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## ***B’ATI NSE NLEYI, EEWO’BO MI NI: GLOBALIZATION AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE***

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**Abstract:** *THERE IS, PERHAPS, NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW FOR US TO APPRECIATE THE FACTOR OF THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT IN UNDERSTANDING THE PECULIARITIES OF DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD. THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD. AT VARIOUS TIMES, IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT WHAT WORKS IN A PART OF THE WORLD MAY NOT WORK, IN THE SAME WAY, IN ANOTHER PART, EVEN AS GLOBALIZATION CONTINUES TO ATTEMPT TO DEFINE WHAT HAPPENS IN THE WHOLE WORLD. THE ARTICLE EXAMINES HOW INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE HAS INFORMED HOW NIGERIANS’ ATTITUDES DEFY THE GLOBAL OUTLOOK BUT DETERMINE THEIR SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES THROUGH A RE-INTERPRETATION OF THEIR SITUATIONS USING THE UNDERSTANDING, SKILLS AND PHILOSOPHIES GARNERED IN THE PROCESS OF RELATING WITH THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. THE PAPER CAPTURES THOMAS’ SOCIOLOGICAL THEOREM OF ‘IF MEN DEFINE SITUATION AS REAL, THEY ARE REAL IN THEIR CONSEQUENCES’. IN DOING THIS, THE PAPER EXAMINES HOW POLITICS, SOME ECONOMIC PRACTICES AT THE MARKET PLACE AND HEALTH BEHAVIOR REDEFINE AND REINTERPRET GLOBAL EXPECTATIONS FOR SURVIVAL. THUS, THE PEOPLE’S ‘SUBJECTIVE’ INTERPRETATIONS HAVE BECOME ‘SCIENTIFIC’ WITH LITTLE RECOURSE TO GLOBALIZED EXPECTATIONS. IN THIS WISE, THE ‘IDEAL’, GLOBAL, IS CONFRONTED BY THE ‘REAL’, INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, AND, AT THE END, DEFINING THE CONSEQUENCES.*

**Keywords:** GLOBALISATION, INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATION, LOCAL POLITICS, NIGERIA

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## INTRODUCTION

The term ‘globalization’ means different things to different authors. For this paper, globalization is defined as the processes by which the whole world is seen as a whole. What exists in one part of the world is expected to be the same in other parts of the world. From this prism, the ‘global’ defines the ‘local’ such that any deviation from the ‘global’ by the ‘local’ is perceived as an aberration. All processes in the ‘local’ must be with the intention of reflecting the ‘global’. Now, the ‘global’ is dominated by the so called ‘developed’ societies. ‘So called’ because there is no society that exists in the ‘past tense’. All societies are developing as they interpret and reinterpret their existence with a view to bring about ‘better’ appreciation of their existence and identify ways by which ‘newer’ ways of survival would be created. Interestingly, the ‘so called’ developed nations are located in the Northern hemisphere of the world where what it means to ‘develop’ is defined for those in the Southern hemisphere (Webster, 1984; South Commission, 1990; Olutayo, 2002; Kambhampati, 2004; Amzat and Razum, 2022). They perceive the world as a globe, or is it, bulb which gives ‘light’ to the other parts of the world. This process began, in the main, with the incorporation of the ‘South’ into the World Capitalist System (WCS) which began, in the ‘South’ with equal trade, later, slavery, and then colonialism and, in the present, neo-colonialism. Popularized by the Multinational Organizations and the Bretton-Woods institutions, globalization has assumed a unique form of trade, financial, international business, politics, cultural and environmental fronts. From cultural and environmental fronts, which encompass all the local social institutions, the whole landscape of the so called developing, or is it underdeveloped, nations are expected to be recalibrated to become like the so called ‘developed nations’.

