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**DEPARTMENT:**

**SOCIOLOGY**

**COURSE:**

**SOC 316**

**MATRIC NUM:**

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**ASSIGNMENT:**

**IN NOT MORE THAN 3000 WORDS, DISCUSS THE CULTURAL CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY UPON THE ADVENT OF WESTERNIZATION.**

The word ‘culture’ derives from a French term, which in turn derives from a Latin word ‘colere’ which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture. It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth, De Rossi said. Culture refers to the total way of life of any society, not simply to those parts of this way the society regards as higher or more desirable. Thus culture, when applied to our own way of life, has nothing to with playing piano or reading. For social scientist such activities are simply elements within the totality of our culture. This totality also includes such mundane activities as washing dishes or driving an automobile, and for the purposes of cultural studies these stand quite on par with the finer things of life. It follows that for the social scientist there are no uncultured societies or even individuals. Every society has a culture, no matter how simple this culture may be, and every human being is cultured, in the sense of participating in some culture or the other. Different kinds of groups can have cultures. People come to share behaviors and ideas because they communicate with and observe each other. Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at a table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things.

Cultural change is a term used in public policy making that emphasizes the influence of cultural capital on individual and community behavior. It has been sometimes called repositioning of culture, which means the reconstruction of the cultural concept of a society. Culture is always evolving and moreover new things are added to material culture every day, and they affect nonmaterial culture as well. Cultures change when something new opens up ways of living and when new ideas enter a culture. All cultures are inherently predisposed to change and, at the same time, to resist change. There are dynamic processes operating that encourage the acceptance of new ideas and things while there are others that encourage changeless stability. It is likely that social and psychological chaos would result if there were not the conservative forces resisting change. Cultural change refers to changes made in cultural elements. Bothe material and non-material. All important changes have cultural aspects within them. Culture tends to give certain dimensions and momentum to a social change to see the limits of that social change. Cultural change includes change in technology, introducing advanced appliances, automobiles, machinery and many more. Culture is automatically changing in the society. However, the changing of the culture, values and beliefs with the passage of time, is important in the society, because in this way the environment can be shaped in a better way. People can get the understanding about the modernization. Moreover, other countries and societies will do efforts to bring the change; cultural change based on the society values and norms. Example, if in the culture people have the thinking to earn money or to get the education, then automatically people will consider the things in an organized manner and there can be growth of the country’s economy. People are influenced by the cultural changes and the values and beliefs.

Westernization is a process whereby [societies](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society) come under or adopt [Western culture](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture) in areas as [industry](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industry), [technology](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology), [politics](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics), [economics](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economics), [lifestyle](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifestyle_(sociology)), [law](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law), [norms](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_norm), [mores](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mores), [customs](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_(norm)), [traditions](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tradition), [values](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_(ethics)), [mentality](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mentality), [perceptions](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perception), [diet](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diet_(nutrition)), [clothing](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing), [language](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language), [alphabet](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabet), [religion](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion),and [philosophy](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_philosophy). During [colonialism](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonialism) it often involved spread of [Christianity](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity). Westernism is a coinage from the word westernize which refers to the act of bringing ideas or ways of life that are typical of Western Europe and North America to other countries. Therefore, western culture connotes the knowledge, belief, morals and way of life of the Western world. The westernization of a country, place, or person is the process of them [adopting](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/adopt) [ideas](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/idea) and [behavior](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/behaviour) that are [typical](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/typical) of [Europe](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/europe) and [North](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/north) [America](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/america), [rather](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/rather) than [preserving](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/preserve) the ideas and behavior [traditional](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/traditional) in their [culture](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/culture). Over the years, western culture has indeed accounted for a lot of changes in our culture. There has been such intense Western effort to change the status of women all over the world, most especially in Africa where it is obvious that women are lowly placed in the scheme of things when compared with their male counterparts. Western style of education has been entrenched in our African constitutions, styles of dispensing justice and politics.

A critical look at the Western influence on African culture shows both good and bad influences. This has made much of African native culture give way to the European culture. Either by design or accident, Africans have imbibed the Western culture and have appropriated it so much that it now becomes almost part and parcel of their lives. Rodee (1983) saw African social problems which emanated from Western influence as one-crop economies, pervasive corruption, spiraling inflation, massive unemployment, over-crowded cities and destitute villages. Obviously, the culture of African people is still undergoing contacts and conflicts which results to a healthier life of the society resulting in an improved social system. However, in the light of the present state of African culture which Nigeria is included, mismanagement, greed, embezzlement, bribery, tribalism has downplayed the influence of culture on the social system. Culture should act as a watchdog to African social system. This is a clear indication why modern method of birth control as abortion has been rebuffed in many cultures despite the enormous efforts of its proponents to give it the best recognition.

There have been several changes that have occurred during the advent of westernization in my community. Let’s take a look at food; western influences have transformed the eating habits of people around. Before westernization, people usually eat their local foods. But the eating habits of people have changed. There is now high demand rate of canned, frozen and packaged foods. People are now relying on them instead of making their dishes naturally. But it still makes cooking easier with its own health effect because of the huge amount of consumption. There are now foreign restaurants and big supermarkets that are often too expensive for average people living around the community. Westernization has affected the eating habits of individuals around the community. But some people still combine traditional cuisine with a little western-style food. Food before westernization was usually eaten by hand, but when western culture came into place forks, spoons and knives are now being used for eating.

Another aspect is social stratification; before westernization there hasn’t been a social class division among individuals until westernization came in place. The westerners decided to divide and place power among few individuals and that is why only few people are rich and majority are living in abject poverty.

