Analysing Urbanization, Cultural Values and Dressing Styles: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Life in Nigeria.

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Abstract
This article analyzes how the agglomeration of diverse people, culture, values and beliefs in urban centres led to cultural diversity and influences the dressing style of the countryside. The study examines the rhythm of urban life marked by collective consumption which influences cultural values and pervades dressing styles of the wider social environment. The urban based system of development in Nigeria projects cities as destination points and vehicles of modern life hence, the importance attached to urban life as a model and an indicator of high social status by the rural dwellers. Wirth and Castell's urban propositions were aptly used to underscore the pervasive influence of urbanization on cultural values by implication, the dressing styles of the countryside. The comparative-historical method was adopted to examine the observed variations between urban and rural life in contemporary Nigeria. The paper argued that urbanization influences the dress style of residents while the rural dwellers exhibit the tendency to catch up.

Keywords- urbanization; cultural values; dressing style; collective consumption; historic-comparative method.

Introduction

Global market forces have enhanced the growth of urban centres. International firms relocate their production to urban centres in the developing countries due to proximity to raw materials and cheap labour. The result is the burgeoning urban population in these countries. Skilled and unskilled labour is thus attracted to the urban areas. A case in point is the textiles and dress fashion industries in Europe and United states some of which produce in Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and others for cheap production cost. The finished products are eventually sold in the home countries or elsewhere with a high profit margin.

In this urban millennium, urbanization bears a strong force that immensely affects the socio-cultural components of nations. Urbanization in its present form in Nigeria was non-existent before European contact. Organized kingdoms and empires were found within Daura, Kano, Benin, Ife, etc. These traditional civilizations helped to mould European urban influence. Contemporary urban Nigeria is a mere transformation of the colonial creation. The urban environment offered residents opportunities to acquire western education and access to social amenities. Local needs and consumption patterns of most Nigerians were influenced to conform to those products which the industries produced. Western education served as the vehicle for socialization of the colonized people. Urbanization greatly impacted on the orientation and outlook of the urban dweller. More so, industries provided opportunities for cheap unskilled labour to the potential urban dweller. Few literate ones moved into the city to avail themselves of the opportunities provided such as stewards, clerks, messengers, cooks, cleaners, and the like. Urbanization in colonial Nigeria emerged in the above context. The independent Nigeria showed

little or no difference the colonial setting except that educated elites (indigenous) occupied the administrative positions previously held by the colonialist. Discovery of oil in commercial quantities and the end of the Nigerian civil war further accelerated the urban drift. These had been the paths to Nigerian urbanization.

The paper views urbanization as of primary importance and a spark on the influence on peoples' standards of behaviour and dress patterns. Urban areas are grounds for the agglomeration of diverse population, culture, beliefs and values. Infrastructure, amenities, life styles, technology and the like are intrinsic components of urban social reality that determine the rhythm of urban life. The aim of the study is to analyze the growing influence of cities on the cultural values of the Nigerian society with a ripple effect on the dressing patterns of villagers.

Urban Pervasiveness and Diversity

Heterogeneity of people, culture, religion and anonymity are some of the features of urban living that vitiate the social imagery of the Nigerian people and culture. Urban centres are probable centres for the emergence of plurality of cultures. Significantly, the globalized effect of the adoption of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the cultural values of developing nations like Nigeria is pervasive. Digital communication creates a global city where interaction in the urban areas are social, mediated, virtual and crucial filters of urbanization affecting cultural values, consumption behaviour especially dressing style. The consumption patterns of urban dwellers tend toward foreign goods and services, more energy and durable goods. The urban situation with its various people, practice and background create sub-cultures within the wider culture. The city offers dwellers various life-support systems such as cinema, movie house, relaxation spots and recreational facilities, social amenities and infrastructure. Berman cited in Giddens and Sutton (2013) tags urban life with the era of modernity.

Scholars in sociology such as Louis Wirth, Ferdinand Tonnies, George Simmel and others had variously described the urban character. The fact remains that there is an absence of universalistic roles, norms and shared values which are intrinsic features of African culture and identity in the urban area. A distinctive feature of contemporary urban living in cities different from other areas today or in the past is the ephemeral, transitory, relatively formal interactions (Giddens & Sutton, 2013).