In spite of all these attempts, local/indigenous knowledge seems to hold sway. For instance, in politics where democracy is expected to define the political space, indigenous knowledge reflects of what someone has referred to as a ‘demonstration of craziness’ wherein *prebendal* politics embedded in patronage holds sway (Joseph, 1991; Olutayo, 1994; Omobowale, 2007; Omobowale, and Olutayo, 2007; Olutayo, 2018). Yet, in Nigeria, where the center is not expected to be holding due to the cataclysm defining the political landscape, Nigeria seems to be forging ahead (Olutayo, Liadi. Olutayo, 2021). Where the global defines poverty in terms of economic and infrastructural deficits, the indigenous knowledge defines it in terms of being able to satisfy hunger (Olutayo and Liadi, 2019) and in health where the recent Covid19 pandemic is causing the death of millions of people all over the world and recommends some non-pharmaceutical protocols, Nigerian don’t seem to be bothered yet the number of deaths is minimal compared with the other parts of the world!

Anchored on Thomas’ sociological theorem of ‘if men define situation as real, they become real in their consequences’, it posits that objective determination of human behavior limits our understanding of the subjective interpretation that underlie their ‘objectivity’. Thus, it helps us to appreciate, indeed, why people behave the way they do without being prejudiced by our own interpretation. The paper is organized as follows. Section one addresses ways by which indigenous knowledge seems to be holding sway despite the overwhelming global expectations as the next section attempts to elaborate on the ‘definition of the situation’ in the understanding and explanation of human behavior. The section is followed by an attempt to describe the indigenous knowledge informing the dominating informal economy of Nigeria as against the expected global formal practices. Then, section four discusses Nigerian politics followed by the health system as they all seem to be ‘boosted’ by indigenous knowledge and the bases of informal education as explanations of health behavior in section six while section seven presents the concluding remarks



### Micro-sociology and the Understanding of Subjective Interpretation

The history of knowledge, generally, seems to have been foundational on objective interpretation of human behavior. This is not surprising since what the social sciences tried to do was to apply natural scientific methods to explain why people behave the way they do. Such application was informed by the ‘successes’ natural sciences seemed to have wrought in the history of mankind. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution with the recurring decimal of ‘science’ as the ‘fruits’ of inventions and industrial applications, its methods became the fancy of almost all the knowledge dominating epistemology in human endeavor. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, doubts began to emerge about the efficacy of scientific methodologies, and the inventions, which are assumed to be responsible for the progress of nations when the world witnessed the use of same through American atrocities in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Social critics began to argue that the ‘science’, assumedly laden with objectivity is, in fact, informed by an ideology foundational on bias rather than objectivity (Collins 1994; Lauer 2003). What is regarded as objective in natural sciences are observations and experiences gathered in the understanding of nature in the surrounding environment. Yet, environments are never the same such that what is observed, and experienced, in a natural environment would defer from others. So, why the generalization? Of course what is argued for is the ‘methodology’ of the observations and the experiences which are expected to be ‘uniform’ and ‘generalizable’. Yet, don’t we see what we want to see or, at best, what are schooled to see?

Transposing this to the study of human behavior continues to generate fierce debates as human beings are differentiated from non-humans contrary to what the founding fathers of sociology swept under the carpet (Labinjoh, 1998; Olutayo, 2001; Olutayo and Afolayan, 2013). Often regarded as macro-theorists, the founding fathers of sociology, relying on the history of the World Wars in Europe and the uncertainty of the social world, accepted scientific mode of analysis in the social sciences with the need to develop universal laws for societal understanding thus creating the leeway for predictability of social change. The historico-sociological context of Germany, however, seemed to have questioned the universal generalization for human society. As such, social contexts became relevant in sociological analyses leading to the emergence of micro-sociological theories rather than a general theory for societies. German philosophers and sociologists questioned *Homo economicus* deferring to *Homo sociologicus* since they observed that the principle of ‘Invisible Hands’, popularized by Adam Smith, did not inform Germany’s progress since the German government intervened in the market yet Germany developed. From here, culture came into contention in societal analyses (Olutayo, 2001-2002). With this, inductive reasoning came to the fore such that reasoning from concrete data and the interrelations among human motives are critical in sociological analyses. To Dahrendorf, ‘(a)t the point where individual and society intersect stands *homo sociologicus* man as the bearer of socially predetermined roles’ (Dahrendorf, 1973).

