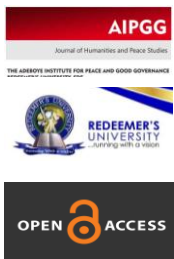


**An avant-garde re-conceptualization of African (Yoruba) culture in the age
of Corona-virus, western consciousness, and globalization**

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Abstract:

The paper examines the new social and cultural orientations in Africa with specific emphasis on the Yoruba society in Southwest Nigeria. Such new orientations constitute the new components of Yoruba culture as occasioned by the unprecedented negative effects of Covid-19 in Southwest Nigeria. Such novel cultural constituents are strange to the traditional African culture and social life. These novel cultural constituents include demystification of African (Yoruba) mysticism and apothecary, defeatist attack on African communalism, restriction on the showy O wambe (social gathering or fun party) philosophy, as well as cautious resentment of migration to the West or to the East which brings along with it the de-internationalization of the sensory taste. These novel cultural constituents tend to be in tandem with the contemporary global cultural and social realities. As such, the traditional African (Yoruba) cultural practices and beliefs (such as communalism) in their pristine nature are lackluster, and consequently do expose the people to the ravaging effects of Covid-19 pandemic. More evident dangers could be noted in the futility of the African cultural assumptions such as the perceptions of the traditional Yoruba people about the gods and prophets who are seen as their saviors whereas the custodians of the gods and those who claim to be of God interceding for the people possess manipulated identities. The new cultural philosophy has resulted in the progressive alliance with the Western values and a re-evaluation of globalization as a result of its both negative and positive effects. This could be deduced, respectively, from the global spread of Covid-19 and new found austerity among the Yoruba people as a novel cultural tenet.

Key words: African culture, Covid-19, Globalization, Communalism, Southwest Nigeria

Introduction

Culture is a critical aspect of the lives of the people of a given society. This is because culture encapsulates all that a people stand for as such relates to the characteristic knowledge of a given and defined group of people bound together in an aboriginal tie. Such an aboriginal tie encompasses the religion, social

habits, language, cuisines, arts as well as music¹. Culture is the behavioral pattern that a people share. Culture in Africa has to be re-conceptualized and reconstituted in the point-edge of globalization and Covid-19. In other words, the current circumstances in the world as they relate to how nations of the world interact in the context of globalization as well as the impact of Covid-19 have reshaped how people perceive and respond to common practices, beliefs and indigenous orientations in Africa as such practices, beliefs and orientations concern or relate to how Africa involves in global affairs. Specific emphasis, in achieving this goal in the paper, is placed on the culture of the Yoruba people in the Southwest of Nigeria. The Southwest Nigeria is significant in Nigeria and important to be studied at the world stage because of a number of factorial developments and considerations.

The Southwest of Nigeria is important to Nigeria because of the factor of the Lagos metropolis. Lagos is a mega city in Nigeria where a significant percentage of the population is taken by people from other parts of the country. And the question of acculturation has occurred in these people from other parts of Nigeria so much so that non-Yoruba people are being appointed into public offices in the State. In addition to this, Lagos is important to the rest of the world because the city is a port city, linking Nigeria to the rest of the world through the Tin Can Ports, a seaport and Murtalar Muhammed International Airport which are critical physical channels of globalization. Demographically, the population of the Southwest of Nigeria is put at about 33 million (AOAV & NWGAV, 2013). This is about the populations of Belgium, Greece and Sweden put together. In addition to all of the above on the significant standing of the Yoruba region of Nigeria (the Southwest), distinguished Yoruba personalities at global stage have emerged. One of such personalities includes Akinwunmi Adeshina who currently heads African Development Bank, a bank in which the United States of America has a significant stake. Others are Olusegun Obasanjo who currently is the chairman of the Association of World Ex-presidents; and Wole Soyinka who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986. Therefore, the factors of the metropolitan nature of Lagos, the ports as viable channels of globalization, the demographic factor as well as the factor of the illustrious personality from the Southwest of Nigeria make the Yoruba region of Nigeria quite significant when discussing regional, continental and global affairs in the contemporary time.

Literature Review

In Africa, culture is seen by the people as a referred heritage and is guarded religiously. This perhaps is because culture is the only thing Africa can relate to since the continent cannot yet boast of any innovative scientific or technological productions. This tends to be the crux of Omojola Awosusi's observation that culture aggregates the norms, belief system including the mores or tradition of a society, by which the society is reputed by the people inside or outside of the

¹ Zimmerman, Kim. *What is Culture?* www.livescience.com July 13, 2017 Retrieved August 27, 2020, 2017

given society². In this comment, 'the people inside' are Africans themselves while 'those outside' are the international community. The consciousness of culture by Africans has made them protect their culture unwilling to allow such culture to be interfered with by foreign culture especially Western and Eastern super cultures. This cultural attitude has been described as a closed culture which has its challenges or consequent difficulties³. However, Ahmed Yerima is of the view that culture in Africa will bring a lot of accomplishments and benefits if Africans would open their culture. The core point that Yerima is advancing is that Africa will gain from cultural inclusivity because by the act of opening African culture, differences emanating from myriad of sub-cultural variables will be harmonized. This is in consonance with Abodunrin's stand-point that the extension of foreign culture especially Western culture to Africa together with the merger of the African experience has determined the social and cultural experience of Africa in the modern time⁴.

