

# Globalization and its Implication On African Culture And Development: Challenges For Education

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## Abstract

*Globalization has continued to engender enormous debate, controversy, protest and demonstrations that are sometimes violent. The reactions against globalization and its implication to human development have been pronounced in the relationship between the developed rich Western world, which are the owners of the new technologies and the poor developing countries. Major critics of globalization from Africa have argued that globalization is destructive to African culture and development. However, since sociology deals with exploration and examination of how people relates in the society and how issues that affect human integration in society is enhanced with the formation of the individual as a self and as a member of a larger society, this paper examines to what extent is the phenomenon “globalization” eating deep into African culture or threatening her development and sovereignty. The origin, nature and dynamics of the process of globalization and its continuous implication on African culture and development were discussed. Education taken as an instrument for change, development and power was identified as the only thing that can save Africa and perhaps enable her defend her interest, preserve her values and make her relevant in the new modernity.*

## Introduction

This paper is a continuation of the Volume 15, Number 1, of 2003 edition of Zimbabwe Journal of Education published by Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe. The title of the article was; “*Globalization: A menace to African Values and Education*” it appeared on Pages 52-61. In the article the following conclusion was drawn;

... Africans should be committed to building a society that is united, conscious of its culture and institutions. That is why there is the need for an overhaul of African educational system to make it relevant in the global world and have all the necessary ingredients for making every African worthy citizens...

Oni, 2003: 52.

The above were the convictions of the writer at that time when the pervasive hands of globalization could be seen in nearly everything African. The last 3 years has given more opportunities to read more academic submissions and scholarly criticism of the concept. On the other hand, the writer has benefited and equipped with a lot of information on the phenomenon through readings and discussions with scholars (both protagonists and antagonists of globalization) around the world.

As we also know that Sociology deals with exploration or examination of how people relate in the society and how order and disorder are maintained and how issues that

affect human integration in society are enhanced with the formation of the individual as a self and as a member of a larger society. It is necessary to note that most people interact regularly with a relatively small handful of other individuals. Yet each person's daily existence is likely to be affected by many other unseen, unknown people throughout the world. The foregoing should illustrate to us that no one is isolated from the rest of the world. On the contrary everyone is part of the world –system linked to other countries through the economic and political relationships forged between countries. And as we know that change is inevitable in every society, though Ritzer (2001) perceived change as an orderly process. Talcot Parson cited in Ritzer (2000) explained how change affects the social system and its relationship with culture and education. Change when it occurs therefore, could result in cohesion, consensus and order. In other words, social systems such as education, politics, family, religion, culture and so on perform a variety of positive functions for each other and this, according to Alexandra and Jonathan (2000) is referred to as functionalism.

Generally, sociology is to examine people's social behavior. Its main idea relating to our subject (Globalization) is that the behaviors are formed by interactions among individuals. In another word, a person's thoughts or acts are effected by his groups. These interactions may go beyond time and space boundaries. The people who live in different time or place are interacting with one another via technology and educational systems. Cultural components spread out distant places and time. The cultural components are transferred by technology to new generations or distant place. A new component may be seen in more than one society at the same time. Similar social facts may be seen in different social groups that are no direct relationships established. The transformation of social values to new generation is also one of them. Different societies have found same set of solutions to organize their needs and to rule their order. Main institutions (such as education, religion, and family) that are created through time can be seen everywhere. Historical observations lead us to the findings that interactions among people have common results. Shortly, continuity of society has been obtained with this interaction, and Globalization is one of the tools of society.

The foregoing are some of the means to show that sociology as a discipline tries to explain social change and its effect on social institutions. Globalization as a concept is better explained as a phenomenon of change (Social change) that cut across every sphere of the society. The phenomenon of globalization is generally an interaction among integration of the activities of human societies propelling change across the world, which have made the world become smaller (Ajayi, 2003; Fedelix, 2001; Finjap, 2001; Seteolu, 2001). It is perhaps the most important trend shaping the current environment for economic development. It is a process that involves more than economic discourse because it embraces other dimensions of human life, which also include governance, social development and culture across national borders. For instance, as a cultural integration process thoughts as well as forms of arts expression become part of globalization process; and, they are manifested in various dimensions, which include music, movies, dressing, and food among others. In other words, the phenomenon of globalization is indeed a process that has the potential to influence social institutions such as education, economy, family, social life and cultural values in a significant way.

