

**GLOBALIZATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALUES:  
A STUDY OF AKWETE NDOKI IN ABIA STATE OF NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

Globalization has been one of the most hotly-debated topics in international economics over the past few years. Globalization refers to increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political and economical spheres. The realities of living in a neighbourhood, the tensions that exist and the ethics of being a neighbour are referred to as neighbourhood values. This paper tries to examine the effect of globalization on neighbourhood values of the people of Akwete Ndoki town. A sample of 120 respondents was selected using the multistage sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The findings show that the people have high values for life and communal relationship. However, with the impact of globalization emphases shifted from communal relationship to individualistic life-style as observed both in the physical structures in the town and the attitude of the youths. Finally, the paper suggests that in order to re-establish neighbourhood values in Akwete, there should be appropriate policy which should help to develop and sell their indigenous technology in the global market. This will create an environment for the propagation of the people's values.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Neighbourhood values, Culture, Indigenous technology

**Introduction**

Human societies across the globe have established progressively closer contact, but recently the pace has rather increased. Jet air planes, cheap telephone services, e-mail, computers, huge ocean going vessels, instant capital flows all have made the world more inter- dependent than ever. Multinational corporations manufacture products in many countries and sell to consumers around the world. Money, technology and raw materials move more ever swiftly across national borders. Also products and finances, ideas and cultures circulate more freely. To the traditional African society, culture is very important

because it is used to identify a group and promote self-esteem, value and morals. Both material and non material cultures of the people of any given society to a large extent exert influence on the mode of economic production and social practices of the people. This in turn dictates the pattern of social relations, socio-cultural practices and the development of cultural values and virtues that help to promote a stable society.

Human societies are systems of social relationships (Dressler and Carns, 1973). These relationships are determined by the culture of the people. Human beings achieve unity and integration through that culture. This is because, people learn and acquire the culture of their people, including what is expected of them under any given conditions. As a system of social relationships, society serves to fashion those relationships into a functioning whole. The outcome is that we engage in human interaction in characteristic ways that are approved by the consensus of the members of the society and are calculated to promote group solidarity and mutual welfare.

However, these socio-cultural practices are becoming a dying culture. For Africa, all the central planks of the process of globalization have been implemented over the past fifteen to twenty years as structural adjustment programmes. Countries have deregulated foreign investment, liberalized their imports, removed currency control, and emasculated the direct economic role of the state, and so on. The results have been further undermining the internal, national productive capacity, social security and democratic integrity of these countries.

This growing integration of economies and societies around the world has been one of the most hotly-debated issues in international circle over the past few years. Rapid economic growth in many countries that were poor about twenty years ago is one of the all positive aspects of globalization (Ponk, 2006).

It created interdependence among countries of the world. However, developing countries like Nigeria are finding it very difficult to cope with this global change. In Nigeria, many parents have resorted to illegal cross border trade and as a result the children and youths are left out of parental care. The implication of this is that the number of rape cases, victims of human trafficking and violence are all in the increase. In other cases privatization of public enterprise had led to loss of jobs while removal of subsidies leads to poverty and high cost of living (Anao, 2002; Adewumi, 2001; MAN, 2003). Able bodied men and women who have lost their jobs now take to anti-social activities in order to beat the high cost of living as is seen in Akwete Ndoki of Ukwu East Local Government Area. Akwete used to be a quiet town where respect for life, liberty, justice, equity, caring and integrity is upheld in high esteem. They believe that the above qualities are what are important in life. Their major occupation are fishing, trading and weaving of the famous Akwete cloth (David 1991). But the effect of globalization into the Nigeria labour tremendously affected the values of the people.

The objectives of the study include:

1. To examine the neighbourhood values in Akwete.
2. To identify the effect of globalization on the neighbourhood values in Akwete.

3. To give suggestions on how Akwete people could adjust in order to adapt to the changed global system.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

This paper will anchor on the Modernization theory of social change. This theory portrays marked influences of classical theorists such as Durkhiem and Max Weber (cited in Ake 1996). However, many analysts of modernization follow the examples of Durkheim, Tonnies, Parsons and Merton. Both Durkhiem and Tonnies were concerned with the moral break- down and social disorganization, which followed the loss of traditional community.

