globalization abounds despite its drawbacks; cultural synergy remains one of the models for establishing the benefits of globalization.

Africa is not the only victim of cultural imperialism in the wake of globalism, in the thought concerning Japan undergoing cultural imperialism, Ito held that “in the discussion of cultural imperialism theory, the Japanese has often been ignored by some as an embarrassing exception. Others maintain that Japan has become so westernized that it is already a kind of Western Country (Ito, 1988, p.198). The Westernization of Japan was met with the cultural synergistic approach as a remedy. The approach began with an effort to recover the loss of identity due to the influence of Westernization. As stated by Ito: “At the end of 1960' a new search for identity began in Japan and many books and articles were written on the subject. This phenomenon was called the *nihonjinron*(studies of Japanese people and culture boom (1988, pp. 198). It took a long period of intellectual synthesis involving a vast array of scholars to find the solution to the crisis. Their approach was to synthesize their country's scientific strides with its traditional cultural values. These values were basically anchored on traditional Japanese views on human relations, groups, and social organizations. Today, Japan has successfully established the required cultural synergy that bridged the traditional and modern societies in the competitive sector and has been able to find common ground with the non-competitive sectors of its culture, in so doing their identity is retained and the negative impact of globalization entrenched in cultural imperialism has been conquered. This was possible through intercultural competence, without intercultural competence, it may not be possible to establish the required cultural synergistic approach to globalization.

Intercultural Competence as a Prerequisite for Cultural Synergy

It is worth noting that cultural synergy at large demands intercultural competence; it is in this regard that the article of Liisa Salo-Lee titled *Intercultural Competence Research: Focuses and Challenges* is relevant. In this article, the author gave four different aspects of intercultural competence; the expatriate aspect deals with the ability to imbibe certain professional ethics in the context of local conditions and constraints, it necessarily demands the relocation of expectations for temporal purpose in imbibing certain professional ethics in their new location. The immigration aspect deals with the permanent relocation of professionals which entails their lived experience of cultural encounters and the ability of both the receiving community and the professional to coexist despite their differences. The third aspect is called the inclusive local aspect; it focuses on the consciousness of the multiplicities of cultures by seeking how to live together amidst contradicting cultures in each society.

Understanding and open-mindedness are necessary factors for the local inclusive aspect of intercultural competence. The final aspect of intercultural competence focuses not on the local society but on the global human society, it is also called 'We All Here and There' it entails mutual influence, it does not focus on cultural imperialism but on the cultural synergy that facilitates participative competence in international knowledge transfer. This aspect of intercultural competence also emphasizes intercultural dialogue aimed at mutual understanding; "multiculturalism and intercultural communication are possibilities towards building dialogue, mutual learning, and creativity...multiculturalism challenges intercultural competence which is today required both abroad and at home" (*Salo-Lee, 2006, p.129*). It is the emphasis of this last aspect that would be relevant in analyzing the cultural synergistic approach to globalization. Cultural knowledge is one of the fundamental prerequisites noted for active intercultural competence.

Cultural Synergy

Etymologically, the word synergy is derived from the Greek word that means working together or cooperation. It is a powerful concept that embraces dynamic process, creative integrated solution, adaptation and joint action by which the total effect is greater than the sum of effects when acting independently. Essentially, in true synergistic process nothing is given up or lost. Synergy may be defined as cooperative or combined action that occurs when diverse or disparate individuals or groups collaborate for a common cause. The objective is to increase effectiveness by sharing perceptions and experiences, insights and knowledge (*Harris et al, 2006, 141*). Culture as a very important attribute of man necessarily needs synergy in the globalized world where the world is shrinking through the effect of advancement in technology, transportation, economic relations, cultural and sociopolitical relations. It is the realization of the shrinking world amid cultural diversity that has given rise to the need of cultural synergy at different levels. To this end, "global leaders are concerned with not merely managing cultural differences, but with ways to foster cultural synergy" (*Harris et al, 2006, 141*). Cultural synergy is an approach to managing cultural diversity that creates contextual unity in diversity amongst cultures that are engaged in the process.

The concern of global leaders is in accordance with the premise cultural synergy is based, it asserts, "we are not all the same – that the various groups within society differ, with each maintaining its cultural distinctness. Appreciating a pluralistic, rather than a homogeneous, society underlies the synergy approach. In addition, rather than assuming that the similarities among people are most important, cultural synergy assumes that similarities and differences share equal importance" (*Adler and Gundersen, 2008, p.110*). The fundamental basis for cultural synergy is the equality of all cultures. The universal declaration of human rights can be the basis of a group opting for cultural synergy by a cultural group, on the premise of equality of all cultures. Equality of culture is not antithetical to right reason, important in any demand for equality is its essence embedded in right reason. With much attention to right reason as the basis of equality of culture, cultural synergistic approach reflects the best aspects of all cultures' in their strategy, structure, and process without violating the norms of any single culture.