Of course Dahrendorf, as well as scholars in the German Historical School of Economics, were also influenced by Max Weber who, one may posit, arguably, was a major intermediary between macro and micro sociological theories in his definition of behavior as being behavior ‘only in so far as the person or persons involved engage in some ‘subjectively meaningful action’ and a behavior is ‘meaningful’ either within an historical situation or the rough approximation based on a given quantity of cases involving many actors’ (Weber, 1962:29). Though Weber remained identifiable with the rational type of behavior as the ideal type, he was a precursor to the emergence of what I refer to as ‘everyday sociology’ in the analysis of human behavior (Olutayo, 2014).

Deriving from Weber, Berger and Luckmann’s seminal text on *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), Mead’s symbolic interactionism and phenomenology, among others, have expanded the frontiers of research methodology for gathering information through key informant and in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and case studies, leading, I believe, to a more robust sociology of

knowledge. Beyond Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge, necessarily encompassing sociologies of language and religion, is the applicability of their ideas to all the other social institutions in any society. This was, in another way, advocated by Siedman, (1991) arguing for a new orientation for sociological theory in which social theory will be 'an event-based, nation/society-based narrative' (p.144). Fundamental to all these is Thomas' (1928) assertion that 'if people define situation as real, they are real in their consequences'. This occurs within the environment within which individuals are located in the performance of their daily activities as they strive to satisfy what they determine as their basic needs, as much as possible, within their society.

Generally known as the Thomas' theorem, it asserts that individuals go through the stage of a critical analysis of their action through a 'definition of the situation' which, gradually, becomes their worldview such that the individual follows a series of such definitions (Thomas, 1923). Such definitions, often, are informed by what is 'acceptable' in the individual's environment since s/he may be labelled 'deviant' with attendant sanctions to related behavior. Nonetheless, few cases exist where the persistency in 'deviant' behavior becomes the new norm. Generally, however, for the newly accepted behavior to become the 'norm', the other members of the society would, again, have to consider it 'acceptable'. In the process, they determine changes in behavior depending on the extent of acceptable behavior. In other words, in as much as the 'society' defines behavior, individuals, in that society, also have their roles to play in the definition process which are interpreted, and reinterpreted, depending on the situation they find themselves. As such, where the 'dominating' norm goes contrary to individually acceptable definition, the situation s/he finds her/himself will determine the ultimate course of action. Depending on the individual assessment of punishment attached to 'deviant' behavior, the individual may, likely, maintain her/his course of action or present a façade in order to avoid punishment. Thus, individuals are, always, in the process of 'defining' the means to the achievement of their goals. It does not often matter whether such action (means and goals) is termed 'rational' since rationality is, itself, defined according to the situation. It is in this wise that the 'social' takes precedence over the 'individual' though not, always, in concrete terms

Contrary to these definitions and redefinitions of the situation are the requirements of the global expectations which are defined by those who occupy the hegemonic status in the world. This, as earlier alluded to, is represented by those who control the WCS. And, in this system, the 'ought tos'/ideal are prescribed which, if not adhered to, not only attach some labels but also there are attendant repercussions. For instance, aids, grants and loans may be withdrawn. Or, at the extreme, violent actions may be taken to ensure compliance (Olutayo and Liadi 2019). In spite of all these, the course(s) of action by those expected to acquiesce seem to be defying global expectations as they seem to continue to define their situations in spite of the negative repercussions /punishments. At best, acquiescence to WCS's demands seem to be only a presentation of a façade at the policy levels such that realities of everyday living at the 'bottom' present a totally different scenario. It is to an elucidation of these that the next section considers at the economic level wherein the global expectations of formality in economic endeavors are compared with the everyday reality of informality at the market place

