GADAMER'S THREEFOLD OF UNDERSTANDING AND ITS RELEVANCE TO CULTURAL SYNERGISTIC APPROACH TO GLOBALIZATION

Dr. Solomon Ojoka Ojomah

VID University Norway

ABSTRACT: *The inevitable metamorphosing of the world into a global village with several cultures contesting for relevance through dominance at different levels of cultural encounter, calls for an understanding of globalization capable of enhancing cultural synergy as a panacea to the perceived cultural imperialism that is often viewed by several schools of thoughts as the major drawback of globalization. The idea of cultural synergy calls for equality of cultures and as such can be a viable antidote to cultural imperialism. In this essay, we shall attempt a presentation of Gadamer's threefold of understanding as a precursor to cultural synergistic approach to globalization. Gadamer's threefold notion of understanding comprises of the hermeneutical circle that does not separate the whole from the parts or the parts from the whole; the prejudice that entails the components of judgment before an encounter and fusion of horizon that regards the past and the present inseparable in giving the interpretation. The systematic pattern of Gadamer's threefold of understanding has the potential of solving the problem of cultural imperialism associated with globalization to an extent. The possibility is embedded in 'understanding' as a fundamental precondition for cultural synergy. With the aid of an analytical method, we shall present to what extent the threefold of understanding signals cultural synergistic approach to globalization as the ideal approach with viable solutions to the danger of cultural imperialism inherent in globalization, also we shall apply the hermeneutic method in line with Gadamer's hermeneutical view. The aim of using Gadamer's threefold of understanding is to show the practicality of the hermeneutic theory in creating new knowledge of how to overcome the loopholes of the globalized world in cultural terms. This essay recommends the threefold of understanding for cultural groups ready to establish a solid cultural synergistic approach to globalization as an antidote to the cultural imperialist aspects of globalization.*

KEYWORDS: Homogenization, Flows, Modernization, Cultural Imperialism, Cultural Synergy

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURE

The modern means of technology and trade has made the different parts of the world with their multiplicity of cultures to be closer together to the point that the world has been described by Marshall McLuhan as a global village. Prior to this description of the world togetherness as a global village, several philosophers have established this idea in different forms. Democritus, for example, wrote as far back as 420 BC that "to a wise man, the whole earth is open; for the native land of a good soul is the world earth."[1]The philosopher Diogenes Laertius gave an explication of a story of Diogenes the Cynic who regarded himself as a citizen of the world in response to the question of his citizenship. A prominent philosopher like Cicero in his *De Officiis* gave much attention to the common fellowship of humanity. The idea of the world togetherness as espoused by ancient philosophers may be regarded a precursor to the idea of globalization as inevitable.

In modern times, as presented by Omoregbe, a German and a French philosopher portrayed this inevitability of the world togetherness through their different theories. These theories were buttressed by Omoregbe based on his definition of globalization as the process by which mankind gets closer together. Thus, "the process of globalization is inevitable because it is part of human nature."[1] The expression of this inevitability is captured in Friedrich Schelling theory of the history of mankind which entails the centrifugal phase that demands to move far from the center and the Centripetal phase which is the current phase that necessitates returning to the center. The French philosopher Teilhard de Chardin presented similar view by regarding two phases of mankind history; the divergent phase that demand scattering all over the globe and the convergent phase which is the current phase whereby mankind is getting closer through centralization, unification, and concentration facilitated by modern means of technology, transportation, and communication.

The substance which mankind is made of is the same everywhere but the culture by which they coexist are totally different. The coming together of different parts of the world with their various cultures is inevitable. The question of whose culture is superior would necessarily be relevant because "many societies, particularly indigenous peoples, view culture as their richest heritage without which they have no roots, no history, or soul. Its value is other than monetary; to commodify it is to destroy it…"[2] Globalization has led to the extinction of some major components of culture; with regards to language, it has been estimated that "at least half of the 6,800 languages spoken around the world today are expected to become extinct by the end of this century."[3] Despite the fact that globalization is inevitable, the ideal ought to be a simultaneous existence of different cultures. The words of Mahatma Gandhi are relevant in this regard, he held that "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."[4] The inevitability of globalization has blown off several cultures to the point that certain scholars now described globalization as Americanization, Westernization, Neo-colonization and their likes. In Africa for example, many view globalization as a threat to African traditions by opting for an African cultural renaissance.

