

# Culture and Globalisation: An Analysis of Cultural Globalisation in Modern Era

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to analyse the impact of global-culture in developing countries. The paper seeks to explore the challenges brought by globalisation to different states and their societies. The main objective being to evaluate the extent to which globalisation impacts different cultures, identify the causes of dominance of other cultures and also propose measures to be taken to strike a balance between cultures of different nations. To achieve the objectives of this; the paper relied on both primary and secondary sources to collect data. The borderless world brought by the system of globalisation is meant to promote the fiscal, cultural and political flows without any restrictions. In the other hand, borderless world is promoting dominance of some cultures over others. African states seem to be in a state of confusion brought by the system of globalisation. Western states seem to be imposing their cultures which contradict values and norms of developing countries. Globalisation is localizing everything economy, politics and culture. This is declaring war against different societies. The questions brought forward are: which culture is the best? How can an individual protect or preserve his or her own culture? Is there any bad culture? Is globalisation wrong? Fundamentalists face a challenge of having to come to grips with the notion of globalisation, have to strike a balance between maintaining cultural integrity and tradition, have to absorb changes associated with globalisation of the world. The main challenge being that, it seems individual members have no choice but to adjust to modern and its accompanying changes. Globalisation is a paradigm shift from which there is no escape; the shift which affects lifestyle, value systems, cultural and mental attitudes towards local, national and the universe. The process has de-territorialised culture and politics, but at the same time has intensified cultural politics in many countries. Identities are constructed in dynamic process and assume multiple forms that permit individuals and societies to uphold both cultural diversity and global norms, such as human rights and democratisation.

**Keywords:** Globalisation; Culture; Tradition; Fundamentalists; Identity

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## 1. Introduction

Culture portrays belief, values and principles of a certain group of people. It is not static, but dynamic and can be passed from one generation to another through teaching and learning. It is people's psychological orientation exercised through beliefs, symbols and values (Heywood, 2007). Culture in simple terms is a way of life through which people humanize and socialize nature. This implies a world view, a value system and a social relation. Culture is a system which grows out of reverence for selected customs and habits as it has its own personality (Wang, 2007). It gives a sense of identity, security, dignity, continuity and also binds community together. Each and every state, nation, ethnic group or society has its traditional way of life with values and beliefs playing a significant role in promoting identity of such nation or individual.

Kluver and Fu (2004) define cultural globalisation as the transmission of ideas, meaning and values around the world in such a way to extend and intensify social relations. Cultural globalisation brings increasing interconnectedness among different populations and cultures. The process of producing a global culture is difficult and not possible without conflict, especially for developing nations. The core values of western societies are in conflict with the core values of many developing countries as many cultures in developing countries are based on a concept of protecting the livelihood of ethnic, racial, religious groups, and common language, not individuals. The conflict can be noted in different concepts of morality and social values. Global culture creates changes in the culture of host communities. These changes affect the role that the traditional culture plays in the lives of African communities.

The rise of globalisation since 1980s has introduced a society with multi-cultures. Globalisation has given rise to global village. There are no more restrictions in relation to the transference of political, economic and cultural activities. Territorial boundaries have become meaningless. Heywood (2007) defines globalisation as complex web that shapes people's lives through events and decisions that are made by other people far from them.

In Ancient time, people would fight against each other and the strongest state through its colonial power had the right to dominance. The strongest state would emerge whenever possible and centralize power in a durable way. Today the world has become a global market in which logistics and optimisation are the predominant concerns and all participants are gradually trying to reach the global economic level of the developed communities. The rise of modern state has brought with it cultural and national homogenisation which is promoting dynamic competition for universalisation and particularisation. Although globalisation is regarded as an authentic process, it does not possess a moral imperative or single widely recognised value. Other theories regard it as an evil, a catastrophe, or a disaster which is to be challenged (Beilharz, 2012).