Towards a Cultural Synergistic Approach to Globalization

In achieving a cultural synergistic approach to globalization, the essential features that led to the description of the world as a global village are worth considering. This consideration hinges on the fact that Americanization or Westernization are perceived to be the culture of the global village by some scholars. The world as a global village, based on the impact of the advancement in technology, transportation, trade and mass communication is not likely to be tantamount to Americanization or

Westernization. Moreover, the insinuations are based on the dominant role and influence of America and the western world in contemporary globalization process. The supposed dominant role presupposes cultural imperialism.

Cultural synergy regards the diversity of cultures as a resource while cultural imperialism regards cultural diversities as an obstacle. Cultural synergy in an African context entails the cooperation of African culture with other cultures of the modern world in the spirit of Africa to produce a combined effect greater than the present effect of Westernization or Americanization on Africa. The main objective of cultural synergy is to increase effectiveness by sharing perceptions, insights, and knowledge. It is an asset because the power of synergy rests in the reality of genuine effect a group can make in solving problems, groups are often smarter than the smartest people within them provided there is a combined effort. Synergistic approach shows that creative problem solving is a significant benefit of cultural synergy. Accordingly, problem solving is contextually enhanced when globalization reflects the values of cultures in their strategy, structure, and process without violating the norms of any culture encountering the West or America in globalization process.

The fading of genuine African culture in the globalized world could be restored by cultural synergy. The multiple perspectives derived within a culturally synergistic approach to the socio-political cum economic problems would provide solutions in Africa. With the open and trusting environment created by cultural synergy challenges affecting the human society can easily be resolved. Cultural synergy recognized the fact that culture function in quite unique aspects and are incomplete and in need of perfection. This perfection however, cannot be achieved if they remain isolated and hostile or indifferent to other cultures. Cultural synergy also recognized the dynamism of human nature, with these qualities of cultural synergy, what needed in Africa and other third world countries that have tag globalization neo-colonization is not Westernization but modernization of our cultural values. This approach is antithetical to cultural imperialist notion that Westernization is tantamount to modernization therefore what is needed in third world countries is Westernization. Not Westernization but cultural synergy is the way forward from the negative impacts of globalization on third world countries, especially Africa.

Huntington pointedly attacks the cultural imperialist notion that modernization equals Westernization. He placed the west in its right perspective by arguing that while all cultures experience certain similarities in the modernization process, cultures still retain their unique characteristics. Even after modernization, societies can be quite different from each other. The differences between cultures around the world remain real and important even though societies are undergoing a common process of modernization. Huntington asserts that “modernization involves industrialization; urbanization; increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilization; and more complex and diverse occupational structures” (Huntington, 1996, p.68). This list could be expanded to include the following “1) technically rational modes of thought, 2) economic structures consistent with producing high technology goods, and 3) socio-political institutions that allow a society to participate in the global economy and modern technological development” (Florig, 2023). Modernization the life wire of globalization is a product of combined and tremendous advancement of scientific and engineering knowledge commonly associated with the eighteen century.

Virtually all scholars of civilizations agreed that Western civilization emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries and developed its distinctive characteristics in the centuries that followed. It did not begin to modernize until the eighteenth century. The West, in short, was Western long before it was

modern. Cultural synergy therefore calls for modernization devoid of westernization. “This spirit is captured in the Chinese slogan *ti-yong*, roughly translated as Chinese learning for fundamental principles, western learning for practical use, and the Japanese slogan of *woken*, *yosei*, roughly translated as Japanese spirit, western technique.” (Huntington, 1996, p.69). Huntington argues that the pattern of borrowing without assimilating is much more common throughout history than complete cultural transformation, this is evident in Buddhism which was absorbed into Chinese society without transforming Chinese culture, another evidence is the Greeks' incorporated into Islamic scholarship without altering essential beliefs, also Chinese writing and culture were borrowed by the Japanese without erasing the uniqueness of Japanese culture. In compliance with these evidences, African would benefit more from globalization by synergizing the modern attributes of globalization in the spirit of African culture.

Many African nations are yet to come up with their mission statements of cultural synergy. Cultural synergy is therefore an imperative for Africa in this globalized world where their cultural identity in all its ramifications are undergoing erosion in a rapid way. Africans are lost in the globalized world by almost total alienation from many of their cultural values. One obvious feature of the globalized world is the celebrated triumph of capitalism. The quest for profits often accompanied by negligence of other spiritual human values characterizes capitalism. The values inherent in African culture could be restored through cultural synergy; it calls for honest attempts aimed at bridging the gap between modernization and African cultural values.

The Chinese and the Japanese effort to uphold their culture amid the influence of Westernization and Americanization in the global epoch may be regarded as models of cultural synergistic approach to globalization. In this manner, the Chinese *ti-yong* and the Japanese *yosei* are worth studying as template for minority cultures of the world to establish cultural synergistic approach to globalization. Cultural synergistic approach is not all about terminology, pragmatic manifestations of the cultural synergistic term is what counts in recognizing a culture as approaching globalization from synergistic perspective.

