# Impact Assessment of Globalization on the Development of Democratic Culture in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*This study espouses the impact of globalization on the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. Nations enter into agreement with others to avoid being alienated. These agreements are entered into, with a view to integrating itself with others into the world economy. It brings nations closer in all facets of human endeavour, and this philosophy of nations coming together is commonly called globalization. In the same way, persons deny themselves certain things because of friendship, so also do nations equally forgo essential national interest and obligations, because of their understanding of friendship, despite their sovereign status. Therefore, this work is an exposition of the impact of globalization on the development of democratic culture in Nigeria.*
*Keywords: Globalization, democratic culture, development.*

## INTRODUCTION

Evidently, nations like individuals detest alienation in all its ramifications; this is because efforts are made towards international co-operation between one state and another. This integration transcends over political, economical, social and cultural issues. Once these agreements, are asserted to by any country, the instruments become binding on the parties concerned. To meet such mandatory obligations from bilateral agreements, nations on their own tend to forgo certain national commitments, in spite of their nationhood. Observers are of the views that national integration helps governments of such nations to abuse the fundamental rights of citizens. The implication therefore is that, globalization has a significant impact on the emergent State. This study is therefore based on four themes conceptual explications, salient characteristics of globalization, variations of globalization and implications of globalization on the development of democracy in Nigeria. For purposes of explicitly, we shall start the exposition with the assertion by Giddens (1990) that globalization is "the intensification of world wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way local happening are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. "By this explication globalization is a social interaction devoid of physical presence by individuals through the use of technological innovations like radio, television, internet and satellite communications (Giddens, 1990). Therefore globalization is a transitional term given to increase interaction between nations for their political, social, cultural and economic empowerment on their own part. Roberts and Hite (1995) strongly holds that though international trade had existed, yet globalization refers to the integration where firms are

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independent, production is linked on global scale, there is dramatic increase in visible and invisible trade and national economics are linked. The restriction of globalization to economic transactions between States is however not acceptable. Rather, McMachael (2000) sees it as a qualitative shift in the mode of social organization that marks a historic transition in the capitalist world order. This millennium global movement of capitalism (globalization) deepens the inherent contradictions between the ever-expending capital on the one hand and its national historical, political and social formations on the other, whereby the present capitalist transformation of transnational relations of production is resisted by sovereign assertions of national political and cultural independence and identities. This premise definitely, alters the explication of globalization as posited by Sklair (1995) that it is a set of processes that increasingly make the parts of the world interdependently integrated. Put simply, globalization is the searching for uniformity of the nation's differences in the economic, social, cultural and political perspectives, by transnational co-operation and world financial institutions. However, to Fischer (2001) we shall never get there for all human societies also like to retain their peculiarity. Especially in view of the fact that globalization cannot completely ignore the forces of national resistance to trans-territorial accumulation by that capitalist powers. It is some imaginary. This study strongly recognizes the salient characteristics of this new capitalism and assesses its impact on the development of democratic culture in Nigeria.

**Salient Characteristics of Globalization**
One of the salient characteristics of globalization is that it is a complex phenomenon. It means that globalization is dynamic and touches many facets of human endeavour. These include economy, society, politics, industrialization, urbanization, social mobilization, differentiation, secularization, media and increased political partisanship. The media expansion or improved information technology has made globalization very universal. It means the ability to have changes happening in Nigeria to be taking place simultaneously in United States. This has led to homogeneity of globalization, which implies that through improved information technology, computer, radio, television system, wireless telephone, compact disc etc (Kielly and Marfleet, 1999). There is therefore a seemingly convergence to homogeneity of the globe. Globalization is also irreversible. This means that most changes being noticed among nations cannot be denied, since the changes are irreversible. Globalization is dynamic. The dynamism of globalization can be noticed by the technological innovations that help information to be stored, refined and transmitted in numerical text of graphics. As a result of this trend, globalization has many perspectives. These are manifested in social, economical, political, environmental, cultural and religious arena. The implication is that citizens of all nations in the world are affected in one way or another by this phenomenon.

**Perspectives of Globalization**
For purposes of proper explicity, this work aligns with the scholarly position of Fischer (2001) on the identified five perspectives of globalization. These are: Economic, socio-cultural, religious, environmental and political perspectives.

Environmental Perspective of Globalization is the co-operation of nationals towards good atmospheric condition global wise. It means that ecological issues cut across national boundaries. The hosting of this global integration will help in the destruction of rainforests, air pollution and nuclear disaster which would have led to international environmental hazards. Health problems like Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Ebola, cancer etc. for instance cannot be handled by one nation exclusively because of increase in travels. As posited by Fischer (2001), economic globalization is as old as history, a reflection of the human drive to seek new horizons". The implication is that history is enhanced by improvement in technology; lowering of barriers to trade and capital flows for mankind. Economic perspective of globalization implies trade liberalization which in the words of Fischer (2001) opens up economies for competition towards integration to the wider world economy by improving trade, productivity and income.