Social life of the urbanite is determined by the demographic characteristics of the urban area. Aseka (2010) asserts that African minds are products of distinctive cultural structures and torrents arising from environmental taming and age-long traditions. Urbanization, global capitalist system among others is liable to influence Nigeria's cultural values and dressing patterns. Contrastingly, non-urban societies are characterized by homogenization of population, common values, symbols, traditions and customs. These are structural and cultural factors that shape their perception and world-view. Traditional societies and by extension, rural societies have informal norms of dress prescribing what to wear at a given time.

Cultural values are standards of behaviour within a particular social environment. It has been observed that certain events in the Nigerian society had adapted the cultural behavior and values of the people. Colonialism, urbanization and modernization stand out (Nwauzor, 2014). People's commitment to certain values have some bearing on what they eat, believe, do, wear and their perception of a desirable behavior.

The urban based system of development in Nigeria concentrates social amenities and infrastructure in the urban area. Many rural communities in Nigeria lack potable water, good schools, functional hospitals, electricity, good roads and the like. Rural life is characterized by

primordial relations, subsistence agriculture and close interaction with the natural environment. Consequently, rural dwellers view urban areas as points of attraction and destination. City life provides an index for measuring one's socio-economic status in the society. Contemporary rural life is inclined to catch up with the model (city life) especially through dressing, music, other forms of arts and consumables. The urban place is differentiated from the rural area as

> an inhabited central place differentiated from a town or village by its greater size, and by the range of activities practiced within its boundaries, usually religious, military, political, economic, educational and culturally. Collectively these activities involve the exercise of power over the surrounding countryside (Jary & Jary, 1999).

Calabrese (2016) corroborates this view by noting that the rural areas have continued to be seen as "vaults of tradition" and urban centres as "sites of modernization".

Contradictory trends within urbanization and their attendant responses have implications for African cultural values. Different cultures in Nigeria have diverse and unique dressing patterns associated with them. These are worn alongside the borrowed western dressing in the South and the Muslim (Arabic) style in the North. Besides, Nigerians adorn themselves in other dress styles peculiar to other foreign cultures. Craik (1994) highlights that "while western fashion may be represented in terms of imperialistic intentions to take over the world of clothes, and thereby extinguish other systems, many non-western cultures have shown remarkable resilience and ingenuity at retaining other dress codes, modifying indigenous codes and developing their own versions of western fashion". Indigenous Nigerian dress styles are custom made unique creations from locally and internationally sourced materials like Ankara, locally made hand-woven fabrics like aso-oke, lace, George, and a wide range of others. They are produced based on demand and come in different dimensions and arrays of dazzling styles.

Urbanization has given rise to the diffusion of life styles, values, attitudes and expectations. Trendy dress styles originate from any part of the world through the urban areas and find their way to the rural areas. Urbanization driven by global capitalism poses deleterious effect on African cultural values. This impact is typified by increasing individual choice shaping social life against the emphasis on tradition and values.

Oyebade (2007) acknowledges the eroding influence of urbanization and western culture on certain cultural practices of Angolans such as dressing style, music and dance. Consequently, there is the existence of cultural differences between the rural and urban dweller in Angola. Oyebade expansively analyses these cultural differences with reference to the emerging stereotype and discrimination against the rural dweller by the urban elites. However, Njoku (2013) also demonstrates the pervasive influence of urbanization on the cultural values and lifestyle of the urban Igbo youth especially in colonial Nigeria. The work emphasized the effect of urbanization on the cultural values of Igbo youth in political leadership in colonial Nigeria. Again, Calabrese (2016) examines the effects of urbanization on ethnic identity in a racially segregated environment (Dakar). Calabrese further identifies dressing pattern as the most distinguishing difference between the rural and urban dweller in Dakar, Senegal. Both have different clothing styles. The paper however seemed to overlook the over-arching influence of urban dressing style on rural clothing style in a non-racist environment. This article aims to fill the gap between these and other works by exploring the pervasive influence of urbanization on the cultural values and dressing patterns of the urban and rural dweller using the comparative

historical approach. Against this backdrop, the study examines the rhythm of urban life marked by collective consumption which influences cultural values and pervades dressing styles of the wider social environment. The departure point for these interactions is the inclination of young rural dwellers to catch up with urban lifestyle especially in dressing. Some pertinent questions are raised in this study: Does urbanization influence cultural values and dressing patterns of urban residents? Are rural dwellers clothing styles inclined to meet the urban style?