The inevitability of the world togetherness (globalization) presents several cultures on a platform of competition that breeds clash of cultural practices best portrayed in Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* where civilization is regarded as the highest level of culture. In his view, culture and cultural identities which are regarded as the broadest stage of civilization identities are shaping the patterns of cohesion and disintegration.[5] The supposed cohesion and disintegration are because of cultural imperialism; however, the possibility of cultural synergy exists. This possibility is embedded in inculcating intercultural competence skills in globalization processes.

The branding of globalization as Americanization, Westernization or neo-colonization has made certain scholars to regards the proponents of these views as anti-globalization. These trends in debates on globalization, therefore, possess several problems summarized in the concept of cultural globalization. One of the bases of regarding globalization as homogenization of American or Western culture is associated with 'global village' the root term that globalization is derived from. The common understanding of village encompasses a group of people living within a specified territory which their living together has yielded a common way of life called culture that defines their identity in different ramifications. Furthermore, if the world is truly a global village, the question; whose culture defines the means

of identity? Is often answered by an affirmation of American or Western culture as the defining culture of this global village. However, the opinion of whose culture rules the global village differs.

> The metaphor of a global village has caught the imagination of many people... Paradoxically, we find that while technology has given the world the means of getting closer together into a global village, this very same technology has also given rise to unprecedented fears of domination by the technologically powerful nations. It has created fears of cultural liquidation particularly among smaller nations.[6]

Based on the perceived cultural liquidation, some African and Asian leaders view global village more as a threat to their cultural identities and pluralism rather than as an opportunity to explore the dynamism of different other cultures.

This is made up of three sections, the first section presents cultural globalization as the crux of globalization. Cultural imperialism thesis is given due attention as the current pattern of globalization is deeply rooted in it. Cultural synergy is presented with its condition as an alternative to cultural imperialism. In the second section, Gadamer's hermeneutical theory is shown as a tool for the actualization of cultural synergy. In the third section, the contents of Gadamer's hermeneutics is applied, a viable means of establishing cultural synergy as a way of overcoming the cultural imperialist components of globalization is fully stated with examples of cultural groups that have made effort towards it.

Cultural Globalization

Togetherness as a defining term for globalization encompasses conquest and unification of the global space. One of the dangers of the unification is the devaluation of the diversities and dynamism of the different cultures of the world. It was with this understanding that Tomlinson defines cultural globalization as "the particular effects which the general social processes of time-space compression and distanciation have on that realm of practices and experience in which people socially construct meaning."[7] Globalization, therefore, involves a common construction of meaning based on the uniformity it tends to create. However, "the most valuable feature of the concept of culture is the concept of difference..."[8] With the construction of common meaning, the difference as a valuable concept that defines cultures of the various groups is devalued in favour of the dominant culture.

 In more specific terms, cultural globalization is regarded as the:

> Economic and technological transformations since the 1970s have led to an unprecedented flow of capital, goods, ideas, and people across state and continental borders. These flows, in turn, have contributed to the demise of institutions of power, notably the state. Our times are thus marked by the incapacity of state-built or state-sponsored boundaries (borders, citizenship, ethnicity) to regiment populations and affect cultural practices and identities. In short, the world is fast turning into a single cultural unit.[9]

This single cultural unit is based on the five dimensions of the global cultural flows that define cultural globalization in Appadurai's analysis. These are ethnoscapes; the flows of people, technoscapes; the flows of technology, mediascapes; the flow of information, financescapes: the flows of capital, ideoscapes; the flows of ideologies.[10] These dimensions of global flows that defines cultural globalization justify the argument that culture is the crux of globalization. With this understanding, the various dimensions of globalization; the political, the economical and others are subsumed in cultural globalization. This point is buttressed by Tomlinson as follows; "globalization lies at the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization."[11] The place of culture as central to globalization is further supported by an economic Marxist Fredric Jameson' view that "today even economic has become cultural."[12] This understanding of culture as the crux of globalization signals a more complex understanding of the culture that transcends arts, image, clothing, music, and their likes. "The huge transformative processes of our time that globalization describes cannot be properly understood until they are grasped through the conceptual vocabulary of culture; likewise, . . . these transformations change the very fabric of cultural experience and, indeed, affect our sense of what culture actually is in the modern world."[13] The sense of what culture is can be identified in the various flows that define cultural globalization.

