

## Research Paper

# Philosophical reflections on globalization and the Nigerian experience

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This paper examines globalization from the philosophical point of view. It tries to locate the source or origin of globalization based on the philosophical understanding of the subject. Globalization is the integration or the coming together of peoples, races, cultures, institutions, societies, ideas, history, goods and services, science and technology. Philosophy, on its part, is concerned with the critical examination of the origin, nature or essence of beings distinct from their accidental attributes or supposition. Here, we explore the correlation or the relationship between philosophy and globalization and search of how the critical approach of philosophy could help make for a better understanding or appreciation of globalization. We equally examine the various problems associated with

globalization based on the philosophical standpoint such as universalism and relativism, freedom and determinism, communitarianism and industrialization, unity and diversity, the one and the many, etc. Finally, the paper considers Nigeria's journey through globalization and argues that the country did not have a fair deal in the process since this had involved impositions from outside, and suggests a way out to be for Nigeria to look inwards so as to adopt a globalization appropriate to its environment and situation.

**Key words:** Philosophy, globalization, universal, particular, communication, community, culture

## INTRODUCTION

Philosophy universalizes. Philosophy searches for truths, truths that are immutable, truths that cut across boundaries and truths that command necessity and universality (Amaku, 2003). Philosophy does not pontificate nor does it rely on authority. Philosophy is about clarification of ideas or concepts. It inquires into the first principles, the ontology, the basic elements, or the presuppositions underlying a subject matter. Philosophy asks about what a thing is, its essence or nature, distinct from its accidental attributes or supposition.

On its part, globalization equally universalizes. Globalization is about the "universalization of concepts, movements, technology and markets in the context of a

compressed world" (Awonusi, 2004). Globalization is the coming together of peoples, countries, races, cultures, events and institutions, to make a united whole. It is the global integration of ideas, history, politics, economy and finance. Globalization is an all embracing phenomenon, affecting, modifying and transforming everything in the universe.

Here, we will search for unifying links between philosophy and globalization as well as their points of departure. We will also search look for how the critical and analytic tools of philosophy can help to explain the meaning, nature, essence and origin of globalization, the implications of globalization to Nigeria and other third

world countries and how Nigeria can maximally benefit from this phenomenon.

## METHODOLOGY

The methods adopted in this study are historical, analytical, expository and critical. In the collection of data for the paper, we depended in the main, on relevant literatures both on philosophy and globalization. We therefore consulted books, journals and other relevant materials. We also sourced information via the internet in order to attend comprehensively to our research problems. Materials collected were then critically analyzed, synthesized and evaluated, to enable us compare with the Nigerian situation.

### Between philosophy and globalization

To better appreciate globalization and its relationship with philosophy, it may be necessary to examine the two philosophical concepts of the *universal* and the *particular* as enunciated by different philosophers, in particular by Plato and Aristotle. According to Plato, the concept of the *universal* is “a property that is common to all but not proper or peculiar to one.” Plato describes the *universal* as, “the general in which the *particular* participates” (Ackermann, 1965:25). In his view, the *universal* is the “ideal” or the “real” world, while the *particular* exemplifies or participates in it. For instance, humanity as a general concept is the *universal*, while individual human beings like John, James, or Jane is the *particular*. Accordingly, John, James, or Jane, participates, exemplifies, or shares in the concept of humanity.

Thus, just as the *universal* is understood as an abstracted idea that is applicable to every individual or every class of being, so also is globalization a general principle or idea in which every nation, race or institution is involved. And since the universal is not peculiar or proper to anyone within each class of being, so also is globalization not limited to any particular country, nation, culture or institution. In this sense, globalization as the *universal*, involves every country in the world, including Nigeria, (the *particular*), which participates in it.

But what is the relationship that exists between the *universal* and the *particular*? Plato says the relationship is like that of an original and the thing drawn. It is an inadequate imitation of a model. It is, he says, like that of a model to the thing drawn or copied from the model.

Again, how does the *particular* participate in the *universal*? Plato’s view is that that the particular *exemplifies* or *imitates* the universal (Tredennick, 1954). This means that the two can never be exactly the same. For Plato, the universal is the *real* world, while the particular is an *illusion*. The *particular* is merely an imitation or approximation of the *universal*. What then are

the implications of this relationship between the universal and the particular as it concerns globalization? The first implication is that all the countries of the world, races, cultures or institutions belong to the class of the international community, and hence are involved in globalization; they all constitute the international community, but in a different degree.

