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Review

Prosperity, penury and polarization: Disaggregating the peasantry in the historiography of colonial Zimbabwe

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Underdevelopment and modernization theorists have long agreed that peasant agriculture was not universally damaged and curtailed, but the two schools remain very much at odds over the general trajectory of peasant agriculture during the colonial period. This dichotomy, however, is unwarranted. In the canonical literature there is a pervasive ambiguity surrounding the term “peasant,” an ambiguity that allows for contradictory assessments of the same historical process. An historical approach that “disaggregates” the peasantry along ethnic, geographic, gender, and class lines demonstrates that there was not a homogeneous Zimbabwean peasant experience during the colonial period, but several. Thus, there need not be any formal contradiction between the observations of the underdevelopment and modernization schools. Theorists from both sides have approached the peasant question with differing ideological precepts, and therefore assessed the same phenomenon in completely divergent ways. In short, Zimbabwean peasants experienced both penury and prosperity in the course of colonial rule.

Key words: Modernization, dependency, underdevelopment, colonial Zimbabwe, peasantry.

INTRODUCTION

After many decades of fierce academic debate and vigorous policy contention, the two foundational historiographical theories explaining peasant history in the extra-European world remain strongly counter-posed if not entirely antagonistic. The specific case of Zimbabwe certainly provides no exception. Indeed, some of “underdevelopment” theory’s foremost proponents began their research with pioneering analyses of the Zimbabwean peasantry in the early 1970s, arguing that white settler colonialism severely undermined the viability of African agricultural production (Arrighi, 1970). Scholars

who adopted a “modernization” paradigm, asserted in contrast that underdeveloped countries could experience the same “stages of growth” as the advanced capitalist West, suggesting that peasant production not only survived the pressures of colonial capitalism, but even came to thrive. Such a dichotomy of views, however, is not necessary. A review of the foundational literature in the debate demonstrates that there is a pervasive ambiguity surrounding the term “peasant,” an ambiguity that allows for contradictory assessments of the same historical phenomenon. Once this ambiguity is

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recognized it is possible to transcend some of the limitations of the traditional historiography, for there was not a *single* peasantry but *different* and *distinct* peasantries. Specific amalgams of ethnic, regional, and class distinctions divided the peasantry itself and significantly influenced its experience of, and reaction to, white settler rule. These divisions, moreover, helped to shape, and were in turn shaped by, a process of historical change that was far from linear (Mosley, 1982: 390-408). Under colonial rule, Zimbabwean peasants experienced both prosperity and penury, albeit at different times and amongst different segments. The suggestion that peasant farming in Zimbabwe was universally damaged and curtailed during colonial rule is, therefore, just as erroneous as claims that projected an oasis of agricultural “modernity” in Rhodesia.

Setting the stage: Contending historiographies

Underdevelopment and modernization theorists agree that Africa, from the “Scramble” to decolonization, experienced a condition of comparative economic underdevelopment. The point of contention between the two schools is the responsibility of European colonial rule and governance in bringing about this state of affairs. Did the introduction of capitalism serve as a beneficial and progressive influence, much like it supposedly did in early modern Europe? Or did colonial capitalism instantiate, even protract, socioeconomic underdevelopment? As Rodney (1981: 27), who first systematically applied the insights of then nascent underdevelopment theory to Africa, averred: “the operation of the imperialist system bears major responsibility for African economic retardation by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly the resources of the continent” (Rodney, 1972: xvi).

In relating the broad theoretical debate to the specific historical experience of colonial Zimbabwe, an important point of departure is the work of Barber (1961) on the British Central African economy. Barber’s work is notable not only because it offered a sterling exposition of modernization theory in its own right, but also because it served as a lightning rod for criticism by underdevelopment theorists. Applying a classical model of development to Rhodesia, Barber argued that the dynamics of African labor could be explained with reference to two distinct sectors: the indigenous, low-productivity “subsistence” sector, and the high-productivity, European-transposed “capitalist” sector. Although Africans were initially slow to seize upon the “unfamiliar” opportunities provided by the new capitalist sector, after “a prodding from the tax collector,” amongst other inducements, Africans were willing to supplement and even abandon their traditional subsistence economies by becoming wage laborers in the capitalist sector (Barber, 1961: 93). Since “disguised

unemployment” in the subsistence sector was so extensive, labor supply kept more-or-less in pace with labor demand, and wages were depressed as a result.

The picture that Barber paints, then, is one of a benign and beneficial capitalism, affording Africans the opportunity to improve their lot via wage labor in non-“traditional” economic sectors, ensuring a standard of living beyond mere “subsistence”. In what became a seminal article on Zimbabwean underdevelopment, Arrighi (1970) sharply criticized not only the empirical assertions but also the normative foundations that underlay Barber’s work. Arrighi assailed Barber’s “*beneficial and rationalizing*” capitalism, arguing that African workers and peasant “derived little, if any, advantage from it” (1970: 199). Barber’s portrayal of capitalist growth as an “almost *spontaneous process*” moreover, disappeared what Arrighi considered to be central to the growth of the labor market: “open or concealed forms of coercion” (1970: 199). Despite Barber’s assertions to the contrary, the “subsistence sector” was not *initially* disadvantaged vis-à-vis the “capitalist” sector; rather, it was intentionally *made* so through the operation of non-market, political mechanisms which reduced peasant productivity and prosperity and effectively forced African agriculturalists into wage labor. It was only the systematic application of *extra-market measures*—land appropriations, taxes, rent, protectionist policies, etc.—that severely undermined and curtailed peasant agriculture and tipped the balance in favor of European capital.

Arrighi’s early writings on Zimbabwe had a profound impact on his own developing corpus of work and that of an entire generation. Many followed the intellectual trajectory that he traced alongside fellow African scholars and Africanists, most notably Immanuel Wallerstein and Samir Amin. They ambitiously expanded the concepts of dependency and underdevelopment, already popularized by themselves and Rodney, to develop a world systems theory which sought to explain the world-wide material systems and structures which entrenched inequality because entire nations and continents.¹ The contradictions of Africa, and colonial Rhodesia in particular, came to signify widespread problems endemic to the Third World as a whole, and therefore requiring global solutions, *Smith in Beijing* (2007), which unfortunately proved to be his final book before his death in, repeated

¹ At the time of Arrighi’s emerging success, Wallerstein was already a long-standing and respected scholar of African politics (cf. 1961, 1964, 1967), while Amin (born in Cairo) worked and continues to work for various academic and policy institutions on the continent (see 1969, 1972). Only Andre Gunder Frank, the fourth member of this intellectual collective respected for his pioneering and widely inspiring *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (1967), spent little time living and researching in Africa. Concepts of underdevelopment and world-systems theory, therefore, have strong roots in African experience and research despite being global in scope.

many of the essential themes originally expressed in his work on Zimbabwe. Animated, as always, by an abiding concern for redressing the plight of the poor peasants and global inequalities between nations, came to see the positive potential in the use by the *Chinese* state of extra-market measures—so long as these measures are intended ameliorate the negative effects of the market and protect peasant livelihoods. Although he was open to the possibility that Chinese socialism may be reinvigorated, Arrighi was explicit that what concerns him “is not so much the fate of the socialist tradition in China, as the broader implications of the Chinese ascent for inter-civilizational relations in the world at large” (Arrighi, 338). In this, Arrighi remains true to his previous work in world systems theory (1991), which was more concerned with the structures that reproduce international inequality than those that reproduce inequality within nations.

It is probably for this reason that Arrighi recalled, in an interview published shortly before his death, that he was far less upset than his one-time collaborator John Saul over the failure of African socialism: “For me, these were national liberation movements; they were not in any way socialist movements, even when they embraced the rhetoric of socialism. They were populist regimes, and therefore I didn’t expect much beyond national liberation, which we both saw as very important” (Arrighi, 2009: 65). Yet, as Saul himself has recounted (Saul, 2005), Arrighi’s apparent insouciance regarding socialism was more a product of latter-day political pessimism than a conviction confidently asserted at the time (Arrighi and Saul, 1973). Indeed, the regime type matters a great deal in determining the effectiveness of extra-market measures, whether undertaken in Arrighi’s newly-beloved China or the less salubrious conditions of the “liberated” Zimbabwe that to which Arrighi once devoted so much time.

In the 1970s, Arrighi’s underdevelopment theory became something of a new orthodoxy amongst scholars of Zimbabwean, and even African, agriculture. Good (1976: 606), for example, asserts that the “disintegration of the peasantries” was a hallmark of every colonial settler state. In Phimister’s (1977: 264) study of the Rhodesian district of Victoria, discriminatory government policies and economic policies combine to reduce the peasants to “marginal and dependent cultivators.” Kosmin (1977: 285), in his research on the Inyoka tobacco farmers in Rhodesia, was more illustrative: “[the] peasant economy [wa]s first fed then later strangled by capitalism.” Palmer (1977: 241) was even more definitive, writing that by the late 1930s “the agricultural economy of Shona and the Ndebele [in Rhodesia]...had been destroyed.”

The growing scholarly consensus surrounding underdevelopment theory was not universal, however. Responding to what he termed the new “conventional wisdom,” Mosley (1982: 395) revived the claims of modernization theory, arguing, in particular, that the

“colonial presence increased the effective pressure of population in African rural areas, [which] was a stimulus to agricultural output rather than the destructive force invoked by Arrighi and Palmer.” Mosley bolstered his claim with statistics demonstrating that African agricultural productivity, far from falling precipitously in the face of European assault, did not follow a linear path and was actually relatively high by the 1950s (1982: 392). For Mosley, the intense population pressure that colonialism engendered was actually a spur to peasant production because it forced the adoption of yield-augmenting production strategies (1982: 392). Indeed, while Mosley recognized that the peasantry did face discrimination (1982: 399)², government policy emerges as the hero of the story, for “variations in grain yield stemmed from differences in the willingness of different regions to adopt suggestions made by agricultural demonstrators from the mid-1920s onwards regarding the cultivation of maize and other subsistence crops (1982: 397).” In marked contrast with the underdevelopment theorists, Mosley found a colonial-era peasantry that was not necessarily harmed by capitalism and, moreover, actually benefited from government policies.

Here a peasant, there a peasant...

On the face of it, the observations and assertions of the underdevelopment and modernization theorists would seem irresolvable. How do we square Palmer’s assertion that the Shona and Ndebele agricultural economy was destroyed with Mosley’s suggestion that the agricultural economy persisted, even grew, until the twilight years of the colonial era? To be sure, the ideological foundations of the two schools seem to be fundamentally counterposed. Underdevelopment theory is based upon a Marxist or “critical” analysis of the capitalist economy and imperialism, while modernization theory is predicated upon the neoclassical models and liberal expectations of bourgeois economics. Considered further, however, this central difference in outlook between the two theories can actually shed light upon their contending empirical claims. Perhaps it is the case that Mosley and Palmer, in observing the same historical process and wrestling with similar data, actually see different things in the end. Ideology is a prism through which reality is refracted (and necessarily “bent” along the way). Preconceived ideas, expectations, and definitions, sometimes overtly stated and sometimes not, inevitably shape the scholar’s perception of reality. To what extent has this occurred in

² It must be added, however, that Mosley portrays the struggle as one between peasant and government, elaborating not at all upon the broader racial, social, and economic forces inducing such a struggle. This would seem to be just one example of the “anti-historical approach” which Arrighi attributes to economists. See Arrighi, “Labour supplies,” 227.

the scholarship on the Rhodesian peasantry?

A full answer, of course, would extend considerably beyond the parameters of this essay. One crucial aspect of the question will be investigated here: the definition of the “peasantry” itself. What is surprising about the literature is how infrequently such a definition is offered, and how less frequently still the definition on offer is actually acknowledged to be important for scholarly research. For example, Palmer’s *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, while an excellent and comprehensive exposition of its subject matter, never offers a substantial definition of what the African “peasant” was and how, exactly, he differed from the Shona and Ndebele “agriculturalists” that preceded him. For a discussion of some of the problems and difficulties arising from the definition of “peasant” and “peasantry,” see Ranger (1970). More recently, authors like Frederick Cooper have emphasized the fluidity of abstract sociological categories during later periods of substantive socio-economic disarray. “Stabilized labor never did conquer the labor market [of the 1950s and 1960s],” he writes. People used family connections to find jobs in cities and to preserve access to farmland at home. Families—even husbands and wives—could thus have more than one residence and often lived apart. Families have to think strategically about placing members in different locations (2002:124). As Sara Berry has written of agricultural change during this period and afterward in sub-Saharan Africa, there often arose conditions of “exploitation without dispossession”, in which complex struggles over commercialization, political centralization, and social change interacted with the dynamics of domestic groups to determine the availability of labor within families (Berry: 155).

Yet, who we consider to be peasants (and who we do not) has significant implications for any assessment of colonialism’s impact. Was the pre-colonial agriculturalist a peasant, and if so, should s/he serve as the baseline for comparison with the colonial peasant? Was the reserve-based agriculturalist, increasingly discouraged from selling surplus product within the cash economy, a peasant? What of the landowning African who may have even employed black labor? The answers to these questions have great import when determining whether the peasant economy was “universally damaged and curtailed,” and if so, to what extent.

Indeed, two distinct definitions make an appearance in the underdevelopment literature. The first, offered by Palmer and Parsons (1977: 2) in the introduction to their edited volume of essays, is the broadest: “peasants’ are small agricultural producers who intend to make a living by *selling* part of their crop or herds, while ‘proletarians’ are wage earners in the hire of an employer.” Within the same volume, the authors admit, some scholars opted for the “somewhat complex” definition provided by J.S. Saul and R. Woods (1971). Indeed, so “complex” is the

definition that only its most pertinent parts are reproduced here:

Peasants are those whose ultimate security and subsistence lies in their having certain rights in land and in the labour of family members on the land, but who are involved, through rights and obligations, in a wider economic system which includes the participation of non-peasants. It is precisely this characterization of the peasantry in terms of its position relative to other groups in the wider social system which has particularly important explanatory power in the analysis of development...Despite the existence of some prefigurings of a peasant class in earlier periods, it is more fruitful to view both the creation of an African peasantry, as well as the creation of the present differentiation among African peasantries, as being primarily the result of the interaction between an international capitalist economic system and traditional socio-economic systems, within the context of territorially defined colonial political systems. (Saul and Woods, 1971: 105).

Underdevelopment theorists offer a definition which, situates the peasantry in a precise historical period, in a specific interaction with classes external to it, and with a particular relationship to its means of production. Since the peasant class was itself a product of colonialism (and therefore did not exist before the colonial period), there is a clear baseline of comparison: a determination of whether the peasant economy was undermined and curtailed will only compare different phases of the colonial era, and will not include the pre-colonial “agricultural” economy. The definition also provides a barometer for assessing “undermining” and “curtailment.” For the underdevelopment theorist, it is not enough to simply measure peasant output or productivity, but to also measure the peasants’ “security and subsistence” based upon “certain rights in land and in the labour...on the land” and their “position relative to other groups.” In other words, it is not necessarily a contradiction to claim that peasants experiencing higher per capita grain yields are nevertheless a “curtailed” and “undermined.” The significant measure is how and under what conditions this higher yield is achieved, as well as how the higher yield compares with “other groups” (in the case of Rhodesia, the white farmers).

Much less complexity is to be found in Mosley’s work. First, Mosley fails to provide a definition of the peasantry, thereby forcing the reader to construct one for him/herself. Thankfully, such a task is made simple by Mosley’s frequent equation of the “African rural economy” with the “peasant economy,” which suggests that he considers the peasantry to consist of any and every rural agricultural producer. With such a broad characterization, it is not surprising that Mosley measures “undermining” and “curtailment” in purely statistical terms: his sole measurement of the health of the peasantry is its per capita grain yield, irrespective of the means and

conditions under which it was produced and its relative standing against other sectors (i.e., the productivity of white settler agriculture).³

Determining which definition is “correct” or preferable is beyond the purview of this essay. The important point is that an assessment of the fate of the colonial-era peasantry is itself dependent upon the stable of ideas that are brought to bear upon the question. The underdevelopment and modernization theorists, in conceiving of the peasantry in very distinct ways, inevitably reach differing conclusions when assessing the same historical process. For those wishing to assess the peasant experience without subscribing to either theory, it is necessary, in the words of Ian Phimister, to “dis-aggregate” the peasantry: “the way in which different regions were incorporated into the wider economy was itself crucially influenced by the uneven spread of commodity relations. By specifying the process of rural class formation and differentiation, it is possible to reconcile evidence of immiseration with signs of prosperity” (Phimister, 1985-6: 240-1, 1988: 1-2). This differentiation created regional, ethnic, and class lines distinctions within the peasantry, divisions that yielded a diversity of experiences. If a more comprehensive picture of the colonial Zimbabwean peasantry is to be achieved, the observations of the dominant paradigm, then, must be supplemented with those experiences that run counter to the prevailing trend.

PROSPERITY, PENURY, AND PLACES IN BETWEEN

Those underdevelopment theorists who have studied the breadth of Zimbabwean colonial history (in particular, Palmer and Arrighi) have observed two distinct periods: an “era of peasant prosperity” (Palmer, 1977: 71-3), running approximately from 1896 to 1908; and a period of decline thereafter, intensified especially during the depressions. The period of prosperity is credited to a favorable concatenation of factors. The seizure of Mashonaland and Matabeleland by the British South Africa Company led to the formal expropriation of vast swathes of territory; however, Shona agriculturalists were not immediately pushed off their ancestral land, and could therefore continue producing as before. Meanwhile, the military conquering of the Ndebele state, which had drained Shona surplus through tribute and raids, enabled the Shona to conserve a greater share of their labor-time. The resulting surplus, in turn, was marketed to a (new) captive market of white settlers and mine workers,

integrating Shona agriculture into the colonial cash economy and enhancing the average material standing of the Shona agriculturalists. Although onerous exactions did exist (rent on privately-held land and forced labor, to name the most prominent), such hardships were not so grievous as to prompt a significant shift from agriculture to wage labor (Arrighi, 1970: 202-3).