The Femi Abodunrin's position is an indication that African culture cannot continue to be a closed culture as a result of the desire of the people to express cultural nationalism. In defence of opening African culture, there is a dimension of vigorous warning as Dele Layiwola believes that Africa's inability or failure to align scientifically or technologically with the process of cultural production which he believes is crucial, a new form of colonialism will consistently compel the currently independent states in Africa to depend on the world powers in perpetuity⁵. This tends to point it out that culture is an important tool which Africa uses to negotiate modern tendencies because culture in Africa as a developing continent, , according to Ahmed Yerima, is an industry which is employed in the process of institutional governance and administration.⁶ There tends to be some hindrances in the propagation of African culture as a way of opening the Culture to the rest of the world. The first is the strong presence of superstition in African culture despite the position that 'there is no possible causal connection between superstition and human lives' in the opinion of Barbara Smoker.⁷ By the way of this submission, superstition should not be of any significance in Africa culture. In addition to this, African culture is centrally animist because lesser gods occupy a significant position in African culture as in many other cultures. When these two circumstances i.e. the prominence of superstition in African culture and the influence of the lesser gods over human,

² Awosusi, Omojola. 'University Culture and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour of Administrators in the Nigerian University System'. A Public Lecture at Redeemer's University, 2018

³ Yerima, Ahmed. *Culture, Drama and National Ethos*. Ibadan: Ebony Books & Creations, 2015.

⁴ Abodunrin, Femi. 'Indigenous Knowledge and Creativity: The Example of Yoruba Poetry'. *Hirenth Journal of the Humanities* Vol. 1 Number 1, pp 57-77, 2014.

⁵ Layiwola, Dele. 2010. *APlace Where Three Roads Meet: Literature, Culture and Society*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

⁶ Yerima, Ahmed. *Refracted Universe, Alternative Realities The Artist as God*. Mowe: Redeemer's University Press, 2013.

⁷ Smoker, Barbara. *Humanism/st Nigerian Edition*. Ibadan: Gadfly Publishers, 2006.

it is uncertain if the animist and superstitions worldview of the African society aligns with the science-oriented worldviews of the Western society which is dictating modernity in Africa currently through globalization. Yet, African culture needs to be able to penetrate the notable cultures of the world in order to be able to impart the world. This is a suggestion in the direction of globalizing African culture.

However, there appears to be a contradiction in the composition of African culture as informed by its interaction with globalization. This is as a result of globalization being a universal phenomenon, and as a result it has influenced African culture such that what is referred to as the African way of life today is indeed a Westernization of African culture. This is as a result of the influence of globalization and this confirms the submission that there has been 'a radical shift in global patterns of cultural consumption' according to Dominic Power and Allen Scott⁸. Such a radical shift in the African context is a comprehensive adoption of Western (or Eastern) ways of life by Africans which is a demonstration of the capability and power of a culture to influence another as James Neuliep believes that 'all cultures exist within terrestrial context'⁹. The adoption of Western ways of life or culture through general use of the products of innovative technology and science holds true that globalization through its principles and ideals is making everywhere look the same as Marthin Mowforth and Munt Ian opine¹⁰. Yet, this is overtly affirmed in the conclusion that though cultures across the globe do vary in the manner and norms of expressions, yet because humans are of the same species, it is discovered that the process that underlie the differing behaviors are the same everywhere as David Myers, Jakin Abell and Sani Fabio assert¹¹. What is suggested in the comparison of cultures and their natures is that there is the unification of human culture which can only be ascertained through the globalization of cultures which 'everywhere' signifies. African culture could be seen as very receptive of Western culture which globalization has enabled in spite of the conscious and vigorous effort that has been made by culture custodians in Africa to defend and protect African culture. This is because globalization has been indefatigable and intensifying in its forces and processes of conveyance and spread as Jonathan Rigg has observed¹². In addition, African culture cannot resist Western culture(s) because technology which is a viable agent of globalization, according to Arthur O'Sullivan, has defied the natural procedures in its system, productions and the exchanges of the productions and systems.¹³ To this end, the intensification and indefatigability that Rigg asserts as characterizing

⁸ Power, Dominic and Scott, Allen. *Cultural Industries and the Production of Culture*. Abington: Routledge, 2004.

⁹ Neuliep, James. *Intercultural Communication. A Contextual Approach*. London: SAGE Publications. Inc, 2009.

¹⁰ Mowforth, Martin and Munt, Ian. *Jourism and Sustainable Development, Globalization and New Tourism in the Third World*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

¹¹ Myers, David, Abell, Jackin and Sani, Fabio. *Social Psychology Second Edition*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill, 2014.