### **Formal versus Informal Economy in Nigeria**

Of course the global expectation is a formal economy. Defined 'activities that have market value and would add to tax revenue and GDP if they were recorded' (Delechat and Medina, 2020), the Nigerian formal economy is only about 35% (CISLAC, n.d) and the remaining 65% are informal. The process of globalization is to ensure that this 65% is 'captured' into the tax net in order that the economy can be considered formal (Burgess and Stern, 1993; Besley and Persson, 2013; La Porta and Shleifer 2014). In fact, it is assumed, the level of informality categorizes the level of development of



a nation in the WCS. The issue is that it is expected that there is a connection between finance and development. The more revenues from taxes, in whatever form, the better the development of nations (IMF, 2011; Keen, 2012; Corbacho, Cibils, and Lora (n.d)). Interestingly, the use to which the revenues are applied are, mainly, for physical and social infrastructures which many of the indigenous people are either unfamiliar with or may not even be able to afford them.

To be sure, informality, understood as an aberration within the revenue generation to ensure ‘good governance’ perspective (formality), misses the point of the ‘official legality’ in the history of nations. In other words, revenue generation for good governance presupposes a ‘legality’ deriving from a form of ‘political’ institution which, it seems, does not incorporate, effectively, the indigenous peoples. For the latter, the disjuncture between the known ‘political’ institution and its expected activities and the ‘new’ ones seems to be the crux of the whole matter. Since political institutions derive from organization around survival, the economic institution to which the indigenous peoples know is fundamental to their understanding of what political institution should do. This is because, as Appiah-Opoku (1999:218) asserts:

...indigenous economic institutions represent established local systems of production and other phenomena derived from the socio-cultural and historical processes of a given society. They originate from local culture, have firm roots in the past and are often referred to as informal, local, pre-existing or native institutions.

Thus, indigenous economic institution is rotted in the indigenous knowledge system about how economic activities should be organized within the social context. The ‘socio-cultural and historical processes’ which hinges, fundamentally, on informality continues to hold sway in most of Africa, Nigeria inclusive.

As earlier alluded to, Nigeria’s economy is dominated by the informal sector. The ‘engine of growth’ for this sector is the indigenous knowledge for the enhancement for survival. The need to survive goes beyond intuitive reactions to physical threats. It is fundamentally based on the need to understand the environment within which human beings find themselves. This is the basis for the development of knowledge systems in societies. Such knowledge systems define the social institutions organized around the survival techniques in order to ensure stability and, in some ways, determine change long before the ‘modern’ economy introduced through globalization. Embedded in these are the norms and values used to define meanings and purposes to/of life. Central to survival are the means of production which are often defined as ‘crude’ based on global standards where large farms are expected to provide food needs. Yet, these ‘crude’ implements used in tilling the land supply the daily food needs of the more than 200 million people in Nigeria, on their small farms, of not more than two hectares. They contribute about 21% to the country’s GDP and employing about 37% of the total labor force. Though considered poor by global estimates, their needs are met through their labor (Ritchie, 2021; Akinwotu, 2021; Ayetoto-Oladehinde 2020; FAO 2018; Sabo, Isah, Chamo, and Rabi (2017); Mgbenka and Mbah, 2016).

