

## Western Hegemony in Africa: An Assessment of the Sacrifice of Indigenous Culture on the Altar of Expediency

**Gabriel T. Abumbe, Ph.D**

Department of Political Science, University of Calabar, Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

**Email:** gabrielabumbe@yahoo.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3222-4159>

### **Abstract**

*After decades of political independence in numerous African nations, the assertion that Africa should rely on externally imported economic development models for its progress raises considerable concerns. Specifically, in the case of most countries in West Africa, these imported economic models have seemingly led to widespread misery and poverty among their citizens. The adoption of such models appears to have favoured the West, disproportionately benefiting developed countries in terms of driving economic growth across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This debate has gained prominence in Nigeria, evident in the evolving consumption patterns, lifestyles, and cultural shifts observed over time in the lives of its people. Notably, this has posed challenges for the poorest countries, hindering their ability to preserve their cultural identities, which have been overshadowed by Western cultural influences. While it is arguable whether Western values are inherently superior to non-Western values, it is indisputable that Western nations have demonstrated creativity, disciplined political leadership, and strong democratic institutions that have significantly contributed to their development. Thus, the assertion is made that no culture is inherently superior to another in terms of development. The paramount factor lies in a nation's capacity to adapt its culture to stimulate development and address immediate and future needs. It is crucial to acknowledge that developing countries, such as Nigeria, have indeed made contributions to global development. The rich natural resources of Nigeria have not only contributed but have also sustained and will continue to sustain development in industrialized countries.*

**Keywords:** African; Colonialism; the West; globalization; Culture.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper aims to explore the argument that contemporary development in Africa is predominantly shaped by foreign cultures, particularly Western influences. It will delve into the ways Africa has seemingly compromised its own cultural heritage in pursuit of expediency. Additionally, the paper will critically examine the assumption regarding whether the foreign-inspired and engineered development agenda in Africa is firmly grounded in the diverse and rich African culture and traditions.

The discussion will extend to a reflection on the social impacts of cultural globalisation, investigating how it has both prompted a demand for and resistance to rapid changes in the traditional cultures and lifestyles of many African countries. Furthermore, the paper will emphasise the concept of globalisation and its increasing influence on the interplay between culture, people, technology, communication, environment, and economic activities within any given society. In the final section, the paper will draw conclusions regarding the implications of integrating Western culture into African culture, potentially leading to a more Westernised and capitalist society.

## **WHAT IS CULTURE?**

Culture is originally perceived as the total sum of the lives of people in a society (Liao, et al., 2005). However, culture can be termed the whole sum of customs and traditions expressed through social norms, values, and beliefs. It is generally transferred from generation to generation through symbolic representation and communication and involves the fabrication and interpretation of symbols, often through audio-visual media like words, pictures, discussion, and writings. In a way, culture can be said to have three levels: tangible, values, and assumptions—tangible—aspects that can be seen, touched, and felt; values—beliefs, taboos, ethics, and rules; and assumptions—perceptions of reality, which may be true or false (Campbell & Göriz, 2014).

In accordance with the term adopted by the World Commission on Culture and Development, culture is defined in a broad manner, including various aspects of the way of life in a given society, e.g., ethics, pluralism, human rights, gender roles, the status of minority groups, and religious and language issues (Deveaux, 2000). Perhaps global culture cannot substitute for the feeling, identity, and sense of direction that come from national and local/regional cultures, as only these provide continuity from society to society. One underlying example of this is that when exposed to global culture, society displays the ability to respond differently to a wider variety of clothing, architectural styles, songs, or even television series in a way congenial to their indigenous cultural traditions (Parenti, 2011).

Given the negative tendency of this historical reality, there is therefore an urgent need for cultural realignment in developing countries. Indigenous religious crafts, art industries, clothes, music, dances, and diets are not inferior, as they are made to be seen. This can be done by evolving a national ideology that generates national consciousness and enhances national cohesion and integration (Thomas, 2004). It is also important to underscore the fact that the cultural dimension of any society should be holistic because it can contribute to the development process if well nurtured within the total sum of culture. A good example is the much-celebrated Chinese success based on the adoption of communist ideology, which was more appealing to the peasant, galvanising the citizenry into collective action against the proliberal nationalists, and the eventual establishment of a communist state obsessed by European concepts and opened to gradual reforms and adaptation to the dynamics of the international system. The outcome is the amazing transformation of her economy (Chulu, 2015).