Cultural globalization is epitomized in cultural imperialism which promotes and justifies a culture as a world culture. The description of globalization as being tantamount to Americanization or Westernization hinges on the fact of their dominant and the concept of a global village where its culture is the Western or the American culture. Even though one can easily argue that it is not only American or western culture that has exhibit global outreach in the contemporary world; it is important to note that the determinant of the global outreach is the influence on other cultures and the policies that government of other nations are inculcating into their system based on this influence. This influence has been explained in these terms:

> United States has unparalleled access to the means of producing and disseminating its ideas and life-style around the world, and in part because the United States possesses a unique set of cultural and historical attributes that are enablers of this dissemination…that in more and more corners of the world American culture must be reckoned with on a regular basis, as an element alongside local culture. [14]

On the view of globalization as being tantamount to Americanization, several claims exist in this regard; Henry Kissinger, a former secretary of the state in his lecture at the Trinity College in Dublin held that "what is called globalization is really another name for the dominant role of the United States… The world had no alternative but to accept American ideas, values, and way of life."[15] This position is one among several positions that portrayed globalization as Americanization. It in this regard that several scholars regard cultural globalization as the western cultural imperialism. To those who regard globalization as homogenization, Malcolm Waters do not view such understanding as erroneous: "The concept of globalization is an obvious target for ideological suspicion because, like modernization, a predecessor and related concept, it appears to justify the spread of Western culture and of capitalist society by suggesting that there are forces operating beyond human control that are transforming the world."[16] On this basis of the contents of globalization that encompasses homogenization, it signals the enthronement of lack of intercultural competence on a large scale. A cultural

competent mode of globalization would necessary entails cultural synergy and not cultural imperialism.

It is worth noting that several views exist as to why globalization is neither Westernization nor homogenization but the glaring evidence of the demise of several cultures in the wake of globalization is one of the major undeniable factors that review the realities of the globalization. One must also admit that culture is not static but when a changing culture is towards a particular direction then it is no longer the necessary change of culture over a long period but a cultural imperialism.

Cultural Imperialism

The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies defined cultural imperialism as "the domination of one culture by another and usually thought of as a set of processes involving the ascendancy of one nation and/or the global domination of consumer capitalism… a loss of cultural autonomy for the 'dominated' nation and the worldwide growth of cultural homogeneity or 'sameness'."[17] The possibility of the world becoming the same in all ramifications is arguable but the level of unequal flow of the components of globalization is what defines the cultural imperialist thesis of globalization. Jeremy Tunstall complained about the impact of the American culture as dominating culture of the globe in these terms; "authentic, traditional and local culture in many parts of the world' was being battered out of existence by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial and media products, mainly from the United States."[18] It is based on the culture battering others in the global village that made many scholars regard globalization as either Americanization or Westernization or neo-colonization.

The purpose of the battering the authentic, traditional and local cultures in different parts of the world can be better understood by reference to words of Ronald Steele echoed in *New York Times* as follows: "We purvey a culture based on mass entertainment and mass gratification.. The cultural message we transmit through Hollywood and McDonald's goes out across the world to capture, and to undermine, other societies… unlike traditional conquerors, we are not content merely to subdue others: We insist that they be like us."[19] In presenting the above purpose of cultural imperialism, Watson declared it to be the clearest expressions of cultural imperialism hypothesis. The insistence of every culture becoming like that of the dominating culture buttresses the inequality. However, every culture is unique.