### **Culture and Development**

The concept of culture consists of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create. It refers to the way of life of the individual member or groups within a society; how they dress, their religious ceremonies,

and leisure pursuits. Kanagy and Kraybill (1999) described culture as set of tangible and intangible elements – things like diet, tools, technology, language and values – that gives shape and meaning to everyday lives of a particularly group of people. Perhaps an analogy will help: if the structure of a society –its groups, organizations, networks of relationships, and patterns of interaction –are the hardware, the culture is the software that provides the operating instructions. So when sociologists conventionally use the term culture they are generally referring to a shared way of life among the members of a society.

Culture, according to Williams (1965), is also an agreement among a society's members about the appropriate behaviors, values, beliefs, history and heritage, rituals that should be respected and observed and so on. The members of a society share a way of life described by a set of blue prints that show "what must be done, ought to be done, should be done, may be done, and must be done." These blueprints are learned understandings of acceptable and expected patterns of behaviors, which is socially constructed and transmitted by socialization to new born members of a society and by acculturation to newly arrived immigrants. Similarly, Tylor in Adewale (2005) defined culture as the complex whole which includes knowledge, morals, belief, art, custom, law, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. In support of this, Good (1964) maintained that culture encompasses ethical, intellectual, artistic, governmental and industrial attainment of group, state or nation by which it can be distinguished from and compared with others.

The above definition shows how cultures are in a constant process of change as individuals and societies adapt to new circumstances. In view of this therefore, it means culture is for the continuity of the society; and as such, every society has a pattern of behaviour, which distinguishes them from others. One could therefore say that cultures evolve much as living beings do. We could therefore summarize it that a culture of a society is the identified totality of the way of life of that particular society and whenever this is compromised then the identity is lost.

## **Development**

Development has been conceived as multi- dimensional; referring to positive changes which affect the majority and which lie in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of societal life. Put differently, development entails social progress in both economic and non-economic components of societal life. Rodney, (1972) conceived development from three levels of individual, social group and state. At the individual level, he said, development implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Development at the social group level refers to the capacity of a social group to regulate both its internal and external relationships, while at the state level, development, he concludes, entails both quantitative and qualitative growth in economic, political and social aspects of human and material resources in a country. Rodney succeeded in giving us a comprehensive definition, which takes into cognizance the entirety of human activities.

Gurk (1975), Development implies not only a change in time but also change, which have direction; development therefore frequently implies advancement or improvement over some more primitive status. Gurk's definition informs that for any change to be developmental, it must be directional, meaning that it must proceed towards a certain end, which is an improvement upon an earlier stage. The foregoing means that any study of development process must be concerned with numerous dimensions, all of which are oriented towards making life better for all citizens of a social, and political community with the specific aim of preserving their identity through their culture. Going by the above

definitions, and since social change can be defined as any type of alterations in social relations of any society, can we then say that globalization is a development process borne out of diffusion as a process of social change? Our discussion later on the organs of globalization and subsequent arguments against globalization will answer this question.

### **Agents of Globalization**

To maintain Western hegemony, America and other nations have tried to flood the whole world with several different forum or agents of globalization. Odor (2002) sees the U.S as the chief architect and driving force of globalization. He pointed out about 12 organizations that are agents and driving forces that sell out the idea of globalization. These include:

- The western European Governments (WEG)
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- The world Bank (WB)
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- The World Trade Organization (WTO)
- The United Nations Organization and its Organs (UNOO)
- The World Business Community for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
- USA Foundations and Businessmen (USAFB)
- Capitalist Political Parties (CPP)
- USA Communication Industry and Agents (USACIA)
- Americans Dominated International Companies (Multinational) (ADIC)
- Non Governmental organization (NGO)

Besides these organizations, the news media BBC, CNN, VOA, Radio France International, information Media Organization, Film shows, Internet facilities and television are the accelerating agents of the integration of global culture. As a result of the driving forces of these agents, teenagers around the world watch videos; listen to the same music and put on the same clothes. At the same time, television audiences in virtually all countries watch the same major events, listen to the same financial forecasts, and see the same glimpses of ecological disasters, all these programmes on these medias disseminating mostly American/Europeans informations. Thus, the economic welfare of individuals is increasingly impacted by global views, while their local cultures and values are being supplanted as a result of the adoption and reference given to others.