It can also be debated that, through the interaction of various cultural norms and traditions, Africans continued to borrow and diffuse their own cultures in a westernised style. What we see in the context of African society, which is unfortunate, is the dominance of western culture over African culture. I am simply saying, for lack of a better term, that the western capitalists are unfair and evil to us Africans. If we are to look at western culture, nothing of African culture has been imported into their culture because ours is often considered redundant and backward in nature. In reality, the globalisation process has raised controversy because it has given impetus to the spread of global culture. In view of global trends in western culture, western values and traditions are gradually being transported across the globe as the standard and acceptable way of behaving, while Africa remains on the backseat of cultural transformation.

No wonder the once respected and rich African culture has been abandoned, if not totally collapsed, over the years (Chulu, 2015), and we have nothing to show for our own cultural identity. This paper, therefore, argues that Africans were brainwashed, critically thinking that following our cultural straits is backward because we live in one global village. The western colonists used the education system to try and exert their influence on western civilization on Africans (Standage et al., 2005). The reality of globalisation for Africans is that there is so much controversy regarding the rise of a global culture in which Western life is being adopted as the normal way of life. However, the impact of globalisation on individuals, nations, and the global world is that westernisation is

considered supremacy, though many scholars have expressed divergent and dissenting views. Though it is generally agreed that globalisation has a political, economic, cultural, and even religious impact on individuals, nations, and the world at large, many specialists disagree on the nature and extent of this impact. While some people agree that it is all positive, some people are of the view that it has nothing but negative impacts on the cultural norms and traditions of any given society (Standage et al., 2005).

For example, the cultural impact of globalisation on Nigeria is so pronounced in the consumption patterns and demands for goods and services. Obviously, the nature and extent of the impact of globalisation have had both negative and positive effects on the quality of life of the majority of Nigerians today. However, it can be argued that the negative effects of globalisation outweigh the positivity much more than its positive effects. It cannot be ignored that African culture has been eroded by westernisation and is on its way to extinction. We should strategize as Africans to strive to regain our lost cultural identity in the midst of a rising global culture. The idea of globalisation is the interaction and integration of our culture into other cultures, which is not new to Africa or the world at large. We all know that Africa has often interacted with the rest of the world, but this interaction has failed us more violently in trying to cope with the west because of our historical moments of trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, post-colonialism, and the present age of current globalisation (Mitchell, 2005).

In the contemporary socio-cultural dimension, culture can be learned, followed by the fact that it can equally be unlearned. This is true to a certain extent: Africa has a lot to unlearn (those western values that are alien and destructive to African culture) from its contact with the west. However, this does not suggest that Africa has nothing good to learn from the West. Indeed, there are many.

## **NOTIONS OF HEGEMONY AND U.S. POWER**

The power of the United States in the seventies and eighties has been perceived differently by different perspectives. For instance, scholars like Robert Gilpin, who belongs to the realist tradition, have seen American hegemony on the decline. Some Marxist scholars like James Petras and world system scholars like Wallerstein have also attested to this prognosis of Gilpin. However, scholars like Stephen Gill, working within the Gramscian tradition, have visualised the ascent of American hegemony in the world capitalist economy despite momentary setbacks as witnessed during the 1970s and 1980s. Susan Strange, a liberal eclectic scholar, is of the view that, although the U.S. has relatively declined vis-à-vis Western Europe and Japan, it has sustained structural dominance over the international system.

In view of these varying assessments of American hegemony, the present chapter has been organised as follows: First, it would highlight the perspectives of Robert Gilpin, Robert Keohane, Immanuel Wallerstein, James Petras, etc. that underline the U.S. hegemonic decline thesis, followed by the perspectives of Susan Strange and Stephen Gill that provide a counterpoint to the notion of U.S. hegemonic decline.

### **Robert Gilpin and the American hegemonic decline thesis**

Robert Gilpin aligns with the realist tradition, reminiscent of scholars such as E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau, where inter-state relations are viewed as inherently conflictual (Sørensen, et al., 2022). This perspective perceives the international system as akin to the Hobbesian state of nature, where states consistently strive to ensure their survival in an anarchic world system, lacking a higher authority to enforce norms of inter-state behavior. According to realists, key characteristics of the international system include (1) the presence of sovereign nation-states with no higher authority; (2) the fundamentally competitive nature of relations between nation-states, with potential for

cooperation in pursuing national interests; and (3) the primary motivations of nation-states being the pursuit of power and material well-being (security) in such an anarchic system.

Within the economic variant of realism, mercantilism highlights the interventionist role of the state in the economy. This involves a national policy of self-sufficiency in crucial commodities and minerals to reduce dependence on other nations. If self-sufficiency is unattainable, the state should aim for guaranteed access to vital technologies and commodities for domestic industry, promoting state-sponsored economic development through international trade. Realism and mercantilism coincide in the understanding that strong national economies are essential to supporting military establishments required for safeguarding national sovereignty.