In transcending the initial notion of cultural imperialism which is limited to economic exploitation and suppression of other nations with the aid of military force, the global village perspective of cultural imperialism has its significance:

> Cultural imperialism signifies the dimensions of the process that go beyond economic exploitation or military force. In the history of colonialism, (i.e., the form of imperialism in which the government of the colony is run directly by foreigners), the educational and media systems of many Third World countries have been set up as replicas of those in Britain, France, or the United States and carry their values. Western advertising has made further inroads, as have architectural and fashion styles. Subtly but powerfully, the message has often been insinuated

that Western cultures are superior to the cultures of the Third World.[20]

The summary of cultural imperialism thesis in the global era is that even though the old empires have crumbled, Western nations have symbolic control of the world through the media, ideology, technology, economic influence, political influence and as the determinant of the various flows that are at work in determining the direction of globalization.

The cultural imperialism thesis of globalization has been criticized for presenting the flow involved in globalization as a one-way traffic. That is, the flow is from the West to other parts of the world. Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz put it this form: "Theorists of cultural imperialism assume that hegemony is prepackaged in Los Angeles, shipped out to the global village, and unwrapped in innocent minds." But if we look closely at the global flows, we can discern regional flows."[21] Besides the one directional flow ascribed to the proponents of cultural imperialism, a closer view is the critics' assumption that cultural imperialism thesis is based on the view that the influence and domination of the Western world over other parts of the world is simultaneous, using the impact of McDonald, CNN and other influences as example. This criticism implies homogenization of world through the lens of Americanization or Westernization.

Despite the criticisms against the reality of cultural imperialism, its practical impact cannot be denied. Hence, "reconsidering the cultural imperialism thesis and elucidating some of its blind spots are therefore useful than rejecting it wholesale."[22] In reconsidering the contents of cultural imperialism, it is pertinent to focus on the areas a given society is undergoing cultural imperialism. Such approach paves way for mitigating the heinous impact of cultural imperialism. To this end, cultural synergy is, therefore, a *sine qua non* for any society experiencing cultural imperialism in the name of globalization. Cultural synergy regards the diversity of cultures as a resource while cultural imperialism regards cultural diversities as an obstacle.

Cultural Synergy

Etymologically, the word synergy is derived from the Greek word that means working together or cooperation. It is a powerful concept that embraces the dynamic process, creative integrated solution, adaptation and joint action by which the total effect is greater than the sum of effects when acting independently. Essentially, in the true synergistic process, nothing is given up or lost. Synergy may be defined as cooperative or combined action that occurs when diverse or disparate individuals or groups collaborate for a common cause. The objective is to increase effectiveness by sharing perceptions and experiences, insights and knowledge.[23] Culture as a very important attribute of man necessarily needs synergy in the globalized world where the world is shrinking through the effect of advancement in technology, transportation, economic relations, cultural and sociopolitical relations. It is the realization of the shrinking world amid cultural diversity that has given rise to the need of cultural synergy at different levels. Intrinsically, "global leaders are concerned with not merely managing cultural differences, but with ways to foster cultural synergy."[24] A cultural synergy is an approach to managing cultural diversity that creates contextual unity in diversity amongst cultures that are engaged in the process.

The concern of global leaders is in accordance with the premise cultural synergy is based on, it asserts, "we are not all the same – that the various groups within society differ, with each

maintaining its cultural distinctness. Appreciating a pluralistic, rather than a homogeneous, society underlies the synergy approach. In addition, if the similarities among people are most important, cultural synergy assumes that similarities and differences share equal importance." [25] The fundamental basis for cultural synergy is the equality of all cultures. The universal declaration of human rights can be the basis of a group opting for cultural, on the premise of equality of all cultures. Equality of culture is not antithetical to right reason, important in any demand for equality is its essence entrenched in right reason. With much attention to right reason as the basis of equality of cultures, cultural synergistic approach reflects the best aspects of all cultures' in their strategy, structure, and process without violating the norms of any single culture. [26]

Cultural synergy has its prerequisites, Adler and Gundersen's view in this regard is instrumental for any cultural group willing to undergo cultural synergy. Cognizance of a problem, interpretation of the situation and creativity are the three major steps in achieving cultural synergy. It is in the interpretation of the situation condition for cultural synergy that Gadamer's threefold of understanding can serve as a precursor to effective cultural synergy. "The first step in the process of creating cultural synergy involves recognizing that a problem situation exists." [27] For such recognition to yield fruit, willingness to tackle the problem is a vital step entrenched in this first step. In this step, recognition of the different perspectives of the culture involved is taken into cognizance but avoiding an ethnocentric approach which is antithetical to cultural synergy. This step entails fundamental questions regarding cross-cultural dilemmas and the capacity of the parties to seek a solution.