Apart from the major agents identified above, there have been other prominent crusaders of globalization like the leaders of G-7. Ex president Clinton said globalization is a fact not a policy choice. Tony Blair said it is inevitable and irreversible. (Seabrook, 2004). From the analysis of the architects and crusaders of globalization, where African involvement are not well pronounced, one may therefore say that globalization appear to be a declaration of war upon all other cultures or what could be described as confrontation between global civilization and local cultures.

### **Arguments against Globalization**

Recalling that the World Trade Organization summit of seven (7) Nations and Russia held in Genoa (Italy) in July 2001 was paralyzed by protests, is a baseline indication that globalization is an unwelcome policy to the people. Many issues have been raised against it, according to Enemu (2002), there is the obvious unwillingness by the west and developed countries to transfer in-tech information and technology to the less privilege countries of the world. Countries of the European Union and the United States of America want to subsidize agriculture and education but at the same time through the IMF and the World Bank, demand are made on developing nations to withdrawal of subsidies from these sectors. The leaders of the seven nations and Russia have painted a picture of globalization as a means to poverty reduction and alleviation, but yet, would not point at one nation that it has weaned from poverty. One may argue from the devastating effect of globalization on emerging nations' ways of life that globalization is only ideal for those countries that have something to put into the world market. But given that the developing nations account for just 0.4% (which is less than 1% of World Trade input), Joining in the race at this time would be like someone who does not drink palm wine and join a palm wine drinkers club. (Otakpor, 2003).

There is also what Bagudo (2003) described as the education argument against globalization, which can be classified primarily as cognitive. The cognitive argument is based on the fact that the new delivery mechanisms for education are electronic and rely largely on the digitization and computerization of knowledge. Many decry the cognitive effect of learning from screen-based information, rather than traditional text-based material, pointing to the breakdown of linear, narrative structures associated with the book and the resulting fragmentation and superficiality induced by the hyper linked structures of the Web and Multimedia CD ROMS. In other words, the educational argument against global education centered on the undesirable aspects of consumerism; wherein learning ceases to be about analysis, discussion and examination and becomes a product to be bought and sold, to be packaged, advertised and marketed.

The social argument against globalization has to do with disorganization and breakdown of community. This phenomenon is part of a much larger, more complex Web of changes associated with postmodern society. Nevertheless, education, which has always been a net contributor to the positive benefit of physical communities, is now seen as undermining. Still further, the physical experience of community offering instead a much less substantial substitute in form of virtual communities. Some observer of this new phenomenon see great danger and significant social laws in the demise of physical community and its replacement by virtual communities, no matter how educational.

The cultural arguments against globalization are equally compelling, and harkens back, of course, to old concerns about imperialists attitudes, the loss of indigenous cultures and the relentless imposition of Western values. Globalization is seen therefore, as the new colonizers, insensitivity spreading their own views of the world into developing nations in the mistaken belief that they are actually helping people. The potential power of globalization to spread dominant ideologies and to crush emerging structures, whether wittingly or unwittingly, is the main cause of concern.