Accordingly, each of these countries, races, cultures or institutions is separated or different from every other country, race, culture or institution, one way or the other. We thus seek the principle of individuation to protect the individuality of each country against the threat, as it were, to its individuality, which its membership of the international community might seem to involve.

Nigeria as part of the global community is distinct from any other country in the world. While sharing in this globalization process, Nigeria has its own peculiar history, culture, mores, institutions, etc. This means that the people of Nigeria should not be made to swallow hook, line and sinker, everything that comes through their way in the name of globalization.

Accordingly, globalization should recognize or have regard for its environment, culture or institution. It is not an all-fitting jacket for all countries or institutions no matter the time and circumstance. Every country, institution or culture, etc., is distinct and therefore has its peculiar place in this scheme of things.

However, by locating *reality* outside the physical universe, Plato had succeeded in enthrone marginalization. This he did when he created two unequal worlds – the *perfect* and the *imperfect* worlds, the *ideal* world and the world of *illusion*, a dichotomy between the haves and the have-nots. This seems to provide justification for slavery, oppression or marginalization by the strong against the weak; the colonization of Africa by the countries of Europe in the name of civilization; as well as the domination of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America by Europe and the United States of America, which the current globalization exemplifies.

Plato’s position is contrary to the position held by Aristotle: that the *universal* is not outside the *particular* or the physical things we see in daily life. According to Aristotle, the universal *inheres* or *exists* in things. Aristotle explains that the concept of the universal is got from the concrete living things or individual things we see in life. A universal, he says, is simply a *property* (simple or complex, intrinsic or relational) that is common to a number of instances (Hospers, 1956). According to him, we arrive at the concept of these properties through a process of *abstraction* from particulars. That is to say, we *sift* out the universal from the particulars. For example, we have a black book, a black pot, or a black cloth. They all have *blackness* as their common property, and each of them shares in this *blackness*. Blackness is therefore the *universal*, while book, pot, cloth, etcetera, are *particulars*. In other words, there can be no universals without particulars any more than there can be particulars

without universals. The two are logically dependent on each other, not as in Plato, where particulars depend on universals, which exist independent of the particulars.

Thus, if as Aristotle had posited that universals cannot exist without their particulars, and that particulars cannot exist without universals, it then follows that each of them is logically dependent on the other, and therefore should not be seen as different entities. Accordingly, since this interdependence presupposes *equality* of beings, unequal relationships or discriminations should not be entertained in globalization. This means that there should be no marginalization, domination or discrimination within and among nations, and by extension, among citizens or individuals in any particular country or society. For this reason, the rules of the game should not be made in such a way as to give some individuals, countries, institutions or cultures undue advantage over the others.

Another way to appreciate globalization may be to look at the relationship that exists or should exist between the *One* and the *Many*. That is to say, what is the position or place of the individual in the global community?

For Plato, every individual thing we see or perceive with our senses is embedded in their essences, in their universals, or ideal Forms, existing in a transcendental world of their own. But while the Forms are the cause of the sensible things that participate in them, or are the cause of the essence of all other things, the *One* is the cause of the essence of the Forms (Jowett, 1968).

Plato identified the *One* with the *Absolute*, with the absolutely Perfect and exemplary Pattern of all things, the ultimate ontological Principle. This Absolute is immanent, for phenomena embody it, copy it, partake in it, and manifest it in their varying degrees. It is also transcendent, for it is said to transcend even *Being* itself. Thus, for Plato, the *One* is the *unifying* Principle, while the intelligible world of Forms or the Ideas owes its being in some way to it.

Plato also thought the Forms or the Ideas to be *one* and *many* at the same time. According to him, the class-concept "Animal", for example, is one, but at the same time, it is many in that it contains within itself the subclass of "Horse", "Fox", "Lion", "Man", and so on. The Forms thus constitute a hierarchy, subordinate to the *One* as the highest all-pervading Form (Copleston, 1962). But how did the world of appearance, the fleeting world of the senses, proceed or come into existence from this hierarchy of Forms, the complex structure comprised in the all embracing *One*, the Idea or Being, or the Good, the Real and the Absolute?

Plato explained that the *Demiurge* (God) conferred geometrical shapes upon the primary qualities within the Receptacle or Space, and so introducing order into disorder, taking His model in building up the world, the intelligible realm of Forms (Lee, 1965). The Ideal World therefore, according to him, is at once a unity and a plurality. It is a unity as contained in the Divine Mind and as subordinated to the Divine Plan, and a plurality as

reflecting the richness of the Divine Thought-content, and as only realizable in Nature as a multitude of existent objects.