Even at this early stage, however, regional, ethnic, and class differentiations ensured that such “prosperity” was not shared by all. Amongst the Ndebele of Matabeleland a distinct process occurred depending upon class position. After the conquest of the Ndebele state the Ndebele upper-caste was expropriated of its land and cattle, effectively destroying the economic base with which it could have integrated itself into the emerging cash-crop economy. The Ndebele lower-caste, in contrast, was largely able to retain its usage (though not “ownership”) of the land just as it, like the Shona, was relieved of its previous burden of providing labor-time to the Ndebele upper-caste (Arrighi, 1970: 202-3). Those Ndebele chiefs who collaborated with colonial authorities during the Rising of 1896-7 were granted an exemption from harsh punishment and were allowed to retain and expand their (not inconsiderable) cattle herds (Phimister, 1985-6: 247).

Amongst the Shona, as well, internal differentiation was significant. “Better off” Shona acquired ploughs which not only enhanced their own agricultural output but also enabled them to sell their ploughing capacity to neighbors (Phimister, 1985-6: 247). For those Shona who managed to acquire relatively high-paying wage employment, “proletarian” status also enhanced “peasant” status, as they were able to reinvest a portion of their wage earnings into agricultural improvements, such as cattle, ploughs, and scotch carts (Phimister, 1985-6: 249). Indeed, the resulting stratification was so deep that a small layer of “black farmers” emerged. One such “farmer” employed eight full-time laborers and drew rent from a further fourteen Shona “squatter families” (Ranger, 1970: 59). Thus, despite the general trend outlined by the scholars of underdevelopment, there was penury (or at least a decisive lack of means) amid the prosperity.

The second phase of development identified by the underdevelopment theorists, beginning as early as 1903 but intensifying after the depression of the early 1920s, brought a harsh reversal of fortune to the Zimbabwean peasantry. Failing to find a “second Rand,” the British South Africa Company (BSAC) sought a supplementary mode of economic development that would be capable of accumulating capital and providing input to Rhodesia’s infant industries: white settler farming. The encouragement of white farming introduced a new political and economic dynamic into the colony, one which tipped the balance strongly against African peasant interests. Competing with the native peasant for land and markets, and seeking to draw a greater upon an ever-larger (and

³ It must be stressed that this is not a criticism of Mosley’s method, his empirical findings, or his focus (the type of statistics that would allow for an ideally broad picture may not be available). It is, however, a criticism of his theoretical conclusion: by using such crude statistical measures to question the underdevelopment thesis, he fails to appreciate (or perhaps understand) the substantive points raised by the theory that he criticizes.

therefore cheaper) pool of native wage laborers, the new class of white farmers pressed for governmental policies that would not simply disadvantage the native peasantry, but would liquidate the peasantry as a group. Facing such pressures, it was anticipated that peasants would abandon commercial agricultural production and revert to wage labor on white farms and white enterprises or, alternatively, subsistence agriculture on land-poor and overcrowded reserves.

To this effect, a series of measures were introduced. In 1909, the BSAC imposed a rent upon all peasants on unalienated land, followed sometime later by a dog tax. In addition to rent and labor services, white landowners established a variety of exorbitant fees (for grazing, cattle dipping, etc) (Arrighi, 1970: 208). Land boundaries were drawn and redrawn in order to remove the best land from peasant usage, most significantly with the Native Reserves Commission of 1915 and the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. Finally, during the depression period, when peasant production was not vulnerable due to low agricultural prices, government intervention further depressed the terms of trade in whites' favor, most significantly through the Maize Control Amendment Act of 1934 (Palmer, 1977: 211-2). By the end of the 1930s, the cumulative result of such policies, accorded to the underdevelopment theorists, was qualitative undermining and curtailment of peasant agriculture. Whereas the sale of produce accounted for approximately 70 percent of African cash earnings at the beginning of the century, by 1932 it accounted for less than twenty percent (Arrighi, 1970: 216). Although some commercial agriculture persisted, the white farmer had won out over the peasant cultivator: wage labor and/or subsistence farming become the only viable economic choices for the native.

As during the "era of peasant prosperity," however, peasant differentiation produced experiences that defied, if only for a time, the broad trend of "proletarianization" and increasing poverty. Mosley (1983: 397) points out that an important regional factor is the extent to which agricultural communities adopted productivity-enhancing "centralization" measures advocated by the government's agricultural demonstrators.⁴ For those peasants who had sufficient grazing land, a shift from produce production to cattle-raising afforded temporary relief, as white farmers continued to demand native stock as an input for their own cattle operations (Arrighi, 1970: 214; Phimister, 1985-6: 202-13). Although Kosmin asserts that the Inyoka tobacco industry "disappeared," this did not occur until the 1960s. To be sure, the Inyoka tobacco farmers were detrimentally affected by the depressions and the governments' "proletarianizing" measures; however, their

production of a niche cash crop allowed them to maintain a degree of independence and prosperity not enjoyed by most others (Kosmin, 1977: 279-85). The peasant producers of Chiweshe, without the population pressures of other districts, were able to expand their production and sale of maize during the 1930s by extending their acreage and widely using ploughs (Dopcke, 1989: 52). Even in such districts as Mazoe, where farmers possessed almost ninety percent of the land (Palmer, 1977: 262), rich peasants were able to stave off "proletarianization" through the negotiation of tenancy agreements. By agreeing to work on the white farmers' land in certain intervals, these peasants were granted "personal fields, usually with richer soils than in reserves" (Phimister, 1985-6: 253).

This article is primarily concerned with the empirical, and, in particular, the theoretical ambiguities that shaped early historiographical debates about peasant experience and welfare in the colonial Rhodesia. However, its theoretical emphasis on the need to "disaggregate the peasantry" can also be helpful in understanding the differential and disputed outcomes of the post-2000 land reforms. As various contributors to a special issue of the *Journal of Peasant Studies* (December 2011) devoted to recent land reforms have stressed, there have been multiple responses by those commonly referred to as "peasants." As Sam Moyo has noted, the reforms have fuelled new inequities in access to land and farm input and output markets (339). Even as many new farmers accumulate substantial new assets, others struggle all the more to ensure their basic social reproduction. Meanwhile, a group of so-called "middle farmers" has emerged who are producing, accumulating, and investing (Scoones et al. 2001; 967). As during the colonial era, a close examination of regional domestic networks, political connections, and myriad other factors is needed to assess the fate of post-colonial Zimbabwe's "peasantry"

CONCLUSION

An historical approach which "disaggregates" the peasantry along ethnic, geographic, and class lines underscores the fact that there was not a single Zimbabwean peasant experience during the colonial period, but several. As a result, two important implications arise. First, there can be no doubt that peasant agriculture was *not* "universally damaged and curtailed" during colonial rule. Peasant agriculture underwent an initial period of prosperity, and even when significant hardships and dramatic changes occurred during the period of "proletarianization," such negative experiences were by no means uniform. Mosley's data even suggest that peasant agriculture, conceived narrowly in per capita yield terms, emerged from the latter period without having been significantly effected.

⁴ Of course, it must be noted that such "positive" governmental measures were instituted alongside a much greater number of "negative" ones (such as the Maize Control Amendment Act), thereby reducing significantly their potential benefits. See Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 202-213.

Even if underdevelopment and modernization theorists agreed that peasant agriculture was not “universally damaged and curtailed,” the two schools remain very much at odds over the *general trajectory* of peasant agriculture during the colonial period. Assertions that the peasant economy experienced “disintegration” (Good) and even destruction (Palmer) cannot be easily resolved with the Mosley’s observations. This problem highlights a second implication of “disaggregating” the peasantry, that of definition. The peasantry under colonialism was hardly a cohesive group, or even a unitary socioeconomic class. Under political and economic pressure, the stratum of commercially-successful agriculturalists that colonialism itself had produced began to fragment: the less successful reverted to wage labor and subsistence, while the most successful escaped the class altogether (the so-called “African farmers”). As historical materialists, underdevelopment theorists conceived of the peasantry in a very specific way, as a group possessing definite rights to labor upon land and existing in a certain relationship with non-peasant socioeconomic groups. The absolute value of peasant productivity is irrelevant to the definition. Bearing this definition in mind, it is quite appropriate for the underdevelopment theorists to claim that the peasantry experienced disintegration, even destruction, during the periods of their study. Governmental and economic policies resulting in widespread “proletarianization” undermined the peasantry’s standing vis-à-vis the class of white farmers and challenged preceding rights to labor on the land. Mosley, in contrast, adopts a much broader view of peasant agriculture, making no apparent distinction between peasant commercial production, peasant subsistence production, and African farmer production. For Mosley, peasant agriculture is simply native agriculture, and its fortunes can be traced through raw statistics. Thus, there need not be any contradiction between the observations of the underdevelopment and modernization schools. Theorists from both sides approached the peasant question with differing ideological precepts, and therefore assessed the *same phenomenon* in completely divergent ways.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Review

Is culture a restraining or a driving force for entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka?

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Being entrepreneurial is vital for a country to ensure sustainability. Sustainability is ensured by high levels of opportunity recognition of ventures. Given this, this paper seeks to investigate context specific problems. Does entrepreneurship exist in a country like Sri Lanka? Are entrepreneurial activities limited due to the inherent culture in Sri Lanka? And does culture act as a driving force or a restraining force for entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka? To address these varied questions in existence, we analyze Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions in Sri Lankan context. Each dimension was interpreted and generalizations were drawn in relation to the entrepreneurial impact in Sri Lanka and subsequently questions were answered. A model of Levels of Opportunity Recognition was proposed as a depiction of a strategic tool of sustainability. Finally, we state that inferences drawn are adhering to subjectivity and thus those are required to be tested empirically imposing different implications.

Key words: Culture, opportunity recognition, sustainability, Sri Lanka.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship as a scholarly inquiry has been addressed by different scholars in varied ways imposing diverse conceptualizations. The general understanding about entrepreneurship implicitly acknowledges initiating and conducting business dealings. The author's view in this regard is, this is merely a misconception. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) asserted identification of entrepreneurial opportunity as the essence of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, they highlighted that if a person can spot a business opportunity which has not been addressed or acquired by another entrepreneur in the past, that business opportunity may inevitably have the

capability to be converted to an entrepreneurial venture. Thus mere business creation is differentiated by entrepreneurship. Given this scholarly inference one can question, does entrepreneurship exist in a country like Sri Lanka? We partly agree to this statement. Furthermore, Shane and Venkataraman proposed '[e]ntrepreneurship as the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited (p.218). Given this fascinating definition of entrepreneurship developed so far, Davidsson (2005) writes, the phenomenon of entrepreneurship really consists of new

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entry, while Lumpkin and Dess(1996) assert the creation of new enterprise.

Given these theoretical bases the author intends to answer the question raised above, does entrepreneurship exist in Sri Lanka? Yes, up to a certain extent it does exist. The reason for us to say that is, the number of entrepreneurial ventures that are established in Sri Lanka and the ventures that typically comprehend the values of innovation, expansion and growth are substantially in a low number. It is apparent that, the number of ventures launched annually is equal to the failure rates in Sri Lanka. Here a question arises, what is the reason for this? Is this due to the lack of entrepreneurial activities? Opening a room or a prerequisite to address these problems further, the authors commence to address the foci of the discussion, are entrepreneurial activities limited due to the inherent cultures in Sri Lanka?

Our rationalizations are fairly simple. Recalling Shane and Venkataraman (2000) cited above, we state that the people's willingness to take an initiative and seek new entrepreneurial opportunities, at least or partially, depends and is implicitly influenced by cultural heritages. Thus we integrate Venkataraman's definitions of entrepreneurship and state that the premise of opportunity recognition which is also the entrepreneurship is largely implicitly influenced by the vested culture. Furthermore, this argument is addressed in this explanatory note. Does culture act as a driving force or a restraining force for entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka?

This paper is structured as follows. Since our attempt is to make a scholarly contribution, we write theoretical perspectives of national culture in the second section. Geert Hofstede's Cultural dimensions were proposed and relationships they have with entrepreneurship was also identified. The third section derives the cultural values of Geert Hofstede in relation to Sri Lankan society. Though it is not in line with the foci of the paper, we propose comparative cultural dimensions of India and Nepal highlighting the differences of each country. Drawing generalizations of each cultural dimension, impact was assessed and scrutinized. Furthermore, the section proposes a model of Levels of Opportunity Recognition as a depiction of a strategic tool of sustainability.

NATIONAL CULTURE – A THEORETICAL VIEW

National culture and entrepreneurship

The impetus of entrepreneurship in a country mostly lies within the individuals in that society and on degree of internal and external stimuli with regard to the spirit of enterprises. Given this, the key question arises, what actually triggers entrepreneurship? Regardless of the diverse aspects of triggers of entrepreneurship, national

culture and the relationship it has with the entrepreneurial activities are vital. We put forth this point because, vested culture in a nation invariably has a link with how people think and behave. If so, one can simply determine that, culture shapes entrepreneurship. It may either hinder or stimulate it.

It is a fact that the development of entrepreneurship can be largely attributed to culture. Also, cultures of some countries have a greater tendency for entrepreneurship whereas others do not (Ohe et al., 1991). Since entrepreneurial orientation acts as the sole indicator of entrepreneur's strategy and the vested culture shapes the strategy of entrepreneurs, it is rational to argue that culture acts as a major cause to shape the entrepreneurial strategy. Besides, given the importance of entrepreneurial orientation, Wiklund and Shepherd (2005) write that entrepreneurial orientation is critical for the development of a firm and it offers a beneficial framework for research entrepreneurial activity. Furthermore, entrepreneurship widely accepts the need of individual fulfillment, achievement and career, etc. Also entrepreneurial orientation acts as the strategy of a sole entrepreneur. Thus we state that individual fulfillment and achievement can be largely attributed to effective execution of entrepreneurial strategy; in other words, entrepreneurial orientation. On the other hand culture of a particular country needs to be a supportive and a vital aspect to address.

Many scholarly investigations have addressed the link between entrepreneurship and national culture, and they state that, views and attitudes of key decision makers in firms reflect the assumptions and values in a culture (Mueller and Thomas, 2001). In fact the argument of the reflection of national cultural aspects from the organizational members is especially related to the field of entrepreneurship, as key personnel of the organization act as the "brain" of the venture and they determine the overall strategic orientation of the venture (Colvin and Selvin, 1991). Also many studies have found that the impact of national culture on strategic behaviors of ventures is significant (Marino et al., 2002).

It is important to recognize the importance of assessing cultural aspect in the phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Besides, Lee and Peterson (2000) suggested that, the phenomenon of entrepreneurship develops in a manner, where culture gives rise to entrepreneurial potential. Furthermore, they suggested that the unique composite factors of attitudes, values, and behaviors foster or hinder entrepreneurship in a country.

Hofstede's Culture

Assessment of the relationship between national culture and entrepreneurship persist for decades (Schumpeter, 1934). Also the phenomenon has assessed empirically

(Morris et al., 1994). However, it is important to state that the relationship between entrepreneurship and culture is not well established (Hayton et al., 2002). Some scholars have criticized Hofstede's (1980) work on culture based on the principle not adequately describing the differences in entrepreneurial activity in different countries (Busenitz et al., 2000), but many accept the Hofstede's work in the study of cultural values and entrepreneurship (Hayton et al., 2002).

The phenomenon of entrepreneurship appears to be more compatible with some cultures whereas with others do not. To identify these differences Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions would be a good starting point. Hofstede (1980), in his seminal work on culture, described a set of features that influences how group of people react to its environment and thus differentiates group membership. In his definition of national culture, five independent dimensions were proposed in relation to national culture, namely; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism – collectivism and masculinity – femininity (Long term orientation, check). His discovery of national culture and the relational dimensions was a result of an employee attitude survey in the 1970s. The survey was focused through a large scale research and data were collected at IBM. Basically the study's questions were related to values and represented mental programming of the respondents (Hofstede, 2001, p.48). Furthermore, Hofstede's identifications were each person hold unique parts in relation to mental programming and those parts are shared with each other (Hofstede, 2001). However, Mueller and Thomas (2001) suggested that Hofstede does not specifically state the relationship between culture and entrepreneurial activity, but his cultural dimensions provide a useful means to assess the relationship between cultural aspects and entrepreneurial behavior.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions

First dimension; power distance, “[i]t indicates the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally, (Hofstede 1980. P. 45). Also he further postulated that the notion of power distance is the perception of organizational and institutional members who have less power within a country expect and accept the fact that, power is not distributed equally (Hofstede, 2013). Elaborating more about the dimension, organizational structures with less power distance acknowledge individual's personal ability of making decisions, whereas organizations with high power distance do not accept individual's ability in making decisions (Hofstede, 2001). Second dimension; uncertainty avoidance, “indicates

the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by providing greater career stability, establishing more suitable rules, not tolerating deviant ideas and behaviors, and believing in absolute truths and the attainment of expertise” (Hofstede, 1980. P. 45). Furthermore, uncertainty avoidance depicts the degree or the extent to which a society deals with inherent ambiguities and complexities of life (Kreiser et al., 2010). It is said that, in countries which have high uncertainty avoidance, standardized procedures, clear structures and rules are accepted since they bring stability. In contrast, in countries which have low uncertainty avoidance, unfamiliar situations are accepted by the people. Furthermore, in low uncertainty scenarios people are less resistant to change (Hofstede, 2001).

Third dimension; individualism – Collectivism, “The third dimension encompasses individualism and its opposite, *Collectivism*. Individualism implies a loosely knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and of their immediate families only, while collectivism is characterized by a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups; they expect their in-group (relatives, clan, organizations) to look after them, and in exchange for that they feel they owe absolute loyalty to it” (Hofstede, 1980. P. 45). Simply put, this dimension defines the independence of members of the society. Kreiser et al. (2010) define individualism as the relationship between collectivity and individual in a society.

Fourth dimension; Masculinity, its opposite pole, femininity. “Measurements in terms of this dimension express the extent to which the dominant values in society are “masculine” –that is, assertiveness, the acquisition of money and things, and not caring for others, the quality of life, or people” (Hofstede, 1980. P. 45). The underlying principle of this dimension is, women generally put emphasis on social factors; on the other hand, men pay attention on ego goals, like money and career (Hofstede, 2001). This categorization leads to the typical question: ‘How are people motivated?’ Hofstede (2001) suggests that in a masculine society the prime motivator is achievement and competition, whereas, in a feminine society the quality of life and caring for others are considered as the signals of success. Kreiser et al. (2010) consider masculinity as the level of self-confidence and assertiveness in a culture.