¹² Rigg, Jonathan. *An Everyday Geography of the Global South*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

¹³ O'Sullivan, Arthur. *Urban Economics*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2009

globalization align with O'Sullivan's technological violation of natural procedures in its system and production as an agent of globalization. This has manifested in the borderless ruthlessness with which technology aided the universalization of Covid-19 which could be described as negative globalization. The universalization of Covid-19 translates to or signifies negative globalization because unlike the spread of innovative technological, scientific, artistic or cultural products from the Occidental and Oriental worlds to the rest of the world and to Africa, what was spread in the case of Covid-19 was a pandemic of an unimaginable lethal potency. This observation is echoed in the disclosure that:

Then, in April, the number of Covid-19 deaths in Wuhan revised upward, tripling the previous count and pushing the estimated mortality rate up again... All-cause mortality during March and April was substantially higher in places hit hard by the virus, like New York and New Jersey than in previous years. Mortality rates from other countries affected by the pandemic have added to confusion about how deadly the virus is. The rate is nearly 14 percent in Italy.¹⁴

In the comments above, it could be deduced that Covid-19 is a highly lethal disease. Such inference is signified in the phrases 'revised upward' 'tripling the previous count', mortality rate up again', 'was substantially higher', and 'hit hard by the virus'. These comments convey the fatalities of Covid-19 across the world with specific emphasis on Wuhan, where Covid-19 first broke out and the United States of America. In Nigeria, COvid-19 has been lethal.

Theoretical Framework

This research paper is anchored on the Hollis Chenery's model of Structural-Change Theory which lays emphasis on the patterns of social development as the ideal means and approach to economic development of a nation. This is because the Structural Change Theory advocates that many countries across the world do acquire wealth on a constant basis through different channels of change in a society. This constant change in society has the potential for bringing about development in different ramifications of the given society. The Hollis Chenery's Structural-Change Theory has been considered appropriate for this research because of the tenet that social change can effect development as it has been conceived that the awareness that the Covid-19 pandemic has created in the Yoruba people is a reorientation that will make them re-evaluate their belief about and dispositions to the rest of the world.

¹⁴ Dalton, Clayton. *So How Deadly is Covid-19?* June 5, 2020 @ www.blogs.scientificamerica.com. Retrieved September 13, 2020, 2020.

Demystification of Yoruba (African) Mysticism as a Post-Covid-19 New Culture

As a result of the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural ramification of the global society with specific emphasis, in the context of this paper, on the Yoruba culture in the Southwest Nigeria, the perception of the Yoruba people would have come to the realization of the nature and overt limitation of the Yoruba mystic power and the potency of the Yoruba traditional apothecary. This realization, however, would have, indeed, do have a terrifying effect on the Yoruba people. This is because the Yoruba people overtly demonstrate overwhelming pride in their mystic power and traditional medicine as constituents of their culture. The Yoruba mystic power is a tremendously valuable heritage of the traditional Yoruba society such that the unimaginable things such as mysterious disappearance (*egbe*), destiny manipulation, destiny promotion or destiny exchange, gun-shot neutralization, money-making rituals, hypnotic *juju* and, warding off of indigenous diseases induced by the agents of the Yoruba pantheon, the gods and goddesses are routine accomplishments. The Yoruba society is a densely animist society. The people worship the deities and the gods (and goddesses), which include *Orunmila*, *Ogun*, *Osanyin*, *Obatala*, *Osun*, *Egungun*, *Sango*, *Oya* as well as *Eyo*. Even, in spite of the infiltration of other religions from the rest of the world especially from the Occident and the Orient, nominal adherents of such foreign religions still have cause to resort to the Yoruba animist powers. That is, the people combine the foreign religions with Yoruba traditional animism. However, Covid-19 could not be prevented or eliminated by African (Yoruba) animist rituals, *juju* or voodoo.

The calamity that befell the Yoruba region through Covid-19 was unprecedented. Lagos, a state in the Southwest of Nigeria, was incomparably hit. This means that the gods did not see the coming of Covid-19 and as such could not alert the people. Or it might be conjectured that the gods, the goddesses or the deities saw Covid-19 coming but were too angry with the people for the people's religious ambivalence through worship hybridity. Worship hybridity in the context of this paper is the combination of the worship of God with the worship of the gods which might be seen in the extraterrestrial clime in the cosmos as hypocrisy. Either that the deities saw the pandemic outbreak but the intensity level of the worship by the people was too low for cosmos-terrain communication between the deities and the animist adherents, what has been constant is that Covid-19 broke out in Nigeria and Yoruba animist ritual rites could not exorcise the people or remove the virus from the body of an infected person. The Yoruba animism and mysticism has not been able to treat a Covid-19 patient.. This is in spite of the claim that through African animism the spirit of sick people which have left the bodies of the sick people during surgical operations could be ambushed and captured in the spiritual realm thereby preventing the spirit from getting back to the physical bodies.¹⁵ Yet, despite this unprecedented magical power, the Yoruba African animism did

¹⁵ Nwolise, Osisioma. *Is Physical Security Alone Enough for the Survival, Progress and Happiness of Man?* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2013

not address the Covid-19 outbreak long after the outbreak of the disease in Nigeria. It is perhaps more worrisome going by the claim of Africa to self determination and sufficiency and belief in their traditional mystic poer that a second wave of the pandemic has broken out in Nigeria and Lagos, a region in the Southwest Nigeria constantly leads the daily records of new cases of the virus.