The second step in creating cultural synergy entails answering fundamental questions regarding the assumptions of the different cultures involved in the synergistic process, reasons for their actions and their historicity. Understanding reasons for different cultural practices are keys to cultural synergistic process, this also entails interpretation devoid of sentimental approach. Gadamer's threefold of understanding presents the needed model of interpretation that is not sentimental. "The second step in the process of creating cultural synergy, therefore, involves identifying and interpreting the similarities and differences in thoughts, feelings, and actions among the cultures involved." [28] The purpose of identification and interpretation of cultural practices is to get the best out of the cultures that are out to create synergy. Hence, to get the best out of any synergistic process, unbiased interpretation ought to be the key, not interpretation that is out of context but within the context of the cultural practices and how it can be improved through the components of other cultures that they are to be synergized with.

After a proper recognition and interpretation steps in creating cultural synergy, the essence of the cultural synergy is established by the creativity that is derived based on the understanding arrived at in the previous step. In the third step, a cultural synergistic approach is created through the creativity for effective functioning. At this state, the combined effects of the cultures involved in synergy create a solution to the problem identified in the first step, its possibility lies in adequately description and interpretation of the contents of the cultures engaging in cultural synergistic approach to the perceived problem of cultural imperialism. Synergy can never be attained if the description and interpretation of the components of cultures are based on a dominant culture. Cultural synergy, therefore "develops new solutions to problems that leverage the cultural differences among all cultures involved while respecting each culture's uniqueness. Culturally synergistic solutions always go beyond what would be needed in a purely domestic situation." [29] In this contemporary globalized world, a globalized approach to cultural synergy is required as a purely domestic approach to situations and

problems can hardly be as effective as a cultural synergistic approach that encompasses combined effort.

The Three-Fold of Understanding in Gadamer's Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics means interpretation, it was initially the form of interpretation used as a means of understanding ancient scriptural text. Gadamer's usage of hermeneutics transcends mere textual interpretation, it entails both textual and cultural milieu. The hermeneutical approach is primarily aimed at understanding. Gadamer's notion of understanding is threefold which comprises of hermeneutical circle, prejudice, and fusion of horizon. Intercultural competence embodies meaning which is the essence of communication involved in it. The contents of Gadamer's hermeneutics entails a given meaning that needs interpretation relevant for understanding cultures which are necessary for cultural synergy. "Since meaning is born in a socio-cultural historic context and transmits through time, actions and expressions of individuals can only be properly understood by reference to their cultural context."[30] Gadamer did not say much on this point but "hermeneutical dialogue makes transcultural exchange and understanding possible: the fusion of horizons is seemingly blind to national and temporal boundaries. Since the hermeneutic process involves universality, all understanding, whatever the cultural background, participates in the hermeneutic circle of incompleteness, of part and whole."[31] To this end, Gadamer's hermeneutics offers a method for understanding and appreciating other cultures and as such pave way for intercultural dialogue that is capable of enhancing understanding necessary for cultural synergy.

To overcome cultural imperialism and establish cultural equality between different cultural groups and organizations, intercultural dialogue is a fundamental need for cultural synergy. Intercultural dialogue creates unity in diversity of worldviews and practices as a means of fostering mutual understanding and participation that entails freedom of choices, respect for others, tolerance and transformation in the globalized world. These qualities are embedded in Gadamer's threefold of understanding. Intercultural dialogue is so important that 2008 was declared as the year of intercultural dialogue in Europe. Under the auspice of this declaration, the Council of Europe defined intercultural dialogue as "a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect."[32] In furtherance of this process, freedom, and ability to express oneself, the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others are some of the major requirements outlined by the Council of Europe for the attainment of cultural dialogue.