Proceeding from Plato's recognition of the *One*, the Absolute, the Perfect and the Efficient Cause as the embodiment of *one* and *many*, one can therefore safely infer that each individual being shares in something of the ultimate or definitive reality of the whole being. That is to say, that the individual is not an insignificant speck as would be the case were I to be measured quantitatively and contrasted to the broad expanse of the globe. Rather I, as an individual, have the importance of the whole as it exists in me. The same is also true of other persons and of the parts of nature.

In other words, every individual being in this multiplicity of beings should be appreciated as a unique contraction of the whole. Others which are distinct and different should equally be appreciated as complementary rather than as contradictory. They are the missing element towards which one aspires and which can help one grow and live more fully. They are the remainder of which I am part, which supports and promotes me and towards whose overall good my life is directed.

In that sense therefore, every country of the world, every culture or institution though separate and distinct, is unique, and hence should be recognized and appreciated in their rights without which the global community would not be complete. They are complementary rather than contradictory to each other. In other words, every individual, every country, whatever the level is as important as the other, and hence should be appreciated. A company chief executive, for instance, would find it difficult to settle down in office and carry out his duties if the cleaner was not there to tidy the office, in the same way as the Western advanced countries would hardly perform any economic or technological miracle if the third world countries that produce basic raw materials and supply cheap labour that rubricate their productive engines are neglected or allowed to be wiped out of the face of the earth by hunger, disease and the internecine wars. As a testimony to the interconnectivity of the world occasioned by globalization, any crisis like war, or a disruption in crude oil production in any part of the world would also reverberate in many other countries of the globe, leading to refugee crisis or the escalation of prices of goods and services.

Again, how are finite beings, that is, the individual things we see and perceive, related to the whole or the *One*?

As contractions of the whole, finite beings are not merely products ejected by and from the universe of being: they are also limited expressions of the whole. In other words, the entire reality is a limited image of the whole from which they derive their being, without which they cannot exist, and in which they find their true end or purpose. As changing, developing, living and moving, they are integral to the universe in which they find their perfection or realization and to the perfection of which they contribute

by the full actuality and activity of their reality. As an unfolding of the whole, these diverse beings are opposed neither to the whole nor to the Absolute One. Rather, they unfold from the One and returns thereto.

Seen in the light of reality as a whole, each being therefore, is a unique and indispensable contraction of the whole. Hence, finite realities interact not merely as a multiplicity, but also as an internally related and constituted community with shared and interdependent goals and powers. Every being is then related to every other being in this grand community almost as parts of one body. Each depends on the other to survive and by each the whole realizes its goal.

Arising from this postulation, it then follows that the realization of each is required for the realization of the whole, and it is by acting with others and indeed in the service of others or for the good of others that one reaches one's full realization. In other words, it is by interacting with and for others that one activates one's creative possibilities and most approximates the full realization of being.

McLean, (2001) puts it this way: "To see each as a contraction of the whole provides each not only with equality, but with definitive status as endowed by the significance of the whole. I cannot be instrumentalized, much less reduced either abstractively or concretely to a least common denominator. Thus equality can be promoted without the reductionism entailed by egalitarianism. At the same time, by thinking in global terms it becomes possible to see that diversity is the key to enriching the whole and thereby drawing it closer to the fullness of perfection".

What therefore is the implication of the *One* and the *Many* relationship to globalization? The implication is that each individual is unique and has his own place and role within and among the comity of nations. In other words, we should see our contemporary globalization as a part of the universal march towards global unity. This means that human endeavours can be successful and meaningful only to the extent that the efforts of each individual are integrated into the global system.

For centuries, the countries of Western Europe had seen themselves as special creatures that were endowed with superior intelligence and thus possessing superior history and superior culture, while the black and other coloured races were considered to be less than humans who had to be enslaved. This had provided justification for the enslavement of the black race and their colonization in order to "civilize" them and the steal Africa's natural resources. This led to the extraordinary large gap between the few rich countries of the Western hemisphere and the many poor countries of the third world.

The recent rise in terrorist activities in different parts of the world is a manifestation of the extremely big gulf between the vast majority of poor people in the third world existing side by side with the few super rich people

in Europe and America. With a future that did not hold any hope or promise, a future that looked extremely bleak, the marginalized, the downtrodden, the alienated, those who saw themselves to have been left behind, had no alternative than to take up arms as the only means of expressing themselves and asserting their identity. Thus, if globalization by means of international division of labour has brought increased production, it has however not been accompanied with equitable distribution of resources in order to make the system beneficial to all.