Gilpin, in his book “The Political Economy of International Relations” (2016), posits that “a hegemon is necessary to the existence of a liberal international economy.” He argues that historical experience indicates international economic cooperation is challenging without a dominant liberal power, and conflict becomes the norm. According to Gilpin, hegemonic powers utilise their economic and military capabilities to establish and maintain liberal regimes, regulating international trade and monetary affairs. In the post-World War II era, the United States, leveraging its predominant position in the world economy, established institutions like NATO and the Bretton Woods agreement, leading to the formation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, etc. This integration included Western Europe, Japan, and the non-communist third world into a liberal international economy, primarily facilitated by the United States. Many European nations and Japan heavily relied on the United States to rebuild their war-damaged economies during the 1940s and 1950s.

Large infusions of aid and exports of primary products and manufactured goods by the United States played a pivotal role in the recovery of West European economies. Simultaneously, the perception of a growing threat from the Soviet Union and the inability to defend themselves made these economies reliant on U.S. military protection. These factors collectively contributed to a U.S.-led liberal international economy, with the United States maintaining economic integration and political coordination by bearing a disproportionately large share of costs. This was achieved through massive economic assistance, averaging 1–3 percent of U.S. Gross National Product (GNP) annually during the 1950s.

From 1945 to 1970, the U.S. provided over \$134 billion in total, in the form of grants, for direct economic aid and defence support assistance to 130 nations (Matissek, 2018). The United States also assumed the risk of nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, with military expenditures averaging nearly 9 percent of U.S. GNP from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. During this period, European allies spent less than half as much of their GNP on military expenditures. Additionally, the U.S. promoted international economic integration by maintaining a relatively open economy and reducing restrictions on imports and exports compared to other members of the system. The U.S. was the largest market globally in the 1950s, with its GNP constituting about half of world GNP. Even in 1970, the U.S. accounted for over a third of world GNP, with its imports comprising nearly 16 percent of total world imports in 1950 and around 14 percent in 1970 (Matissek, 2018). By providing access to its market on favourable terms, the U.S. contributed to the steady growth of the world economy, especially in the West European and Japanese economies, which experienced high growth rates during the 1950s and 1960s.

Gilpin contends that the U.S. has been motivated by enlightened self-interest and security objectives to assume leadership responsibilities. The U.S. has been willing to bear short-term and additional costs to support the international economic and political system, believing it aligns with its long-term interests. However, by the 1970s, American economic dominance began to diminish due to structural transformations in the global economy. The breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in 1971, the loss of control over the energy market with OPEC raising oil prices in 1973, and

the emergence of new competitors like Japan and Southeast Asian nations with rapid growth rates marked this period of transition from a dominant to an interdependent economy (Matisek, 2018).

During the 1970s and 1980s, the American economy experienced a significant decline in its growth rate, plummeting from approximately 3% annually in the post-war years to an astonishing low of 0.8% in the 1970s. The period from 1953–1954 to 1979–1980 saw imports as a share of GNP more than double, escalating from 4.3% to 10.6%. Subsequently, between 1980 and 1984, there was a further increase in imports, rising from 11.4% to 15.3%. Throughout this era, the United States ran a trade deficit with almost all its trading partners. By 1985, the American trade deficit amounted to \$150 billion, with \$50 billion of that deficit attributed to Japan. The surplus trade balance of \$20 billion with Western Europe in 1980 also transitioned into a \$15 billion deficit by 1984. As trade deficits and unemployment surged, the U.S. utilised its hegemonic position to implement protectionist policies, resulting in inflationary forces and global economic instability. In this context, Gilpin characterises the U.S. as a “predatory hegemon,” exploiting its hegemonic status (Matisek, 2018).

Considering this scenario, Gilpin expresses pessimism regarding the potential for rational cooperation among major capitalist states and their ability to effectively manage the world economy. He believes that the tendency towards the breakdown or fragmentation of the system increases with the relative decline of the hegemon. Gilpin’s analysis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the relative economic decline of the United States, which has consequential implications for its overall hegemony in the political and military domains.

### **Robert Keohane and After Hegemony**

Robert Keohane, a pioneer of the transnationalism approach, presented his perspective in the 1984 book “After Hegemony.” In essence, Keohane contends that American hegemony has been in decline since the mid-1960s. He posits that the United States is unlikely to reclaim its hegemonic position in the foreseeable future, emphasising the necessity for non-hegemonic cooperation as the basis for interactions between states. This argument holds significance as it challenges the realist assertion that great hegemonic powers are indispensable for maintaining order in the international system.