The interconnectedness of the states is posing a challenge to other states or nations. There are cultures that are more dominant than other cultures. The system of globalisation, by its own nature, seems to be undermining, destroying or weakening other cultures. People seem to regard other national cultures as better than others. Traditionalists and indigenous peoples are concerned about their cultural and social identities in the new global era. This makes the situation about globalisation and cultural identity quite complex. People are confused and failing to have a clear idea of what culture is. If people can have an understanding of what culture is, they will also understand the impact of globalisation on cultures around the world, in the meantime people will also understand the way they could handle globalisation and its dynamics. Globalisation seems to be an overwhelming world trend. Multi-products are circulated around the world. Economic, social and cultural globalisation is forever moving more swiftly across national borders. As a result, local orders are disrupted. In other words, global culture is shaped in such a way that it adheres to the dictates of the market and utilizes customs, practices, and rituals for the benefit of the few (Ghosh, 2011).

To achieve the objectives, the paper reports on the theoretical framework and literature review from appropriate primary and secondary sources wherein the impact of globalisation to different cultures, the reasons for the dominance of other cultures over others are also discussed. The paper tries to analyse the influence, effects, and challenges of globalisation on culture.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Neoliberal theory of "world order" has been used in this paper in order to evaluate the extent to which globalisation impacts different cultures, identify the causes of dominance of other cultures and analyse the effects of cultural globalisation. The basic rationale of using this theory is that it advocates for nation-states as the key actors of globalisation, and are the products of rational connections with society which is capable of rationally regard globalisation project as a new affirmation of the principles on which they are based. The theory includes both traditional states and more extensive, flexible socio-political systems resembling social unity or civil society.

The theory regards globalisation as the opportunity for nation-states to establish uniform structures, and establish common political values such as democracy, freedom of the press, free enterprise, non-interference of the government in the economy, and a common tolerant social climate in regards to ethnic, gender, social, and other principles.

The theory also regards globalisation as procedures for further promoting "open society," individualism, cosmopolitanism, rational behaviour, and "human rights." With this theory the ideology of "global society" becomes predominant, and the controlling of the nation-state begins on a global scale. The parts of one state become closer to the parts of another and transitional social communities are created which, after developing communication and freedom of movement, result in the disappearance of national borders and the creation of a world state.

According to this theory globalisation openly appeals to Eurocentrism and does not conceal the fact that it considers European values to be universal and common; it addresses the philosophical paradigm of Western social-political culture; it openly, strictly affirms the consecutive plan of social-political transformation both within the state and on a global

scale; it openly acknowledges "global society" as its ideological goal; it stresses that globalisation's actors are NGO's that become the instruments of arranging national and common transnational communities (Meyer *et al.*, 1997).

### **3. Influence of Globalisation on Culture**

Globalisation has a great influence on international world as it emphasises in interdependence between nations and their economies. The global realm is composed of national, regional, local and international communities, speaking different languages and consisting of different ethnicities and races, professing a number of faiths which are all exhibiting numerous and competitive cultural, economic, technological and financial systems (Kroukamp, 2011). Globalisation promotes cultural and national homogenisation. Globalisation has the potential to influence dominance of a certain culture over others, particularly western cultures. Developing countries are struggling to identify with cultures of the modern era and yet remain in poverty with an ever growing inequality of multiculturalism. Globalisation can be regarded as a system that is declaring war upon all other cultures. People seem to be undermining the issue of uniqueness of individuals which have an impact on self concept and tend to forget that the way people see them is shaped by a web of social and other relationships that distinguish them from other people. There is no life style which is better than the other and every way of life has its own flaws.

In today's world, the geographical position of an individual no longer counts as every individual has the right to move from one geographical area to another. Society, culture and economy operate in the same sphere. If cultural globalisation is affected, economic globalisation is also affected as they depend on each other. Therefore, an advanced economy, an industrialised nation and a mature economy are likely to be considered than weak economies, an emerging market and a liberalising society. Trade creates wealth, the world's poorest people continue to struggle for survival as they do not have access to that wealth.