### Ethical problems in globalization

One major ethical problem in globalization is how to strike a balance between *universalism* and *relativism*. It is whether one can successfully give a uniform account of values (either of the good or of moral standards) that will apply to all societies irrespective of time and place, or whether one can assume that different societies simply have different values and moral standards? Put differently, the problem is whether one can say that there are some basic moral rules, values, rights, needs, capacities or principles operating in all societies and for which every country involved in the process of globalization must subscribe? This has become necessary in view of the fact that since globalization affirms a universal system of application; can one on that basis assume that all the countries involved in globalization should have a common value system, that is, a uniform moral standard? Or whether one can simply say that different countries should have their own value systems and moral standards?

To look at this question, there seems to be some ethical principles and moral values which may be very difficult to universalize given the fact of the existence of the diversity in moral values and moral practices. That is to say, although cultural subjectivism may not be accepted, there seems to be some moral values and moral practices which may not be easily universalized or are trans-historically binding. In other words, there are different practices that reflect different understandings of morality such that no one understanding or set of practices can be said to be better than any other. In practical term therefore, there are no internationally established morality or set of moral principles that are binding on all people, in all places, and at all times.

In traditional African society, for instance, honour and respect were usually accorded to the elders, but under the present set up, respect and honour now go to those who possess material wealth. That is why chieftaincy titles and honorary degrees are conferred on those with the power of the purse. These are people who are given recognition at public events and who occupy front seats in churches and in mosques. It is equally for the same reason that a 65-year old man would readily bow down before his 25-year old 'Master' to greet him, open his car

door, and carry his bag into the office.

In capitalist Europe which, according to Friedrich Nietzsche (1973), had since “lost touch with humanity”, the establishment of “Old People’s Homes” is considered normal but not so in traditional Africa with strong attachment on kinship and communities ties. The same could equally be true of the “extended family system” (where a well-to-do individual would readily assist his other brothers that are in need) – *Onye-aghanna-nwanneya*, has proved an essential element of African way of life. In Europe, this system appears to be anachronistic and not suitable for a capitalist/industrial society. Also in Christian Europe, monogamy is considered valuable, but not so in Muslim societies as well as in some parts of Africa, where the individual’s wealth is measured in terms of the size of his family.

More and more people now place individual interests above the collective interest. Even when they show interest in the collectivity, it only proves to be temporary and instrumental. For instance, the traditional moral practice of life-long marriage is fast disappearing in many societies, particularly in Europe and America. Even though most people who marry stay married, the institution of marriage as whole is now seen in some quarters as a contract that is dissolvable simply on the wishes of one of the contractants. In many countries of Europe and America, gay marriage has been legalized, but this is seriously abhorred in Africa.

In contemporary world, one no longer has confidence that any tradition or set of traditional moral principles is capable of providing a secure basis for moral evaluation or assessment of whether one is acting morally or not. The result is not just subjectivism or relativism. It is simply nihilism. It is also the denial that there can be any norms or standards at all, while moral values seem to be, at best, just a matter of subjective taste. But are all moral values, interests and rules really subjective? In other words, are there ethical values and moral interests that transcend peoples and societies? That is to say, are there ethical and moral values that can be universalized?

First, there seems to be a universal recognition that *human life* is valuable, and that to have and sustain such human life, there must be certain objective and material conditions, such as the presence of food, water, shelter and security, as well as the possibility of satisfying not only physical, but also intellectual, moral and spiritual needs. Nigeria is still grappling with the necessity of placing these basic needs on the front burner.

Secondly, there is the general recognition of the need that one must honour one’s *promises*, and that such promises are binding for every human person irrespective of which country he or she lives or comes from. But some people will honour their promises rather inconsistently, that is, only when such promises suit them. For instance, many Nigerian politicians, while canvassing for votes, will lay out several promises, but will quickly jettison them as soon as they entered the office. The same thing applies

to the requirement of not to telling a lie, which some people also honour inconsistently.

Some philosophers, for instance, Sen, (1997) also maintain that the idea or notion of *human rights* hold good for all societies. He contends that the idea of human rights is not derived from citizenship of any country or membership in any nation. These rights, according to him, are taken as entitlements of every human being. The right to life, right to free speech and right to fair hearing, for example, are inalienable rights of every free citizen, he asserts.

These rights differ from constitutionally created rights guaranteed for specific people, such as the Nigerian citizenship. According to Sen, the “...human right of a person not to be tortured is affirmed independently of the country of which the person is a citizen, and also irrespective of what the government of that country or any other country wants to do”. That is why human rights groups like the Amnesty International will always frown at violations of individual rights in any part of the world and fight for the restoration of rights of any such individual.