Keohane acknowledges the difficulty of achieving non-hegemonic cooperation, recognising that independent states often prioritise their self-interest over working towards a common good. However, he maintains the belief that, despite persistent discord, world politics does not resemble a state of war. States possess complementary interests that can potentially foster beneficial forms of cooperation. The international regimes established in the post-World War II era, such as the oil regime, become particularly relevant during periods of hegemonic decline as they create a more conducive environment for cooperation than would otherwise exist. Keohane argues that the network of international regimes bequeathed to contemporary international political economy by American hegemony provides a valuable foundation for constructing post-hegemonic patterns of cooperation, which can be used by policymakers interested in achieving their objectives through multilateral action (Armijos, 2018).

### **Wallerstein and the crisis of the capitalist world economy**

Wallerstein’s world system approach endeavours to trace the trajectory of capitalist development as a ‘world system’ since the sixteenth century (Rojas, 2015). He contends that the crisis of feudalism in late mediaeval West Europe precipitated the emergence of capitalism, consolidating itself in Europe around 1650 and subsequently dominating the world. This world system comprises three levels—core, semi-periphery, and periphery—functioning as a stratified, interconnected global market. As international trade and colonialism influenced these levels, they specialised in distinct

economic activities, leading to disparities in exchange relations and an outflow of surplus from the periphery to the core (Rojas, 2015).

Despite the potential for states to shift within the spatial hierarchy based on economic activity, the fundamental structure of extreme inequality endures. This structure is maintained through formal means, such as military power, or informal means, including the indirect application of market power. Wallerstein emphasizes the role of class alliances between the transnational bourgeoisie of core states and comprador elements within the elite of peripheral and semi-peripheral states in sustaining the core's economic dominance. Additionally, Wallerstein's analysis extends to examining major developments in the world system since 1945 and forecasting the short-term and middle-term future of the world capitalist economy up to 2050. He explores the linkage between economic cycles, particularly Kondratieff cycles, and hegemonic positions. The Kondratieff cycle involves phases of economic growth and expansion (Phase A) characterized by monopolies and high profits, followed by economic stagnation (Phase B) marked by increased competition, unemployment, and a search for innovations (Rojas, 2015).

Wallerstein argues that U.S. hegemony aligned with the A-phase of the Kondratieff cycle from 1945 to 1967, a period of remarkable growth and productivity (Martins, 2019). However, since 1967/73, the world economy has entered the B-phase, characterized by economic stagnation, and U.S. hegemony has declined. The erosion of American competitiveness and the rise of Western allies and Japan have weakened American political and economic leadership, leading to the loss of hegemonic status in the 1970s. Wallerstein suggests that a resurgence of U.S. hegemony is unlikely in the near future.

### **U.S. Hegemony under Siege**

James Petras aligns with the tradition that subscribes to the class analysis approach, emphasising the importance of 'class analysis from a world-historic perspective' for addressing contemporary global issues (Rojas, 2015). Petras contends that the key units of analysis in this approach are the state, including the imperial state, and class relations. He emphasises the role of class formation and its impact on capital accumulation and regional and world markets, stating that both classes and the world market shape the dynamics of capital accumulation. In their recent work, "U.S. Hegemony under Siege: Class, Politics, and Development in Latin America," Petras and Morley (1990) contextualises the decline of U.S. hegemony within a comprehensive analysis of political and economic shifts in the U.S., emphasising the centrality of violence resulting from these changes. Petras identifies structural shifts in the economic and political spheres as fundamental to understanding the decline of U.S. hegemony. The transition from productive capital to financial capital, marked by a focus on speculative financial activities, led to a decline in U.S. productivity compared to Western Europe and Japan. The U.S. share of world trade and its manufacturing sector also experienced declines between 1960 and 1980.

Politically, Petras and Morley (1990) highlights the emergence of politicians inclined towards military adventurism and the influence of ideologues and political figures on Latin American affairs. He describes a shift towards a militarised foreign policy, characterised by interventions, coups, and wars in the Third World during the late 1970s and 1980s. This militarization, rather than reversing the hegemonic decline, exacerbates it. Petras and Morley (1990) explores the internal imbalance within the U.S. imperial state, where military and ideological components took precedence over economic components during efforts to suppress revolutionary upheavals in the Third World. This imbalance contributed to the crisis of hegemony. He argues that the economic agency of the state, tied to productive capital, is crucial for a global hegemonic power's rise and decline.

The U.S. attempted to restore its power through the strategy of detente in the 1970s. However, this approach failed, leading to further disequilibrium between ideological and military components and economic components. Petras and & Morley (1990) underscores the importance of the interaction between productive capital and the economic agencies of the state in shaping global hegemonic powers. According to Petras and & Morley (1990), the rise and decline of U.S. global hegemony between 1950 and the 1980s can be attributed to the shifting dynamics between the military-ideological and economic components of the imperial state.