Given all these dimensions of culture, Horst (1996) write that it is not required and it is not necessary that all the members in a society would follow all the dimensions proposed above in each aspect of their lives. Also it is important to recognize that none of the individuals will be a slave of the vested culture in a nation. This implies that there will be some individuals who often deviate from the vested cultural norms (Morrison, 2000).

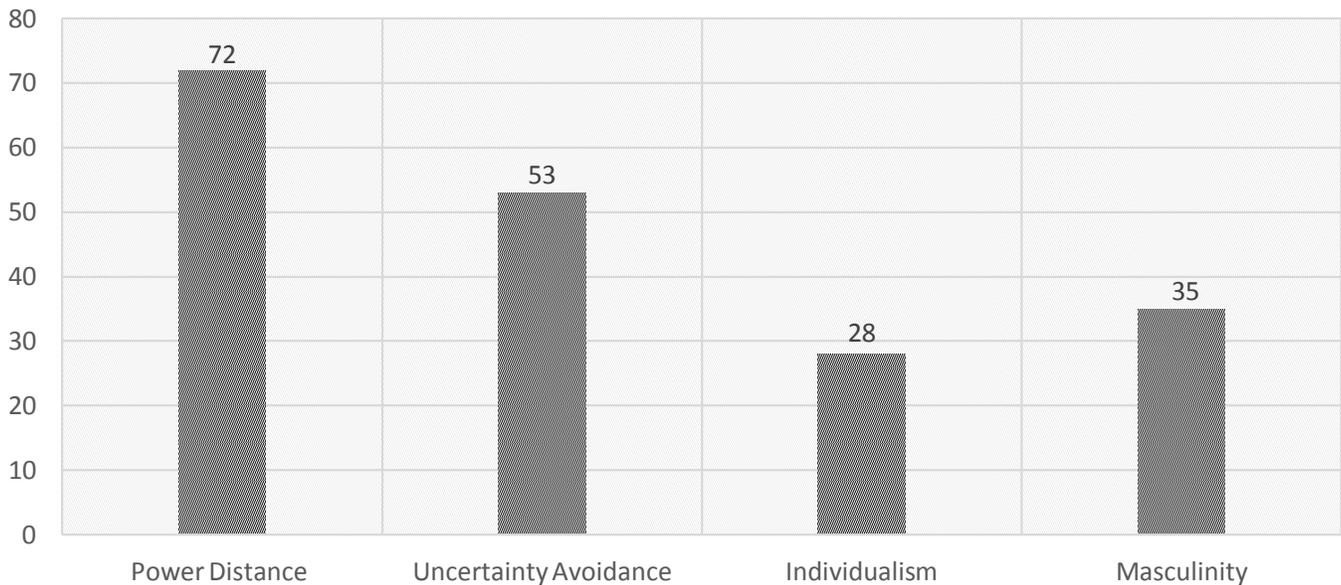


Figure 1. Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Sri Lanka. Source: Geert Hofstede's personal website, (URL: <http://geerthofstede.nl/geert.aspx>).

National Culture in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has been recognized to have high levels of power distance and uncertainty avoidance. The theory behind power distance is the distribution of power in an organization. Simply put, high power distance implies the fact that, organizations in general do not acknowledge participative decision making and they do not accept individuals in making decisions. This scenario links with the empowerment dimension of an individual. Simply, empowerment refers to the result individuals may feel when they become part of the decision making process. The participative decision making culture in an organization takes collective decisions. All the managerial and non-managerial positions contribute to the decision making considering the levels and the authority they hold and thus leads to positive outcomes. In contrast, according to the chart number one, 72 level of power distance implies that there are high levels of power distance that exist in organizations in Sri Lanka as a whole.

As we mentioned above, uncertainty avoidance depicts the degree or the extent to which a society deals with inherent ambiguities and complexities of life (Kreiser et al., 2010). Furthermore, if a country is as a result of high uncertainty avoidance culture, standardized procedures and structures are anticipated as those that bring stability. However, the author's view in these regard is, there are many disadvantages of being standardized.

In contrast, individualism and masculinity values held a

somewhat lower level than power distance and uncertainty avoidance in Sri Lanka. According to Figure 1, individualism and masculinity values were 28 and 35, respectively. The notion of individualism defines the independence of the members of the society. The low degree of individualism implies that Sri Lanka as a society has a tendency toward collectivism. Being collective as a country Sri Lanka, we draw an inference highlighting the fact that Sri Lankan society as a whole is characterized by a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups. In the surface level, the authors believe that this is a positive sign in fostering positive outcomes. Finally, the masculinity value corresponds to a level of 35 implying a below moderate level. The notion of masculinity refers to the allocation and distribution of roles between the genders of the country. The traits include self-centeredness, strength, power, individual achievements and assertiveness. Literary masculinity refers to the dominance of male in the society whereas femininity refers to the femaleness of the society. The relatively moderate level of masculinity value of 35 depicts that the society seeks for relationships, work in order to live etc.

In comparison, power distance does not hold a considerable variation in relation to the three countries considered. The approximate value of 70 implies high power distance for countries of India, Sri Lanka and Nepal (Figure 2). Most notably, this observation is critical. The reason is that, as a country, India has acquired relatively high level of industrial growth in Asia. This

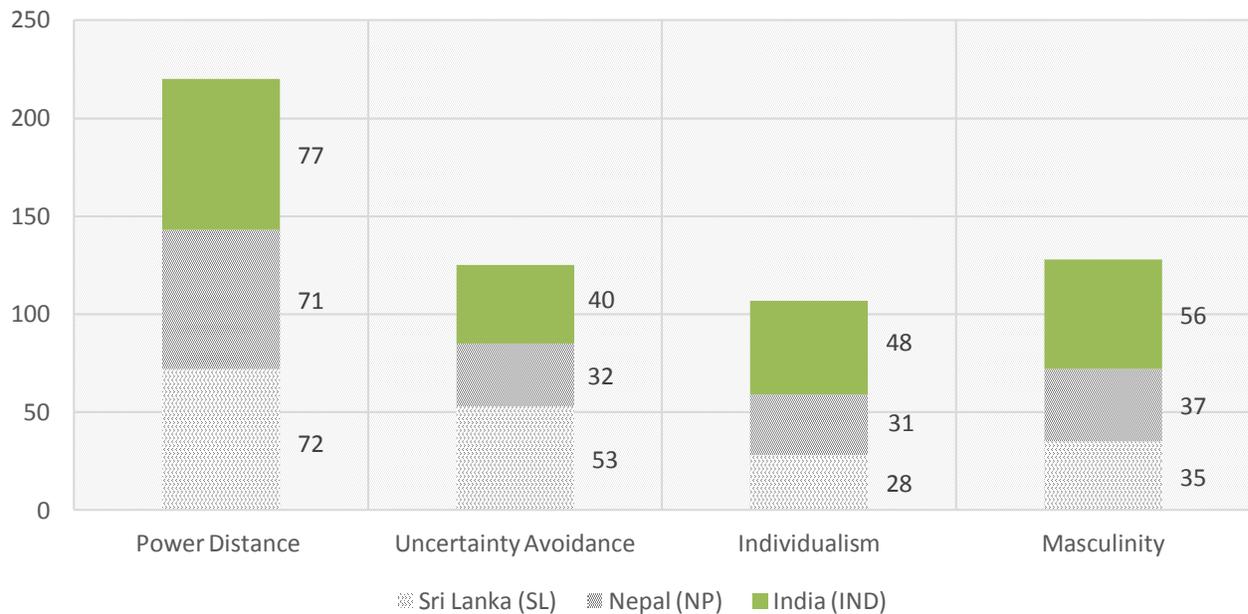


Figure 2. Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Sri Lanka, Nepal and India. Source: Geert Hofstede's personal website, (URL: <http://geerthofstede.nl/geert.aspx>).

observation presents the question, 'does a dimension like power distance actually have an impact on the country's outcome?' Simply said, do participative cultures actually contribute to stimulate organizational productivity?

Furthermore, uncertainty avoidance stands relatively high in India and in Sri Lanka which implies that organizations have a high tendency to establish rules, regulations and clear procedures expecting stability. Finally, individualism and masculinity hold relatively low in Sri Lanka in relation to India and Nepal. These observations imply the fact that independence of the individuals stands low which on the other hand implies collectivism. Further, low masculinity of Sri Lanka and Nepal compared to India implies the observations of more women in organizations, relationship orientation, solving problems through negotiations etc.

Drawing of generalizations and linking culture and entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka

In this section we intend to address the foci of this explanatory note. That is, does culture act as a driving force or a restraining force for entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka? To draw inferences in relation to this question, we propose a new dimension acknowledging Shane and Venkataraman's opportunity recognition. Recalling their idea, opportunity recognition is identified as the heart of entrepreneurship. We firmly believe that, still this

definition can be acknowledged in defining entrepreneurship and to differentiate entrepreneurial ventures from typical business ventures. We do not agree with the fact that entrepreneurial ventures are equalized to business ventures based on the opportunity recognition notion. An entrepreneurial venture always tries to spot an opportunity which no one has acquired in the past. In contrast, a typical business venture can be a replication of another business with a profit motive. But entrepreneurial ventures go beyond profit maximization. A fascinating social entrepreneur in the world, Professor Muhammad Yunus spotted an entrepreneurial opportunity that had not been filled in Bangladesh. He created a business model named Microfinance as a facilitative model to the rural in the country. Eventually, he ended up with the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance. However, business ventures can be entrepreneurial with opportunity recognition dimension but the absence of opportunity recognition differentiates entrepreneurial ventures from mere business. Thus we affirm the fact that, entrepreneurial ventures and business ventures are not synonymous terms. Furthermore, opening an approach to address the focus of this paper, does culture act as a driving force or a restraining force for entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka?, we propose a model. That is the levels of opportunity recognition (Figure 3).

It is important to recognize that entrepreneurship occurs in two levels. One is an individual starts a new venture

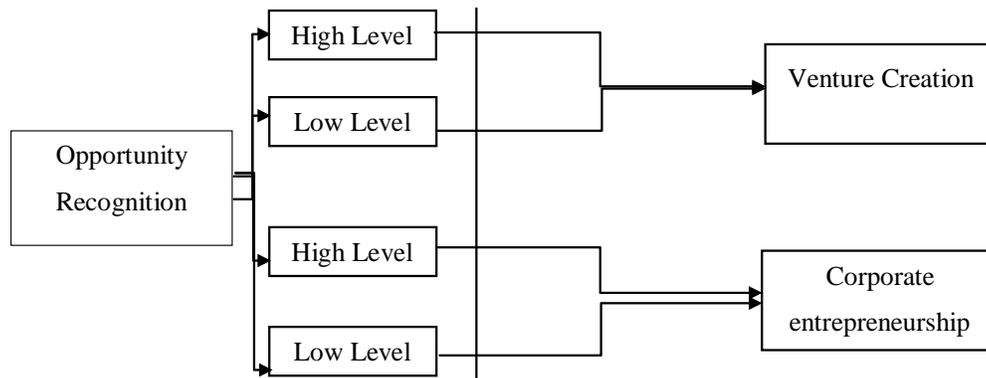


Figure 3. Levels of opportunity recognition.

with an identified entrepreneurial opportunity. Jeff Bezos the founder of Amazon.com identified a true entrepreneurial opportunity to sell books online. That is one aspect of opportunity recognition highlighted under venture creation above. The other is corporate entrepreneurship. The notion of corporate entrepreneurship can be defined as the conceptualization of entrepreneurship at the firm level. A corporate giant, BMW is one of the sustaining corporate entrepreneurial firms in the world. Opportunities are identified at the firm level in the large scale. Identifying these two aspects of opportunity recognition, it is very much important to identify the levels of opportunity recognition. Simply, a venture can be created with an identified entrepreneurial opportunity. For an example, a small food cafeteria established in an urban town can also be perceived as opportunity recognition based on the assumption that the particular entrepreneur sees an opportunity depending on his level of opportunity recognition. But the author's view in this regard is, putting up a small food cafeteria corresponds with low level of opportunity recognition which also has less tendency to sustain. However, the entrepreneur sees some kind of an entrepreneurial opportunity or otherwise he/she may not launch his/her venture in the urban town. Similarly, putting a food cafeteria with a unique value proposition as a product or service which no one has produced in the past can be categorized as high level of opportunity recognition, which also has much tendency to sustain. This high level of opportunity recognition is somewhat seldom in a country like Sri Lanka, and thus we affirm the low levels of opportunity recognition as a definite reason for high venture failure rates despite the other reasons of lack of technology, finance etc. Similarly, the high level of opportunity recognition is required to be practiced in large firms as well. And thus, Sri Lanka's economic sustainability would have been different from the present. With these inferences, we answer the question raised in the introduction section, *does*

entrepreneurship exist in a country like Sri Lanka? Yes, but in a relatively below moderate level due to low level of opportunity recognition in relation to venture creation and corporate entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka.

The focus of this paper is to investigate whether entrepreneurial activities are limited due to the inherent cultures in Sri Lanka? To answer this general question in an explicit manner, we utilized the Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Recalling the results, the dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and masculinity corresponded to the values of 72, 53, 28, and 35 respectively. What do these values imply actually? Putting it very simply, as we elaborated above, 72 value of power distance implies the fact that Sri Lanka as a country holds high levels of power distance; which means power in organizations in Sri Lanka are not equally distributed. Furthermore, Sri Lankan organizations do not acknowledge participative decision making process. The general understanding is that, if an organization implements decisions only from the higher levels of the organization regardless of the contributions possibly made by the low levels, it leads to less empowerment. Low level employees do not feel as a part of the organization. If an organization disregards the value of lower levels, it implies that, it hinders innovation and creative thinking of individuals. Moreover, low level workers might feel that they are similar to cogs in the organization. Linking entrepreneurship literature, Miller (1983) highlighted the value of innovation as an inevitable capability of an entrepreneur to prosper. He titled innovation under the construct of strategic posture as a strategic tool for every entrepreneur. Thus, we draw our first inference based on the power distance dimension, *are entrepreneurial activities limited due to the inherent cultures in Sri Lanka? Yes, it is limited by the high levels of power distance in organizations in Sri Lanka.*

The second cultural dimension is uncertainty avoidance. As Kreiser et al. (2010) suggested uncertainty avoidance

depicts the degree or the extent to which a society deals with inherent ambiguities and complexities of life. As mentioned above, if a country is affected by high levels of uncertainty avoidance, there is a high tendency to implement standardized procedures and structures anticipating stability. The uncertainty avoidance value was 52 as a level and thus country's members seek to avoid uncertainty as much as they can. Uncertainty avoidance further seeks to plan every occurrence. Entrepreneurial thinking is always dynamic in nature. Miller (1983) cited that, entrepreneurs assume a calculated risk. If all the procedures are being standardized in the environment, how does an entrepreneur stimulate entrepreneurial thinking? Thus we draw our second inference, *are entrepreneurial activities limited due to the inherent cultures in Sri Lanka? Yes, entrepreneurial activities are limited due to the moderate level of uncertainty avoidance in Sri Lanka.*

The third cultural dimension, individualism holds the value of 28, implying a low level of individualism. This low level of individualism implies that Sri Lanka as a country is more towards collectivism. In collective societies, we observe people are integrated since birth into strong, cohesive social groups, and extended families. Sri Lanka as a country always values social esteems. This nature is apparent due to the inherent traditional culture in Sri Lanka. The authors do not perceive this fact as a negative sign in stimulating entrepreneurship, but rather, this nature may influence team working being collective as a society with a positive sign in stimulating entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka society. Thus we draw our third inference, *are entrepreneurial activities limited due to the inherent cultures in Sri Lanka? No, entrepreneurial activities are fostered by collective culture in Sri Lanka.*

The final dimension, the masculinity value corresponds to a level of 35 implying a below moderate level. The notion of masculinity refers to the allocation and distribution of roles between the genders of the country. The traits include self-centeredness, strength, power, individual achievements and assertiveness. Literary masculinity refers to the dominance of male in the society whereas femininity refers to the femaleness of the society. The relative below moderate level of masculinity value of 35 depicts that the society seeks relationships, work in order to live etc. In the surface level, 35 value of masculinity does not depict an explicit impact on entrepreneurial thinking. Thus we draw our final inference *as unrevealed link to entrepreneurial thinking being below moderate level of masculinity in Sri Lanka.*

Conclusion

Being entrepreneurial is of paramount importance for a venture to attain sustainability and thereby to contribute

to the national economy. We affirm being entrepreneurial refers to comprehending the value of expansion and growth. This expansion certainly requires an identification of an entrepreneurial opportunity. Opportunity recognition is viewed as an unchallengeable construct of entrepreneurship which both the dimensions of venture creation and corporate entrepreneurship should acknowledge. Furthermore, we affirmed that, for a country to sustain, high levels of opportunity recognition are required. Low levels of opportunity recognition correspond to low levels of sustainability. Thus we postulated the value of high levels of opportunity recognition introducing the model of Levels of Opportunity Recognition. Drawing inferences from the model formed, we generalized the reasons for high levels of venture failures in Sri Lanka. Despite the number of common reasons we postulated the value of high level of opportunity recognition as a solution of sustainability.