Intercultural dialogue is a tool for creating equality and human dignity. Its goals are "to develop a deeper understanding of diverse worldviews and practices, to increase co-operation and participation (or the freedom to make choices), to allow personal growth and transformation, and to promote tolerance and respect for the other."[33] With these goals, intercultural dialogue broadens one's worldview and offers a more humane and decorous tactic to cultural diversity by fostering of cultural equality which can only be possible by understanding. Gadamer's threefold of understanding presents is a platform for intercultural dialogue that can yield cultural synergy.

One fundamental question concerning intercultural dialogue is, how do parties or entities needing intercultural dialogue with the aim of reaping the benefits of cultural synergy converge for dialogue? For example, to synergize western culture with a culture of a country could be a problem because of the difficulty in bringing the western entities to a roundtable discussion

and the possibility of the representatives of these entities to work with the conditions for successful intercultural dialogue. Dialogue aspect of intercultural relations ought to be viewed from two perspectives of dialogue; inner dialogue and outer dialogue. The traditional notion of dialogue demands face to face meeting, listening, empathy on the part of the parties involved, openness, understanding and responsible action; this notion of dialogue is called outer dialogue. The problem of intercultural dialogue proceeding to cultural synergy is associated with the outer dialogue perspective. Another dimension of dialogue called inner dialogue is a remedy to this problem. The inner dialogue may be defined as a constructive act of human mind and a tool for discovering knowledge and decision making, it entails reflective action of sensory awareness. Inner dialogue has a similar attribute with outer dialogue but it is based on internal reflection on the object or situation that requires face to face discussion. In its superlative form, the inner dialogue starts with statements of problem or statements about matters of fact and proceeds with logical rigour until a solution is achieved.[34] An approach to intercultural dialogue based on inner dialogue or internal dialogue of the culture experiencing cultural imperialism is the key to achieving a cultural synergistic approach to globalization.

Hermeneutic Circle

Hermeneutic circle is the interplay that occurs between the parts and the whole in understanding that can simply be expressed as the part cannot be understood without reference to the whole and the whole cannot be understood without reference to the parts. Gadamer embarks on his exploration of understanding by reference to Heidegger's contention that hermeneutic circle occurs "when we have understood that our first, last and constant task in interpreting is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves."[35]

Gadamer's approach to hermeneutics entails a demonstration of how correct understanding may be achieved based on the things themselves. As such, his view of understanding of a text, for example, entails a movement of the interpreter from the proposed meaning of the whole to its part and back to the whole: "The movement of understanding is constantly from the whole to part and back to the whole…The harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding."[36] This process of understanding encompasses "the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter."[37] The necessity of this circular movement involved in understanding is further explained on the basis of his notion that "nothing that needs interpretation can be understood at once."[38] Hence interpretative circle demands this movement for proper understanding.

Prejudice

It was accordance with Heidegger's ontological description of fore-structures of understanding that Gadamer developed his notion of prejudice involved in the process of understanding. Prejudice entails one's conscious and unconscious knowledge, its usage in Gadamer's threefold process of understanding is not based on the negative connotation but presupposes a positive connotation that entails "the meaning of words, our preference, the facts we accept, our values and aesthetic judgements, our judgement concerning human nature and the divine and so no."[39] This pre-judgmental connotation affects our understanding and interpretation.

Gadamer described Prejudice as "a judgment that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined." [40] The prejudice of an individual constitutes

the historical reality of his being. Prejudice can either be a legitimate source of understanding or illegitimate which does not lead to understanding. In arguing for the authority of tradition, Gadamer contended that it is realistic to expect legitimate prejudice to be inherent in tradition by referring to the case of classics like Plato and others.

Fusion of Horizon

The Horizon in the words of Gadamer means "not being limited to what is nearby, but to being able to see beyond it…"[41] The past and the present form different horizons, in achieving an understanding required in hermeneutical approach the present is not the sole requirement for understanding since this would mean being limited to what is nearby; the present and the past are inseparable in understanding. Hence, "understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves."[42] Fusion of horizons is a product of the past and present required for understanding a text or a cultural milieu.