Another cultural change that has happened in my community during the advent of westernization is the deviation from the traditional politics to the western politics that was introduced to us. Before westernization individuals had their various ways in which they conducted their various affairs in the community. Authority and power belonged to the community. Every member has the share of power in the community, the power to govern is invested on a group of persons and at times, a worthy leader to act on behalf of the community. The community confers the authority on the persons to exercise power on behalf of the living and the dead. By so doing, they become symbols of unity and agents of maintaining the harmony of the community. Due to cultural change, the people that lead no longer see themselves as leaders who have the mandate of their people to serve. Today, people now fight, kill and bulldoze their ways into positions of power. This shows deviation and abandonment of values, especially the sacredness of human life. High values and respect should be reposed in the community and there is a need to re-evaluate the traditional leadership systems which are more of hereditary in nature. We should also embrace the democratic aspect of leadership to check the excesses.

Westernization also changed the religious aspects of individuals in the community. Before westernization, people practiced African Traditional Religion as their form of worship. They usually had shrines, statues, etc. as their form of worship. The advent of westernization broke the traditional religious system and it gave way for Christianity and Islam to reign. Churches and mosques were built and people left their old way of life to embrace the new religious systems. But then can we say the advent of these new religious systems has brought any positive change other than creating division amongst each of us. People thinking one religion is superior to the other and creating crisis in the community. Even in the mode of worship is now a challenge. There was always a traditional form of worship in which drums and local languages were used as a form of worship. But since the advent of westernization, things has changed in the community. The local drums that makes the music of the people very significant and meaningful has greatly been replaced with band-set and English songs. The acrobatic dances during our mode of worship when drums and music are being played is far richer than the western pattern of worship which has gradually turned us into iroko trees that stand very erect in the place of worship. We should try our best to go back to our heritage if not all what we know, our history will be forgotten and not lived by our future generations to come.

Westernization has changed the way we communicate; before the advent of westernization people usually spoke their native languages. But after westernization came into place it changed our mode of communication and created a communication barrier between people in the community. English language was brought by the westerners and instead of people to still imbibe the habit of speaking their local languages, they rather speak English and that is why languages are dying. It also creates a communication barrier between the old aged individuals that speak their local languages and those that don’t. Proper communication won’t occur. It is important for people to teach and educate their children in the midst of acculturation so that the local languages of the people will not be completely lost to western language.

Westernization has changed the mode of dressing; before the advent of westernization, people usually wore their traditional attires as a way of representing their cultural heritage and the pride they had for it. After westernization come in place. People started coping the way the westerners dress. No value was being placed anymore on the importance of wearing traditional attires. Also due to the cultural change, it has brought about indecent sexual behavior. Women now dress indecently along the road. Putting on clothes that does not cover up their women parts properly, all in the name of fashion trend. Men who also wear clothes and make hair that makes them look irresponsible, unkept and razz all in the name of fashion trend. It is important for people to imbibe the cultural wears and the importance of dressing decently.

There has been a cultural change in marriage style; before the advent of western culture, people usually just paid pride price with the parents, chiefs and elders involved and sometimes a traditional marriage is involved. That is how people get married. But now people don’t really value the essence of having a traditional marriage. They rather have a white wedding and most times people practice the traditional and white wedding. But then again can’t we say it is a waste of time and money. Sometimes people go the extent of borrowing money just to have a white wedding which is of no essence if you look at it from another angle. Even in the case of divorce; in the old Igbo set up, a young man or Woman does not tell his/her parents who to marry. It was the full Right of the parents of the girl and the man to begin to find a wife for their son, and give their daughter to anybody of their choice. The Next was for him to wait for them to tell him where and when the Marriage would take place. According to Ubani (2007), the work of doing the investigation, finding money and other things is not in the Hand of the man. Investigation here means finding out whether the Girl’s people can give birth without difficulties, a trace of rampant Adultery, stealing, and premature death and so on. Due to cultural change, men find their wives on their own without the consent of their parents. They are not willing to know or investigate things about who to marry; they make decisions on where and when the marriage will hold. Which has often times Resulted to regrets, abandonment and even quarrel between the two Parties. In Africa, both the living and the dead gather during Marriage. It is a conglomerate that no single individual must stand Alone. In order to avert frequent divorce cases in Africa, it is Imperative for young men and women going into marriage to listen to their parents especially when there is a sense of danger. But then can we also say our parents picking the right woman/man for their children to marry is also the right spouse for them.

There has been a cultural change in the educational system; before the advent of western culture, the community practiced traditional form of education which involves the family. That was their own way of learning without classrooms. Western culture accompanied by advanced technology stepped down the pace of African local technological development and oral tradition. In fairness however, Western technology has tremendously improved the lifestyle of Africans in various areas such as Medicine, Communication, Transport, Agriculture, Sports, Education, Clothing, and so on. However, we should not keep basking in the euphoria of Western technological achievements and forget to improve on our local technology as stated by Arinze (2006). We should appreciate the products of our local art works of painting, sculptures, and molding just for what they are and it will encourage development.

Conclusion

All cultures change through times. No culture is static. However, most cultures are basically conservative in that they tend to resist change. Some resist more than others by enacting laws for the preservation and protection of traditional cultural patterns, while putting up barriers to alien ideas and things. . African culture should act as a means of checking, adopting and transmitting such changes as technological development, political development and social development. In order to avoid cultural extinction, there is an urgent need for cultural restoration in Africa owing to erroneous impression or Western indoctrination. This is very necessary because a people without a culture are a people without an identity.

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