Globalization also has political argument, this is explained by Schotler (2000) as the "neo- liberal" approach. This uses the *laissez- faire*. According to the neo- liberals creed, official measures are used only to enable and never to constrain global market forces. This is because they believe that unbound global economy will in time generate prosperity,

democracy, community and peace for all. The second political opinion is “reformism” or global social democracy. The reformist agrees with the neo-liberals that market capitalism can be a major force for social good. But they agree with proactive that public policies must restrict global flaws. The third political response is the progressive radicalism. This group rejects the structural foundation of contemporary globalization. They seek to reconstruct the process. This group seeks to promote an alternative globalization based on different kinds of knowledge and identity politics. The fourth political approach is referred to as traditionalism. These regard trans- word connection as inherently violent. They hold the opinion that globalization intrinsically undermines cultural heritage, democracy, health, economic well-being and social cohesion. Therefore, they call for a total “de-globalization.”

From these different general approaches and arguments we could see the positive and negative benefit of globalization from different point of view of protagonists and antagonists; however our next discussion would now elaborately discuss the effects of globalization on African cultures and development.

### **Effects of Globalization on African Cultures and Developments.**

The concept of globalization, as it is generally being propagated in the West, namely, as “ (Invisible) forces operating beyond human control that are 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.” (Waters, 1995). Maduagwu (2003) admitted that:

Globalization is the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet via statement, 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.

He argues further that the goal of globalization (perhaps unlike that of colonialism, one may add) is not the world would become Westernized and capitalist. The effect is that Western culture has become the standard by which all other cultures must be measured, or as he puts it, “every set of social arrangements must establish its position in relation to the capitalist West.”

For the critics of globalization, it is mere deception to suggest that globalization is a self – propelling social dynamics. However Maduagwu (2003) described it as economic sphere being directed by the World Trade Organization (WTO), with its underlying goal of economic liberalization; in political and cultural spheres, through the powerful means of information technology, dominated by the West. The weak cultures may not be able to resist the forces of globalization but the third world countries should not be unaware of the “hidden agenda” of globalization. The apparent truth about globalization is that it is the latest under current principle of economic exploitation of the Third World by the technological advanced countries, particularly of the West. It is no wonder that third world scholars have concentrated their reaction to globalization to its economic dimension (South center, 1996). For the Third World, the conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations and the establishment of the WTO have risen to a new world order extending far beyond traditional international trade relations.

The situation in Africa today is so pathetic as a result of the gradual admittance of Western culture at the detriment of our own culture. Africa has consequently changed from

a land of culture, nature; of tradition and rural setting where the cockcrow signals the dawn of a new day, to a land of urban dwellers with all the evils associated with it. Not only this, the formal ways of life of the African origin has been altered in much diversity, take for example African traditional religion, with all it has to offer, is driven to the background. It is the Western religion that is now promoted. The worship and belief of our gods and goddesses has been washed away by the belief and worship of one God. The basis of our religion is the root of our behavior and hence our belief and trust has been replaced by what we have been told is better than what we have; we have stolen the trust and belief in ourselves.

On the social front, the problems are endemic. Crime is promoted daily as a result of globalization popular among this is the cyber crime all over the world, armed robbery is also accorded a professional status for young men and women. Fear rules the night of African man and despair rules the day. The man in public office turns corruption to his god. Pages of newspapers and magazines are filled with scandalous reports of one corrupt practice or other. Nigerian newspapers for example, reported daily occurrences of public office holders' involvement in bribery and corruption. Even those people that supposed to protect the law are indicted of one corruption or the other.

Societal restrictions on sex are no longer there. Married men and women compete with bachelors and spinsters on sex game. Even the younger one now go to the internet to choose their spouses without the usual affinity and affiliation of courtship Adultery to modern African is conquest. Fornication is "enjoyment." Hotels and brothels make fortunes for them. Besides this our education is no longer delivered in the traditional way but now in the cellular and secular style and form. Our indigenous and civic /moral education that promote obedience, brotherhood, love, respect for elders and constituted authorities is now thrown to the background in favors of the western education. The foreign culture embedded in Western education has dealt a serious blow to African culture and has even almost wiped off our culture. The situation has reached an alarming rate that most Africans do not see anything good in locally made goods except imported foreign goods. No matter the quality of the goods, unless Nigerians see the stamp of made in England, Japan China etc on it, they would not be satisfied.