Another ethical problem is with regards to improvement in production versus equity in the distribution of goods produced. Since globalization through division of labour and specialization leads to massive increase in production of goods and services, does it also guarantee equity in the distribution of the goods produced? That is to say, even though a lot of progress has been made in the production of goods and services through globalization, much of these goods and services still remain in the hands of those who already have, while the vast majority of people are excluded from such benefits. In effect, while globalization has entailed efficiency and increased productivity, the system is not being accompanied with equity in distribution of resources. Globalization should therefore maintain a balance between increased productivity and equity in distribution.

Globalization should also aim at man-centredness or egalitarianism. It should combine increased productivity manifested by Western technology with the African tradition of sharing wealth based on respectful and moderate use of resources. To this end, what matters is not necessarily what is produced, but how such products are distributed or utilized.

African tradition in contrast to the current phase of globalization which emphasizes exclusivism and individual growth is community-centred. While every member of the community is required to contribute his means to the material well-being of the community, the fruits of such labour should be distributed in such a way that everybody gets what is due to him. As such, there should be no marginalization of anybody, and there should be no misery or poverty in the midst of plenty.

Another problem is how to strike a balance between *freedom* and *determinism*. For instance, there is a presupposition that every sovereign nation is free to order its priorities and activities the way it chooses without

recourse to any other authority. Yet, there is a truism arising from globalization that national sovereignty has become more or less a myth rather than a reality, which means that the countries of the world have compromised their freedom and independence as a result of globalization.

The problem therefore, is how to strike a balance between this presupposed sovereignty of every nation with the interdependence of nations? No country in the world is wholly independent, and none can go it alone without the support and assistance from other countries. Every country is thus dependent on every other country for its sustenance. The United States of America and the countries of Western Europe, for instance, may pride themselves as being key determinants of world political and economic order, but they would never be settled or comfortable if there is disturbance in any part of the world, including the so-called third world countries who supply them with cheap labour and basic raw materials. That is why a crisis in any corner of the globe will invariably reverberate in all parts of the world.

That notwithstanding, some “super countries” who assume the “policemen of the world”, have continued to destabilize and lord it over other sovereign, but poor weak countries in the name of protecting their people against tyrannical rule and promoting democracy. In 2003, the United States of America invaded Iraq, a sovereign nation, massacred many people there, including its President, Saddam Hussein, on the pretext that the country was producing weapons of mass destruction. Ever since then, the United States is yet to prove to the world the weapons of mass destruction being produced by Saddam Hussein. If it were some minion countries like Sudan, Kenya or Liberia, former US President, George W. Bush, who carried out that dastardly act, would have by now been at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Geneva, answering charges for crimes against humanity.

Another problem is whether the character and outcome of globalization would be the same for both the industrialized societies of the West and for the predominantly agrarian and communalistic societies of third world country like Nigeria? Specifically, what would be the likely problems associated with globalization in predominantly agrarian and communalistic societies developing countries as opposed to Western industrialized societies?

While the Western industrialized countries have the advantage of reaping the full benefits of globalization, developing countries are made to bear the brunt of the system. First, Western industrialized countries get cheap labour from developing countries and they also determine the prices they pay for the raw materials they buy from developing countries.

Second, through large scale production, industrialized countries dump their substandard goods on developing countries at highly exorbitant rates. The implication is that

developing countries lose two folds – from what they get from their raw materials, and from what they pay for the finished goods they buy from industrialized countries.

### **Globalization as unity in diversity**

As a concept, globalization may be equated with the philosophical idea of *unity* of beings or forces. Pre-Socratic philosophers represented by Thales, Anaximander, Anaximanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, etc., for instance, believed that the diverse elements we see in nature have one common source or origin. Accordingly, they postulated one substance or the other as the origin or source of all such things.

Thus, in spite of all the differences, in spite of all the diversities observed in nature, the material world could well be reduced to one common source, or one denominator. For instance, While some of these philosophers had posited “water” to be the primary substance, others said it was “fire”, or “air”, or the “Indeterminate Boundless”, etc.

In the same vein, African philosophy sees an underlying unity among the diverse elements in the universe, such that there is a coordinated and harmonious relationship with all existent beings or forces in the world like human beings, the living and the departed; lower animals, for example, horses or lions, etc.; inanimate things such as stones; and even God Himself. This means that there is a linkage or interconnection and interactions among all these beings. Ruch and Anyanwu (1984) put it succinctly thus, “beneath the world of appearances lies a fundamental unity, a block of granite”.