Most of the lands are owned by families, in spite of the Land Use Act of 1978, who use ‘simple’ hoes and cutlasses to till the land as well as artisanal fishing and livestock keeping. Some of these lands are sold or leased out to people to farm based on indigenously crafted arrangement (Wanger, 2020; Udoekanem, Adoga and Onwumere, V.O. 2014; Achinewhu-Nworgu, Nworgu, Babalola,, Achinewhu. and Nna, 2014; Ifeka, 1996). Family farms are, mainly, headed by the male members because, it is believed, the women would leave for another family, through marriage, where their needs would be taken care of. On the other hand, the male members take care of all the family needs during and after the females’ exit (Olutayo, 2005). The crops farmers rely on are diversified and often mixed





with livestock keeping. Farmers do not totally rely on food produces for survival but also engage in the marketing of their produces. As they say: *ona kan o wo oja*, meaning, you don't go to the market only through one way. This is more so that they envisage possible natural and/ man-made disasters

On the average, smallholder household consists of more than six household members with not more than five years of western education. Education is informal relating to survival in the whole environment, including the farm. Children are taught about the flora and fauna in their environment and how to relate with them. The relationship to the environment is in terms of its preservation since that is all they have and depend on. It is a life-long learning which takes place through the socialization processes throughout the day as children follow their parents to the farm and back home. During this period, morals, values, mores, ethics and ethos in relation to their place in the society are taught practically. The children are taught to be independent early in life. From the age of five, household chores are assigned to the two genders and are sent on errands both at home and on the farm. Before age ten, a child is expected to know very much about farming practices and her/his place in the scheme of things as they belong to different age groups. Most land conflicts are settled communally with the active participation of various community officials who are indigenes to the community. Where conflicts escalate out of the community, the courts adjudicate though, in most cases, the implementation of court proceedings require the cooperation of the community members (Adeoye, 2017; Akujobi, Ebitari and Amuzie, 2016; Omotara, 2016; Eck, 2014)

Foods produced on the land are sold, mostly, in the local markets. Long before the emergence of modern markets, local markets dominate, and is still dominating the Nigerian landscape (Globe Newswire, 2020). Local markets are organized around market officials chosen by the people. Such choices do, however, take cognizance of the 'owners of the market' who are indigenes of the community. In fact, where indigenous market laws are altered, the new market constitution which market unions practice reflect, to a very large extent, the values of indigenous market laws (Diala, 2019). This is more so that local markets serve both economic and social purposes as they are centers of interactions where information is disseminated to the people. As such, there is always a connection between what happens at the market and other social institutions. In short, it is at the market place that religion, politics information dissemination, and commerce meet. In most indigenous markets, traders pass their knowledge to their children who, in most cases, succeed them in their businesses. As such, generational trade patterns emerge as those selling one article of trade inherit it from their forebears. Again, this takes place through life-long socialization processes where children are taught selling techniques at very early ages of five hawking goods for their parents in the market (Akinwotu, 2021; Olutayo, 1994). Here, among others, they are taught haggling techniques, economic and political structures of the markets and the market architecture, generally (Grossman, 2019; Porter, Lyon, Adamu, Obafemi, Blench, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that informal indigenous practices continue to hold sway in the marketplace, in spite of possible higher levels of education.

Knowledge is passed down through informal means and meanings attached to behavioral practices according to 'tradition'. Nonetheless, these 'traditions' change but at a snail speed. Such changes are, often, interpreted and reinterpreted depending on the social situation individuals find themselves. As such, when subjective meanings are giving to any social situation, it is determine by those present in such situations. Consequently, any understanding of each situation requires a qualitative approach which studies both verbal and non-verbal communications that surround each in/action.

### **Globalization, Politics and Nigeria's indigenous knowledge**

Aside the proliferation of new ideas, technologies, and tools, the fundamental avenue through which the global community impacts indigenous societies is through ideology and politics. With the



fall of the Soviet Union, globalization has continued to fester through its attempt to democratize the whole world. This has been the age long orientation of the United Nations and its agencies (Newman and Rich 2004; Joyner, 1999). It was given impetus with the *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Democracy preaches that the ‘will of the people’ should determine governance as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights while the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights further laid down the ‘legal’ basis as its principles in international law recognizing, among others, freedom of expression, the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of association. Furthermore, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women attempts to ensure that women can vote and be voted for as well as participate in public life and decision making. For the UN and its agencies, electoral democracy is the basis of governance. But, what is the score card for Nigeria in all these, and more?