Western education has produced a set of Africans with colonial mentality. Most educated Africans do not allow their children to speak their native language; instead, it is English all the time. Even when somebody comes from their village and speak the native language to the children, they would answer in English and tell you they understand it but they cannot speak it. The overall result is that Western education has actually Westernized Africans to the extent that they can no longer be regarded as people who have culture. Most Africans now see cultural way of life as uncivilized, primitive and ancient We could see from the foregoing that globalization has not only broken our religion, education, but also individual lives, families, relationships, situations and societies. The typical man no longer eat with his bare hands from the calabash-dish but with silver made spoons and golden plates and fingerlike looking stainless forks and knives. He does not sit on the floor with his traditional mat decorated with local decoration but relaxes on an easy armchair stirring a beautifully made flat table as dining furniture. The concerned Africans for the factors responsible for these undesirable trends.

From the above, we could see that the effect of globalization is more profound on our youths who are rapidly losing touch with their cultural values as portrayed by their alien culture and bizarre dressing, dancing, language and so on which invariably affect other aspects of social life. The on going discussion of cultures, religious, moral values and

development of the African society can therefore be traced to just two factors- Colonization and globalization via the advent and advancement of modern technology. From these two can found a number of sub-factors Colonization on one hand gave rise to bureaucratic arrangements, new political system, new religion, western education, new judicial system, etc. while the advent of modern technology gave rise to urbanization, changes in family roles and patterns, monetized economy, materialism, growth of the mass media, mobility, and turning the entire world into a small community etc, while the sub-factors could not be out rightly said to be evils in themselves, they nevertheless constitute the “carrier agents” of the evils that befall the African society. The bureaucratic arrangement that came with colonization was supposed to ease the administration of the African countries. However, evils like bribery and nepotism set in because of competition for scarce “goods”- employment, scholarships, and other forms of economic advantages.

Other aspects of the problem/effects of globalization are reflected in immodest, nudity, individualism, consumerism, and it has created a lazy and corrupt elite group in Africa. These problems are orchestrated by Africa’s dependency on alien and unreliable legal codes that hinder self- determination in adjudication and dispute resolution because it relegates the communitarian nature of African societies to the background. Globalization also explains the imposition of western style democracy that is unclear to many and too expensive for developing economies to run further orchestrating Africa’s dependency status. It is this dependency that has paved the way for the cultural imperialism permeating Africa under the guise of globalization. To ensure perpetual; dependency on the west, militaristic intimidation and economic sanctions have become the everyday weapons as indicated by the attempts to muzzle Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe some years ago.

### **Conclusion**

Globalization in the paper was established to have many dimensions and could be seen to have three main thrust; (i) Culture and civilization (ii) Global economy) (iii) Global political and military order. However, this paper has attempted to focus on the effects of globalization on African culture and development. There is no doubt that this paper argues that globalization is destructive to African cultures, and sends some warning signals to African people to be conscious of the onslaught of forces of globalization. To meet the challenges of globalization, what Africa needs to do is to intensify efforts in redeeming whatever is redeemable from its rich cultural heritage. One critical area we can suggest for intensification of these efforts is in the indigenization of African Education, which Oni (2003) described as Africanizing our education.

The revival of African cultures, which has been virtually overwhelmed by Euro-American culture through centuries of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, are most urgent before they will be completely wiped away by the new forces of globalization. The culture of the people is the total dignity and identity of man in his natural environment, that is, the characteristic activities and interests of the people, their attitudes and behaviours, their language, their manner of their birth and death, the food they eat, the dress they wear, their socio-political organizations, their interpersonal relationship including their respect for age and cultures their moral standards and child bearing and child rearing practices that is why Maritain (1943) described man as “ not merely an animal of nature... he is also an animal of culture” One could therefore deduce that meaningful education, development, civilization and identity has its roots in cultures of the people. However, we should be warned in the words of Awoniyi (1978) that;

A society cut off from its own roots may thrive for a while on its own momentum but eventually, it will wither like cut flowers in vase.