Further, our explanatory note investigated the reason for low levels of opportunity recognition. Based on the assumption of people's willingness to take an initiative and seek new entrepreneurial opportunities, it at least or partially depends and is implicitly influenced by cultural heritages. We link Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions to draw a near perfect inference. Out of the four dimensions, two cultural dimensions (power distance and uncertainty avoidance) were identified as hinderance to entrepreneurial activities and one (collectivism) as a stimulator of entrepreneurship and one (masculinity) as an unrevealed impact on entrepreneurial thinking. Finally, we state that, these inferences are drawn with subjectivity and thus they are required to be tested empirically imposing different implications.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

Globalization, Culture mutation and new identity: Implications for the Igbo cultural heritage

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The paper engages in globalization debate to explore culture mutation and resurgent new identity in the periphery societies of Africa. It focuses on the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria. The study of Igbo culture mutation is particularly interesting because 'traditional' scholarship presents the people as 'acephalous', 'egalitarian' and "republican". It locates culture mutation within a social organization of culture contact and domination resulting in dislodgement, alien practices and lifestyles which gradually calcifies-hence a new identity. To explore the political economy of this new identity, a conceptualization of culture mutation is attempted. Globalization is thus treated as a source of disarticulation of Igbo culture. The paper advances to explore specific culture mutation instances using both primary and secondary data sources. The primary sources are interviews from two purposively selected communities drawn from each of the five states of Eastern Nigeria namely; Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, Ebonyi and parts of Delta State while the secondary source is existing literature and reports. Findings suggest that globalization dislodges Igbo culture which results in mutation. The article calls for culture redress and policy discourse for culture reinstitution and sustainability.

Key words: Identity, culture mutation, culture sustainability, globalization, development.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and its unfolding dynamics are taking various forms in recent decades including resurgent novel modes of behavior and new identity. However, one central problem of this unfolding dynamic namely; culture mutation, remains understudied among the periphery societies.

Few studies raise such heated debates as the issues surrounding globalization and culture mutation. This paper explores fundamental implications of these changes which have not been given adequate scholarly

attention in Igbo cultural studies.

Colonialism resulted in disarticulation, dislodgement and destruction of pristine African culture and the natural economy through co-option, force and imposition of alien "ways" of life. Through colonial policies Africans became alienated from their land- their primary source of subsistence (Coleman, 1959).

Ake (1996) argues that colonialism in Africa was markedly different from the colonial experiences of the Americas, Europe, and Asia. To begin with, it was

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unusually statist. The colonial state redistributed land and determined who should produce what and how.

This was followed by neo colonial and neo imperial influences as African elite could not dissociate from the colonial legacies (Amadi and Ekekwe, 2014).

In the 1960s and 1970s, several African countries gained political independence. A series of highly visible colonial legacies created a groundswell culture distortion including “Westernization” of Africans through acculturation of Western values such as urbanization, bureaucracies, change in dress codes, attitudes etc. These reflected some form of proclivity to European lifestyles.

Eke (1975) identifies emergent “two publics” as a colonial legacy- one within the public realm, the other in the private. He argues that many of Africa's political problems are due to the dialectical relationships between the two publics.

The colonial state and its administrative structure resulted in the imposition of warrant Chiefs in Eastern Nigeria which was alien to the Igbo people ‘who know no kings’ (Afigbo, 1965).

The missionaries equally furthered the incipient destruction of Igbo values (Ilogu, 1974). Western names such as John, Henry, Mark either reflect the names of former imperial rulers of England or Christians in the holy Bible, given to people through “baptism” to “transform” them from “heathens” to “Christians”. Kalu (1996) underscores the decimation of Igbo gods at the advent of Christianity.

In the 1960s, well known literary works began to examine colonialism and the gradual “overthrow” of Igbo culture; Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, John Munonye’s, *The Only Son*.

From a feminist perspective, Flora Nwapa’s *Efuru* and Buchi Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen* both provide the relevance of cultural renaissance. Other feminists such as historian, Catherine Acholonu reinforces congenial perception of Igbo artefacts.¹ The post -civil war culture change, economic hardship and reintegration of the Igbo in Nigeria have been portrayed in Phanuel Egejuru’s *The Seed Yam Has Been Eaten*.

Korieh (2010) reveals the effects of agrarian change on Eastern Nigeria at post- civil war and peasant production especially within gender contexts.

From linguistic perspective and preservation of Igbo language, Chidozie Ogbalu and the formation of *Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture SPILC in 1948* gave greater impetus to Igbo language consciousness. Although Rev. Thomas Denis had developed the Union Ibo Bible in 1904, perhaps the greatest innovation in modern Igbo language development, several Igbo scholars such as Achebe found that to be a “mutant variant” of Igbo language devoid of pristine Igbo semantics.²

On the contrary, Nwadike (2008) debunks the anti -

Union Ibo Bible debate and argues from a rather progressive perspective stating that Rev. Thomas contributed meaningfully to the development of Igbo language.

Early studies on Igbo culture shows rich cultural heritage. Chidozie Ogbalu’s *Omenala Igbo* comes the closest which provides a panorama of Igbo culture. Ilogu (1964) identifies *Ofor* as Igbo religious symbol. Other cultural norms such as Igbo gerontocracy, oath taking, punishment for breaking of bonds of competent relationship have also been studied (Uchendu, 1974; Irogbu, 2009; Amadi and Agena, 2014).

Within the oral literature of Igbo cultural studies are two veritable culture renaissance programmes namely; *Ahiajoku* lecture series established in 1979 and recently *Odenigbo* in 2009. Eminent Igbo scholars such as Echeruo, (1979), Okigbo (1980), Afigbo (1981), Nwoga (1984), Nwabueze (1985), etc. Also the late professor Chinua Achebe among others have lectured in the series.

The years after the Cold War witnessed the beginnings of dramatic changes in peoples’ identities and the symbols of those identities. Ukaegbu (1991) examines Igbo identity and personality in relation to Igbo cultural symbols.

Igbo culture at once reappears in globalization discourse which in this paper is the “disappearance of boundaries and integration of the world into a global village”. In this dynamic, culture clash is inevitable as the dominant culture strives to dislodge the recessive culture. This “clash” provides a new look at globalization debate from the lens of culture mutation conceived as total or partial excision of ways of life of a people .As mutation emerges, new modes of behavior and lifestyle emerge which results in new identity.

At the turn of the millennium, globalization becomes a paradigm for explaining these new modes of behaviour, lifestyles and changing identity.

In this paper, we argue beyond the debate about the existence of globalization and posit that globalization is designed to advance the culture of stronger nations at the expense of weaker ones. One of the major effects of this in recent times is culture mutation. We argue that cultural globalization involves the constellation and inter-connectedness of different values, norms and knowledge of different peoples. In this interaction, dominant culture dislodges recessive culture.

The central theme of our argument is the dislodgement of Igbo culture by the dominant Western culture in the cause of this interaction and its implication for Igbo cultural heritage. We demonstrate this with substantial evidences which include; The new internet identity, online alliances and networking, The global System of Mobile communication (GSM) revolution, Global Satellite System, European Premiere League (EPL) fanatic, New Lifestyles, Online dating and internet virtual sexual intercourse, New Media, New Mobile Apps, New

Consumption Patterns, Novel Western centric names of people and things, Western E-learning and educational inequality, etc.

We would demonstrate how these globalization induced processes have led to Igbo culture mutation and new identity and argue that urgent policy response is needed for culture reinstitution and sustainability.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article deploys a historical dialectical method which explores the Igbo culture and customs dislodged by the anti-thesis of colonialism and post-colonial history and synthesized into the present state through globalization. The arguments rely heavily on primary and secondary data, generalized theories, proceed to an equally generalized discussion of a specific case analysis—Igbo cultures—and synthesize findings on Igbo cultural mutation.

Our primary method of data deploys interview from two communities both from each of the five purposively selected States in Eastern Nigeria. The communities are; Afikpo and Ohaozara in Ebonyi, Onitsha and Awka in Anambra, Owerri and Orlu in Imo, Arochukwu and Ngwa in Abia, Nsukka and Nkanu in Enugu, Asaba and Ibusa in Delta State. While these do not presuppose the entire Igbo community of Eastern Nigeria, they form the bulk of the population and most suitable audience for the research theme. Secondary data include existing relevant literature, reports etc.

To recapture the pristine state of Igbo culture and general evidence of culture decline and mutation, the history of the study area provides evidence of rich Igbo cultural heritage and incidence of distorted specific cultures, to determine what went wrong and the causes of this particular distortion. The specific globalization induced culture mutation that we seek to investigate includes; excision of core cultural identity and practices such as traditional wrestling contests, initiation into masquerades, mutation of Igbo cultural festivals, Igbo language, dearth of libation to Igbo gods and ancestors, mutation of traditional institutions, novel modes of "blessing" of Kolanut devoid of Igbo spirituality, monetization of Igbo traditional titles, Igbo culture de-alignment, land alienation, attitudinal change, dearth of Igbo recipe and delicacies, ethical bankruptcy, moral decadence etc. We shall substantially elucidate dimensions of these specific mutated cultures.

History of the study area

The history of the origins of the Igbo people has been a subject of intense scholarly debate (Nzimiro, 1972; Onwuejeogwu, 1975; Afigbo, 1974; Isichei, 1969).

Onwuejeogwu (1979) observes that autochthony, which is the claim of origin from the spot of present habitation by maximal lineage generally *Umudiani* ("Children of the earth"), is found in many ancient Igbo towns such as the *Umudiani* in Nri town who claim they were there when Nri migrated to the present town called Nri. The *Umudiani* also claim "amnesia," which means they recall nothing of their origin. In the Igbo culture area, only new towns like Aro confederacy, Onitsha, Ogidi, Ibusa, Asaba, Ogwashi-Ukwu, etc. claim origin of "certainty". However, such claims are contestable in recent times³

The Igbos share boundary on the north with the Igala, Idoma and Ogoja peoples, on the east with the Ibibio, on the south with the Ijaw of the Delta region, and on the west with the Edo-speaking peoples of Edo State of Nigeria.

Before the civil war (1967-1970), Igbo land was roughly made up of present Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, parts of Delta and

Rivers states, small parts of Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River, Edo, and Kogi States (Uchem, 2001).

More than 30 million people inhabit Igbo land and with a population density ranging from 1000 people per sq. mile in high density areas and 350 per sq. mile in low density areas (Ezeokana, 1999). It could be the densest area in Africa after the Nile Valley.⁴ Altogether Igbo land has an area of some 15,800 to 16,000 square miles.⁵

Igbo land is not a homogeneous entity but characterized by different sub-cultures with significant differences among them. While Forde and Jones (1950) distinguished five Cultural sub-groups of the Igbo culture area, Onwuejeogwu (1981) identified six. According to Forde and Jones (1950), the division is as follows;

- (1) Northern or Onitsha Igbo which includes towns like Awka, Udi, Enugu, Enugu Ukwu, Nsukka, Aro Ndizeogu, Onitsha, Agukwu Nri, Igboekwu, Nanka, and Ihiala.
- (2) Southern or Owerri Igbo, which includes towns like Aba, Umuahia, Owerri, Ahoada, Okigwe, and Orlu;
- (3) Western Igbo, which is the part of Igboland in Delta State and includes towns like Asaba, Agbor, Kwalle, Ilah, and Aboh;
- (4) Eastern or Cross River Igbo, which includes towns like Abam, Ohafia, Afikpo, Arochukwu, and Aribra.
- (5) North-Eastern Igbo, which includes towns like Ezza, Uburu, Okposi, and Abakkaliki.

The Igbo people are among Nigeria's three major ethnic groups, with highly specialized and distinct cultural values. Igbo culture is inherently dynamic and flexible, rather than static.

The moral standard of *omenala* (culture/custom) is very high. Their spirituality is triadic and anchored on the Chief Priest of *Ala/Ani* (earth goddess) who interfaces between the living, the dead (ancestors) and the gods.

Iroegbu (2009) observes that the Igbo cosmology or worldview consists of a world of (i) above, (ii) a terrestrial one or man's world, and (iii) a world below (Iroegbu, 2009 cited in Amadi and Agena, 2014). The world-above is known as *eligwe*; that is "sky or heaven", where the supreme God (*Obasi, Chukwu, or Chineke*) dwells. The terrestrial world is *elu uwa, ala*, conceived as the earth, "the world of man" (*uwa madu*), the life scene on man in the midst of other beings like animals and trees. The "world-below" (*okpuru uwa*) is known as *ala mmuo*, which is the domain of the spirit forces (*agbara na mmuo*). It is mainly the world of the spirit ancestors, good or evil, inhabiting "the underworld" (*ime ala*), "the world of the dead" (*ndi nwuru anwu*). Life therefore revolves around the interaction of the forces coming from each of the major beings and spaces, represented in the cosmology of life and space (Iroegbu, 2009 cited in Agena and Amadi, 2014).

Igbo traditional religion involves several sacrifices, rituals and initiation such as initiation into the masquerade cult, the Ozo institution, *Nze* title, the *Ichie/Oha* (elders council) (Tolbot, 1967; Isichei, 2004). There are relationships between the gods, oracles, and divination (Ogbaa, 1992; Iroegbu, 2009) such as *Amadioha* (the god of thunder), *Ogwugwu, Ogbanje, Ibinu Ukpabi, Agwu, Onuochasi, Agbara mmiri*, (water spirit), *Ohammiri/Ogbuide* (water goddess among Oguta Igbo), *Mbari* art (among Owerri Igbo), *Ahijoku/Ifejioku* (yam goddess), *Chiokike, (God the Creator)* etc. Various significant streams and rivers are interconnected to Igbo spirituality.

The advent of Christianity has brought most of these gods and

their worship to an end (Ilogu,1996).

Dibia (diviners) play important roles in Igbo religion and spirituality. Orji (2007) explores the *Dibia* in historical contexts as priests, healers and diviners. They together with the Chief Priests (*Onye isi Ala/Eze Mmmuo*) are intermediaries between the gods (spirits) and the people (humans). There are female *Dibia* or diviners but there are no female Chief Priests. The gods select such positions through a long and tortuous consultation. *Onye Isi Ala* is hereditary among specific families known as *ndi nwe isis ala*, (custodians of the sacred land goddess). Soothsaying and potency to concoct charms, spells, poison and to dispel same are common among Igbo culture. Others are herbalists who could cure all sorts of ailments with various roots, leaves and herbs.

Pre-colonial Igbo civilization is democratic. They have a complex and sophisticated form of political life (Nzimiro, 1972). Although they are patrilineal, they believe in *Oke na Nnne* (Male and Female). Hence there are role specifications between various distinct sub groups including women. They are much more diffused than in many places of Africa which makes the study of Igbo culture mutation both important and useful.

A distinct feature of the Igbo civilization is the absence of any formal, centralized political authority. They have egalitarian and republican structure with sub groups which observe specialized form of gerontocracy and recognize the council of elders (*Oha* or *Ndichie*) as the highest decision making body who are the custodians of *Ofor* (symbol of authority).

The largest family unit is the *Umunna* (Kinsmen) made up of male heads of extended families or clans. The patrilineal structure is both distinct and congenial to peaceful co-existence (Amadi and Agena, 2014). Other sub groups are the *Umuada* (daughters of the land); they engage in conflict resolution; the *Umuama* (youths and children) periodically clear the communal roads, the age grades maintain law, peace, order and security and engage in community development projects.

At the extended family level, there are several associations such as hunters, palm wine tapers, herbalists, cultural dance groups, women cooperatives etc. Such are the life wire of the people and the nucleus of their socio-economic and cultural being (Amadi and Agena, 2014). The systemic role specifications among these sub groups are reintegrated into a common societal good.

Important ceremonies and festivals such as child naming ceremonies, traditional titles, festivals exist. They are enterprising and undertake self- help projects. Where necessary, they levy themselves or through their communal palm cutting- *Iwu Nkwu*, raise funds.

Land is the source of economic existence of the Igbo who are largely agrarian. There are communal and individual ownership of land. It is shared along patrilineal lines. Women do not own lands according to custom. Igbo people engage in commerce, craftsmanship and trade. The Aro area in present Abia State was a slave port in the 18th century.

The social life of the Igbo is built on core values and ethics such as taboos, sacrileges, equality, honesty. *Ezi Okwu bu ndu*-(truth is life) are Igbo philosophical norms .

The Igbo cultural system is a system of equality. The pattern of adjudication is systemic and well developed among the *Umunna*. Consensus is built after the consent of everybody is sought and heard. Everybody has equal right in key decisions and could insist to be heard. Decisions on issues are taken with collective consensus binding on the people called *Izu Ummunna*(Amadi and Agenna, 2014). Several such decisions must be in line with the will of the gods and custom of the land. Issues of conflict include communal or family disputes, border disputes, breaking of oath of competent relationship, infidelity, deceit, stealing, etc. Such conflicts are judiciously adjudicated. After fulfilling cultural obligations such as fines, defaulters are reintegrated. Dissident parties could be

ostracized or banished where they do not conform to collective decisions on amenable ways of resolving such conflicts such as purification rituals or cleansing of the land to appease the gods (Amadi and Agena, 2014).

Certain rituals are performed in cause of reconciliation, reinforced with *ofor* often struck aggressively against the earth by the eldest (Opara/Okpara) of the clan on each count of consensus followed by collective shout in affirmation by the *Umunna* –ise (Amadi and Agena, 2014). However, where the offence is outrageous, the defaulter is utterly banished such as killing of human beings. They also engage in communal wars. The Abam people are warriors involved in conquests long before colonial contacts.

Food is both a way of life and culture component of the Igbo people. Various Igbo communities are associated with various kinds of food including food crops. There are *Ji Onitsha* (yam specie that originated from Onitsha), *Akpu Ohaji* (Cassava from Ohaji), *Oka Awaka* (Specie of corn that thrives in Awaka), *Ugba Owerri* (oil bean) etc. Traditionally yam is their staple food and the king of crops; other important food crops are cocoyam, vegetables, maize, palm tree, raffia palm etc.

There are rain makers, hunters, craftsmen and women who design core Igbo arts and artifacts including the highly revered *Mbari* art, *Akwaete* cloth weavers in Ndoki near Aba present Abia State; there are local blacksmiths in Awka axis in Anambra, ceramic and local pottery makers (*Udu*) native water keg, basket weavers, mats, local foot mat etc.

Igbo culture venerates nature which is believed to be interconnected with *Chiokike* (God the Creator). Issues of purity such as virginity, first child (especially male) or first fruits are traditionally celebrated. They place high premium on male children as custodians of culture and inhabitants of the *Obi* (homestead).