Nigeria seemed to have accepted the democratic principle at independence in 1960. Under a decade however, the democratic experience faltered giving way to a series of military interventions. Until 1999 when Nigeria returned to democracy, the military dominated governance for almost two decades. Two main parties have been ruling in Nigeria since 1999 and, to date, informal indigenous knowledge seem to be the underlying principle in its democratic experience. This is because, for the ‘will of the people’ to be supreme, democracy should be bottom-up. In Nigeria, democracy is top-bottom though this is only a semblance of reality since there is, virtually, no linkage between the governing and the governed. The Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD) noted, in its 2021 report, the draconian rules the present Federal Government uses to restrict freedom of information thus:

regulatory restrictions and nebulous legislation, including hate speech attracting N50 million penalty or death penalty; measures banning public; demonstrations and processions except for the Nigerian state; poor and limited spaces available for CSO participation (p.ix)

The body also observed that there is a disjuncture between the Federal government and its people at the ‘grass roots’ (CSCSD 2021). No wonder it has been posited that politics in Africa, including Nigeria, is only a mere reflection of the *symbolic* appetite of the leaders, policy makers, legislators and academics for Western culture (Shiza, 2008). The ruling government does not need to satisfy the needs of the people since they answer only to those who ‘installed’ them through informal, rather than formal, means (Obuene, Akanle and Omobowale 2022; Omobowale 2007).

In Nigeria, at the ‘bottom of the water’ in the process of elections is what someone has called the *Baba Isale*, a derivative of the precolonial *Balogun* (or *Baba ogun*), warlord, which may have informed what Joseph (1991) referred to as prebendal politics. Omobowale (2007) historically traced the patronage system in Ibadan to the *Babaogun* system. Ibadan was a pre-colonial military city with protection overlordship over most of post-Oyo empire *Yorubaland*. During the colonial period, the British allowed the indigenous patrons to continue their overlordship over subjects as members of the Native Authority System. The native leaders held power until the eve of independence when the British allowed the educated and economic elite to take over governance, and thus assumed positions of the new patrons. The traditional political system has not significantly changed in terms of the exchange relations between the patrons and clients. The *Babaogun* are no longer warlords, they are political and economic patrons whose existence and clientelistic chains are fueled by existing liberal socio-political and economic systems that favor political patronage and brokerage at the expense of clientele who are oblivious of ongoing exploitation (see Omobowale and Olutayo 2007, 2010).



As in Ibadan, the Nigerian political system now has the people called ‘leaders’ down to the ward levels. These are the people who decide people’s representatives at the community levels up to the national level. That is why each political party has its own national leader. And, depending on the amount of pecuniary resources available, those who would control the elections are, already, determined either through communal agreements or through violent means. These resources are provided through the hierarchies at the state and federal levels. As such, the informal, rather than the formal, practices continue to hold sway. No wonder very few women have been give the privilege to occupy public positions and take part in decision making processes. This is because the *Baba ogun*, in relation to war, are not expected to be women. Except their ‘powerful’ family male members support them, they are relegated to the background. Such support from male family members are often few and far between because their subjective interpretation is determined by the environment which subjugates women (Olutayo, 2010).

The subjective interpretation is informed by the precolonial arrangement which relegates women to the background, given voice by the colonial establishment and being perpetuated by the ruling male elites (Olutayo, 1999). It is a sort of structural violence as discussed by Galtung (1969). Yet, when the people do not get their desires. They may wait for decades believing that ‘*soja go soja come, barrack remain*’ meaning that those in who win today would soon go with time and they would be waiting for them. This is more so that they believe that: ‘*b’aba ku, a’jeran t’oju erin lo*’ meaning in so far as they are alive, they have a lot to gain. With these, they accept their losses and wait for their time. When their candidates win, they expect to be compensated even though, if they don’t, it is only a matter of time. For them, therefore, they have nothing to lose in the long run. Politics, as far as they are concerned, is only momentarily because it is the election period that is most important not the ‘culture of democracy’ as globalization and its advocates attempt to inculcate.