> The point is not to overshadow and abolish the horizon of the past (conceived as other), but to show how that horizon has been taken up and expanded in the present; this is a question of not exposing the weaknesses of the past such that they had to be superseded by the present, but by bringing out the sense in which the present is just the past in a new form.[43]

Basically, conversation or dialogue always entails fusion of horizons since understanding in Gadamer's view is part of dialogue attained by the interference of horizons in dialogue. In Gadamer, genuine dialogue encompasses fusion of horizons made possible by the harmony of the interpreter (subject) and the text (object) including the aspects of traditions involved in the dialogue. The language involved in dialogue is very important because "understanding itself has a fundamental connection with language"[44] which can be clarified by the specific reference to Gadamer's view that "the fusion of horizons that takes place in understanding is actually the achievement of language."[45] Consequently, an analysis of the concept of language is part of the prerequisite to clarifying how the fusion of horizons results in incorrect understanding.

Towards a Cultural Synergistic Approach to Globalization

In achieving a cultural synergistic approach to globalization, the essential features that led to the description of the world as a global village are worth considering. This consideration hinges on the fact that Americanization or Westernization are perceived to be the culture of the global village. Moreover, the insinuations are based on the dominant role and influence of America and the Western world in the contemporary globalization process. The supposed dominant role accentuates cultural imperialism.

Cultural synergy regards the diversity of cultures as a resource while cultural imperialism regards cultural diversities as an obstacle. Cultural synergistic approach to globalization in African context entails the cooperation of African culture with other cultures of the modern world in the spirit of Africa to produce a combined effect greater than the present effect of Westernization or Americanization on Africa. The synergistic approach shows that creative problem solving is a significant benefit of cultural synergy. Accordingly, problem-solving is contextually enhanced when globalization reflects the values of cultures in their strategy, structure, and process without violating the norms of any culture encountering the West or America in the globalization process.

The fading of genuine African culture in the globalized world could be restored by the cultural synergistic approach to globalization. The multiple perspectives derived within a culturally synergistic approach to the socio-political cum economic problems would provide solutions in Africa. With the open and trusting environment created by cultural synergy challenges affecting the human society can easily be resolved. Cultural synergistic approach to globalization is cognizance of the fact that culture function in quite unique aspects and are incomplete and in need of perfection. This perfection, however, cannot be achieved if they remain isolated and hostile or indifferent to other cultures. The Cultural synergistic approach also recognized the dynamism of human nature, with these qualities of cultural synergy, what needed in Africa and other third world countries that have tag globalization neo-colonization is not Westernization but the modernization of our cultural values. This approach is antithetical to the cultural imperialist notion that Westernization is tantamount to modernization therefore what is needed in third world countries is Westernization. Not Westernization but cultural synergy is the way forward from the negative impacts of globalization on third world countries, especially Africa.

Huntington pointedly attacks the cultural imperialist notion that modernization equals Westernization. He placed the West in its right perspective by arguing that while all cultures experience certain similarities in the modernization process, cultures still retain their unique characteristics. Even after modernization, societies can be quite different from each other. The differences between cultures around the world remain real and important even though societies are undergoing a common process of modernization. Huntington asserts that "modernization involves industrialization; urbanization; increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilization; and more complex and diverse occupational structures."[46] This list could be expanded to include the following "1) technically rational modes of thought, 2) economic structures consistent with producing high technology goods, and 3) socio-political institutions that allow a society to participate in the global economy and modern technological development."[47] Modernization the life wire of globalization is a product of combined and tremendous advancement of scientific and engineering knowledge commonly associated with the eighteen century.

Virtually all scholars of civilizations agreed that Western civilization emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries and developed its distinctive characteristics in the centuries that followed. It did not begin to modernize until the eighteenth century. The West, in short, was Western long before it was modern. Cultural synergy, therefore, calls for modernization devoid of Westernization. "This spirit is captured in the Chinese slogan ti-yong, roughly translated as Chinese learning for fundamental principles, Western learning for practical use, and the Japanese slogan of woken, yosei, roughly translated as Japanese spirit, Western technique,"[48] Huntington argues that the pattern of borrowing without assimilating is much more common throughout history than complete cultural transformation, this is evident in Buddhism which was absorbed into Chinese society without transforming Chinese culture, another evidence is the Greeks' incorporated into Islamic scholarship without altering essential beliefs, also Chinese writing and culture were borrowed by the Japanese without erasing the uniqueness of Japanese culture. In compliance with this evidence, African would benefit more from globalization by synergizing the modern attributes of globalization in the spirit of African culture.