The Igbo philosophy is rooted on the perceptions they have over the nature of the Igbo universe. Odita (1995) observes that the two primary factors that underline their belief system and existence are “life-on-earth” and “life-after-death”. These two factors, according to him, help to clarify certain fundamentals and cultural expressions. These are some of the issues surrounding Igbo identity which explains who the people are, how their society functions, and their belief system etc.

Colonial plunder, conquest and slave trade unleashed terror on Igbo cultural values. Igbo identity and culture also vitiated during the decades after the Biafra War (1967-1970). As they lost the war, several groups either wholly or partially dissociated from Igbo identity and connection.

In what follows, we would demonstrate how globalization in the 21st century has changed this pristine Igbo world view as it suffices in this debate.

Conceptual and theoretical issues

The study tracks the dynamics of the culture mutation today in an attempt to identify the cultural practices that have ebbed the ones that have endured overtime and the ones overtaken by globalization. These dynamics make the study of Igbo cultural heritage important.

Debates and conceptualization of culture mutation, identity and globalization is broad and not their entire treatise is relevant in this context. Quite apart from generalizing theories and conceptualizations, we have historical and ethnographic studies of identity which provide the rich Igbo cultural values (Afigbo,1965; Uchendu, 1965; Isichei,1967; Tolbot,1967; Okparaocha,1976; Orijji,1994).

In the social sciences identity has been variously used to explore dynamics of social interactions and attitudes distinct to a particular group of people. For instance in Nigeria both Nnoli,(1978) and Obi (2001) have used concepts such as “ethnic identity” or “ethnic

minority politics" to explain modes of ethnic behaviour.

Castells (1997) argues that identity is "a people's source of meaning and experience. Cultural identity encompasses a broad variety of values, attitudes, socialization and norms which are distinct about a particular people (Grauman, 1999; Hall et al., 1992). Social norms and attitudes identify cultural relics, such as belief system and values. Equally, historiographic parameters and anecdotal evidence has largely been useful identity variables. A major theoretical constellation stems from the symbolic watermark of commonly shared traits such as attitudes, values norms and other innate features. Cultural identity encompasses a broad variety of values, attitudes, socialization and norms which are distinct about a particular people. A major theoretical constellation stems from the symbolic watermark of commonly shared traits such as attitudes, values norms and other innate features. (Pedersen, 2008).

The debate on "culture mutation" is a corollary of revisionism which argues that globalization should be revisited as it is at odds with cultural sustainability (Blaukopf, 1985; Mieke, 2011; Moahi, 2007).

In recent times, culture mutation is discernible in virtually every aspect of the Igbo life; first, was the colonial legacy including the destruction of the natural economy and emergent culture dislodgement with imposition of Western values and Christianity. The gradual extinction of the gods and powerful Igbo deities and their associated practices have been given attention (Kalu, 1996; Ogbu, 1996; Isichei, 1977; Amadi, 1981; Arinze, 1970).

Amadi (1981) explores the effects of Western tradition on African culture with what he termed, "colonial brainwashing". Culture mutation in this paper refers to excision of prevailing totality of ways of life and attitudes of people overtime through subtle or obvious rejection or imbibing of alternative ways of life which alters existing attitudes or values.

The discourse regarding the effects of globalization on cultural diversity is a challenging debate. The advancement of technology dissolves international boundaries and opens cultures to a whole new arena,⁶ enabling globalization to occur. Globalization can be an empowering entity. It can interconnect the world, support economic development, provide information and create a global village.⁷ However, "There is a paradoxical dichotomy, a tangible undercurrent, when it comes to globalization and cultural diversity".

On one hand, globalization has the potential to mobilize and empower people, provide a means for self-representation, support a collective identity through socialization and provide employment opportunities. On the other hand, it has the ability to disempower people by misrepresentation, provide a process for further colonization, and propel the loss of individualism and self and group identity".⁸

Giddens writes "Globalization is political, technological and cultural, as well as economic."⁹ The second groups are skeptics who believe that we live in an international world in which national forces remain highly significant. Ruigrok and van Tulder observe that "Globalization seems to be as much an overstatement as it is an ideology and an analytical concept."¹⁰

Appadurai observes that globalization activities occur in five dimensions: *ethnoscapes* (people who move internationally), *technoscapes* (technology often linked to international corporations), *financescapes* (global capital, currency markets, stock exchanges), *mediascapes* (electronic and new media) and *ideoscapes* (official state ideologies and counter ideologies).¹¹

It signifies perceptions of common origins, historical memories, identity and common ties between people. It has its foundations in memories of past experiences and common aspirations, values, norms and expectations.¹²

"Political theorist Fredric Jameson presents this as two competing future visions: one of a corporate-dominated monoculture

where nations and cultural groups alike are deprived of autonomy and identity; and another of a vibrant celebration of pluralism, in which various cultural groups are in direct and harmonious contact with one another, free from limiting political forces such as national governments".¹³

"However, the most dreaded dimension of globalization that has adversely affected Africa is the cultural aspect. This has the overall aim of making Africans; lose their history, values, social norms and consequently their personality as it attempts to universalize the world culture into western categories. Since culture in whatever form is always ethno-centric and value loaded, the universalization or rather westernization of culture undermines Africans self - definition, self- realization and unique contributions in the global village arrangement" (Okoro, 2009). The Igbo is not left out in this problem (Ojukwu, 2009; Obioha, 2010). Walden argues on de-globalization (Bello, 2004).

A key question is whether a sense of culture reinstitution and sustainability remains meaningful to the present day Igbo child in re-moralizing the socio- cultural realm to confront globalization.

Dimensions of Igbo culture mutation and resurgent new identity

According to Samuel Huntington the years after the Cold War witnessed the beginnings of dramatic changes in peoples' identities and the symbols of those identities. Global politics began to be reconfigured along cultural lines (Huntington, 1997).

Giddens (1992) argues that; "In traditional societies, the past is honored and symbols are valued because they contain and perpetuate the experience of generations. Tradition is a means of handling time and space, which inserts any particular activity or experience within the continuity of past, present and future, these in turn being structured by recurrent social practices" (Giddens, 1990; cited in Hall et al., 1992).

Let us get closer to the fundamental concern here namely; that globalization induced culture mutation puts at risk the legitimacy of culture sustainability as follows.

Mutation of Igbo cultural festivals

"Although not all cultural festivals have disappeared, "Omenala" (Igbo culture/ custom) is in dilemma and crisis. After colonialism, I envisaged we could have re-invented Igbo culture but it has been futile"¹⁴ "The core festivals that ought to have served as unifying factor and vehicle for transmission of knowledge like the days of our fathers such as wrestling matches, folklores are dead. In its place is European Premier League (EPL). An average Igbo boy, even girls are fans of one or more European club sides. Such addiction has grown deeper". "Few Igbo festivals are strong and alive such as new yam festival- *iri ji Mbaise* (Mbaise Yam festival)" ;¹⁵ "While *Ofala* remains strong in Anambra state as it involves the *Igwe* (Traditional ruler). Presently what exists predominantly in most Igbo communities are "events" not cultural festivals". "The relegation of great festivals such as *Aju* festival in *Obibiezena* near Owerri, Imo State, *Odo* in parts of Ehemufu Enugu, State, *Nkwa Umuagbohoo* (maidens dance) in *Afikpo*, Ebonyi State, *Nwa-okorobo* dance in Ikeduru in Imo State, *Nwa-alija*, *Ojionu*, *Ekpe*, *Okonko Atilogwu*, *Agaba*, *Odogwu*, *Adamma* masquerades etc are evidences of culture loss".¹⁶

"I met my husband in the 1980s after a traditional dance called *Odima* in my secondary school days. Today, *Odima* dance among the Owerri Igbo is no more". The conventional moonlight play and folk tales (*Igba Oro* or *Egwu Onwa*) by children across Igbo clans etc, have all gone".¹⁷

In one of the well-known traditional wrestling communities known as *Ezeogbamgba* (Ezeogba) (king of wrestlers) in Emekuku Owerri, Imo State, Elder P C Amadi recounts that; "the last my village experienced traditional wrestling contest was in the late 1940s, when my late brother Simeon Njoku threw a great wrestler from a neighbouring village. It was historic and memorable"¹⁸

In Nnobi in Idemili South Local Government Area, Anambra State, a culture disconnect with their revered sacred Python is ongoing. Same is applicable to *Eke Emii* (Emii Python) in Emii community Owerri North, Imo state".¹⁹ Other rituals such as *Igbandu* (oath of mutual trust), *idu isi* (Swearing with the deity) are now uncommon²⁰

"The annual *Uguzor* festival in Emekuku in Owerri one of the most developed and well attended festivals in Eastern Nigeria, experienced its worse turn out last November. The moderator Chief Jude Ajaero states; "I am amazed at the rate our people are withdrawing from such great festivals"²¹

The *Mbari* art is one of the distinctive cultural artefacts of the Igbo; it represents historic Igbo symbols and designs representing the gods, monumental events and relics of the past. After such designs which are usually sculpted, its unveiling attracts great ceremony (Okparaocha, 1976). "In my village, I was only a child when the great *Mbari* art was performed. Children were never allowed to participate as it looked like shrines with symbols of great Igbo histories. I am not aware of any village since the 1960s that has *Mbari*"²²

Igor Orji (blessing of kolanut) has witnessed changes in recent Igbo history. "We have left the natural and transcended mode of blessing of kolanut in Igbo land. In the days of our fathers, kolanut observe some rituals and blessed with special prayers; "I salute *Nkwo, Eke, Ori, Afor*, (names of market days), the gods of the land, kola has come, our ancestors, kola has come. He who brings kola, brings life. Our ancestors ate this and lived long, may we eat it and have long life and prosperity, unity and brotherhood. This pattern of prayer is replaced with a novel mode of prayer this way; "We bless this kolanut in Jesus name, Amen. This does not reflect Igbo spirituality".²³

The excision of libation is another mutant variant. The Igbo has systemic spirituality. Pouring of libation to their gods and ancestors is one of the mediums for expressing this. It is poured in three successions signifying the triadic Igbo spirituality. However, Westernization and Christianity have resulted in a gradual end to libation. "In my opinion there is a disconnect among the present Igbo generation with the ancestors. Libations to the ancestors and the gods are no longer offered."²⁴

Language mutation

The Igbo language belongs to the 'kwa' language group of the Niger-Congo language family (Forde and Jones, 1950). A recent study demonstrates the effects of globalization on Igbo language (Ahamefula and Okoye, 2012). It is argued by Western globalization pundits that; "Globalization has also contributed to an increasing interest in English-language education worldwide. In response to the emergence of English as a world-linking, global language, an increasing number of schools have stepped up English-language requirements, even at undergraduate levels. The argument is that a universal teaching language is necessary as a natural consequence of globalization" (UNESCO Report, 2006). Ironically this has side stepped other languages and cultures and fosters inequality and promotion of Western culture and ideology. In relation to language planning in particular, Rasool (1998) cited in Tikly, (2001) has described the issues surrounding linguistic human rights in the context of mass migration of peoples and the 'hybridization' of indigenous cultures. On the one hand, she describes the tremendous possibilities opened up for language

choice for migrant and formerly colonized groups of people in relation to ever-changing geographical demographics. On the other hand, she points to the difficulties of language planning in relation to these groups. Tuhus-Dubrow (2002) observes that a language is considered endangered when it is no longer spoken by children, moribund by only handful of elderly speaker and left to extinct when it is no longer spoken. The number of language endangered varies but the average estimates from studies, according to Whalen (2002) are alarming with half of the world language struggling to survive. It has been observed that many of Nigerian languages are endangered (Ajayi, 2001 cited in Abdulraheem, 2004). Igbo people have names for the days of the week; such names in present times are less relevant (Nkwo, Eke, Ori, Afor). These names are core Igbo identity which determines the market days and days for great occasions such as burial, marriage and child naming ceremonies. Names such as *Nwoye* (child born on oye day), *Ofofiele* (ofor is potent), *Nwa-eke* (child born on eke day) are rarely given to children of contemporary generation.²⁵

Mutation of Igbo traditional institutions

Globalization has not only weakened traditional institutions but has decimated same. Eke (1975) observes that one of the most successful ideologies used to explain the necessity of colonial rule was the heavy emphasis placed on what was described as a backward historical past.

He argues that Africans, according to this view, should be ashamed of their past; the only important thing is in the present. Missionaries openly told Africans that ancestor-worship was bad and they should cut themselves loose from their 'evil' past and embrace the present in the new symbolisms of Christianity and Western culture. Indeed, Africans were virtually told that the colonizers and missionaries came to save them, sometimes in spite of themselves, from their past (Eke, 1975). "Igbo institutions are withering away in era of globalization. The sanctity of *Ofor* (symbol of authority) has vitiated. Chief Agwuka Okorie, an elder and *ofor* holder from Arochukwu in Abia state recounts; "My son, *ofor* is no longer what it used to be. Sincerely most communities no longer have *ofor* and the younger generations do not know its potency even some of the custodians have soiled "their hands" so much that they are afraid to associate with *ofor*".²⁶"*Ofor* has several roles in our lives, it is revered, and reinforces our commitment and union with our fore fathers, hence it is in the custody of the eldest."²⁷"Ask all the Igbo communities today how many have *ofor*. Am not speaking for others though I am a custodian of *ofor* by virtue of my status, it exists in proxy today"²⁸. Elder Nwamkpa from Ohaozara near Afikpo Ebonyi state recounts, "Yes *ofor* is very rare in recent times, but I have ours intact, its loss implies that we have lost this kingdom."²⁹

In a sample of 30 respondents from the six states of Eastern Nigeria within the ages of 15 to 25 none accepted to have seen or known what an *ofor* is. In rural Amasiri close to Afikpo in Ebonyi state .Mr Omaka Oko says; " I am not aware if the *ofor* of my clan still exists"³⁰

Mutation and rural /urban migration

With rapid urbanization, rural life and culture suffers as majority of the population migrates to the urban centres and adapt to urban lifestyles. "Modernization" and similar infrastructures have created culture divide between the urban and rural areas. "In my area (Onitsha) there are several high rising buildings in the urban centres most of the owners rarely visit the villages as they are permanent urban dwellers."³¹ The reduced number of people

residing continuously in the village undermines village institutions and makes the enforcement of cultural norms and values ineffective.

The new identity

With the mutation of Igbo culture the following globalization induced new identity emerges.

The new internet identity

Castells (2001) identifies "internet galaxy" to explore the new internet identity. The internet is now a way of life. There are internet addicts in recent history. Conversely, the poor and illiterate are left behind which creates inequality beyond culture mutation. The Internet (248 million users currently, in 2000; 700 million projected by the end of 2001; 2 billion by 2007) will link individuals and groups among themselves and to the shared multimedia hypertext. This hypertext constitutes the backbone of a new culture, the culture of real virtuality, in which virtuality becomes a fundamental component of our symbolic environment, and thus of our experience as communicating beings (Castells, 1996).

The New Media and Mobile Apps

"A major part of these revolutions can be attributed to social networking and information exchanges made possible by networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter. These avenues provide information sharing on a whole new level"³²

Several mobile applications are currently changing the world. Phones, Apple Ipad, Androids, Blackberry provide new modes of interaction and identity. There are pinging, WhatsApp, YouTube, Skype, LinkedIn etc, providing certain modes of behavior that are alien to the Igbo culture. A number of similar applications are on the way. Mobile Apps, promote Western culture and lifestyles in a variety of ways; some are good others are bad. The bad ones include obscene materials such as pornography, Lesbians, Gay, etc which are "abomination" according to Igbo custom. While the good ones are access to information etc

There is widespread consensus that information and communication technologies (ICTs) present one solution to Africa's (Igbo inclusive) development problem, with resurgence in mobile phones, social networking sites etc. Currently, services such as G-cash in the Philippines and M-Pesa in Kenya are providing mobile-based financial solutions for persons who may not otherwise have access to a bank.³³ Although many useful mobile applications have not been implemented on a large scale in Africa and if it is, Africa would remain passive recipients.

Online alliances, networking and new lifestyles

Globalization is brain washing (Amadi, 2012). New relationships, modes of social interactions are emerging through "social network sites" and online alliances; friendship requests from Facebook, Badoo etc. Different levels or interaction result in different levels of understanding. Some amoral relationships contrary to Igbo value system and belief emanate such as online virtual sexual intercourse and similar online alliances are in practice. There is e-commerce, e-transact which has taken transactions to a different level. Castells (1996) observes that this is the enclosing of dominant cultural manifestations in an interactive, electronic hypertext, which becomes the common frame of reference for symbolic processing from all sources and all messages. He argues that it will link

individuals and groups among themselves and to the shared multimedia hypertext. This hypertext constitutes the backbone of a new culture, the culture of real virtuality, in which virtuality becomes a fundamental component of our symbolic environment, and thus of our experience as communicating beings (Castells, 1996).

The GSM revolution

In 2003, GSM became a dominant mode of telephony in Nigeria. This led to a change of attitude and dearth of conventional traditional mode of communication and information transmission. Undoubtedly it has eased the challenge of communication, at the same time, it has been exploitative (Amadi,2012). The Igbo local "town crier" is gradually phasing out with Short Message Service (SMS) which excludes the majority who are illiterates.

Global Satellite System

The global satellite system tele guides the world interactions. This has resulted in disappearance of boundaries as the world is integrated into a global village. The more powerful and technologically advanced societies teleguide the activities of the poor and weak societies.

New Consumption Patterns

Schor (2005) argues that; "As is widely recognized, US private consumption currently entails a globally disproportionate use of resources, as measured by ecological footprint, measures of material weight, and numerous other indices and estimates (Wackernagel, 1999; Wernick, 1997,cited in Schor,2005). The 1990s and early 2000s have been a period of rapid consumption growth for the average household, as consumption outpaced income growth, and savings rates declined (Schor, 2005). Challenges of sustainable consumption are on the increase among the high income countries which deleterious effects have been manifold on the human environment. In the globalizing world, African lifestyles and attitudes have drastically changed. The consumption patterns, dress code, moral decadence, lack of respect and veneration of traditional African institutions etc are evident. In the context of consumption, Western foods such as the MacDonald's, UAC's Mr Biggs, Coca-Cola,Starbucks etc have affected consumption patterns. Traditional African meals such as dried bush meat, pounded yam, *Ofe Nsala* (Nsala Soup) are fast replaced with micro waved frozen chicken. These have carcinogenic effects resulting increase in incidence of cancer.