The African continent currently relies on the scientific and technological innovations on Covid-19 vaccine. Again, out of the many vaccines for Covid-19 which have reached advanced stage of development, completion and availability in terms of supplies, none is coming from Africa. Examples of these many vaccines from the West and the East include Sinopharm (Beijing), Sinopharm (Wuhan), Sinovac, Anhui Zhifei Longcom, IMB at CAMS, and CanSino, all in China. Others include Moderna in the United States, Murdoch, Children's in Australia, AstraZeneca in the United Kingdom, FosunPharma and BioNTech, Prizer (a combined effort by China, Germany and the United States), ZydusCadila by India, CureVac from Germany, and Gamaleya from Russia. Other countries such as Cuba, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Canada, Italy and South Korea have been identified as having progressed in developing potent Covid-19 vaccines at the global stage and by globally regulated standards. No African country has made any universally acclaimed progress apart from self adulation in that direction like the Madagascar's herb jamboree. Even if the West through the World Health Organization puts African herbs to clinical trials in order to ascertain the efficacy and potency of the herbs, such is humbling the African pride. The involvement of the global community in the authentication of African herbs hurts the self-adulation and self-assertion that characterize African heritage, especially the Yoruba heritage. Until Covid-19, custodians of African culture with specific emphasis on Yoruba culture custodians believed that it is the Whites that hindered them or Africa as a cultural bloc from attaining global limelight or acclaim. Covid-19 consequently has been a one-in-a-millennium opportunity for the continent especially the Yoruba people to prove their capability in medical research. It is potentially correct to aver that WHO's endorsement may not be needed if the African herbs had cured many infected patients. The Yoruba medicine is particularly humbled because it has always been taunted as all-curing. Such a wild claim is in the name of advancing the African consciousness. As it is in the case of Covis-19 so far African consciousness as a cultural ideology is mere rhetoric and mercantile oratory. Africa, therefore, relies on the rest of the world for solution to the Covid-19 pandemic going by the revelation that:

Pfizer, a research-based global biopharmaceutical company, says Nigeria will remain a priority country in its plans for the supply of viable Covid-19 vaccines to Africa. Pfizer Country Manager and Representative in Africa, Subair Olayinka gave this assurance on Wednesday, during a virtual

meeting between representatives of the BNT162 COvid-19 vaccine candidate and Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.¹⁶

In this regard, the insinuation that science is cowardly, pompous, despotic, or arrogant¹⁷ could be seen as a ruse. As it is currently, Africa can only get solution to the Covid-19 pandemic through the products of Western or Eastern medical ingenuities. This is because:

While the race to find safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines continues, African countries are signing up to a ground-breaking initiative, which aims to secure at least 220 million doses of the vaccine for the continent, once licensed and approved. All 54 countries on the continent have expressed interest in COVAX, a global initiative which is co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The partners are working with governments and manufacturers to procure enough vaccine doses to protect the most vulnerable populations on the continent.¹⁸

Africa's Covid-19 incapability has led Africans especially the Yoruba people in the Southwest region of Nigeria to re-evaluate their reliance on their cultural assets as a strong and uncontested source of healing them. This is particularly so because African mystical, to date, has not yet recorded any advancement, success or breakthrough in such critical health situations such as dialysis, kidney transplant, fetal incubation or Caesarean Section. Perhaps this is to the effect that the reliance of Africans on their idols and mystic power may be deficient because the idols and the mystic power may not be comprehensive in tackling the myriads of African or human problems.

Defeatist Attack on African Communalism

In the context of this discourse, communalism shall be seen as social interaction, kinship kindness or cultural association which is intended to foster integrated living and benevolence among a category of people in a society, tribe or societal unit such as a family. This value is common with the indigenous people of the Southwest Nigeria, the Yoruba people. In fact the Yoruba always tell their visitor *ile n'le e* (feel free in my home, the home is your home) and the

¹⁶ Igomu, Tessy. *Pfizer Assures Nigeria of Covid-19 Vaccine Supply* @ www.healthwise.punchng.com August 6, 2020. Retrieved September 16, 2020, 2020.

¹⁷ Nwoli, Osioma. *Is Physical Security Alone Enough for the Survival, Progress and Happiness of Man?* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2013.

¹⁸ World Health Organization. *African countries engaging in ground-breaking COVID-19 vaccine initiative September 3rd, 2020*. @ <https://www.afro.who.int/news/african-countries-engaging-ground-breaking-covid-19-vaccine-initiative> Retrieved October 1st, 2020, 2020.

Ibadan people in the Southwest Nigeria pride themselves in the expression *Ibadan gbo'ole o gb'ole* (Ibadan accommodates even thieves and lazy people in which case thieving and laziness are metaphors for all kinds of attitudes). This unique aboriginal sense of accommodation and tolerance is borne out of the Yoruba people's concept of *s'eniyan* (being characteristically pleasant or humane) which 'approximates those levels of virtues, degree and quality of a person and personality' among the Yoruba people.¹⁹ This way of life is age-long among the Yoruba and this echoes the Yoruba committed sense of association. In fact, while the English believe *three* is a crown, the Yoruba people believe that *k'arink'apo, yiye l'o n ye ni* (it is noble to be together). Indeed, the Yoruba have gone cosmic by believing and asserting that *eni o l'egbel'aye, konil'egbel'orun* (anyone who does not keep association on earth will be lonely in heaven).