The Chinese and the Japanese effort to uphold their culture amid the influence of Westernization and Americanization in the global epoch may be regarded as models of cultural

synergistic approach to globalization. In this manner, the Chinese ti-yong and the Japanese yosei are worth studying as a template for minority cultures of the world to establish a cultural synergistic approach to globalization. The Cultural synergistic approach is not all about terminology, pragmatic manifestations of the cultural synergistic term are what counts in recognizing a culture as approaching globalization from synergistic perspective.

In Africa, there are terminologies that signal cultural synergistic approach to globalization, since most of these terminologies are devoid of practical impacts, there are not synergistic approach. In Nigeria, the term 'wazobia' which is the combination of the same word from three major ethnic cum cultural groups could be regarded as a precursor to having a practical cultural synergistic approach to globalization. 'Wa' in Yoruba, 'Zo' in Hausa and 'Bia' in Igbo, all means 'come'. The combination of these words can simply be interpreted as a clarion call to come together. By analogy, the concept of 'Wazobia' encompasses synergy literally. The clarion call inherent in the concept 'Wazobia' is a call to work together in making Nigeria a better place. The working together necessarily signals inculcating that values that once made the various cultural groups great into the modern world in the spirit of Africa.

An attempt to establish a cultural synergistic approach to globalization in Africa can be found in Tanzania. 'Ujamaa' a Swahili term that means familyhood introduced by Julius Nyerere in his social and economic development policies that encompass cultural synergistic approach as a means of recovering the values of the Swahili people before their experience of cultural imperialism in the colonial era. The concept is based on the notion that the essence of an individual personhood is established via the community. In this attempt, the cultural practices that define the community could be regarded as the defining culture of the group amid the influence of Americanization and Westernization. The proponent of the concept of 'Ujamaa' established certain policies under this concept as a means of sustaining certain cultural values after much influence of colonialism.

The beauty of cultural synergy in a world of diverse cultures is the fact that it recognizes the existence of the various cultures and makes use of the strong elements. In this regard, it may be regarded as a form of the rainbow that brings out the beauty of several cultures. Cultural synergistic approach to globalization cruces on strong cultural values amid modernization.

In moving towards a cultural synergistic approach to globalization, the essential features that led to the description of the world as a global village are worth considering. This consideration hinges on the fact that Americanization or Westernization as argued by proponents of the homogenization thesis as the operating cultures of the global village. It is pertinent to note that, even though the advancement in technology has turned the world into a global village, it can never be the same with the conventional notion of the village. The dominance of Americanization and Westernization cannot be overlooked, any other culture with such opportunity would have likely dominated the world like they are doing. The history of the world has a lot to do with the dominance of one culture over other cultures.

The importance of cultural synergy in a multicultural world is the ability to recognize the point of convergence despite the differences:

> The only thing in common is our difference and once we
> understand that–we discover our oneness…As we continually

> search for ways to get along together as human beings sharing this one planet, the need to transcend boundaries, to bridge and transform our differences, to be in relationship with one another, to join in the oneness of our humanity while accepting our differences–these needs will continue to drive us as we seek to overcome differences that may divide us, differences that lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, and even in some cases, to the point of war.[49]

That cultural imperialism exist in the contemporary globalization cannot be denied but it does not define globalization in all its ramification, as globalization cannot be tantamount to cultural imperialism. Essentially, struggle over our differences would continue but as for the possibility of globalization becoming homogenization is not a likely to happen. However, the application of Gadamer's threefold of understanding is a potent tool for cultural synergy which is an antidote to cultural imperialism.

CONCLUSION

The novelty of the richness of Gadamer's threefold of understanding is its utility in yielding cultural synergistic approach to globalization, it is a means of creating equality of culture and redeeming of the valuable battered cultures at the dawn of globalization. it is worth noting that cultures are not static but the impact of creating synergy is a gateway for evaluating the aspects of cultures that require synergy as a means of avoiding the extinction of esteemed cultural values in globalization encounter.

ENDNOTES

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