While the Bantu, for instance, hold the “vital force” to be an animating, sustaining creative life-force which is inseparably tied to the concept of being (Tempels, 1945), Ogotemeli, a blind sage, sees “nommo” alone as possessing total power over the forces of nature (Jahn, 1961). Thus, both the Bantu’s “vital force” and Ogotemeli’s “nommo power” constitute the basic element and the energizing power in this unity of forces. This means that the Africans, like the pre-Socratic philosophers, do not conceive the world as anarchic, isolated entities. Rather, the world for them is a dynamic of forces in motion which interact, affect, and re-enforce each other. God or the Supreme Being, for instance, interacts with human beings through the lesser spirits or divinities, while human beings on their part make shrines and oracles for these spirits and through these shrines offer sacrifices and ask for favour from the Supreme Being. The lower animals, plants and even inorganic beings like stones, also form part of this linkage.

Tempels, (1945) compared the relationship that exists among beings with the spider’s cob-web, which according to him, is so organically linked and intertwined that no part of the system would be touched without affecting the

others. And according to Van der Leeuw, “the primitive world is not made up of series of beings each of which would occupy its proper place and which would therefore be mutually exclusive and which could be counted separately. It is made of beings which participate in each other and interpenetrate each other.” (Ruch and Anyanwu, 1984).

Globalization is a march towards global unity. It recognizes the interdependence of beings, cultures, races and institutions, and strives to integrate them into a unified whole. Globalization is a natural, irreversible principle governing the universe. It recognizes the fact that man is a gregarious animal who lives in community with his fellow human being. Man is never an isolated or solitary being. He is essentially a social animal, always on the move in search of something better and greater. This enables him not just to provide for his immediate needs, but also to seek for the satisfaction of his future needs.

In traditional Africa, for example, man is necessarily tied up with and dependent on his fellow men and nature. He shares and participates with his fellow men in his joys, fears and tribulations. Mbiti (1969) captures it thus “...in traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole”. Tevoedjre (1979) also maintains that “...the African cosmogonies underline the fact that life is a cycle in which all beings depend on each other”.

Globalization has helped to improve this relationship. With improvements in transport, such as motor cars, trains, ships, airplanes, and spacecrafts, distances have become drastically reduced, which have enabled people from the four corners of the globe to come closer and united among themselves. For instance, it is now possible for a person to travel round the world, or even to the outer space, in just a matter of days, if not hours. In the same vein, inventions in information technology have made it possible for events happening thousands of kilometers away to be viewed or heard instantaneously. Thus, one can easily participate or access any information from even the remotest part of the globe by simply feeding the data on the website.

Similarly, different individuals or races, colours and tongues, now communicate among themselves in the languages they easily understand. Globalization has therefore made it possible for millions of people to share the same language or group of languages. Studies have shown that the over six billion people living in the world today now share few languages. The implication is the gradual evolution of what can be termed a “world language” or languages.

Unfortunately, this “world language” or languages have turned out to be mainly the European languages, such as English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and to some extent, Russian and Japanese. No African language is

considered qualified for use in official communication at international conferences, such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, or even among some pan-African organizations, like the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS), etc.

Globalization has also enabled man to aim at mastering and re-creating the world, making it not only habitable, but also beneficial and enjoyable. Not only is man rational, he is also a worker. Through his creative instincts, man tries to change or recreate the world around him. A unique feature of this current phase of globalization is technological innovation which has revolutionized production and thus enhanced the overall being of man.

Notwithstanding the tremendous progress made in economic, political, cultural and technological spheres as a result of globalization, it appears that not all countries of the world enjoy the full benefits of the process. While the developed countries of Europe and America as producers of finished goods, for instance, reap the full benefits of globalization through mass production and the dumping of their products on the developing countries, they also at the same time, fix the prices which they will pay for the raw materials from the developing countries. This invariably leaves the developing countries helpless as they are made to grapple with crumbs that fall from the master’s table. The result is the marginalization or pauperization of developing countries in exchange relations by these powerful Western industrialized countries in the name of globalization.

Similarly, with inventions in information and communication technological, such as the satellite, the World Wide Web (www) or the internet, the email, facebook, Youtube, etc. the developed countries seek to dominate the developing countries through the imposition of their culture and worldview. Western lifestyle, expressed in their music, dance style, dress code, food, religion, language, etc., are portrayed as the most acceptable way of life, which must be copied, imitated or emulated, while the language, religion, beliefs, etc., of developing countries are despised, branded primitive, and hence should be discarded. Thus, globalization as currently understood and practiced, rather than promote overall human development, global progress, social cohesion and general welfare of countries and peoples through equitable distribution of resources, encourages lopsided development and the marginalization of the weak by the powerful rich nations.