However, there is a new consciousness that there is equally danger in spite of its taunted benefits, in interaction, integration and association. That is inter-personality may necessarily mean transmission of communicable diseases and instilling behavioral vices and ills from persons to persons in a close associational interaction. Yet, to a great extent, the Yoruba associational philosophy of *ara kiisa fara* (we should not avoid each other's contact as we are one) has been rattled and deconstructed with the advent of Covid-19. Perhaps, it is high time the Yoruba integrated their cultural values with what obtains at the global cultural centre-stage such that what the Yoruba people practice as their culture will be realistic, practical and doable to the people of the rest of the world. This will translate to globalization of the Yoruba cultural heritage which has its advantage of putting the Yoruba society or culture at the world centre stage. It should dawn on the Yoruba community that globalization which has been forceful in its reach across the globe necessarily needs to be tolerated in order to eradicate the people's sense of closed culture. Though in the actual sense, it is not a deliberate action by the generality of the Yoruba to close their culture to the rest of the world the reality is that many of the tenets of Yoruba culture as an African culture, incontrovertibly, are impracticable to the peoples of the rest of the world. This is visibly authenticated in the social interaction question. In this regards, there has been a misconception by the Yoruba people (indeed, Africans in general) on the individualistic tendencies as a cultural practice among the people of Europe, America, and the Far East regions of the world. This is because the Yoruba people (Africans) take individualistic tendencies for isolationist tendencies. Therefore, in the expansive rhetoric of postcolonial narratives of lamentation, individualism has been repudiated in favor of collectivism. Yet, individualism is not negative and collectivism is not positive particularly in social interaction as a cultural practice. Individualism does not discard exchange of pleasantries, small talks and greetings which are viscous agents of relationship lubrication in the African experience. Rather,

¹⁹ Dasylya, Ademola. 'Globalizing the Yoruba *Omoluabi* Concept of the Persona: A Theophilosophical Perspective of the African Heritage'. *Hirenthan Journal of the Humanities Volume 1 Number 1* pp 79 – 95, 2014.

individualism is the attribute and philosophy of personal management on the peculiar bases of material resources, time and emotions and choices. Individualism spends or utilizes resources for adequacy and satisfaction or fulfillment. It enables the utilization of little time to accomplish many tasks. It allows rest or relaxation at the time nature requires it in the body of an individual especially at the end of a hard day at work or on a weekend. Individualism makes it possible for a person to reason and take informed decisions. Individualism therefore eliminates predation on limited resources, time wastage, complications emanating from lack of rest and removes undue interference in the decision-making processes of an individual particularly that a piece of advice which a Yoruba person especially an elderly person gives is expected to be used by the person to whom such advice has been given. Conversely, these are what collectivism promotes in the cultural ramification in Africa with emphasis on the Yoruba society.

The Yoruba community needs be reminded that the age of community was practicable and practiced during Africa's era of agrarian existence. This was the time when community sense or location is defined. It was the time when produce from subsistence farming served the people in the community. Utilities might not be necessary to be paid for. Undue pressure was limited on the finance of the head of the family. But today life style is complex as a result of Westernization of African social system which includes the Yoruba social and cultural systems. Such Westernization is visible in capitalism which demands utmost discipline of employees. It also manifests in austere management of resources since the practice of the economic tenets of the Global North include currency exchange and taxation. Yet currency exchange as it relates to the naira to the dollar reflects that the naira is currently weaker than the dollar i.e. at N460 to 1 dollar. The consequence of this is that Nigerian economy went into recession and there has been high inflation in the economy. An economic circumstance like this coupled with employee's discipline in a capitalist economic does not permit uncontrolled financing as well as recklessness with time both of which do characterize African collectivism. Again, it cannot be convincingly argued that during Africa's era of collectivism (or communalism) there were no crimes such as poisoning, encroachment, incest, theft, wars or ill feelings such as anger, backbiting, bickering, adultery or envy. These are human vices and people in the African era of collectivism were no angels or saints. Therefore, individualism is no evil because it is no isolationism but self control, and collectivism has its limit and may not apply to the present experience. This is because it has the capability of transfusing the negatives just as Covid-19 has symbolized the converse side of globalization. If the world is re-jigging globalization principles and practices in the direction of isolationist globalization or individualist collectivism attainable through sterner visa restriction to control migration further, the Yoruba society may not succeed in further advancing the collectivist or communal culture. This is because never did the people envisage a circumstance such as a pandemic like Covid-19 capable of preventing them from visiting family members and well-wishers. Covid-19 has done this. Again, Covid-19 has made the people experience lockdowns ceasing their freedom and rights and consequently impoverished

them. Therefore, communalism which manifests in constant social gathering, living together in large numbers, kinship kindness or communal benevolence is put to test and rattled.