To the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2002), economic perspective of globalization implies having more "access to more capital flows, technology, cheaper imports and easier export markets". These means, increase in investment in the human capital (labour) and its mobility. In this direction, accessibility to health, education, economic opportunity and efficient social safety nets poverty. Reduction and growth facility are involved. Human capital investment refers to education (training) of citizens in line with new technological acquisition. This requires spread of knowledge and technology advancement to enhance production methods and management of new technological inventions. The opening up of world trade prevents nation-States governments from protecting business from original competitions. It does not allow States to determine their own internal rates without reference to those in other emergent States, prompted Held (1993) to state that "the world financial markets can underline the value of a combining currency, forcing its government to change policy to take account of the new circumstances". These multinationals are global and can shift their products elsewhere regardless of the wishes of the government of the "have" countries.

Sovereignty is where State or Nation claims autonomy; external influence can also affect a State's internal decisions. According to Haralombos and Holborn (2001), levy observed that "power relations increasingly act across nations and State lose some of their capacity to act independently and shape social life within their boundaries". As boundaries of new States cannot block information, they, become less able to control what happens in their respective States. Bonnet (1994) asserts that, through out the world, power is exercised across nation states, rather than within them. Many of the economic, political, military and ideological power that shapes our lives work across nations and through multinational co-operations (Yoshnobu, 1999). International financial institutions, transitional communication system and transnational organization like European Union (EU), African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Trade Organization (NATO), etc. (McBride and Wiseman, 2000). These global forces have more powers on nations than colonial masters. Haralambos and Holborn (2001) affirm that "nation governments without being stripped of power, do increasingly share it with other groups of nations". This is probably to enjoy creditability and increase the well being of their respective nations; but Giddens (1999)

has it that nations retain, and will for the foreseeable future, considerable governmental economic and cultural power over their citizen and in the external arena. As asserted by Ohmael (1992) that today people through improved information technology, "can see for them what the tastes and preferences are in other countries, the styles of clothing now in fashions the sports and lifestyles". Since people are free to see and buy such products no matter where made, globalization has indeed enhanced the socio-cultural aspect of our life. The above shows the inability of government to control information dissemination through cultural ideologies. Equally, it is believed that cheap television, cassettes and radios now totally penetrate into the world and are beginning to penetrate deeply into the countryside in every other country (Sklair, 1995). This has led to increasing standardization of people across international borders. Consequently States are less able to call on national loyalty. Conversely, Kwanashie (1999) contends that "culture, value systems and even religious beliefs are all affected as people all over the world are exposed, more than ever before, to different alternative views". This therefore affects the people's attitude and behaviours, which are aspects of a people's culture. According to Olade Williams (2002) it is simply "all about westernization, manifesting in the export of western commodities, values, pointers and ways of life". Nigerians are now exposed to culture of lesbianism and homosexuality. Other cultural aspects affected by socio-cultural perspective of globalization include change from polygamy to monogamy, African communalism to individualism; extended family system to nuclear system, socio-cultural globalization is therefore already affecting socio-cultural lifestyles in Nigeria.

## Implications of Globalization on the Development of Democratic Culture in Nigeria

Democracy is perceived as "government of the people, by the people and for the people". It encompasses many things. In the first place, the implication is that a democratic government should not be imposed. It means a democratic government must be representative of the people. If people are not represented, they will feel alienated, consequently, they will not participate in decisions. Equality is assured only if people are represented proportionately. Secondly, the implication, *by the people*, means that it is Government by the people which means, DEMOCRACY: In the words of Jega (2007), democracy therefore entails a situation of an active participation of all those who are defined as citizens in the conduct of their public affair, in the society. This means in the democratic culture, the people decide what is to be done and in deciding, they take their destiny firmly into their own hands. Democracy provides for the actualization of individual and group aspiration and also involves freedom to make choice about what one does, where he lives and how he uses his earnings, the operatives of institutions, the home, the church, local, State and federal governments; the rights of the citizens. Such a government must have the blessings of the people through free and fair elections, devoid of electoral fraud, intimidation or victimization. Thirdly, the implication of "for the people" means that the people are supreme. Their interests and wishes must be the sole concern of the government. These interests and wishes constitute the sustainability of our democratic culture. The list of democratic culture might be unlimited, but major ones exist. These include a nation's sovereignty, human equality and preservation of the ideals of the tenets of democracy which help in the sustainability in Nigeria.