## **BACKGROUND OF INFLUENCE OF WESTERN CULTURE ON DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA**

Africa has remained underdeveloped despite being endowed with natural resources. Perhaps this is the reason why Nigeria is one of the poorest in terms of economic development. We often follow the blue-print development models of the West, thinking there is a solution to the economic ills the country has faced over many years. This is a difficult issue that begs a very honest answer, exactly from the policymakers. Many scholars have expressed different thoughts as to why this is so. The challenges of Africa's underdevelopment are a matter of concern among many of its inhabitants (Nwonwu, 2016). Some theorists argue that Nigeria has several times copied development theories from the west at the expense of its traditions and cultural identity. On the contrary, other theorists do argue that our underdevelopment is a result of the exploitation of natural resources by the West. However, there are divergent views on the notion of the dimension of development (Nwonwu, 2016).

According to critics of neo-colonialism, they argued that western culture expresses itself in the form of capitalism or globalisation, which advocates for the liberalisation and market economy of forces of demand and supply. Global capitalism thrives on cultural imperialism over time. This is a system of making the culture and taste of the indigenous people look inferior to those of the imperialists. In developing countries, colonial administrators, Christian missionaries, and anthropologists were the main instruments of changing the ways of the indigenous people and enthronement of Western culture, which in essence was to create the desire for food, clothing, education, religion, and other aspects of western culture (Frankfurter, 2003). The creation of this desire transformed into the demand for western products, which empirically is the backbone for the expansion of markets for the finished products of these countries and indeed the basis for the lopsided trade relationship between the west and the developing world and the fabrication of dependency syndrome (Frankfurter, 2003).

The fallout of this is the internationalisation of western culture, as Africans and other indigenous values were trampled upon as irrelevant, unprogressive, backward primitive, conservation, traditional, and unscientific, compared to the assumed modern, civilised, dynamic, and scientific values of the Europeans and their allies. This was concretized by western education, which further indoctrinates Nigeria and other developing nations to the point of unquestionable preference for western culture, as evidenced by the adoption of Jewish and European names, religions, languages, and the craze for western music, dances, dresses, housing, household appliances, and diet. The situation is more pathetic in this era of globalisation when information and communication technology have eliminated national boundaries, which would have reduced the domination of local values by predatory western values through the internet, satellite television, and radio (Price, 2002).

The argument so far shows that the West has often underplayed the impact of the slave trade on Africa's development. But it is a known fact that during slavery, millions of able-bodied Africans were forcefully taken to Europe and America, thereby denying Africa the needed manpower for development (Jalata, 2013). Also, modernization theory de-emphasises the impact of colonialism on development and how different types of colonialism affected different countries of the world differently (Chulu, 2015). It is on record that Africa, where extractive colonialism took place,

witnessed more exploitation than colonies in South America and Asia. In fact, from all indications, colonialism and neo-colonialism penetrated and disarticulated the Nigerian economy and structured it in such a way that we now perpetually remain dependent and underdeveloped.

### **CONCEPT OF GLOBALIZATION**

Woods (2016) defines globalisation as the increasing global interconnectedness of culture, people, and economic activities. It is characterised by a heightened transnational circulation of ideas, languages, and popular culture. Globalisation is acknowledged to contribute to economic growth in both Western and developing countries by fostering increased specialisation and leveraging the principle of comparative advantage. However, critics like Bell & Harrison (1996). argue that while globalisation may lead to economic benefits, it has simultaneously reduced inter-cultural contact and elevated the potential for both international and intra-national conflicts. Living in a global village, globalisation is not merely a policy option but an undeniable reality that society must grapple with in its development discourse. Recognised as a double-edged sword, globalisation brings about positive as well as negative changes in social welfare and development.

Economic globalisation, specifically its impact on culture through market penetration, has historical roots in the global exchange of ideas, travel, and trade. The quality of life in Nigeria, as in many other places, is significantly influenced by cross-cultural interactions. Cultural globalisation entails the extension of cultural traits within and beyond the social units of a nation and the global community at large. Dreher et al., (2008) characterises globalisation as a social process in which geographical constraints on social and cultural arrangements diminish, leading people to become increasingly aware of this transformation.