The basic premise of modernization theory is that the status of traditional cultural values declines as a society modernizes. Social change has been accompanied by urbanization, industrialization, formal education, modern technology and changing nature of work, health advances and population growth. All these have combined to erode the position of honour, prestige and respect accorded to cultural values and family values in simpler societies. In non-modernized societies, family members find time to stay together. They enjoy moonlight tales and meet each others physical and emotional needs. They started requiring external assistance when modernization disrupted the traditional (mostly agrarian) family economic and social support measures.

The last few decades have witnessed the growing impact of distinct global trends which have had profound implication for the world economically, socially, culturally and politically. There has been rapid growth of information, technology and the increased global integration of trade and capital flow. This trend has resulted in a significant shift in the world economy, uprooting the old way of life, thereby threatening livelihood and culture (Carrison, 2006).

### **Methodology**

The locale for this research is Akwete, a small town in Ndoki community of Ukwa East Local Government Area of Abia State. It is bounded in the east by Ohanso, in the West by Asa, in the North by Nkporobu and in the South by part of the Imo River, the Ndoki water-side popularly known as Ndoki harbour or Ndoki Port (David, 1991; George, 1982). Akwete became the headquarters of Ukwa-East Local Government Area in 1993 and since then there has been a lot of economic, political, social and cultural changes. Akwete has a population of 333,999 (NPC, 2006).

The instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of both open ended and close ended questions and it is divided into two sections. Section A dealt with the personal data of the respondents while section B consists of questions on Akwete peoples' values and on the effect of globalization on those values.

The sample size is 130. According to Oranye (2000) the sample size of a research study can be derived from the population of the study by adopting YARO YAMANIÖS method. The formula is stated as follows:

$$n = N / 1 + (Ne^2)$$

Where n = sample size

N = population of the study

e = sampling error expressed in 7.5% (0.075)

1 = Constant

Thus,  $n = 333999 / 1 + (333999 \text{ multiplied by } 0.075)$

$$= 333999 / 1 + 25049.9$$

$$= 333999 / 25050.9$$

$$n = 133.3$$

In order to make the sample accessible, it was reduced to 130.

The multi stage sampling technique was used for data collection. But to make the population from which data were collected more manageable, it was clustered into ten. Akwete is made up of ten compounds namely, Isiama, Amakam, Obiohuru, Umuwibari, Uhuobu, Umukamalu, Umumai Uhuogbuji, Umugeorge, and Umuonyeike, each of these is known as Onuobu (Goerge, 1982). These ten compounds formed the ten clusters. Two compounds were randomly selected from these ten clusters. Namely, Isiama compound and Umuwibari compound. The sample size is one hundred and twenty. The house holds were serialized from 001 to 829 and a random start of 011 was taken. We also used only the adult members of the population who are between the ages of 18 to 60. In analyzing our data, we employed simple percentage. Frequency distribution tables were constructed for all the variables to determine the trend of responses (see Appendix).

### **Discussion and Findings**

Out of the 130 questionnaires that were distributed, 120 were properly completed and returned. Thus, the analysis and discussion were based on 120 respondents. Twenty per cent of the respondents are non indigenes residing in the town. Eighty per cent of the respondents are Christians; two per cent are Moslems while the other eighteen per cent stated that they do not belong to any religious group. Forty percent of the respondents are civil servants, thirty per cent are business men and women, and eight per cent are students while the rest are unemployed but are engaged in one form of activities or the other in order to make a living. All the respondents accepted that Akwete people have strong moral principles about what is right and wrong. Also there is great respect for life. Seventy-two percent of the respondents stated that Akwete people's cultural values emphasis more on consensus rather than conflict. According to them, in the past years, some basic problems had persisted because of a very high level of tolerance. On inter personal relationships ninety-two per cent of the respondents stated that there is emphasis on respect for elders, and life in general. Seventy-eighty percent of the respondents also stated that there is great emphasis on group identity rather than individual identity. In other words, there is high value on communal relationship. The people are caring and try to protect each others lives and property. Response to the question; what is the effect of the recent increase in information technology and enhanced economic interdependence that is binding the whole world into one global system on the socio-cultural values of Akwete? It shows that Akwete