Restrictive Elimination of the *O wa n be* (Partying) Philosophical Culture

One cultural trademark of the majority of the people of the Southwestern part of Nigeria, the Yoruba, is excessive flair for organizing social gatherings (parties). It is true that virtually all peoples of the world do organize parties but the mode, manner and purpose for the Yoruba social parties are revolutionary and unique. The revolutionary uniqueness is, first of all noticeable in the local term for parties among the Yoruba people. That is *O wanbe* which generally means my fashion is state-of-the-art and better than yours or all others'. To this end, the Yoruba people's party is a parade of fashion and styles. This may explain why the first thing that a typical traditional Yoruba person who has cause to organize a party does is to choose the clothes that everybody attending the party must wear, and everybody must buy from the organizer of the party at a higher prize. Two purposes tend to have been certain regarding the reasons why most traditional Yoruba like parties. The first is the avenue the parties provide for show of fashion and style; while the second is the economic gains from the sale of the common clothes for everybody which is called *aso ebi*. There are fallouts to these two. The actual fallout of the fashion instant is that the outrageous fashion of the people often results in adulterous consequences in the inter-gender context and envy and strife in the intra-gender consideration. From the inter-gender perspective, there has emerged the phenomenon of Yoruba Demon which describes a well-dressed man who is a philanderer. He struggles to be well-dressed wearing in particular a Senator's Suit (a local style) in order to impress a woman who herself is gorgeous in her dress. She thinks he is wealthy or comfortable but realizes that the man is fake usually after the man has got the woman pregnant. This accounts for the many Baby Mamas (single female parents) among the Yoruba in the contemporary times.

The second consequence is economic. Money flows during the organization of a Yoruba party especially those party organized by the subaltern and the middle-class people, and the traffic of the flow is from the well-wishers to the organizer. And the organizer realizes that apology will suffice for those who would not be entertained. Therefore it is always a case of little food many guests. The organizer realizes that it is customary that the guests are compelled to help the organizer financially by offering tokens. The organizer realizes that a person will be stigmatized if the person does not purchase the *aso ebi* from the sale of which the organizer makes gains. In addition to this, the traditional practice is that the guests are expected to *spray* currency notes on the forehead of the organizer of the party in appreciation and support.

In addition to this, the musician (s) whom the organizer has invited to entertain the guests expects the guests (and the organizer does too) to spray currency notes on them as the case may be. That is not all, the guests may have to drive

across state borders to attend the party. When one looks at it critically, there have been about five loopholes serving as conduit pipe through which money flows out of the pocket of guests into the bank account of the organizer. Who then gains from the organization of an *O wambe* (a Yoruba party)? It is the organizer of the party. That means guests lose. This is one area through which most Yoruba people in the Southwest Nigeria lose income. They did not know this until Covid-19 struck. The lockdowns which government at various levels declared in Nigeria especially the total lockdowns declared in Lagos and other municipal states such as Ogun State, Osun State and partial lockdowns in Oyo State, Ondo State and Ekiti State (the Six States that constitute the Southwest Nigeria) exposed how financially bankrupt most Yoruba people were. Many had no food to eat. Many survived on the palliatives that kind-hearted well-meaning people offered. Such well-meaning Nigerians who distributed palliatives included radio personalities such as Kola Olootu, Yinka Ayefele and to mention a few, Oriyomi Hamzat. The awareness is becoming a cultural practice that the *O wambe* is an impoverishment and the sense of communal collectivism which well-wishers cite in the cultural sphere of the Yoruba people is waning. Many have realized that attending *O wambe* particularly is not healthy for funds accumulation intended for future contingency. Even though many who have been endemically immersed in the *o wambe* culture find it hard to desist, yet conscience may prick them reminding them of the Covid-19 experience.

Cautious Resentment of Migration to the West or the Far East with the De-internationalization of Tastes

There is an evidential caution by the Yoruba people (and this is true of Nigerians and Africans at large) on migrating to the Whiteman's land – the West or the Far East. It needs be emphasized that Nigeria (Africa) is an underdeveloped country and by the virtue of this, the Southwest region of Nigeria is an underdeveloped society. All indices of underdevelopment are visible in the Southwest of Nigeria as applicable to the entire country and Africa in general. It has been opined that industrialization is key to economic development and that Nigeria is not an industrialized nation because as at 2018 Nigeria was still testing industrialization policies and strategies.²⁰ Yet the world around Africa is advancing and getting more complex through scientific breakthroughs.²¹ In addition to this Nigeria is still being advised to adopt renewable energy resources for power generation because 'Nigeria's electrification rate is less than 50% of the population'.²² And of equal concern is the revelation that:

²⁰ Adeleke, Adepoju. *Development by Choice and Prime in Performance: Entrepreneurship for Industrialization*. Ede: Redeemer's University Press, 2018.

²¹ Layiwola, Dele. 2010. *APlace Where Three Roads Meet: Literature, Culture and Society*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

²² Sadik, Omowumi. *Energy Crisis in Nigeria Nanotechnology as a Sustainable Option* Anniversary and Convocation Lecture at Redeemer's University, Nigeria, 2015.