Globalisation is seen as an evolutionary and irreversible process to which all human societies must adjust. Cultural globalisation leaves people with no choice but to adjust to modern times and its

accompanying changes. Once a state is exposed to the globalising imperative no aspect of social life, customary practice, traditional behaviour will remain the same. The system calls for changes in lifestyle, values, and cultural and mental attitudes toward local, national and universe (Monshipouri, 2005). Globalisation by its own nature through free trade and free markets dilute or pollute other cultures. Globalisation is killing non-western cultures and is augmenting and enhancing western countries. The fact that American culture is encroaching on the rest of the world is not a new idea. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase which was celebrated in 1904, in the meantime it was celebrating an alleged American cultural, political, and even ethnic supremacy (Balko, 2003). U.S.A culture has been successful in generating trans-national appeal, as it is able to produce entertainment, products and services that naturally appeal to a wide array of tastes and demand. American mass culture has transformed the world into a replica of the United States. Local cultures in developing countries are to conform to western cultures. The example of western cultural hegemony is Hollywood and its big-budget studios which is monopolising the world movie industry and, consequently, polluting other cultures with American iconolatry (Seabrook 2004).

### **4. Effects of Cultural Globalisation**

Cultural globalisation helps spread awesome ideas and at the same time bringing pretty bad stereotypes. Cultural globalisation has the potential for cultural homogeneity, which refers to worldwide cultures becoming similar. Homogenisation could be regarded as something imposed on people by market forces and basically treats people as objects. Western countries are affecting local businesses around the world as other developing countries cannot compete with some of their brands. This means that in plenty of places around the world, western brands have become a very common sight, and this has led local cuisines and businesses to decline in some instances. Huer (2009) advocates that every society has its main culture and its subcultures with the main culture representing the nation and symbolizes its society, character and way of life. In most advanced nations, the main culture tends to be open and easily comprehensible, to both its own members and visitors alike. The global world has its main culture and subcultures. The European Union and the US, along with Japan, make up today's dominant "world culture;" as such,

they form an economic-political-cultural group that sets the world's agenda.

The introduction of western life style to developing countries has led to the decline of core values of African cultures. African cultures, like South Africa is composed of different ethnic groups with different cultures. The country had and still has core values and principles which govern its nation in such a way that some of the challenges people suffer today would not be the case. The example of challenges the nation is suffering from because of loss of values and principles is of the pandemic such as HIV/AIDS. In Africa girls were taught from young age to maintain virginity till marriage. Every African tribe in South Africa has traditional schools which would teach a boy and a girl child, of different ages, norms and values of the particular community or society. Religious ceremonies were highly observed. But today, cultural globalisation has given rise to many policies which are against those norms and values. Global policies are dictating national policies and governments. Examples of some policies are gays and lesbians' rights, the right to abort the unborn child, and other policies. Globalisation has led to the loss of state sovereignty (Akello, 2013). Developing countries are losing control over their own cultures which leads to looseness and promiscuity of the generation of today.

Cultural globalisation though being a two-way street, some countries are actually imparting their cultural patterns onto more places in the world than the other way around. The effect of this may lead to diverse cultures and languages losing their unique stories, flavours, ideas, and other cultural aspects in favour of today's more popular western culture. The global flows of capital, labour and information, is having a homogenizing influence on local culture (UNESCO, 2017). Cultural globalisation has the potential of disseminating experiences, values, and ideas throughout the world through various means. Though cultural globalisation allow people access to new and exciting information, but at the same time it runs the risk of stereotypes and homogenisation or worldwide cultures becoming very similar of global culture. There are countries like the United States which have greater influence on globalising culture than others, because of its size of economy which is the largest in the world as it is one of the wealthiest economies. The mass market of USA has connections to cultural globalisation. The USA is a large producer of various forms of media, such as

film, television, music, and literature. People are becoming more and more connected, more and more similar to one another. USA cultural products dominate despite other nations' efforts to preserve local culture. Many American cultural products tend to be popular with people of very different societies, and despite the popularity of American cultural products, other countries still produce a substantial number of films, music, books, and TV shows.