As earlier mentioned, a good starting point would be to Africanize African educational systems, which in the case of sub-Saharan African, had been too long neglected by the leaders and elites. Since it is education that causes this cultural slavery, education should also be used to address it pattern still affect the present day educational system in Africa, as a result, the educational system has been producing people who are struggling to acquire the Europeans ways of life; people who are struggling to be more westernized than the westerners.

From the submission above, we could as well reflect that Africans need to learn the educational wisdom of Asians particularly the Japanese, Indians and Chinese in order to diversify their understanding for interpreting Western education, science and philosophy of life. If we become exclusively African oriented, we may as well never develop or preserve our ancient cultures, which need to be improved with the fusion of other cultural, dynamic, educational and scientific models. Evidence has shown that single or ancient models, which do not change, tend to progressively become less competitive because they are archaic and unenlightened. In some cases, they may experience entropy perhaps; Africans need to get wisdom even from China since Western wisdom seems to be ineffective. This will enable us understand that no one is an island. No nation is an island and no continent is an island. We are all interrelated regardless of our differences and an interpretation concerning what is better for us and what is better for other people. Since all cultures are not static, and therefore are dynamic systems that change, no culture has a pure functional monopoly of itself.

Given the effects /implication of globalization on African culture and development, we could see education as the most important of all the social institutions, because education is so central to the future of the society and can enable us cope with problem of change that might occur as a result of globalization. Therefore, only education taken as an instrument for change, development and power can save Africa and perhaps enable us defends our interest and preserves our values. We can begin to appreciate subtle message and harm intended by globalization only when we empower our people through qualitative education. This will enable us confront the evils represented by globalization because to be globalize is to be removed from history; from your culture; from your identity and to be now left with what Ayandele (1974) described as “*Marginal Man*”, that is, those who have allowed other cultures and civilizations to becloud their senses of reasoning which make them to see their own culture as inferior. However, only education can be used to achieve this change.

It should be emphasized that only the education built on solid dynamics culture of the people can be used to achieve this so that we can at least attempt to stop acting as carbon – copies of Western/Europeans ideas, thoughts and actions. Furthermore, such education will attempt to prevent us from consciously rubber-stamping European/Western schemes and plans for domination and control.

In order to achieve these points discussed above the following recommendation for African education are made:

- Our education should be adapted to the needs of individuals and community; this is to enable them to be useful to themselves and the society at large;

- In order to promote our cultural heritage vernacular should be used as a median of instruction in our system of education; this will help the child to value its culture;
- Aims and objectives of our education should be clearly defined and geared towards the development of character and acquisition of family life;
- Rural community education in Africa must be based on general development of Africa, while clearly defined program of school and community should promote its development;
- Educational curriculum in Africa should be based on cultural values and norms of the society as specified in the initial discourse;
- Education curriculum should be ruralized to reflect local technology, skill, craft etc.
- Teaching and learning in African Schools should help students to develop positive self-concept, because people with this view feel good about themselves, about their culture and environment. They believe in their own, identity, culture, dignity and worth as individuals;
- There should also be provision of indigenous skills meant to transform the Africa economy generally from underdevelopment to developed one through our own indigenous scientific and technological capabilities;
- Africans should join hands to enforce values of the people, and discourage our young ones from copying everything Western blindly. Everyone should make himself an agent of cultural enforcement. Any anti-cultural behaviour should be condemned openly and people should be counseled on the need to adhere to one norm and keep the societal values;
- Our traditional education should be documented on radio, television and internet etc and this should be shown to the people from time to time. Programmes in our mass media should be 85% adapted to the local environments. All those Western films, which have no positive bearing in the life of the people.e.g. war film, kidnapping, hijacking of plane, prostitution or blue films should be banned not only in our mass media but also from being imported to the country. This is very necessary because evil communication corrupts good manner; and
- Traditional education should be integrated into the school curriculum at both the primary and secondary school levels African traditional values should be inculcated into the young ones and this should be monitored not only by the teachers but all elderly members of the society as it used to be the case in the past. The society should show strong disapproval to any misdemeanour on the part of both the young and old. Also, good behaviour should be encouraged through reinforcement.

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