### **Globalization and the Nigerian experience**

Nigeria in her journey towards was caught in the web of Arab-Muslim expansionism and Euro-Christian imperialism, and thus became an easy prey to the machinations of both the Arab and European power plays. The Koran and the sword, the Bible and the gun,

were used as instruments of oppression and exploitation. With the Koran in one hand, and the sword in the other, the Arabs invaded Nigeria from the north, imposed their religion on her, pillaged and plundered her resources. Almost at the same time, Western Europe used the Bible and the gun to capture Nigeria from the south, got the local chiefs drunk with various brands of gin imported into the country, imposed their religion on the people, stole most of their precious goods, and above all, carried away many of their able-bodied men and women away to slavery to the United States of America.

The Arabs were the first to strike. Constructing a brilliant and cosmopolitan system that stretched from the Iberian Peninsula to the Indus Valley and up to the Caspian Sea, they cast their hungry looking eyes to areas south of the Sahara Desert and from there, entered Kano and Katsina around the twelfth century AD where they established the Islamic faith. The intruders did not merely come as religious evangelizers, but also as economic exploiters and parasites, pillaging and plundering the people's resources and carrying some of them away as slaves. As Briggs-Davidson (1972) reports, "Islam was the means to an end, that is, economics. The same caravan which carried the Islamic faith also carried the gold of the Upper Niger, the copper of Agadir, and of course, the slaves of Guinea."

With the entrenchment of the Islamic faith also came the introduction of Arab culture, politics and economic systems in many parts of Nigeria, particularly the north. This led to the destruction of the original cultures of the people. Under this system, whoever was appointed head of the Islamic faith, also controlled the political direction, determined the cultural perspectives and had the last say in matters of life and death. In many parts of Northern Nigeria, feudalism, as its legacy, persists till today.

Almost at the same time that the Arabs were ravaging and pillaging several parts of Northern Nigeria and turning upside down their culture, religion, social and political systems, the countries of Western Europe invaded the country from the south through the Atlantic Ocean, and carrying along with them their religion, politics, culture and commerce, which they imposed on the people, without recourse to their own cultural life.

At first, the foreigners appeared genuine and simple-minded as they came along with gift items like cloths, blankets, hot drinks, which they freely gave out to the people.

But the people did not know that these were mere Greek gifts, designed to lure them to an alien faith, beliefs, lifestyles, language, etc., which would turn them away from their culture, history and religion.

Having gained a foothold, the invaders began to steal the people's resources such as gold, ivory, gum, camwood, etc. As if that was not enough, they went into that despicable trade which history has forever stood them condemned – trade in human beings or slavery. For more than five decades, they carried out the business

unhindered, taking away in the process more than ten million people.

When trade in human beings was no longer profitable due to the introduction of machinery in production, slavery became unconscionable and against Christian ethics, and was therefore outlawed or abolished! This paved way for the physical occupation of the country by Great Britain in the form of colonization. For more than one decade, Britain as the colonial overlord, superintended over the affairs of Nigeria, and carted away her precious resources and imposing her culture, religion, mores, language, lifestyle, politics, history, economic system, etc., on the people of the country.

In their desire to create a large market for their industries at home, the colonialists brought together the disparate historical, social and cultural groups inhabiting a large expanse of land into one political unit which they called Nigeria, but failed to make them one people. The result was that while priding herself to have established a Nigerian country, Britain had failed to create a Nigerian nation.

Nigeria therefore, entered the era of globalization with an amputated leg. First, Nigerians were cut off from their cultural roots due to the imposition of foreign cultures – religion, language, art, history, etc., which had made them become pawns in the hands of foreign manipulators, thereby aping the mores and value systems brought from outside. In the process, many of them lost their identity. And as products of their environment, they were separated from it, and thus neither wholly indigenous nor totally foreign.

Second, politically, Nigeria was deeply divided. As a British creation, the colonial administrators created a Nigerian country, but failed to create a Nigerian nation. This was exemplified by the differential policies introduced in the area, which kept the different ethnic groups perpetually at war with each other. The net effect of all these was that while many other countries of the world were advancing healthily towards globalization, Nigeria was busy battling with cultural conflicts and unending ethnic rivalries.