### **Globalization and Nigeria’s Health System**

As earlier adumbrated, globalization’s ultimate aim is to ‘modernize’ the whole of the world within the template created, and recreated, by the United Nations and its organs. The World Health Organization is not different as it attempts to develop global health standards in drug manufacturing, prescriptions, treatment, among others, as the ‘model’ for a modern health system through what Eriksen (2007) describes as standardization, deterritorialization and modernization.

The modern health system in Nigeria is at three levels: tertiary, secondary and primary representing Nigeria’s federal, state and local government structures of government. Across these three tiers, the intention of the Nigerian governments has been the need to ‘catch-up’ with the so called developed world in the provision of health needs to its people. Thus, in line with the WHO’s Alma Ata Declaration of 1978 which defines health as a fundamental human right involving ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing...’ was to be provided for all its citizenry on the principle of equity and social justice; to be participatory; related to all aspects of national and community development; as well as using socially acceptable methods of technology which are ‘scientifically’ sound. Interestingly, these were the intentions of the World Bank’s Structural Adjustment Program recommendations (Olutayo, 1993; Turok, 1991). The supposed establishment of the primary health care services at the local government level, being the closest to the people at the grassroot, is based on the modern health system within which health officials, taught in the foreign, euro-American, mode, determine the health status of the people and how to be treated. Indeed, in the Nigerian health system, indigenous health practitioners are not part of the health management system. Thus, only a very few people patronize these hospitals and centers.





More Nigerians, like in Asia and other African countries patronize indigenous herbal medicine derived through indigenous knowledge than modern medicine in spite a lot of financing of the latter (Ezigbo, 2021; Amorha, Nwabunike, Okwumuo, Ayogu, Nduka, Okonta. (2018); Oreagaba, Oshikoya and Amachree 2011; WHO 2008). Herbal knowledge, a component of traditional medicine, is derived from the beliefs, health practices and approaches in the use of plants, animals, and/or mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises. Indeed, most of the so called modern drugs derive from plants (Elhardallon, 2011; Covello, 2008; Raskin 1992; Hollman, 1988). Thus, it is instructive that people in Nigeria use more of herbal medicine than the modern one. To be sure, WHO is aware of the increasing use of indigenous medicine thus it has been encouraging the integration and complementary alternative medicine into the ‘modern’ national health care system of countries (WHO, 2011; 2005). Herbal medicine is efficacious, easily available (almost everywhere on the streets where they are hawked and with special place in open markets), readily accessible with no bureaucracy, almost, totally, informal and relatively more affordable. It is introduced to the children very early in life through the socialization process when mothers use them to treat their children. They teach their married children its use when they go to help them raise their children, through *omugwu*, (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p080npbh> accessed 240122) and it is, thus, passed from one generation to the other, almost effortlessly (Alade, Okpako, Ajibesin, Omobuwajo 2016). *Omugwo* is not limited to the Igbo alone as the Yoruba people of Southwestern Nigeria also have similar practice called *olojojo or ojojo omo*. In fact, women believe in the efficacy and use of herbal medicine during pregnancy (Illamola, Amaeze, krepkova et al. (2020); Fakeye, Adisa, Musa 2009). In other words, it is an ever-present living experience.

For Nigerians, the belief is that what they eat determines whether they will live or die. As such, every flora and fauna has been well researched into, through trials and errors, and the findings, through various practical applications, define its dynamism (Ezekwesili-Ofilu and Okaka, 2019). From varieties of chewing sticks (Olutayo 2018), which they do not, always, need to buy, to the cultivated food delicacies, every region relates with its environment to satisfy their needs. For instance, *ewedu*, jute leaf, often associated with the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, is also available in the Middle-East and West, East and Northern Africa (Osinkolu, 2020). It is said to be rich in beta-carotene for good eye sight, iron for healthy red blood cells, calcium for strong bones and teeth, Vitamin C for smooth, clear skin, strong immune systems and fast wound-healing.