Western scholars, particularly Waters (1995), engage in an ideological discussion of globalization. Proponents argue that it is a force, akin to an invisible wind, operating beyond human control with the potential to transform the world into a unified global village. Conversely, opponents contend that globalisation is an endeavour by the West to propagate its influence, specifically Western culture, in developing countries (Waters 1995). Waters encapsulates these perspectives in his comprehensive analysis:

Globalization is the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet via settlement, colonization and cultural mimesis. It is also bound up intrinsically with the pattern of capitalist development as it has ramified through political and cultural arenas (p. 3).

Critics of globalisation, including Tondon (1998), assert that portraying globalisation as an inherent and self-propelling force for societal development is a fallacious notion. According to this perspective, weaker cultures have struggled to withstand the impact of globalization. Developing nations, therefore, need to remain vigilant against the potential undisclosed agendas associated with globalization propagated by the West.

In examining globalisation, it becomes evident that the term holds diverse meanings for different individuals, contributing to its varied interpretations in academic literature. It encompasses not only the economic integration of nations but also extends to include aspects of culture, technology, and governance. Consequently, globalisation is a conceptual framework used to characterise and scrutinise the extensive systemic changes that have unfolded in the global economy in recent times (Hudis, 2011).

### **IMPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Globalisation has been a prominent subject in international discourse for approximately three decades. The process of globalisation has gained momentum in recent times due to the increasing influence of culture, people, and economic activities, resulting in the world being perceived as a



single global village. Although fundamentally an ideology of economic liberalisation, globalisation significantly impacts economic systems as well as the political, social, and cultural systems of Nigeria (Ogunwa, 2012). There are indications that as globalisation spreads, it detrimentally affects the social and cultural norms and values that define diverse communities. It can be argued that the dynamics of globalisation forces tend to promote the homogenization and standardisation of social and cultural diversities expressed in various identities, values, and traditions.

Notably, globalisation encounters stronger resistance in the social and cultural spheres than in other domains. Opponents of globalisation argue that the persistence of cultural specificity raises doubt about the relevance and viability of transferring models of development from one part of the world to another unless these models are altered to respond to local economic prescriptions and the specifics of developing countries (Sida 1997, p. 104). Lessons drawn from the failed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) Institutions in the early 1980s to restructure the economies of developing nations highlight the impracticality of assuming scientific answers across the board for developing countries (Mkhize, 2002).

What proves effective in Nigeria may not necessarily work in other countries with different economic challenges. For instance, the privatization process advocated by the World Bank (WB) has left Nigeria worse off, as many companies were sold off cheaply without yielding positive benefits. One-size-fits-all development models may not be applicable in many developing countries, as development must occur at a pace within the context of country specificity. The late Julius Nyerere, former President of the Republic of Tanzania in the 1980s, rejected policy recipes provided by the World Bank (WB) and IMF for his country, emphasising the importance of policy choices based on country-specific circumstances (Booth, et al., 2014).

Cultural influences are undoubtedly spreading with globalisation in many developing countries. There is a prevalent perception that a global culture of Western consumerism and light entertainment, symbolised by entities like Coca-Cola, Shoprite, Pick & Pay, Multi-choice, and Game Stores in Nigeria, is achieving a hegemonic position at the expense of traditional and genuine national cultures. For instance, many Nigerians prefer imported items to locally made ones due to conditioning that deems the former a better alternative (Alden, et al., 2006). However, cultural globalisation also encompasses the dissemination of ethical, legal, and political values with universal recognition, such as democracy, human rights, moral values, social justice, economic rights, gender equality, environmental protection, medical and technical progress, etc.

In this context, evidence supports the viewpoint that transnationally controlled entertainment through entities like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), particularly in news reportage and documentaries, beamed around the world via electronic media, plays a vital role in defining people's tastes and consumption patterns.

## **GLOBALIZATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION**

From a technological perspective, one can argue that the technological revolution has played a role in facilitating globalisation, albeit with serious ripple effects on the broader global economy (Petricevic & Teece, 2019). This suggests that Nigeria has directly experienced the impacts of globalisation through the diffusion of new technologies, such as improved mobile telephone and internet communication networks, facilitated by the three major mobile telecommunication companies: MTN and AIRTEL. These technologies have significantly transformed the living and working conditions of people in Nigeria, even in the remotest parts of the country (Petricevic & Teece, 2019).

However, the weakening of African culture is still notable due to the influence of global media, including not only satellite television but also newspapers, magazines, books, films, and social media platforms like the Internet. Consequently, the more developing countries import

Western technology and culture, the more they face challenges in their development (. In contemporary Nigeria, technological development is prominently reflected in various aspects of modern life, including Cable News Network (CNN) and other Western models influencing preferences for fast cars, skyscrapers, mobile telephones, punk hairstyles, extravagantly luxurious houses with imported furnishings, and international designer wear encompassing clothing, shoes, handbags, wristwatches, and perfumes (Prah 2011, p. 156).