By sharing ideas, language, music, the concern by some is that the differences that exist between different cultures might become lost over time. The concern is that the only cultures that are continuing to have a strong and increasing presence are the ones from more economically and politically dominant countries. Across the globe, the lifestyle activities of people have changed dramatically following the influence of western countries. Television broadcasts are accepted as models, as simulation of reality, by young generation. The weaker cultures of the developing world are being threatened. Cultural identity is at risk everywhere with the depredations of globalisation, and the developing countries are particularly at risk (Crawford, 1993). Global culture is in such a way that people from developing countries feel good when identified with western styles. People who can afford are even taking their children to schools where they could be taught in English and other international languages so that they can identify well with western cultures. Youth prefer western food, songs, clothing, languages and other things than local ones (Muyale-Manenji, 1998).

## 5. Challenges Brought by Globalisation

Globalisation promotes diversity and weakens traditional social identities. Globalisation undermines class solidarity and political loyalties in its tendency of increased social mobility. It affects the nation's capacity to establish a strong and stable social identity (Heywood, 2007). States or countries are trying to decolonise its nations by democratisation of social, political and economic lives. In the meantime, globalisation is recolonizing the states, particularly African or developing states. People feel obliged to adopt what the televisions, newspapers, radios, internet and other systems portray as good cultures. Global inequality widens as some nations with certain cultural traits prosper and others with other traits don't (Brooks, 2005). The challenge with globalisation is not only with the intrusions of

global culture on local norms, but also bears with it the economic costs of the disruptions. The process favours a certain group of people over others. Western countries benefit more from the process than the counterpart. Global wealth is enriching the already developed countries than enhancing underdeveloped states. Globalisation impart the developing countries the notion of interdependency and reliance to other countries (Jordaan, 2001).

Globalisation negatively affects the call for respect of authority and the strengthening of traditional values and culture. Fundamentalists are concerned about the sense of values, beliefs and faith being sacrificed to global necessity. The rich and powerful are failing to acknowledge that they are unable to separate the profound and complex social and religious disruptions with spectral companions of economic globalisation. The system is sacrificing vast number of poor in pursuit of what advantages their own image (Seabrook, 2004). Cultural globalisation also brings with it a loss of uniqueness of local culture, which in turn can lead to loss of identity, exclusion and even conflict. This is especially true for traditional societies and communities, which are exposed to rapid modernisation based on models imported from outside and not adapted to their context.

There is no policy in relation to the protection of local or indigenous cultural value conflicts with the forces of globalisation (Steger & James, 2010). Issues of culture pertaining to globalisation in terms of conflicting values should be considered and people should be able to decide for themselves what aspects of globalisation may be positive, negative, or truly indifferent to cultures around the world. Western countries have straddled multiculturalism and assimilation policies, but failed to pursue them (Monshipouri, 2005). The further away a society is placed from this main culture, the "stranger" the nation appears to the main centre of the world and, consequently, more "estranged" the nation becomes from the centre of action and understanding. The emerging nations, such as the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are trying to replace or join the dominant Western-capitalist group and become part of the world's main cultural force (Huer, 2009). Globalisation emphasises the transfiguration of worldwide diversity into a pandemic of westernised consumer culture. Dominance of American culture influencing the entire world seems to be causing an end of cultural diversity which may

lead to a human monoculture. The end of cultural diversity is associated with the destruction of cultural identities, dominated by a homogenised and westernised, consumer culture. The global influence of American products, businesses and culture in other countries around the world has been referred to as Americanisation.