Technically speaking therefore, a recession occurs when there is negative economic (GDP) growth in a country for two consecutive quarters. This was the case with Nigeria when it posted -0.67 percent -1.49 percent GDP growth in the first and second quarters of 2016. This was to extend to the third and fourth quarters of 2016 and first quarter of 2017 when it posted GDP growth of -2.34 percent, -1.73 percent and -0.91 percent respectively. The effect of recession is that 'macroeconomic indicators such as GDP, investment spending, capacity utilization, household income, business profits and inflation fall, while bankruptcies and the unemployment rate rise' – we saw this happen in Nigeria.²³

The economic deficiencies as above particularly lack of electricity, inflation, drop in household income, bankruptcies and rise in unemployment has resulted in many people especially the younger generation to migrate to other countries especially to 'The West and Far East'. The industrialization of Lagos being a major port city in the Southwest of Nigeria is not enough to convince many people to stay back at home. The struggle hard to migrate to other parts of the world where they think the grass is greener. Despite the fact that many Nigerians that they are likely to be denied visa especially to the United States of America, perhaps because Donald & Trump is reported to have referred to African countries *shithole countries* many Nigerians (with emphasis on South-westerners) still commit so much money and time to processing travel visas abroad.²⁴

However, the unprecedented phenomenon of Covid-19 with the morbid havoc that the pandemic wreaked on the global community has raised the novel consciousness in the Yoruba community that in the deistic realm or from the theo-philosophical ramification no race, clime or tribe is superior to the other. The peculiar emphasis on the Yoruba from the many peoples in Nigeria and Africa is along their proverbial enunciations after it is the people of most of the African countries and Nigerian ethnic groups that desperately desire to leave Nigeria and migrate abroad. This is because of the alignment of the novel deistic and theo-philosophical circumstance and the Yoruba wisdom as contained in their proverbial system. This is in connection with the assertion that proverbs are crucial when a human tribe wants to inculcate cultural norms and values. There are some Yoruba sayings that repudiate travelling to a foreign place as an appreciation of the distant destination. For instance, the Yoruba people believe that *ibi gbogbo lati n ko adie ale* (evils are everywhere) and that *ajo ko le dun, k'oni'le ma re'ile* (no matter how comfortable one is in the Diaspora, one is

²³ Ebi, Ernest. 'Negotiating the Recession Challenges: Options for the Structurally Unbalanced Nigeria Economy'. Convocation Lecture at Redeemer's University, 2017.

²⁴ Chironda, Melody. *Cape Town-Have You Ever Been Denied a Visa?* @ www.allafrica.com/stories April 17, 2019. Retrieved September 18, 2020, 2019.

better and more comfortable) at home. To this end, this aboriginal belief system henceforth motivates or determines the migration decision of most Yoruba people in the post-Covid-19 era. This is particularly so because never before did the Yoruba people (Africans) envisage that such as case of lethality could originate from the white man's land. The Yoruba people hold the Whites in high esteem and awe. In fact they believe the Whites are second to God. The Yoruba see the Whites as saintly and invincible. Therefore, to see the pandemic emanate from abroad with higher fatalities among the whites and perhaps minimal casualties among the Blacks tends to be a demystification of the white race and, in that regard, an elevation of the black race. For instance, while the number of deaths in the United Kingdom was 41, 664 as at September 16, 2020, the number of deaths in Sudan was 836. Again, while the number of deaths in Italy was 35,633, it was 81 in Chad. Also while the number of deaths in the United States was 195,342, it was 1, 088 in Nigeria.²⁵ With this statistics, the invincibility hypothesis tends to have transposed from the seemingly illusive perception of such for the Whites by the blacks to the Blacks themselves.

In addition to this, the mess arising from the experience of Nigerians stranded abroad but willing to return home but who could not. This is because countries of the world had suspended international migration. It was worse when the Nigerians abroad who were no longer feeling comfortable in foreign lands were asked to bear the financial cost of evacuation by the Nigerian Federal Government and would be in the words of Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO Nigerians in Diapora Commission (NIDCOM), 'compulsorily quarantined'.²⁶ Such an experience was not pleasant to Yoruba people because the idea of quarantining a Nigeria as a result of where the person has been and is coming from sharply contradicts the Yoruba people's philosophy of *Wole, ile baba omo kib'omo leru, wole* (enter, a child should not be afraid of or be restricted from entering the child father's house). The import of this Yoruba belief is that a person aboriginal to a place is free to go up and down, and majestically too in the person's place of birth. Therefore, the Yoruba saw those who were quarantined as being psychologically punished and as such psychologically depressed. The people consequently saw the cause of the quarantining and psychological torture as reprehensible. Though it is not all the categories of Yoruba people that would want to stay back home. For example, the millennials do not tend to feel that they should stay back home, and there are a couple of reasons for this. The first is that the Yoruba millennials (as the millennials of other ethnic groups in Nigeria) are essentially given to pleasure and easy money. Most of them do not want to be artisans or holders of university degrees. They want to be hiphop singers, they want to travel abroad so as to be able to convert the hard currencies to naira. This situation was factorial in President Muhammadu Buhari's description of Nigerian youths as

²⁵ Raynor, Best. *Covid-19 Death Rates Worldwide as of September 16, 2020 by Country* @ www.statista.com/110. Retrieved September 18, 2020, 2020.