This growing pattern, as observed by Waters (1995), is becoming increasingly apparent:

English is becoming the *lingua franca* of the world communications system. This has proved a particular problem for the small nations of Europe but the failure of Euro news, a multilingual satellite news channel, to dent the market shares of CNN and Sky News that broadcast exclusively in English, indicates that English may well become the common public language of the globalized system and that vernaculars may be restricted to localized and domestic contexts (p. 149).

### **Economic globalization**

Numerous scholars, including Bhagavan (1987), contend that the economic integration of countries has instigated profound changes in the structures and patterns of production, income, and consumption. A notable aspect of globalisation is the accelerated growth of global trade in comparison to global production, with both being surpassed by the surge in foreign direct investment. On the contrary, skeptics, as exemplified by [Author], suggest that economic integration has negatively impacted Nigeria by diminishing its inflows of financial and industrial capital markets within the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The unimpeded flow of financial and industrial capital, coupled with the rapid global transfer of information and knowledge facilitated by contemporary technology, has significantly hampered Nigeria's capacity to enforce economic policies beyond its borders. The logic of global markets exercises considerable influence over extensive changes in labour markets, technology choices, political and social organisation, and educational systems. Given its inherent nature, a country, by itself, cannot effectively address and influence solutions to the challenges brought about by economic globalisation (Nayyar, 2010).

### **PATTERN OF COLONIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Masaka (2016) contends that an excessive reliance on the Western education system during colonialism led to the development of a distorted value system. The prestige associated with colonial-initiated education gained societal approval by promoting the use of the English language. Proficiency in English was inaccurately equated with intelligence, and the ability to communicate in the colonial master's language was misconstrued as a sign of being educated. These efforts aimed to influence African minds by introducing Western civilization. For instance, government accountability to citizens held little significance compared to maintaining international recognition and goodwill by adhering to the colonial status quo. Formal education became a means to gain prestige, transforming the competition for places in higher education into a competition for social status. Local languages were marginalised and displaced in this process (Masaka, 2016).

Colonialism further diminished the role of African languages in African economies by assigning the highest prestige value to education in colonial languages. Qualifications in colonial languages took precedence over those in African languages. As a result, educational qualifications obtained in an African language held less value than those acquired in the colonial language. Human development was deemed valuable only when expressed in the language of the colonial power, and abilities were considered valuable to "national development efforts" only when acquired in the colonial master's languages. This influence extended beyond education, affecting not only our dietary preferences but also our clothing styles. Today in Africa, particularly among young adults,

there is a trend of women dressing provocatively and men adopting unconventional hairstyles, earrings, nose rings, and torn clothes or rags, all in the name of fashion (Kwame 2007, p. 18).

In general, globalisation has contributed to the decline of African traditionalism, emphasising the urgent need to counteract the rapid erosion of values and practices influenced by the West. The African culture, as argued earlier, is rapidly approaching extinction due to its interactions and integration with the West during colonialism, the slave trade, and missionary activities that served as agents of Western civilization. The proliferation and sustainability of Western culture in Africa were facilitated through the dissemination of religious ideologies by missionaries (Gladwin 2017). While acknowledging the precarious contamination of African traditional values by Western civilization, it can be argued that Africa might have preserved its indigenous political systems and governance processes had it established them before accepting the rapid pace of civilization introduced by missionaries in the name of religious ideologies (Kwame 2007, p. 19). Missionaries played a significant role during the colonial era, utilising colonialism as a means of imposing cultural imperialism in Africa within the framework of Christian movements. This period saw numerous missionaries arriving in Africa, representing a clear imposition of foreign rule over the indigenous traditional political landscape and the dominance of African people across social, political, cultural, economic, and religious dimensions (Falola, 2003).

It is crucial to emphasise that the historical context of Westernisation in Africa can be traced back to contact with Europe through the Atlantic slave trade, missionary activities, and imperialism. The forced acculturation of black populations in the New World, particularly evident by the mid-eighteenth century, marked the initial sustained assimilation of Western culture by Africans (July 2004). Notably, the contribution of Diaspora blacks to the process of Westernisation in Africa was manifested through their roles in Christian evangelization and education carried out by missionaries. Western civilization, characterised by commitments to neoliberalism, liberal democracy, consumerism, and a Christian worldview, exerted political, economic, and social effects during colonialism.