*Ewedu* contains abundant anti-oxidant associated with protection against chronic heart diseases such as heart diseases, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension and heart conditions. As ayurvedics, its leaves are used for ascites, pain, piles and tumors for cystitis, dysuria and fever (Islam, 2013). Okoli, Aigbe, Ohaju-Obodo and Mensah (2007) identified 70 herbal medicines prepared in various ways to treat ailments ranging from common cold to complex pathological disorders including respiratory, circulatory and genito-urinary systems. Black soap is also said to contain properties that have positive effects on the skin as it helps to remove harmful bacteria, all kinds of dirt and impurities from the skin. It is also used to, thoroughly, remove make-ups, as facial cleanser and the cleaning of almost anything including acne and blemishes, eliminating razor bumps, healing eczema, and fighting off yeast and fungal infections (Brennan, 2021). Attitudes toward the protocols associated with COVID19 world pandemic is not, therefore, surprising (Odeyemi *et.al.* (2021); Nwagbara *et.al.* 2021; Ilesanmi and Afolabi 2020). In spite of their levels of education, most respondents do not practice preventive protocols of COVID19 though those of high socio-economic status seemed to have high levels of knowledge, positive attitudes and good practice of the protocols (Lawal *et al.* 2022). It is instructive to note, nonetheless, that COVID19 has not been as prevalent in Nigeria as in other parts of the world for yet to be fully identified reasons.



With easy accessibility, informality, and the social-relations defining the existence of herbal medicine, the Nigeria’s regulatory bodies like the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) as well as the National Agency for Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) have not been able to curtail its continued use (Li, Odedina, Agwai, Ojengbede, Huo & Olopade 2020; Awodele, Daniel, Popoola, Salami 2013). Most of the herbal medicines are not only unregulated but their use is also increasing (Aina, Gautam, Simkhada and Hall, (2020) Okoh, Okafor, Kokonne, Ajeh, Isimi, Olayemi, Emeje., (2016); Okoronkwo, Onyia-pat, Okpala, Agbo and Ndu 2014). This is more so that almost every individual can make them for use as they are freely available in the forests and bushes all around. Indeed, they can be cultivated in pots and other containers at home or in small gardens. It is not surprising, therefore that the Federal Government of Nigeria’s Traditional Medicine Policy of 2007 which was expected to promote ‘Health for All by the Year 2010 and beyond as enunciated in the National Health Policy’ (THPN 2007) to commemorate the Decade for African Traditional Medicine, has continued to be on the shelf, more than a decade after without any relevance. This is not, perhaps, unconnected with the fact that the aim was, more or less, to please the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as support the Regional Strategy of the African Region on Promoting the role of traditional medicine in health systems (AFR/RC50/9)

## CONCLUSION

Globalization is a process whose intended end is to ensure that ‘no one will be left behind’ which, now, constitute the world agenda (UNDP 2018). As such, it is an encapsulation of the various means by which the international agencies define how all the nations of the world *ought* to develop in a one-world with little or no other alternative. It assesses the social institutions of different nations within its own framework and attempts to bring them in line with the certain identified variables, a definition of their own situations. Consequently, it is not a natural phenomenon but it is a project being consciously driven by those who hold the hegemony in world affairs. The underdeveloped sections of the world are expected to key into the project through their leaders who, ironically, do not have direct and full control of the ideological state apparatuses of their countries. Thus, the majority, at the bottom of the ladder in such countries, continue to rely on their existential realities through the indigenous knowledge developed in the process of survival. Therefore, they define their meanings, reinterpret them, as they deem fit, and socially construct their existence depending of their understanding of their social situations. To a very large extent, they do not seem to be affected by what their leaders do in so far as they survive using their indigenous knowledge within their environment.

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