²⁶ Nicom, Media. *Covid-19: FG Gives Guidelines for Evacuation of Nigerian Nationals*. @ www.ncaa.gov.ng/covid-19advisor. June 19, 2020. Retrieved September 18, 2020, 2020.

lazy. The second reason is that the millennials are aware that Covid-19 fatalities are more among the geriatric category of the population most especially those with co-morbidities such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and so on. Yet, the tendency is that these commodities are rare among the millennials who are just about 20 years old. However, in spite of the avaricious disposition that drives the millennials, the Covid-19 undertone still interferes with their decision on migration.

This becomes more manifest in the de-internalization of delicacies. Among the Yoruba of the Southwest Nigeria and, to a great extent, the rest of the country, it is a thing of pride, in fact, elitist pride to say that one is patronizing Chinese Restaurant for lunch, as example. Such a person is usually seen as civilized and rich. This is because there is always racial discrimination such that it is only the Chinese that were allowed patronage and thus served at many of the outlets that specialize in Chinese cuisines. Such discrimination has, however, attracted the wrath of the Nigerian government as contained in this report:

The Federal Government (FG) has shut down the Chinese outlet, Haufei Restaurant & Mall, for discriminating against Nigerians. The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission "FCCPC" has shut down the Chinese outlet, Haufei Restaurant & Mall, after Nigerians accused the restaurant of racial discrimination while attending to Nigerians at its location in Victoria Island, Lagos. There have been complaints regarding the business model of the Chinese restaurant after a Nigerian complained that his experience while ordering at Haufei Restaurant was unpleasant. According to Nigerians, who shared their experience on Twitter, Nigerians were not allowed to dine in the restaurant; they could only get takeout, but Chinese were allowed.²⁷

Anyone who is able to beat the racial barrier and dine at a Chinese restaurant is seen as well-connected and wealthy. Such connection could be in the form of the person working in a Chinese company in Lagos which is prestigious in the worldview of the Yoruba. In the same worldview, a person who is able to overcome the racial huddle and dine at a Chinese restaurant in Lagos, or Abeokuta and any other part of the Southwestern part of Nigeria is seen as wealthy because the Yuan, the Chinese currency and the currency with which the ingredients for the Chinese cuisines are purchased exchanges for the naira, Nigerian currency at 57 naira per Yuan, according to themoneyconverter.com/CNY/NGN This means that it takes multiple of 57 times the amount of money for one plate of a Nigerian cuisine. In other words,

²⁷ Fakoyejo, Olalekan. *FCCPC Shuts down Chinese Restaurant for Racial Discrimination*. @ <https://nairametrics.com/2020/03/14/fccpc-shuts-down-chinese-restaurant-for-racial-discrimination>, March 14, 2020. Retrieved November 6, 2020, 2020.

somebody who orders a plate of a Chinese delicacy can actually feed 57 people. It is only those who are assumed to be rich that can patronize a Chinese restaurant which is deployed in this sense as a symbol of foreign tastes. However, such tastes are no longer marks of glitz and prestige as a result of Covid-19 outbreak. This is particularly so that Covid-19 erupted first in China. The case in Southwest Nigeria could be seen as a reflection of what obtains globally in terms of Covid-19-induced low attitude to Chinese delicacies and globalization. This may be inferred from:

The corona virus has dealt a heavy blow to the foodservice industry around the world, including in China. Chinese restaurateurs are finding innovative new ways to adapt to the changes and thrive in the post-pandemic environment. Restaurants are trying everything from making their meals more affordable to bringing fine dining to their customers' homes. The news seemed to be on everybody's lips last month: Against the backdrop of an industry battered by the COVID-19 pandemic, chef René Redzepi announced he was converting his famous Copenhagen Michelin two-star restaurant into a hamburger joint. The coronavirus has dealt a heavy blow to restaurateurs around the world.²⁸

The Nigerian situation is particularly abysmal economically because the economy could not survive the lockdown and prices of commodities especially foodstuffs went up astronomically. The hike in the prices of commodities made such luxury unaffordable to many even those who could afford it before.

In Conclusion

The nature of the Yoruba culture and social practices has changed significantly, and the change is directly attributable to the advent of Covid-19 in this region of Nigeria. Though the disease affected the rest of Nigeria but the responses of each culture in Nigeria differed. This is because Covid-19 proved so many Yoruba traditional assumptions and social practices wrong and limited in continued relevance. Such deflation of traditional assumptions among the Yoruba include the unraveling of the of age-long assumption about African (Yoruba) mystic powers and herbs, defeatist onslaught on African communal habitations, restriction on the *O wambe* (that is, the social gathering or fun party) practice, selective resentment of migration to the Occident or to the Orient and this is accompanied by the de-internationalization of the consumption tastes and patterns of the different classes of the Yoruba society. This Covid-19-mediated change in the socio-cultural ramification of the Yoruba worldview in Africa is a re-conceptualization of the Yoruba culture and a long-

²⁸ Bonnefoy, Florent. *China Offers Insight into what Restaurants could Look like Post-COVID*. @ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/how-china-s-restaurants-are-adapting-to-a-post-coronavirus-world>. July 9, 2020. Retrieved November 6, 2020, 2020.

lasting redefinition of the Yoruba cultural attitude to globalization and its channels, agents, products and other matrixes.

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