Pennycook (2017) asserts that Western languages are merely instruments or tools of communication, making the alteration of native languages challenging for indigenous people to navigate effectively in foreign languages. The colonial system, as discussed above, was established primarily for exploitation, domination, and subordination, challenging claims that the colonisers brought a beneficial education system to Africa, as the capitalist system they propagated thrived on exploitation regardless of justifications. One of the cultural transformations introduced to Africa was the adoption of colonial languages for administrative and judicial purposes in most African nations. In some emerging republics, the ruling elites even favoured French, Portuguese, or English in their social and political interactions, choosing to raise their children without knowledge of traditional vernacular languages (Wright, 2016). Education, particularly higher education, predominantly followed the European model, utilising European textbooks and teachers. A cultural influence more pervasive than language and education was colonial religion, with Christianity spreading beyond colonial cities to impact the lives of rural peoples who still adhered to their own languages and customs. Even after white political commissioners withdrew from Africa, many white missionaries remained, supported by a growing number of black Christians (Wright, 2016).

It is evident that colonialism imposed an education system that distorted African traditions and cultures. Consequently, prevalent standards exhibit inferiority in tastes, ideas, and the consumption of education and curricular policies in many developing nations. The colonial education policy marginalised African history, promoting European history as the authentic one (Dei, 2023). The imposition of English and French as communication mediums by colonialists had a profound impact on African countries. Thinking in one's native language before communicating in English or French can affect thought processes, given the diversity of native languages, hindering mastery of

the two foreign languages (Alidou, 2003). It is important to recognise the influence of the foreign education system on our way of life, but as Africans, there is an opportunity to develop our own education system. Contrary to the belief that only the English language can provide better education, alternatives should be explored.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is this line of thought that if Africans conceive of development as largely influenced by foreign culture, especially western culture, then our mind set will see the west as being superior and the developing world as inferior. And as long as developing world theorists and scholars, as well as policymakers, continue to accept the western theory of development and anchor their quest for development on it, they in effect acknowledge their inferiority and the superiority of the West. Thus, their drive for development becomes a manifestation of their belief in their own inferiority and a reinforcement of that belief. This would translate to looking up to the west since they occupy the superior and enviable good state of being. So often, Africans have a tendency to be dependent on the west for their development, and this is the reason why there is increasingly western exploitation and domination of African culture.

Today's development in Africa is largely influenced by foreign culture, especially western culture, as there is a spread of the western consumerist lifestyle and patterns of elite citizens. This shows the pattern of how the Nigerians have also sacrificed their own culture on the altar of expediency; this is true as our culture has failed to resist temptations from western culture. There is, of course, a weakening of Nigerian culture through the influence of global media, not just satellite television but also newspapers, magazines, books, films, and social media such as the Internet. Therefore, the assertions that the foreign-inspired and engineered development agenda of Africa is not solidly based on the rich African culture and traditions are genuine, as we have now achieved a hegemonic position at the expense of our traditions and cultures.

Most of people in developing countries especially the affluent have been exposed to western culture and this is displayed in their taste and consumption patterns such as huge desire for fast cars, sky-scrapers, mobile telephones, punk hair styles, extravagantly luxurious houses with imported furnishings, international designers wears from clothing to shoes to hand-bags, wrist-watches and perfumes etc. This is at the expediency of the quality of life which has been cross-cultural influenced by the western countries and most people would agree with me that, on the whole, it has either made the Africans worse off or better off than before civilization to which all cultures are striving to attain. In Africa we are facing a dilemma on how to reconcile the traditional cultural and life-styles due the wide spread of forces of cultural globalization.

As a result of this, many Africans do not appreciate their own cultures and traditions as a heritage for development agendas unless they're Eurocentric in nature. In the final analysis, the Africans should not copy the western culture in terms of consumerism lifestyles and patterns but should promote their own rich traditions and cultures as a means of developing the continent. Therefore, no culture is superior to another culture, development-wise. What matters most is the ability of any nation to transform their culture to trigger off development in order to attain their immediate and future development goals. Perhaps Africa ought to redeem itself or undergo the process of self-cleansing by reclaiming its lost cultural identity. It is now time for Africa to reposition itself on the path of recovery of African ideologies against our own cultural practices. It can also be debated that Africa has lost it in terms of culture and must consider re-orienting the development agenda on the basis of our rich and diverse culture as we continue to take a leaf from the capitalist western countries.

Equally, the developing countries such as Nigeria have opted to copy Western cultural values through interaction with the Western educational system and media. Most of the Nigerians have

forgotten that every cultural system is naturally ethno-centric. It has been disastrous to integrate the Western cultural values into the African traditions and beliefs as there is a danger of massive erosion of African cultures and values because of the forces of globalization. Ever since our experience with colonialism, African countries have been unable to articulate their own history, culture and identity. Lest we miss the point, our attitude today as Africans is to a certain extent heavily influenced by the perception of the post colonial education system.

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