## Way forward

Globalization does not exist in a vacuum. It is the result of human action in a social community. This means that globalization should reflect its social milieu. Nigeria as part of the global community is part of this process. It cannot be otherwise. But the country should absorb or adopt a globalization appropriate to its environment and social situation. A correct and appropriate globalization should reflect and be the outcome of its social environment, what Roy Ramirez (1991) calls "appropriate technology".

What then is this "correct and appropriate globalization"? It is a globalization that takes into account



the widest interest of human beings in its social milieu; a globalization that absorbs or adopts all that is good and appropriate to its environment and does away with all that are unsuitable to its society.

First, the Nigerian economy is import dependent. In spite of the arable farmlands available in virtually every corner of the country, Nigeria has abandoned agriculture, while every conceivable food item is being imported to feed her teeming population.

In the same way as agriculture is despised, so also is the value system. To have "arrived" in Nigeria is to be identified with everything foreign – foreign goods, foreign language, foreign dress code, foreign hair style, foreign music, foreign sports, foreign names, foreign religions, etc. Apart from the attendant cultural enslavement and the draining of the nation's economy, health experts also warn that most of the common ailments prevalent in the country, like cancer, diabetes, liver and heart related diseases, were largely related to the type of lifestyle most Nigerians live, coupled with the type of food they eat, mainly processed and imported food items.

In the same vein, Nigeria still largely depends on exporting crude petroleum products, whose prices are determined by the global market, for most of her foreign exchange earnings, and conversely, also depends on importing refined petroleum products, whose prices are equally determined by the global market, for most of her energy uses. A contradiction in terms!

Nobody will deny the fact that globalization has made tremendous progress and brought improved standard of living for many people the world over, since it has made the inventions of man accessible and beneficial to men in every corner of the globe. On the other hand, globalization has equally led to increase in crimes, since some undesirable elements easily make use of these inventions to destroy lives and property, or cause havoc in society. In many countries of the world, and in particular, in third world countries like Nigeria, this negative effect of globalization is more pronounced.

The increasing rise in criminal activities in different parts of the country in recent years, such as the Boko Haram insurgency, child trafficking, rape, kidnapping and armed robbery as well as youth militancy, is not only as a result of the mirroring of these crimes from other parts of the world by their perpetrators, but also due to the neglect by the Nigerian government, of the vast majority of its growing population. Many Nigerian youths, particularly in the northern parts of the country, did not have the luxury of formal education, while the privileged few from the southern part of the country, those who graduated from the universities are left without jobs. With just a little motivation, they will fall easy prey to those already waiting in the wings to hire their services to cause havoc and mayhem in society.

Nigeria cannot therefore claim to be marching positively towards globalization when a large percentage of its growing population is left behind, people whose future

appears to have been compromised due to lack of functional education and job opportunities. The solution will not be the wielding of the big stick, but in finding the best way of keeping these "idle" youths positively engaged. An idle mind, they say, is the devil's workshop.

Culture as the sum total of the way and life of a people is dynamic. It is never static. Culture changes with time and circumstance. As such, Nigeria should do away with such obsolete and archaic systems which are no longer in tune with her environment and pull the country centuries behind. Rearing of cattle by nomadic system, for example, is no longer fashionable. It had been done away in Europe and America many centuries ago with the establishment of ranches where they rear their cattle. Apart from the very healthy nature of cattle reared in ranches, the system could prove effective antidote to frequent altercations between cattle herders and farmers in the environment over the destruction of crops and farmlands.

A successful globalization for Nigeria requires the building of national consensus among the disparate and antagonistic groups who currently pull each other apart, thereby preventing the country from realizing its set goals. With unity of forces, Nigeria can pull together her rich potentials, human and natural, which would enable the country compete favourably with other countries of the world.

## Conclusion

Through the philosophical concepts of the *particular* and the *universal*; the *one* and the *many*; we have been able to establish a parallel or relationship between philosophy and globalization. Just as *particulars* participate (Plato), or inhere (Aristotle), in their *universal*, so also do every country of the world participate or take part in globalization, in the same way as the *one* can equally give birth to the *many*. Globalization is an irresistible process in accord with natural laws for which every country of the world irrespective of their individual degree of cultural, economic and political development must join. Nigeria's journey in globalization is however being hindered by distortions in her cultural and historical past occasioned by infusion of Arab and European cultures. Nigeria can still overcome this problem by building a national consensus as well as striking a healthy balance between the positive aspects of her culture and those brought in from outside.

## AUTHORS' DECLARATION

I declare that this study is an original research by me and I agree to publish it in the journal.

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