In Africa, there are terminologies that signals cultural synergistic approach to globalization, since most of these terminologies are devoid of practical impacts, there are not synergistic approach. In Nigeria, the term 'wazobia' which is the combination of the same word from three major ethnic cum cultural groups could be regarded as a precursor to having a practical cultural synergistic approach to globalization. 'Wa' means in Yoruba, 'Zo' means come in Hausa and 'Bia' means come in Igbo. The combination of these words that means the same can simply be interpreted as a clarion call to come together. By analogy, the concept of 'Wazobia' encompasses synergy literally. The clarion call inherent in the concept 'Wazobia' is a call to work together in making Nigeria a better place. The working together necessarily signals inculcating those values that once made the various cultural groups great into the modern world in the spirit of Africa.

An attempt to establish a cultural synergistic approach to globalization in Africa can be found in Tanzania. 'Ujamaa' a Swahili term that means familyhood introduced by Julius Nyerere in his social and economic development policies encompasses a cultural synergistic. The concept is based on the notion that the essence an individual personhood is established via the community. In this attempt, the cultural practices that defines the community could be regarded the defining culture of the group amid the influence of Americanization and Westernization. The proponent of the concept of 'Ujamaa' established certain policies under this concept as a means of sustaining certain cultural values after much influence of colonialism. The beauty of cultural synergy in a world of diverse

cultures is the fact that it recognizes the existence of the various cultures and makes use of the strong elements; cultural synergistic approach to globalization craves on strong cultural values amid modernization.

In African politics for example, cultural synergy entails the modernization of traditional African political values in the spirit of Africa. Dr. Geo'BenEzeani shared an experience he had in a conference at University of Brighton in UK when he mentioned the name African Democracy. Hewas immediately challenged by some Africans in that conference; “what do you mean by 'African democracy?' Has African any democracy? What is your African democracy all about? Tell us the difference between your African democracy and Western democracy” (Ezeani, 1998, p.9). Despite the manifestation of ignorance of some of these scholars, it was surprising that the Western scholar that organized the conference Mr. Frank Bex, affirmed the existence of African style of democracy and explained that basic characteristics that distinguished it from western style of democracy is the “consensus element” (Ezeani, 1998, p.9). The difference between these scholars is knowledge, that is why self-awareness and the awareness others is key to cultural synergy.

For there to be cultural synergy, a deep knowledge of the two or more cultures that are to undergo this process must be known in details. Knowledge of cultural values in Africa is necessary for the proper process of cultural synergy. It is in terms of knowledge that intercultural competence is well pronounced. Intercultural competence of individual, institutions, and cultural groups are needed for effective cultural synergistic approach to globalization. Ezeani's knowledge of the values inherent in African democracy and the modern knowledge of democracy has yielded a cultural synergy in the political realm which he called; Collegial Consensus Democracy. This form of democracy suitable for Africa overcomes the present political crisis in Africa. The principle characteristics of this form of democracy are; “It is the most peaceful and fair version of democracy, monetarily the cheapest democratic system, rigging –free model, guarantees the emergence of choice leadership, satisfies just desires of majority and minority groups, checks corruption, ensures accountability and a nation-family democracy” (Ezeani, 1998, p.4). It is therefore evident that African democracy, transcended the realm of politics, it extends to the peoples' culture and as such an integral component of the sense of belonging. The synergistic approach to globalization is possible in different aspects of the globalization; the validity of cultural synergistic approach is not the theoretical views but the practical observations of the contents of these theories.

Conclusion

In moving towards a cultural synergistic approach to globalization, the essential features that led to the description of the world as a global village are worth considering. This consideration hinges on the fact that Americanization or Westernization as argued by proponents of the homogenization thesis as the operating cultures of the global village. It is pertinent to note that, even though the advancement in technology has turned the world into a global village, it can never be the same with the conventional notion of village. The dominance of Americanization and Westernization cannot be overlooked; any other culture with such opportunity would have likely dominated the world like they are doing. The history of the world has a lot to do with the dominance of one culture over all.

The proverbial saying 'do not blow your trumpet' is relevant in this epoch of history for all cultures who are very much interested in cultural synergistic approach as a way out of the perceived shackles of dominant cultures of the globe. To this end, every culture ought to blow their trumpet because if they do not blow it, no one would blow it for them. The Chinese and the Japanese are likely to exert

much influence in the nearest future because they are blowing their trumpet already. The dominant culture of the globe has a lot to gain from their influence, expecting them to champion cultural synergistic approach would be a mirage. It is therefore a sine qua non for the victims of cultural imperialism to inculcate and acquire the necessary knowledge for cultural synergy as a solution to the problem of imperialism in a new dimension inherent in globalization.

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