"The core Igbo delicacies of *Ogiri*, *Uziza*, (Igbo Indigenous spices), *Utazi* (medicinal leave) *Onugwu/Olugwu* (Bitter leaves), *Uda* (Herb) *Nchanwu* (Saint leave), *Oha/Ora* ,Achi,etc are hardly found in most homes or popular local restaurants. Pounded yam is replaced with semovita or semolina, *Abacha* (Native Salad) and *Ugba* (Oil bean Salad) are gradually replaced with Western delicacies such as Western salad now popularly served in public Igbo functions. Burgar, Spagheti and more recently, Indian noodle-indomie are now household names for Igbo children". "*Mkpu* (edible termite), *Nsiko*(native crab), *Ololo* (edible larva), *Ukpara/Ukpana*, (Edible grasshopper), *Eruru* (edible laver from raffia palm/palm trees), *Odo* (traditional yellow chalk), *Uhe* (native die for beautification of maidens),*Uli/Uri* (native powder), *Nzu* (edible white chalk which symbolizes peace and used during child birth as quasi kolanut), *Akidi* (Igbo native beans), *Mbuzu* (crickets), *Ero* (mushrooms). Species of peculiar mushrooms found around Ngwa and Owerri axis and snails are gradually disappearing due to the

use of Western organic fertilizers³⁴.”

“Other cultural values and practices in decline include Igbo traditional patterns of greetings and dearth of Igbo gerontocracy (respect for elders). Rituals such as libation are no longer observed; the gods and ancestors are dissociated.”³⁵

Monetization of Igbo Traditional Titles: Traditionally, Igbo has a reward system; the society is based on an ethical system that promotes hard work, honesty, trust, and cooperation. People who serve their communities and maintain the moral and ethical ideals of the community either through philanthropy or patriotism are rewarded by the community with traditional titles. Title taking has been a source of upward social mobility.

Conversely with globalization and modernization of the Igbo society, the institution of

‘Chieftaincy’ has lost its original moral and ethical meaning. “Due to the deteriorating economic conditions in some communities and dearth of societal values, chieftaincy titles are now awarded to the highest bidder regardless of the source of the money. As a result, well-known criminals now receive chieftaincy titles from their villages – a practice that has compromised the high moral and ethical values of the Igbo. This has result local conflicts.”³⁶ It has also affected the adjudicatory institutions as “the money bags” pervert justice which results the loss of integrity and value system.”³⁷

Igbo Culture De-alignment: This is a systemic excision from conventional to extraneous mode of behaviour or orientation. In present times the Igbo is arguably de-aligned or disconnected from their pristine values yet unaligned or unconnected to the Western values. This explains the dilemma of present Igbo cultural. The philosophy of *Engligbo* underscores “identity cross roads” of neither English (White) nor black (Igbo).

Attitudinal Change: As a result of globalization, there is discernible change of attitude. The younger generation now feels they know more than the elders. “Our people have moved away (retreated) from our culture, our ways of life. Taboos and sacrileges are no longer observed as they were in recent past”³⁸ “I hold the title of “*Onyeishi*” (Clan Head), our value system-our identity. Our dress codes are in question. Symbolic body art used to decorate both men and women is no longer in use. Maidens traditionally wear short wrapper with beads around their waist. These relics are now a thing of the past”³⁹.“ The traditional Igbo coral beads (*Mgbaji*), *Uli mma* (traditional make up powder) is no more or rare. In its place, Igbo women and maidens prefer the Western make up kits”. “There is emerging and discernible “attitudinal change and value re-orientation”. For instance, millennium child-rearing and upbringing has taken a different dimension; no Igbo child of contemporary upbringing calls his father *Nna m* (My Father) or mother (Nne m); even children born in remote rural villages call their father “Daddy” and mother “Mummy” as though the Igbo cherished conventional use of *Nnem* (my mother) or *Nnam* (my father) is abhorrent. You are aware that we mothers have returned to exclusive breast feeding because this whole “Oyibo” (Whiteman) thing is not working”⁴⁰ “Worse still, none in the urban areas speaks Igbo perfectly without mincing English words/*pidgin* nor rightly pronounces the Igbo words, wise cracks, folklores, idioms and meanings”⁴¹

Land Alienation: A primary culture mutant was the repressive land policies adopted by the colonial state. Coleman (1959) identifies such policies as the Minerals Act ,the land use act etc (Coleman, 1959) which was later inherited by indigenous African government to foster the interest of emergent African elite. “Similarly the people of Ubowalla in Owerri North Local Government Area, Imo State lost their unique “Achara Ubo festival” (grass land) celebrated annually on the last *Afor* market day of the year to the State government in the 1980s as a result of land grab .Till date they have no cultural festival.”⁴²

Emergence of New Names: The names of people, places and

things are fast changing in the periphery societies in line with Western names. Although the history of name mutation is traced to the early colonial contacts with mutilation of name of towns such as Onicha-Onitsha, Omekeukwu-Emekuku, Owere-Owerri, Orka-Awka, Enugwu-Enugu etc. “According to Ebeogu, within the Igbo cultural context, names are not abstractions but hinge on the socio-cultural consciousness of the people (Cited in Ukpokolo, 2009). In the same vein, Madu posits that Igbo names are not mere appellations but have very deep expressions of attitudes, sentiments, aspirations, sorrows, historical facts, and the underlying philosophy of the Igbo people (Cited in Ukpokolo, 2009).

He further notes that a social scientist can study the social, religious, historical and political issues in the Igbo society through Igbo names, which must be understood within the context of Igbo worldview and the symbolic functioning of such names (Ukpokolo, 2009). “In *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, Chinua Achebe had earlier on extended this significance to the names a man gives to his children, and advised: “If you want to know how life has treated an Igbo man, a good place to go is the name his children bear” (Ukpokolo, 2009).

Globalization and Western values have played on the psyche of most Igbo people so terribly that “mutation” of names has become the order of the day. *Chukuemeka* (*God is so merciful*) is mutated to Chucks (meaningless); *Obinna* (Fathers’ heart or wish) to Obison (meaningless) etc. More than these are the novel names parents give their children, such as Chelsea (Name of European Football Club) etc; non reflects Igbo history or identity.

E-learning and Educational Inequality: New identity accompanies Western education as a result of globalization. E-learning is internet based learning. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared that ‘everyone has the right to education’. In the year 2000, the organization adopted the eight Millennium Development Goals, which included the goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015. The six ‘Education for All’ goals were also adopted by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). These goals also included providing free and compulsory primary education for all. Conversely, the e-learning and e-library which of course are “new forms” of globalization induced learning are missing in Sub Saharan Africa. In line with ongoing mutation, there are elements of inequality which keeps the Igbo child at cross roads.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

New lifestyles and identity are fast appearing. Survey data on the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria show that most of the consequences of these changes could be grave in the near future.

From the six states, the study demonstrates systemic culture dislodgement and proclivity to Western values from the addiction to European Premier League (EPL) infused from globalization networks, satellite system and live telecast, mobile applications etc. Igbo traditional system is eroded and gradually extinct. The data from the survey and the interviews demonstrate how Igbo cultural practices are mutated by globalization. This includes the internet, social media, online relationship and networking, mobile applications, weakening of Igbo cultural institutions -such as *ofor*, masquerades, chieftaincy titles, Igbo spirituality, connection with the gods and ancestry, reward system, monetized chieftaincy titles etc.

The republican structure of the Igbo system allows for

the increasing globalization culture contact. As advanced in this study, the resulting variants of culture mutation have placed upon the recessive culture (Igbo) some growing dilemmas and social disorientation.

The major burden of generating culture resilience in a weak economy has been enforcements- hence vulnerability and dislodgement of Igbo cultures. In most rural communities Christianity had earlier fostered culture dislodgement.

Globalization as observed appears to produce a psychological reaction in the sense of people trying to re-create meaning in their lives. We have identified new lifestyles such as online virtual sexuality which are issues of globalization discourse. These are counter to Igbo culture and values "the internet identity" are integral component of the Western globalization.

Western consumption pattern now dominates following the proliferation of eateries and Western outdoor catering, burger, salad, spaghetti, noodles etc.

Cultural identity is one such source of meaning. Indeed, there is growing pessimism on what becomes the fate of cultural identity in the context of dramatic globalization induced changes in the near future.

One of the most distressing concomitants is the loss of the sense of self. It can be argued that what makes a person the same person through life is the accumulated set of identity he carries with him. Certainly, it would seem that identity is an important concept from the perspective of cultural development and heritage. Identity is arguably an important source of meaning. As modern technology erodes on culture identity – one of the few truly sources of identity – Igbo culture is likely to experience a clash, shock or dislodgement. Identity is related to every aspect of the Igbo cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Neo- liberal ideologies have served only the interest of the West at the expense of the poor societies. Our larger point, which is well documented in the political economy of identity debate, is that the neo-liberal policies, existing global economic institutions and structures, and the exercise of its considerable power reproduce the global regime of asymmetrical global system. This asymmetry is multidimensional including economic and socio-cultural (Amadi, 2012).

We have demonstrated that culture mutation results identity loss and culturally disoriented personality arising from novel attitudes alien to the norms and values of a people. We acknowledge that change is inevitable in human existence but not when it is fostered with exploitation and economic interest insulated from the wellbeing of the people. Culture change should evolve from the people based on their commonly shared attributes and mores which could be transformed over

time and not from external ploy.

The contention can be made on the basis of the evidence from both the primary and secondary data collected for this study that Igbo culture is mutated. Globalization is deculturation. From our case analysis, the study suggests that Igbo culture is witnessing changes as globalization spreads. Evidence has been substantially demonstrated both institutionally and individually.

Culture mutation is the research agenda that has been explored in this literature as it attempts to establish its implications for the Igbo cultural heritage and to establish how such culture dislodgement could be remedied through culture sustainability drivers .

Since 1987 sustainable development launched the vast research trajectory, defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation from meeting their own needs (Brundtland, 1987). Culture sustainability has been a missing research agenda among the poor societies. A culture sustainability program could salvage the increasing dislodgement of the periphery cultures through culture reinstitution movements, symposium and conferences. A policy discourse in this regard is important aimed at culture reinstitution.

This literature suggests the confrontation of globalization. The internet has taken relationship and social interactions to the next level. We deduce that some of the web based interactions and their contents are not in line with Igbo values. Many crucial development issues such as illiteracy, poverty, and gender inequality have been neglected. These icons of a culture are viewed as a living heritage and are an integral part of identity Using images, reselling them and mis-representing these rights are considered property theft and a heinous crime against communities. It is difficult to monitor or control what is out on the Internet and therefore difficult to prevent and prosecute appropriately (Smith and Ward, 2000).

In Igboland and most African societies there is a strong need for services and software in local languages, dialects and cultures. This has kept Africa at the periphery as mere users of finished Western centric configured applications. None of the globalization machinations understands the Igbo environment; this keeps the Igbo at a superficial level as non- stakeholders in the globalization construct.

We posit that Igbo culture is the last frontier of common identity available to the people; it is their sole unifying factor and should constitute an instrument to confront globalization. Culture reawakening and renaissance is needed.

Socio-cultural movements to improve, restore and reintegrate Igbo culture on a global level is important which could attract value-adding international culture transformation that could contribute to the Igbo cultural

development.

It is apt to argue at this point that globalization and its implications on Igbo culture will be antithetical in the near future as the cultural traits of the Igbo are disappearing. New globalization paraphernalia are soon on the way to further mutate the Igbo culture. Policies to redress these issues are important. A detailed knowledge of Igbo indigenous institutions and their systemic mechanism which are integral components of the socio-cultural and spiritual life of the people, should be considered in policy formulation.

Thus, the implications of the relationships described in this paper are important for public policy makers seeking to develop strategies for promoting culture sustainability by considering the importance of complex institutions and practices that are increasingly fading away as a result of globalization. A more balanced interaction is proposed.

Despite this general sense of “culture disconnect and distortion” the promise of culture renewal via culture reinstitution and sustainability programs through veritable and equal terms on integration of Igbo culture into the wider globalization order are yet to be possible.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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14. Personal discussion with Igbo culture custodian Amanze Iwuoha ,13th October ,2014
15. Interview with Chief Levi Chikere, custodian of Igbo culture in Mbaise March 30th 2013. He emphasised the need to bring back the Igbo culture, several interviews conducted in this study point to this direction .
16. Discussion with Chief Dikeora Obieke on issues on culture experiences in Anambra state. March ,12th, 2014
17. Lolo Lucy Ihenacho said that traditional dances endeared several Igbo maiden to men for marriage. That she was among such persons in the 1980s during the Odima traditional dance around Owerri axis which she said was no longer in existence.
18. Interview with Elder P C Amadi Ezeogba Emekuku Owerri North Imo State, 30th October, 2013
19. Personal discussion with Barrister Obiageli Oraka from Nneobi Anambra State. July, 2012
20. Several rituals are no longer observed as Igbo custom demands.
21. Interview with the moderator of the 2012 Uguzor Emeke festival, Chief Jude Ajaero.
22. This narrative was provided by Madam Patricia Ajaero of Mbaoma Owerri. North Mbari art is predominantly found among the Owerri Igbo.
23. *Igor Orji* (blessing of Kolanut) is a ritual of its own. Ironically, today the Igbo merely "bless" the kolanut. They hardly "pray " with the kola as Igbo custom demands, encompassing the triumvirate structure of Igbo spirituality and religiosity involving ; the gods, ancestors and the living. As Igbo custodian Mazi Nwafor Mbonu stated, Aba, Abia State 10th May, 2012
24. Ibid
25. Names are very symbolic and important among Igbo people including names of people and markets days such seem to have waned in recent times.
26. Chief Agwuoka Okorie provided an incisively understanding of the potency of Ofor and failure of the custodians to live up to the task as a result of lack moral rectitude.
27. Pa Nwankpa is an octogenarian and spoke spiritedly about *Ofor*. 1st November, 2014, Ohaozara Ebonyi State Eastern Nigeria.
28. Ibid
29. Discussions with Pa Nwankpa 10th March, 2014, Ohaozara Eboyi State.

Notes

1. Feminist writers of Igbo extraction have made cogent contributions to gender and Igbo culture transformation.
2. During the ..Ahiajoku lecture series Professor Achebe the Guest lecturer described the Ibo Union Bible as a mutation variant of Igbo language and was attacked by Igbo linguist Innocent Nwadike (2008) who upholds the Ibo Union Bible as effort in Igbo language development
3. Several Igbo communities claim authocnomy such as Owerri, Mbaise etc.

30. A sample of 25 children shows that they are not conversant with *Ofor* and what it signifies. Also discussion with Mr Omaka Oko a school teacher from Afikpo shows a vitiated potency of *ofor*, 10th November, 2013
31. Interview with Mr Ifeanyi Okolie, 10th October, 2012
32. Smith, C. & Ward, G. *Indigenous Cultures in an Interconnected World*, 2000. Vancouver: UBC
33. According to Igbo traditional custom, when a child gives an elder *Mbuzu* (cricket) the elder gives the child a hen in exchange, the hen reproduces and replicates.
34. Across Africa are globalization induced transactions such as E-transact, E-cash, G-cash in Philippines, M-Pesa in Kenya etc.
35. Similarly Mr Jonh Ekenta observes poor ritualization of Kolanut as Igbo custom demands also *ofor* and similar cultural institutions
36. Ibid
37. Ibid
38. *Onyeishi* (Head) is the eldest in the clan it follows in order of gerontocracy. Around Nsukka Axis in Enugu. Interview with Pa Linus Igwe.
39. Ibid
40. Interview with Mrs Hilda Chukwu a rural women leader from Mebiowa Okposi in Ohazara Local Government Area of Ebonyi state, 12th August, 2013
41. Interview with Mrs Ngozi Ogbuni a primary school Igbo Teacher in State School I Aba Abia State. She stated that pupils in most homes are now trained in English language as none addresses their parents in Igbo parlance. *Igba Oro* or *Egwu Onwa* (moonlight play) was typical of traditional Igbo settings where children listen to didactic folk tales, learn Igbo cultural norms and myths.
42. "Achara Ubo" festival in Ubowalla Emekuku Owerri is a well-known festival mutated by land grab by Imo State government in the early 1980s.

Full Length Research Paper

A Short Political Biography of Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu

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The main purpose of this paper is to reconstruct the political biography of Kiburⁱ Atoⁱⁱ Haddis Alemayehu who was one of the senior officials of Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I and the author of the most accomplished Amharic novel, *Feqer Eska Meqaber* ("Love unto Grave"). In order to undertake this study, both primary and secondary sources were used. The source analysis revealed that after the liberation of Ethiopia from Italian occupation in 1941, Haddis served his country at different senior governmental posts, among others, as Director, Director General and Vice Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, and Minister of the Ministry of Planning and Development. He was Ethiopian Consul to Jerusalem, First Secretary of Ethiopian Legation in Washington D.C., Ethiopian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN and Ambassador to Great Britain and the Netherlands. Besides, he also participated in a number of international as well as continental conferences. In his dealing with other countries on behalf of the Ethiopian government, Haddis was committed to protect Ethiopia's interest and sovereignty. At home, Haddis had a character of truthful and meticulous administrator and bold enough to comment any mistake of the government. Thus, the consideration of Haddis Alemayehu's political biography helps not only to know him at some depth but also to comprehend the nature of the past feudo-capitalist system of Ethiopia.

Key words: Haddis, Minister, Ambassador, Diplomat, Foreign Affairs.

INTRODUCTION

In the past century, distinguished personalities had emerged in the province of Gojjam, North-western Ethiopia. These personalities served their country, among others, as provincial governors, resistance leaders, politicians and literary men. One of these personalities who played significant role in the politics and literary development of Ethiopia was Kibur A to Haddis Alemayehu (Figure 1).