***Economy:*** Economically, Nigeria like many other nations has no absolute control over her economy by way of taxation, value of her currency and welfarism or labour wages (Spyley, 1996). Nigeria has no right to tax multinational cooperation because, they can easily park out. Since, she cannot tax freely, her labour wages cannot be set without consultation and approval of the multinational and transnational, cooperation. To this McMichael (1996) continues that "the new power financial institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Paris club etc. all have been at the expense of the sovereignty of State, monetary authorities (Robertson, 1992). The Nigerian democracy is a victim of this economic perspective of globalization. The value of Nigerian currency, the Naira has risen to a high in comparism with the Euro, Dollar and Pound sterling. Apart from this, Nigerians are still suffering from the effect of the consequences of the structural adjustment programmes imposed by the military junta under Gen. Babangida in 1985 in line with conditions of international financial institutions. The present dribbling of Nigerian workers concerning the pump price of petrol and monetarization of benefits are parts of the structural adjustments programmes. Accordingly, Giddens (1999) had this to say:

> *The new period of globalization attacks not only the economic basics of welfare state, but the commitment of its citizens to the equation of wealth with national's wealth. The state is less able to provide effective central control of economic life.*

That the multinational and transnational corporations are in control of nation's economic life is evident from above. This explains why Haralambos and Holborn (2001) observe that "nations have became less and less isolated and at the same time less able to control their affairs. This has serious implications for democracy". These according to McMichael (1996) include privatization of public assets, reducing social budgets, cutting wages, devaluation of our national currencies and promotion of exports. As Nigeria is undergoing all these conditions the dividends of democracy the people's interests, wishes and aspirations are never met. According to Harvey (1992), "Capitalism generates a lot of insecurity and it is always unstable and crisis prone".

***Environment:*** Democracy has been widely acclaimed to be the best form of government, if its major tenents are strictly adhered to. It entails freedom of movement to all. It therefore means that many Nigerian professionals, in health, education, legal, manufacturing etc. accepted that their support might improve the welfare condition of people back home in Nigeria. The environment implications include high rate of contact to epidemics like Ebola, SAARS, HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, the available weapons for fighting communal conflicts and drugs which have affected the lifestyle of Nigerians, as well as the political, social and economic environment of Nigerians.

***Politics:*** The political motivated globalization is; its effect on our democracy, especially between 2010-2015. First and foremost, the birth of this democracy owes much to the condemnation of the west particularly, Britain, United States etc. Secondly the strengthening of democratic institutions has really helped our democracy. For instance, the freedom of Information bill (FOI), and strengthening of the local government among others. Democracy advocates equality, unity and compromise; however globalization has created fragmentation

and disintegrative trends. Thus, ethnic nationalism are virtues of globalization as they obtain support from foreign bodies. According to Bonnet (1994), ethnic and national groups seeking independence from large States can look to transnational organizations for security, to assist them in asserting their independence and nationhood. Nations therefore face threats from regional organization like European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), African Union (AU) etc, and within by local groups wanting disintegration. The resuscitation of the demand for the Republic of Biafra with a radio station in Washington (USA) is a threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria, and the sustainability of our democratic culture.

Apart from the case of the Igbo, the unceasing complaints of ethnic marginalization and call for national conference in spite of the existence at local, states and federal legislatures confirm that it is not yet Uhuru for our democracy. The spirit of Globalization gave birth to the United Nations and its legal arm the International court at the Hague, Netherland. This body has been able to adjudicate the Nigeria – Cameroon border dispute over the oil rich Bakassi Peninsular. That the issue was resolved by peaceful means and in accordance with legal criteria without war shows that globalization has helped to maintain the fundamental human rights of the affected citizens. The United Nations according to Held (1993) has "pounded a vision, in spite of its limitations of a new world order based upon meeting of governments and under appropriate circumstances of a supranational presence in world affairs" (Magdoll, 1973).

*Socio-Cultural Implication:* Even though globalization helps to bring the unity of cultures, their uniformity is not possible. It is evident that, the more they are exposed through information technology, the more they divide us. The films and culture of violence for instance exposes our youths to violence. Consequently, people want to identify with their old past, this is because globalization is sustained multiplication of diverse culture is rooted. Outside this perception, culture goes with the entrenchment of material and philosophical world view of the people, because democracy has enabled Nigerians to have access to telephone, internet etc. Therefore, due to globalization, the socio-cultural aspect of Nigerians has been altered.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The major attribute of democracy is the sovereignty of a nation. In spite of Nigeria's membership of regional governments, such as Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), Common Wealth of Nations, United Nations (UN), she has maintained almost all its obligations. In spite of communal conflicts, calls for national conference, civil war, threats from ethnic militia's, complaints of marginalization, Nigeria is still a sovereign State. This internationalization of authority has not affected her political map in relation to other States. Globalization has surely come to stay and so the entrenchment of democracy is germane. Democratic culture is now a success as the uniformity and unity aimed at by globalization is being achieved. This is further strengthened by the successful hand over of power by a ruling party to an opposition party without bickering and animosity is a sure indicator that democracy in Nigeria is rooted.

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