socio-cultural values have undergone complete metamorphosis as emphasis has shifted from communal relationship to emphasis on material wealth as indicated by sixty per cent of the respondents. This change in values can be observed in all spheres of the social, cultural, economic and physiological life of the people. More people are becoming victims of armed robbery activities that it reflected in the fortified nature of the designs of buildings and the surrounding high walls. This fear of crime has affected neighbourhood values and relationship that people hardly care to know what is happening behind the high fence. Able bodied men and women from Akwete have abandoned the traditional occupation of the people and gone to bigger urban centers in search of jobs which are not readily available. On coming back to the town, since they can not easily readjust to the traditional occupation, they take to several anti-social activities in order to make a living. The Vanguard News paper of June 28, 2006 carried the story of two youths who were drowned in the river by angry villagers for breaking into peoples home. About a year later there was crisis in the town resulting from the activities of youths who were going from house to house breaking and stealing valuable materials. When they were attacked by the towns vigilante group, these youths used the GSM communication system to invite their colleagues from neighbouring towns and states to join force with them and they threatened to burn down the entire town. This type of incidence has never been witnessed in the history of Akwete.

These are the negative effects of modernization on the people,s valued culture and interpersonal relationships. Before now the people of Akwete value life, property and interpersonal relationship.

### **Conclusion**

From the study, it has been observed that modernization has made a great impact on the socio-cultural values of Akwete people. This impact has led to changes in the people's attitude towards their indigenous technology. These changes have also resulted to a major consequence which is the abandoning of the people's indigenous technology for greener pasture in the towns and cities. The stand of this paper is that Akwete can still be made very attractive for both the indigenes and non indigenes to invest in.

### **Recommendations**

In order to reestablish neighbourhood relationship in Akwete, pressure groups like town unions and age grade associations should enact an appropriate domestic policy which should help to develop and sell their indigenous technology in the global market.

Presently, there is a weaving unit within the local government complex where young ladies are employed to weave the Akwete cloth and are paid monthly. This idea could be extended to other trade like fishing and farming. The product of this project can be packed in such a way that it will be sold in the global market.

Secondly, individuals should form co-operative societies and sought loans from Federal and State Poverty Alleviation Programs (NAPEP) and Microfinance Banks to set up private weaving centers, fish ponds, and animal farms. This will help to redirect the interest of the youths from anti-social activities and re - activate to the cultural values of the society. It will also create an environment for the propagation of interpersonal relationship.

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## Appendix

### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

**Table One: Sex of the Respondents**

| SEX          | FREQUENCY  | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| MALE         | 60         | 50         |
| FEMALE       | 60         | 50         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>120</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Table Two: Age of the Respondents**

| AGE RANGE    | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 18-27        | 40        | 33.5       |
| 28-37        | 30        | 25         |
| 38-47        | 15        | 12         |
| 48-57        | 6         | 5          |
| 58 and above | 29        | 24.5       |
| Total        | 120       | 100        |

**Table Three: Place of Origin of the Respondents**

| PLACE OF ORIGIN | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| AKWETE          | 96        | 80         |
| NON-INDIGENS    | 24        | 20         |
| TOTAL           | 120       | 100        |

**Table Four: Religious Affiliation of the Respondents**

| RELIGION        | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| CHRISTIANITY    | 96        | 80         |
| MUSLEM          | 8         | 2          |
| TRADITIONAL REL | –         | –          |
| ON-RELIGION     | 21        | 18         |
| TOTAL           | 120       | 100        |

**Table Five: Occupation of the Respondents**

| OCCUPATION         | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| CIVIL SERVANTS     | 48        | 40         |
| BUSINESS MEN/WOMEN | 36        | 30         |
| STUDENTS           | 10        | 8          |
| UNEMPLOYED         | 26        | 22         |
| TOTAL              | 120       | 100        |

**Substantive Issues:**

**Table Six: Response to whether Akwete People have a Strong Moral Principle**

| <b>RESPONSE</b> | <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>PERCENTAGE</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| YES             | 120              | 100               |
| NO              | –                | –                 |
| DO NOT KNOW     | –                | –                 |
| TOTAL           | 120              | 100               |

**Table Seven: Akwete People’s View on Interpersonal Relationship**

| <b>RESPONSE</b>                    | <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>PERCENTAGE</b> |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| RESPECT FOR ELDERS                 | 40               | 33.5              |
| RESPECT FOR LIFE AND PROPERTY      | 40               | 33.5              |
| RESPECT FOR COMMUNIAL LIVING       | 30               | 25                |
| RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALISTIC LIVING | 10               | 8                 |
| TOTAL                              | 120              | 100               |