Haddis Alemayehu was one of the senior officials of Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I. After liberation from Italian occupation in 1941, Haddis served his country at different governmental positions and represented the government of Ethiopia at global and continental levels. He also published seven fictional and non-fictional books in Amharic. As a result, Haddis

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attracted the attention of some researchers. However, the studies previously undertaken on the life and career of Haddis Alemayehu (Molvaer, 1974; Fentahun, 2000 Ethiopian Calendar, - hereafter - and Girma, 2004) had several problems. Firstly, these studies did not make careful examination, checking and cross-checking of primary and secondary sources. Due attention was not given to collect information from individuals who knew Haddis closely and who worked with him in different governmental positions. Sources available in Haddis's home and in Institute of Ethiopian Studies were not consulted. Secondly, the previous studies confined themselves in listing the positions held by Haddis in Haile Selassie's government than considering the various activities performed by him in those positions. Therefore, one of the means to fill this gap is undertaking a research by carefully examining primary and secondary sources for the reconstruction of the political biography of Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu. Thus, this study was initiated to fill the gap already mentioned. The general objective of this study was to examine the political career of Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu as one of the senior officials of Haile Selassie's government and to draw lessons from his contributions. The specific objectives were identifying the senior governmental positions that Haddis had active involvement, examining Haddis's contribution for his country while working at different governmental positions and evaluating the nature of relationship that existed between Haddis and Haile Selassie's government.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was undertaken by employing a historical research design based on qualitative method. Both primary and secondary sources were used in this study. The primary sources are Haddis's own manuscripts obtained in his home and books written by him. The secondary sources consist of both published and unpublished materials written in relation to Haddis. Oral information obtained through interview conducted with individuals who closely knew and worked with Haddis was also used in this study. Some of the sources were collected in 1998 while the researcher was undertaking an investigation on related issues for academic purpose. Additional secondary sources [Fentahun (2000), Fikre-Selassie (2006), Girma (2004)] were reviewed in 2013 and 2014 and used in this study.

Early life of Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu

Haddis was born in 1909 from Aleqa¹ Solomon Hailu and Weyzaro² Desta Alemu in Indodam Kidane Mihret , a



Figure 1. Photograph of Haddis.

village in Gozamin Wereda (district), Debra Marqos Awraja (sub-province), in the province of Gojjam.³ His maternal grandfather, Alemu Seyoum, was a Zema (church melody) teacher in the monastery of Indodam Kidane Mihret. It was there that Haddis started to learn Geez letters at the age of six.⁴

During his formative years, Haddis attended different levels of ecclesiastical education in the monasteries of Indodam Kidane Mihret, Debra Elyas, Debra Werq and Dimma Giorgis in Gojjam. He attended Deguwa, one of the contents of Zemabet (school of church melody), in Indodam Kidane Mihret and Debra Elyas, Qene (Geez poetry) in Debra Elyas, Debra Werq and Dimma Giorgis, *Metshafbet* (interpretation of the holy books) in Dimma Giorgis.⁵ In his study of ecclesiastical education, Haddis was a shining student who excelled his friends. It was while attending *Metshafbet* that Haddis and his friends such as Samuel Tedla, Tamiru Melaku, Betradsadiq Kassa, Mekonnen Chekol and Yiheyis entered Addis Ababa, accompanying their teacher, Mergeta⁶ Belay, who decided to go to Shoa, his birth place, because of his disagreement with the priests of Dimma Giorgis (Figure 1).⁷

² A title given for married woman

³ Reidulf, K. Molvaer, Black Lions: The Creative Lives of Modern Ethiopia's literature Giants and Pioneers (Lawrenceville: NJ Red Sea Press, 1966), p. 134

⁴ Ibid., pp.134-35; Oral Informant (hereafter O. I.) Blatta Mehari Kassa (age 93, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 20 Dec. 1998). Blatta was a title given in the twentieth century to government officials of the director-general level or equivalent

⁵ Feekare (Private Bulletin), Vol-I, No. 1, Yekatit 1985 E.C, p.4; O.I. Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu (age 88, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 13 Jan. 1998)

⁶ A title given for those who attended higher level of church education and for choir or chant leaders in Ethiopian Orthodox Church

⁷ Bekur (Bulletin of Amhara National Regional State), Sene 1989 E.C., No.6, p.26

¹ A title given for a learned priest and the head of a church

Once they reached Addis Ababa, Haddis and his friends took lodging near patriarch's compound, where destitute men used to reside themselves. As they spent more time in Addis Ababa, Haddis and his friends began to visit different places. This gave them the chance to meet with Ato Ayalew Negussie, a Gojjame who was teaching in Swedish Mission School. After his contact with Haddis and his friends, Ato Ayalew advised them to enter into Swedish Mission School and attend modern education. However, Haddis had a fear that mission school would convert him to Catholicism. As a result, he was reluctant to accept his advice. However, Haddis had no relative and supporter in Addis Ababa and had to beg in order to get a living. He was also in a state of confusion for he was new to urban life. His friends also told him to accept the advice of Ato Ayalew. All these contributed to the change of his mind and finally decided to join the school.⁸

Then, Haddis and his friends went to Swedish Mission School with priest Badema, a Gojjame who had close relation with the head of Swedish Mission School. After long conversation, the head of the mission school, Mr. Sharne, promised their enrolment after tentative stay for three weeks. Finally Haddis and his friends were accepted as regular boarding students in Swedish Mission School in 1925 and attended grade one and two in this school.⁹

Gradually, Haddis and his friends understood the advantage of modern education and sought to join government school. The intention of Haddis and his friends was realized when they easily won the help of Ras Hailu Tekla-Haymanot, the hereditary governor of Gojjam (1901-1932), who was financing Gojjame students in Teferi Mekonnen School. Therefore, Haddis and his friends were paid ten birr (Ethiopian currency) per month from Ras Hailu's treasury. Haddis attended Teferi Mekonnen Elementary School from grade three to grade six.¹⁰

Meanwhile, a strike caused by problems in the teaching-learning process broke out in Teferi Mekonnen Elementary School. Adult students were suspected of instigating the strike and some of those above eighteen years were ordered to learn living outside the school compound. This means they were denied boarding facilities in the school. As a result, only those students who had relatives in Addis Ababa were able to continue their education. But those who came from provinces and who did not have relatives and supporters in the capital could not afford and were forced to stop their education. Haddis was one of the latter students.¹¹

After he was denied of boarding facilities in Teferi Mekonnen Elementary School, Haddis had taken a teacher training course given in Menelik II School and became a teacher in Swedish Mission School, where he was for the first time been introduced to modern education. However, Haddis taught only for about nine months in this school. Because in 1931, he was ordered to go to the province of Gojjam, to serve the customs office of Dangila town. In fact, Haddis was sent to Dangila to inspect the activity of the British consulate found in the town.¹²

Dangila was a well-known slave market in Gojjam province in the early twentieth century¹³ and the British set up consulate office in the town and the consulate used to report to its government regarding the brisk slave trade conducted in the town. When Haddis reached Dangila, the interpreter of the consulate office, Zewde Kidane-Weld, through whom Haddis could contact the consul, was sick. As a result, Zewde was replaced by *Qegnasmach*¹⁴ Hiwet Hedaru. As soon as Haddis began to inspect the activity of the British consul through Hiwet, Major Chessman, the British consul in Dangila, set out his journey from Bahir Dar to the Sudan to visit the Blue Nile.

After completing his visit to the Blue Nile, Major Chessman returned to his consulate office in Dangila town. However, the consul did not stay longer in Dangila. Soon, he closed his office and went to England for his own purpose. As a result, Haddis was forced to change his task and began to work as inspector in the customs office of Dangila. But Haddis also stayed in this post for a short period of time because he was ordered by the government to involve in the operation of emancipating slaves in Dangila.¹⁵ This duty was given to him as a result of domestic and foreign pressures on the Ethiopian government to abolish slavery and slave trade.¹⁶

Although series of proclamations were issued by the Ethiopian government by 1923 and after, the practice of slave trade and slavery continued secretly in the region. Because of this, in 1934 Haile Sellase set up 26 local offices to control slave trade.¹⁷ At this time, Blatta Helete-Werq, the head of Agew Meder and Achefer customs office, was nominated as emancipist of slaves in his region. It was at this time that Helete-Werq asked Haddis

1998); Haddis Alemayehu, *Tezetta*, ("Memory"). (Addis Abeba: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1885 E. C.), p.141

¹² Molvaer, pp. 135-37; O.I. Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu

¹³ Abdulsamed Haji Ahmed, "Bure-A study of Long Distance Trade 1900 - 1935," B.A. Thesis (Addis Abeba University, 1977), p. 25

¹⁴ A Politico-military title which was given for the 'commander of the gate'

¹⁵ Haddis, *Tezetta*, p.19

¹⁶ O.I. Blatta Mehari Kassa

¹⁷ Bahru, Zewde. (2005). *A History of Modern Ethiopia: 1855-1991*. Second Edition. Addis Ababa: Addis Abeba University Press, p. 94; Richard, A. Greenfield, Ethiopia: A New Political History (New York: Frederick A. Preager, 1965), p.173

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-7; O.I. Blatta Mehari Kassa

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ O.I. Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu

¹¹ O.I. Ato Amanuel Abreha (age 84, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 16 December

to voluntarily participate in the operation of emancipating slaves. Haddis also welcomed the request and joined the workers assigned to this purpose, and began to hunt the slave traders. Within a short period of time, they emancipated many slaves and placed them around Dangila town.¹⁸

After accomplishing his part in the emancipation of slaves, Haddis was assigned to organize a school in the building of the British consulate of Dangila town. When the school was opened, Haddis became both the director and teacher of the school that became the first of its kind both in Dangila town and in the whole of AgewMeder. The nobles of *SebatBet* Agew (the Seven House of Agew) used to send their sons to this school for education.¹⁹

At the end of March 1935, Haddis was transferred to Debra Marqos and began to teach in Tekla Haimanot Elementary School, which was established in 1934. He taught English and Arithmetic in grade three and four. He also taught the children of the then governor of Gojjam, Ras Emeru Haile Selassie, namely Marta, Hirut, Yudit and Mikael, and stayed there until the Italian invasion of the country in 1935/36.²⁰

During the Italian invasion, Haddis joined the forces of Ras Emeru Haile Selassie, the leader of the Ethiopian forces at the Shire front and served as agitator or activist and combatant in the military engagement that took place in the northern front. He also served as purchaser of war provisions in the Sudan after his return from the front. In the early years of Italian occupation he was captured by the fascist forces in the military confrontation that took place against the Italians at Gojjeb River in Kaffa in 1937 and sent to the island of Ponzo in the western Mediterranean, then to island of Lipari, near Sardinia (South Italy), and became war prisoner in Italy with Ras Emeru and other Ethiopians for seven years. Haddis was released and came to his country at the end of 1943, three years after the liberation of Ethiopia from fascist occupation.²¹

Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu's political career from 1944 to 1959

The Fascist Italian occupation of Ethiopia had come to an end in 1941, due to the relentless effort made by the joint Anglo-Ethiopian liberation campaign and greater sacrifice of the patriots. After liberation, Emperor Haile Selassie I

was restored to the throne and began to consolidate his political power.²²

In the post-liberation period, Haddis served his country at different positions. Most of his service was in the area of foreign affairs at domestic and international levels.²³ As soon as he came back to the country, Haddis was appointed as Deputy General of Press and Information in the Ministry of Communication. During his brief stay, he was reported to have reorganized the office with man power and enabled it to function properly.²⁴ Meanwhile, he was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Director of the American Department. His total service in both offices was, however, less than a year.²⁵

In February 1945, Haddis was appointed as Ethiopian consul to Jerusalem, where he stayed for two years, during which he married Kibebe-Tsehay Belay. Kibebe-Tsehay was the great granddaughter of Wagshum²⁶ Teferi Wessen and she was taken to Jerusalem and grown up there under the custody of Weyzaro Amarch Walelu, who was leading a monastic life in the Holy Land.²⁷ During his stay in Jerusalem, in 1947 Haddis was ordered to attend international conference held in Atlanta City, New Jersey, to talk on the reconstruction of post-World War II global telecommunication system. Haddis stayed there about five months to participate in series of conferences on behalf of the Ethiopian government.²⁸

With the completion of the conference, Haddis became First Secretary of the Ethiopian Legation in Washington D.C. under Ras Emeru Haile Selassie, head of the Legation. Apart from his secretarial duty in this Legation, Haddis worked as an Ethiopian representative to the UN assembly held at irregular interval for short periods. In 1949, he was appointed as Ethiopian representative to the Interim Committee of the General Assembly of the UN and stayed in this office for a year. During his stay in the United States of America, Haddis was attending an evening class in International Law in Washington University. Since he was ordered to return to his country, Haddis was forced to discontinue his study after completing most of the courses offered in the department. Haddis did not return to Washington to complete it and he could not get a diploma in International Law.²⁹ Back to Ethiopia, in 1950, he was

¹⁸ Haddis, Tezetta, p.19; O.I. Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Molvaer, p.137; O.I. Lej Mikael Emeru (age 73, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 18 Dec. 1998) and *Weyzarit* Yudit Emeru (age 75, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 29 Jan. 1998). Lej was a honorific title generally reserved for sons of the royal family and of the upper nobility. It means 'child'. *Weyzerit* is a title given for unmarried woman.

²¹ O.I. Blatta Mehari Kassa; Haddis, Tezetta, pp.95-105

²² Christopher, Clapham, Haile Selassie's Ethiopia (New York: Praeger, 1969), p.19

²³ Ethiopian Herald, April 13, 1966, p.3; Molvaer, p. 139

²⁴ O.I. Bitwedde Zewde Gebre Hiwet (age 86, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 24 Jan.1998)

²⁵ Molvaer, p. 139

²⁶ A title which was given for the governor of the province of Wag in north Wallo

²⁷ O.I. Dejjazmach Dr Zewde Gebre Selassie (age 70, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 5 Dec. 1998) and *Weyzerit* Yudit Emeru

²⁸ Feekare, p. 28

²⁹ Molvaer, p. 140; Ethiopian Herald, 1966, p. 3; O.I. Bitwedde Zewde Gebre Hiwet

restored to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Director General of the Department of Press and International Organization. After serving in this office for two years, Haddis became a Vice Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when this position was left vacant due to the transfer of BitwededZewde Gebra-Hiwet, who was sent to New York as Ethiopian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN.³⁰

As a Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Haddis was reported to have always challenged America's domination of Ethiopia. Above all, he was not in good terms with John H. Spencer, an American adviser of Ethiopia on foreign affairs.³¹ Of course, following the signing of the Ethio-US treaty in 1953, America's influence on Ethiopia particularly in the areas of military organization, communication and education became stronger. This growing influence of America led to bitterness among the educated elites of Ethiopia on the ground that the country had fallen under American imperialism.³² Likewise, Haddis was said to have opposed America's endeavor to run Ethiopia according to her interest and Americans attempt to involve deeply in the works of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³³

There are different views on Haddis's ideological alignment. John H. Spencer regarded Haddis as a communist. In his book entitled "Ethiopia At Bay: A Personal Account of Haile Sellase's Years", Spencer asserted that "Ras Imru, Haddis Alemayehu and Sirak Heruy ... were openly communist sympathizers."³⁴ Spencer also considered Haddis as one of the authorities in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who resented Ethiopia's closer tie with the United States following the signing of the treaty on military aid program,³⁵ and he asserted that Haddis was one of the senior officials responsible for the strengthening of Ethio-USSR relations.³⁶ On the contrary, based on analysis of his literary works, Tsegaye asserted that Haddis prefers western type of government as opposed to socialist democracy.³⁷ But informants strongly argued that "Haddis did not have special alignment both to the western and eastern political systems. Instead, his great concern was maintaining Ethiopia's interest and sovereignty."³⁸ The view of the informants was matched with what Haddis has written on the type of political system Ethiopia needs. In his book entitled *Ytyopia Min Aynet Astedader Yasfelgatal? / "What type of government*

Ethiopia needs?"/, Haddis suggested neither capitalist nor socialist political system, rather a political system designed by taking ideas from both and suited with Ethiopia's history, society and culture.³⁹

Due to his regular duty as a diplomat, Haddis had participated in a number of international as well as continental conferences. He was:

- an Ethiopian representative at the 1948 FAO conference held in Rome
- an alternate delegate to the 4th session of the UN General Assembly held at Lake Success (a village in New York) in 1949.
- a delegate to the UN General Assembly of 1952.
- a delegate to the 6th session of the. UN General Assembly held in Paris in 1954.
- a delegate to the 1964 conference of African Foreign Ministers held in Lagos.⁴⁰

In 1956, Haddis was appointed as an Ethiopian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, as the second Ethiopian officer to this post, replacing Bitweded Zewde Gebra-Hiwet. One of the major responsibilities of Haddis in this office was to negotiate with the Italians on the boundary problem between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland.⁴¹ With regard to the stand of Haddis to the sovereignty of Ethiopia, Spencer pointed out that Haddis was known in "his refusal ever to surrender an atom [a piece] of Ethiopian sovereignty or territory".⁴² It was from this stand that Haddis was said to have chosen as the acting general of Ethiopian delegates dealing with the boundary problem with Italian Somaliland.⁴³

The frontier line between the Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia had for long been a source of contest between the two countries and bestowed Italians with a good pretext to carry out their aggressive policy in 1935.⁴⁴ Four years after the end of the Second World War, Italy was once again given a ten year UN trusteeship over her former colony of Somaliland. Since the middle of 1950s, the Ethiopian government began to make efforts to solve the boundary problem with Italian Somaliland. However, the two parties could not reach an agreement.⁴⁵ As a result, by a resolution of the General Assembly in December 1958, King Olaf of Norway was asked to find a

³⁰ Ethiopian Herald, 1966, p. 3; O.I: Bitweded Zewde Gebre Hiwet

³¹ O.I. Bitweded Zewde Gebre Hiwet

³² Bahru, pp. 185-89

³³ O.I. Bitweded Zewde Gebre Hiwet

³⁴ John H. Spencer, *Ethiopia At Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Silassie Years* (Algonae: Michigan, 1984), p. 219

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 313-14

³⁷ Tsegaye Haylu , "Haddis Alemayehu as a Social Critic" M.A. Thesis in literature (Addis Abeba University, 1987), p. 14