The process of cultural globalisation has the potential of causing conflict to the civilians. While the world is becoming smaller and interconnected, the interactions between peoples of different cultures enhance the civilisation consciousness that in turn invigorate differences. Indeed, rather than reaching a global cultural community, the differences in culture sharpened by this very process of cultural globalisation will be a source of conflict. Cultural globalisation is an ambivalent process bringing an intense sense of local difference and ideological contestation (Huntington, 1993). The phenomenon of globalisation is perpetrating a kind of cultural genocide on the world in such a way that the largest, most dominant cultures are becoming larger and more dominant at the expense of many others. In this view, globalisation is in fact another word for Americanisation. The playing field of cultural globalisation is not on the same level. Free trade naturally favours larger economies and so the predominant western influence stifles the cultures and traditions of the developing world. Another important factor is that globalisation enhances culture that cannot thrive in poverty. Both sides generally agree that subsidies, tariffs and other protectionist policies by developed countries against goods commonly produced in the third world (textiles, for example) hamper both culture and economic growth there (Balko, 2003). Cultural globalisation involves the spread of language, the arts, food, business ideas, and technology, and therefore, its impact is felt by almost everybody in the world.

## **6. Conclusion**

Culture embodies values, traditions and practices of a particular group of people or society, but also gives particular society a sense of belongingness, common identity and sense of distinctiveness. Culture is a dynamic force for change rather than a rigid set of forms or parameters that must be strictly adhered to. Every culture of a particular society influences and is also influenced by other cultures in numerous ways.

Balancing the benefits of integrating into a globalised world against protecting the uniqueness of local culture requires a careful approach. Placing culture at the heart of development policies does not mean to confine and fix it in a conservative way, but may mean to invest in the potential of local resources, knowledge, skills and materials to foster creativity and sustainable progress. By recognising and respecting other cultures, there will be mutual understanding, dialogue and peace. Globalisation contributes to a certain homogenisation of culture. This impact is more prominent in developing countries than other countries. The growing disparities among different segments of all the nations across the globe and the resultant unevenness in the spread of a global culture proliferates diversity. Globalisation is promoting a tremendous rise in the influence of religion in the public sphere in recent times. There is an increase in the number of religious institutions and the large-scale participation of people in religious aspects. The rise of religious and ethnic aspects is also posing a challenge in contemporary era. Globalisation is clearly at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, particularly in developing countries. Globalisation is perceived to have cleared the way for world-wide development but the pace of progress seems to be not the same. This means that globalisation does not hold the same benefits to all the states (Lawal, 2006). In conclusion, globalisation cannot be defined as a single concept. Globalisation is a dynamic process that impacts on all spheres of life of different societies in unique ways. Some of developing countries were deterred to participate in global activities because of apartheid practices, South Africa is an example, however, since the rise of democracy from 1990's has ushered the countries into global realm. Globalisation is there to stay with its pros and cons.

## 7. Recommendations

Globalisation is there to stay, is irreversible and cannot be changed. People should develop positive mindset that will accommodate it. People should perceive globalisation as a catalyst for actually creating and shaping culture. If states themselves can be altered by globalisation, why can't the host state use the opportunity for its own development? Instead of one culture dominating another, the relationship between cultural globalisation and cultural diversity is one that actually allows for greater diversity. States can make use of markets, physical materials, ideas, and inspirations flows for successful artistic

creativity. When two cultures trade with each other they tend to expand the opportunities available to individual artists.

Globalisation is not this monolith that some argue. Individuals should not regard globalisation as uncontrollable force that easily sweeps away other cultures with the dominant culture, but rather, use their abilities to accept what cultural globalisation offers, or equally, use the ability to reject it. It is imperative that the maintenance of balance between multicultural integrity be found and absorbing changes associated with a globalising world on the other. People should be empowered in practice and in theory to understand and accept the uniqueness of every culture and that no culture is better than the other. Every culture is good on its own. Restoration of human dignity, sense of identity, continuity, and security are things that every culture should strive for. Africa or developing countries should find a way to manage their own affairs and of bringing back values and principles of their nation.

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