³⁸ O.I. Bitweded Zewde Gebre Hiwet and Blatta Mehari Kassa

³⁹ Haddis Alemayehu , *Ytyopia Min Aynet Astedader Yasfelgatal* ("What Type of Government Ethiopia Needs?") (Addis Abeba: Birhanena Salam Printing Press, 1966 E.C.), p.19

⁴⁰ Ethiopian Herald, 1966, p. 3

⁴¹ O.I. Weyzerit Yudit Emeru and Dejjazmach Dr Zewde Gebre Selassie

⁴² Spencer, p. 300

⁴³ O.I. Bitweded Zewde Gebre Hiwet

⁴⁴ John, Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of Traditional Polity* (Addis Abeba: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 368

⁴⁵ O.I. Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu

basis on which Ethiopia and Italy could start to settle the border dispute involving the former Italian colony, Somaliland. Accordingly, Trygre Lie, Norwegian diplomat and the First Secretary General of the UN was selected for that purpose by king Olaf of Norway.⁴⁶

On August 3, 1959, Lie met Haddis, John H. Spencer and Italian delegates to the negotiation. At every meeting, Haddis' was asked to start the dialogue. This condition gave the Italians ample time to give response to what he demanded. However, the meeting was short lived because the Italians ignored the content of the 1908 treaty and raised different treaties that Italy signed with Britain and France as term of reference to the negotiation.⁴⁷ But Ethiopian delegates also did not accept the points of negotiation presented by the Italians. It was at this point that Lie prepared his own proposal that acknowledged the agreement of 1908, but sought to consider other international treaties for its interpretation. However, both of the delegates were not satisfied with his proposal and this brought the whole process of negotiation between the two parties to an abrupt end.⁴⁸

Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu's Political Career from 1960 to 1974 and After

Haddis took the post of Ambassadorship to the UN for about four years and five months. At the onset of 1961, he became Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a brief period of time,⁴⁹ during which he wrote and submitted "Leyu Mastawesha" (special note) to Emperor Haile Selassie I. It was dated Tir 23, 1953 E.C. (1 February 1961) and dealt with the abortive coup d' et at of December 1960,⁵⁰ during the attempt of which Haddis was in New York and was not involved or forced to involve in it.⁵¹ However, he was well aware of the problems within the country that instigated the coup makers. Thus, in that "Leyu Mastawesha", a document which later on published, with modification and adjustment, as Ityopia Min Aynet Astedader Yasfelgatal? Haddis pointed out what he considered possible causes for the discontent and unrest in the society and forwarded suggestions to prevent the coming of such disturbance and unrest again in the country.⁵²

According to Haddis, the root cause for the unrest that took place in December 1960 was the dissatisfaction of the younger generation which was emanated from the

backward socio-economic and political condition of the country. Therefore, Haddis suggested, in his "Leyu Mastawesha", that the only solution to bring about sustainable peace was to undertake reform on the political system of the country and to raise the socio-economic and political condition of the country and make it a competent nation with other developed countries. Otherwise, Haddis pointed out that another unrest could explode.⁵³

Apart from pointing out what needs to be done in his "Leyu Mastawesha", Haddis also openly requested Emperor Haile Selassie I to improve the political system of his government by saying:

The improvement of Ethiopia's administrative system and developmental program is inevitable, tomorrow, if not today; the day after, if not tomorrow. If that improvement is done today, instead of tomorrow; by his majesty, instead of another person; history would acknowledge you for not only laying the foundation, but also for concluding Ethiopia's development.⁵⁴

Obviously, Haddis's suggestion was considered a challenge to the government and it created tension between Haddis and the emperor, who summoned Haddis to his palace and was said to have rebuked him for a radical stand.⁵⁵

Here, the personality of Haddis deserves mention. According to Clapham, "Haddis has a reputation [of being] honest and painstaking administrator."⁵⁶ My informants also confirmed this. They said, he was open and forwards his feeling directly to the emperor including his view against any mistake of the royalty. In his long service, Haddis was always admired for his humbleness, honesty and genuineness. Overall, his modesty and far sightedness were incomparable. And he always longed for better administration and for changes that could bring Ethiopia into better level of development.⁵⁷

Despite his challenge, on 9 February, 1961, Haddis was appointed Minister of State in the Ministry of Education.⁵⁸ That means, he was a de facto minister acting for the emperor, who had so far held the position of the Minister of Education himself to exhibit his actual concern for education. Although Haddis served at ministerial level, it was Emperor Haile Selassie I who was known officially as Minister of Education. This condition was said to have prevented Haddis to work freely. As a

⁴⁶ Spencer, p. 297

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 297-99

⁴⁸ Mesfin Welda-Mariam., The Background of the Ethio-Somali Boundary Dispute (Addis Abeba: Haile Sellase I University, 1964), p. 54

⁵¹ O.I. Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu

⁵² "Leyu Mastawesha" ("Special Note"). Tir 23, 1953 E.C, p. 1

⁵¹ Molvaer, p. 142

⁵⁴ "Leyu Mastawesha", p. 1

⁵⁵ Ibid.; Haddis Alemayehu, Ytyopia Min Aynet Astadader Yasfalgatal, p. I

⁵⁶ "Leyu Mastawesha", pp. 9-10: Translated from a manuscript written in Amharic

⁵⁷ O.I. Blatta Mehari Kassa

⁵⁸ Clapham, p. 194

⁵⁹ O.I. Ato Tekalign Gedamu (age 64, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 24 Dec. 1998); Blatta Mehari Kassa

⁵⁸ Ethiopian Herald, February 10, 1961, p. 1

result, he stayed only for five months in the new office.⁵⁹ But before leaving this office, there was a conference of African states in Addis Ababa that dealt with the development of education in the continent. In this conference, Haddis was said to have reported the actual number of schools and students found in Ethiopia. However, the emperor was not happy for he understood that the statistical report presented was less than any other African country.⁶⁰ This displeasure has grown into a serious tension between Haddis and the emperor when UNESCO published educational statistics of African countries which disclosed that Ethiopia's educational system has failed behind most African countries. Greenfield mentioned the tension that developed between the two as follows:

When UNESCO published comparative statistics for African countries in 1961, Haile Selassie refused to believe them and tension developed between him and the minister of state responsible for education [Haddis Alemayehu]⁶¹

The participants of this conference pledged to remove illiteracy from the continent within twenty-five years.⁶² To this end, Haddis, along with other experts of the Ministry of Education, was reported to have prepared a plan and submitted to the government. Generally, the budget assigned for education was very small and inadequate, out of which nearly 75 percent was allotted for the administrative sector. Haddis proposed that the administrative sector should take only 25 percent of the budget leaving the rest to fulfill educational facilities. It was also proposed that except formulating plans and supervision of achievements, the Ministry of Education should leave the execution of the plan to responsible bodies such as educational institutions and experts.⁶³

However, the plan itself met serious opposition and even the existing budget was reduced by quarter. At this time, Haddis understood that the government was not ready to implement the decision passed by the 1961 conference of African states on education. As a result, Haddis presented his resignation to the government.⁶⁴ Clapham has observed the tension that developed between Haddis and Emperor Haile Sellase I and asserted:

At the ministry of education, Haddis Alemayehu lost his job after revealing that Ethiopia was educationally well behind most other African countries, a revelation which greatly weakened the

emperor's carefully built up image as keen supporter of educational advance.⁶⁵

In the meantime, interchanging of junior officials of the Ministry of Education time and again had been customary. Regarding this issue there was a joke reported to have been stated by the officials of the ministry. The joke reads: "The vice-ministers or assistant ministers responsible for education had time only to give one order before a general Shumshir [demotion and promotion] dictated their translation to another ministry or an embassy overseas."⁶⁶

Following his resignation from his post in the Ministry of Education at the end 1961 Haddis was sent to London as Ethiopia's Ambassador to Great Britain and the Netherlands and stayed there until 1966.⁶⁷ While in London, Haddis lost his beloved wife, whom he married by Holy Communion. She died in America, where she went for higher medication. Her corpse was taken to Jerusalem and buried there.⁶⁸ Their marriage was childless and Haddis led a lonely life until his death. Haddis had great respect and love for his wife. Following her death, he handed over their home found in Qechene to Addis Ababa municipality to make it a children care center in commemoration of his wife.⁶⁹

Starting from April 1966 Haddis became the member of the Cabinet. This was following the political reform of the emperor which was issued on 24 March, 1966, when he appointed Aklilu Habta-Weld as Prime Minister and gave him the authority to choose his ministers. Then the Prime Minister asked Haddis to come back from London and join a new cabinet to be formed.⁷⁰ After long discussion on the issue, Haddis became the Minister of the Ministry of Planning and Development on 11 April 1966.⁷¹ There was no such a ministry in the country before his appointment but the Planning Board run under Prime Minister's Office.⁷²

According to informants, before April 1966 the work of planning was not conducted in organized way. But after the formation of the ministry, Haddis was said to have gathered domestic and foreign educated young Ethiopians and organized the ministry with skilled man power.⁷³ It was during this time that the Third Five Year Developmental Plan (1968/9-1972/3), which embraced provisions for agriculture - a sector neglected by the earlier two developmental plans -, was prepared.⁷⁴

⁵⁹ Molvaer, p. 142

⁶² O.I. Blatta Mehari Kassa

⁶³ Greenfield, p.472

⁶⁴ Molvaer, p.142

⁶⁵ Bekur, p. 28

⁶⁶ Molvaer, p. 143

⁶⁷ Clapham, p. 97

⁶⁸ Greenfield, pp. 334-35

⁶⁹ Molvaer, p. 143

⁷⁰ Bekur, p. 28

⁷¹ Ibid.; O.I. Bitwedde Zewde Gebre Hiwet and Blatta Mehari Kassa

⁷⁰ O.I. Ato Tekalign Gedamu

⁷³ Ethiopian Herald, 1966, p. 3

⁷⁴ O.I. Ato Tekalign Gedamu

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Markakis, p. 346

According to Markakis, the execution of the Third Five Year Developmental Plan was intimidated by unwillingness of Yelma Deressa, Minister of Finance, to cooperate for the implementation of the plan.⁷⁵ Yelma argued against the budget allocated for the implementation of the plan in view of the financial problem caused by the global political instability in connection with the closing of the Suez Canal.⁷⁶

Haddis did not agree with Yelma's stand. However, convinced by the statement of Yelma Deressa, the parliament decided to reduce the budget previously approved for the execution of the Third Five Year Developmental Plan by half. Haddis was highly disappointed with the reduction of the budget for he understood that the newly established ministry was unable to carry out its tasks with the budget allocated to it. This once again forced Haddis to submit his letter of resignation to the government.⁷⁷

In the meantime, a few ministerial changes were made by a cabinet. The reshuffling was proclaimed on 18 February 1969. By the new arrangement, Haddis became a Senator and his former ministry was also reduced to a Planning Commission and put under Prime Minister's office.⁷⁸ Haddis remained a Senator until the outbreak of the 1974 revolution.⁷⁹

While the revolution was in progress, the Derg - the Coordinating Committee of Armed forces, the Police and the Territorial Army - was said to have asked Haddis to become the Prime Minister of Ethiopia.⁸⁰ The story of this issue goes as follows. Beginning from 1973, there was all sort of social unrest in the country. The government was incapable in dealing with the problems. In February 1974, Prime Minister Aklilu Habta-Weld resigned and Endalkachew Mekonnen took his place.⁸¹ On 29 June, 1974, the Derg was formed. Soon, the Derg demanded the change of the Prime Minister.⁸² It also set the criteria for the selection of the Prime Minister which include intellectuality, long years of experience, popularity, support to the objectives of "Ethiopia First", and willingness to work with the Derg.⁸³ The first candidate of the Derg for the position of Prime Minister was Haddis Alemayehu.⁸⁴

The Derg has reasons to propose Haddis for this

position. Haddis has got appreciation and reputation of the peoples of Ethiopia by his novel *FekerEskeMeqabir* ("Love unto Grave"). The members of the Derg were not exceptions. Above all in his book Haddis gave detailed explanations on the horror of the feudal system that prevailed in the country for longer period of time. As a result, the Derg considered Haddis as a man having anti-feudal stand and the members of the Derg hoped that Haddis would fully support the program of the Derg. Thus, the Derg unanimously agreed for the appointment of Haddis as Prime Minister of the country.⁸⁵ The demand of the Derg was forwarded to Haddis Alemayehu through General Aman Andom, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. In the meantime, Haddis is reported to have questioned General Aman what the program of the Derg was, during which the latter was said to have replied "Our Program is Ethiopia First!" But Haddis was not satisfied by what General Aman has said. What Haddis expected from General Aman was a program that would foster Ethiopia's development. As a result, Haddis did not accept what the General has said and suggested that he would agree to his appointment if he would be allowed to design a program and that all members of the army would agree to return to their barracks.⁸⁶

In the next day, General Aman had reported to the Derg as if Haddis has refused his appointment as Prime Minister of the country without explaining the suggestions forwarded by him. Having received this report, the Derg continued discussion to select another candidate to the position of Prime Minister. It was this time that Lej Mikael Emeru was proposed by Mengistu Haile-Mariam, chairman of the Derg, for this position, and finally the Derg made Lej Mikael Emeru Prime Minister on 22 July, 1974.⁸⁷ However, the popular uprising continued unabated and on 12 September, 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie I was overthrown from the political power and the proclamation that deposed the emperor transferred the Derg into the Provisional Military Administrative Council assuming full state power.⁸⁸

In September 1975, the Derg established Yememakirt Shengo (National Advisory Assembly). Its declared objective was to provide advice to the Derg on the country's economic, political, social, developmental and other national issues. This Advisory Assembly was composed of knowledgeable and well-experienced individuals from different ministries, provinces, institutions and organizations.⁸⁹ The National Advisory Assembly was also intended to replace the old parliament. At this time, the Derg told Haddis that he was chosen by the

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 353

⁷⁶ Bekur, p. 29

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Clapham, p. 199

⁷⁹ Molvaer, p. 144

⁸⁰ Abera Jembere, Yesirbetu Abessa Betalaku Betmengist ("The Misfortune of the Prison House in the Great Palace"): 1966-1974 E.C. (Addis Abeba, 1985 E.C.), p.36

⁸¹ O.I. Lej Mikael Emeru

⁸² Ibid., Abera p. 36;

⁸³ Fikre-Sellase Wegderess, Egna na Abiotu ("Us and The Revolution"). (Los Angeles: TSEAH, Publishers, 2006 E.C.), p.87

⁸⁴ Ibid., Abera, p.36

⁸⁵ Fikre-Selassie, p. 87

⁸⁶ Bakur, p.29

⁸⁷ Abera, p. 36; Fikre-Selassie, pp. 88-89; O.I. Lej Mikael Emeru

⁸⁸ Bahru, pp. 235-36

⁸⁹ Fikre-Selassie, pp.211-13

people of Gojjam to be their representative in the Advisory Assembly or parliament. Haddis also welcomed the request and served in this Advisory Assembly for two years until his final retirement.⁹⁰

In addition to his political endeavor, Haddis was also one of a few Ethiopians who made great contribution to the literary development of the country. Of course, he is considered one of the pioneers of Amharic literature. His inclination towards literary work began while he was a student in Teferi Mekonnen Elementary School. However, he did not publish a book before 1956. His mastery of Amharic language and his vast experience in the life and history of his country and those of foreign countries seems to have helped him develop an interest in literature.⁹¹ Haddis wrote seven books in Amharic. These consisted of a fable, *Teret Teret Yemeseret* /"aggregation of tales"/, published in 1948 E.C., three novels, *Feqer Eske Meqabir* /"love unto grave"/, *Wenjelegnaw Dagna* /"the criminal judge"/ and *Yelmjat* /"plenty of dreams"/ published in 1958, 1974 and 1980 E.C., respectively, and non-fictional works such as *Yetimihrtina Yetemari Bet Tirgum* /"the meaning of education and school"/, *Ytyopia Min Aynet Astedader Yasfeligatal?* /"What type of government Ethiopia needs? "/ and *Tezeta* /"memory"/ published in 1948, 1966 and 1985 E.C., respectively. Due to his immense contribution for the development of Ethiopian literature, Haddis Alemayehu was awarded the Haile Selassie I Award Trust Prize Medal and Golden Mercury Prize in 1969 and he also received an honorary Doctoral Degree from Addis Ababa University in 2000.⁹²

Conclusion

Kibur Ato Haddis Alemayehu's political career as senior official of Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I start after his return from confinement in Italy at the end of 1943. In the post-liberation period, Haddis served his country at different governmental posts. Most of his service was in the area of foreign affairs at domestic and international levels. In addition to his regular duty as a diplomat Haddis had participated in a number of international as well as continental conferences by representing the government of Ethiopia. In his dealing with other countries on behalf of the Ethiopian government, Haddis was committed to protect Ethiopia's interest, sovereignty and territorial integrity. At home, Haddis had a reputation of honest and meticulous administrator and bold enough to comment any mistake of the

government. Haddis lost his wife, whom he married by Holy Communion, while he was in London. Since their marriage was childless, Haddis led a lonely life for about forty-two years in his home found north of Urael Church in Addis Ababa until his death. Finally, Haddis Alemayehu passed away after a long illness on 6 December, 2003 at the age of 94. His funeral ceremony was held at Holy Trinity Cathedral with the presence of the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church His Holiness Abune⁹³ Paulos, senior government officials, friends and relatives of the deceased.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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⁹⁰ Molvaer, pp. 144 - 45

⁹¹ O.I. Ato Berhanu Gebeyehu (age 33, interviewed in Addis Abeba on 16 Dec.1998)

⁹² Ibid., Fentahun, pp. 33-34

⁹³ The highest ecclesiastical title of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Feekare (Private Bulletin), Vol-I, No.1, Yekatit, 1985 E.C.
Most of the meanings of the traditional titles formerly and currently used
in Ethiopia are taken from Bahru, pp. 275-77.

ⁱ A title given in Ethiopia to highly authorized and respected individuals. It is
equivalent to His Excellence

ⁱⁱ A title given for adult man. It is equivalent to Mr.



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