The paper is hinged on Louis Wirth and Manuel Castell's theoretical reasoning on urban analysis. Wirth quoted in Giddens & Sutton (2013) explains the pervasive influences which the city exerts on people's social life as "the initiating and controlling centre of economic, political and cultural life that has drawn the most remote communities of the world into its orbit and woven diverse areas, peoples and activities into a cosmos" (1938). The city influence reflects the intersections of urbanization, globalization and new media which are pertinent in the analysis of dress styles in order to understand the impact of diffusion, exposure and increasing individual choice over local knowledge. As a result, rural communities are increasingly shaped by the urban way of life.

Castell views the urban area as "an integral part of processes of collective consumption," which in turn forms an inherent aspect of industrial capitalism. The social amenities, life support services and infrastructure are the avenues or nodes through which urban dwellers "collectively consume" modern industrial goods and services. A blend of Information and Communication Technology and capitalist restructuring facilitates the flow of messages across territorial boundaries (Castell, 1991 cited in Giddens & Sutton, 2013). The process of collective consumption impacts significantly on the dressing style of the urbanite. Diverse styles in dress fashion are diffused through the various channels of Information and Communication Technology. Freedom of individual choice enables the city dweller to adopt the style of choice over the established dressing patterns. Pervasive changes in the urban life style leave impressionable marks on the lives of the rural folks.

Method of Study

The method of study used is the comparative-historical method. The paper draws evidence from the typical urban and rural settings in the southern parts of Nigeria through observation to underscore their variability and influence thus, situates its strength in the comparative-historic method. It involves a comparison or contrast of rural and urban life in contemporary Nigeria in order to ascertain the differences between the two systems in relation to other intervening variables such as globalization, modernization and the flow of messages across territorial boundaries. A comparative analysis of the urban and rural areas in Nigeria in the 21st century shows that there exists a clear difference between rural and urban areas as against David Harvey's claim that industrial development blurs the distinction between city and countryside.

Results and Discussion

The typical urban setting in Nigeria is either a creation of federal, state, local administrative headquarter or a commercial centre. Social amenities, relatively better social institutions like schools, hospitals, and others, basic infrastructure and employment opportunities are some of the facilities available in some urban areas in Nigeria. These constitute the pull factors in rural-urban migration. However, a growing population of urban dwellers faces an urban dysfunctional infrastructure. The urban lifestyle is punctuated by increasing social interactions with people of diverse ethnic/racial, religious, cultural backgrounds. Whereas urban

life is typically enhanced by public spaces like parks, clubs, malls, gymnasiums, etc rural life is still rudimentary. Few rural communities have access to electricity, good schools, potable water, functional health centres and general hospitals. Rural life is a one-stop shop within a homogenous population that is based on primordial relations.

Similarly, the urban dweller adapts to the culture of the urban society. New ways of life are acquired and old ones are either dropped or modified. Urban modes of living create both inclusionary and exclusionary tendencies in terms of values and dressing style. New cultural forms of expression are created in the urban space that tends to move away from the traditional normative viewpoint of what is decent, indecent, good or bad, desirable or undesirable. Urban dwellers redefine their diverse cultural values through interaction. Fashion styles originate or are re-invented from one part of the world and are diffused to other places. Interaction facilitates the exposure and subsequent adoption of cultural, foreign and trendy dress styles are accentuated.

Dress styles worn in the city are put together in catalogues, magazines and pictures which are circulated within and outside the urban environment. Urban cultural diversity and mix is positively expressed in the acceptance and adoption of Aso-ebi culture in Nigeria. Having originated from the Yorubas of south west Nigeria, the aso-ebi culture extends notably beyond ethnic or rural boundaries. Its array of beautiful, classy, elegant and trendy designs adds glamour and colour to any event. Rural dress makers depend on these for production of dress styles for their society. Rural markets rely on the urban markets for supply of fabrics, textiles and dresses. The quality of what is bought is determined by the purchasing power and knowledge of the rural buyer.

Urban lifestyle predominantly revolves around modernity. The digital revolution in communication, education and business transaction are accessible in most Nigerian cities. There is increased access to ideas, information, opportunities and upgraded adaptation in the urban centres. Cities are the hubs of commercial activities. Exchange of goods and services in most urban centres are increasingly becoming dependent on electronic transactions. Contrarily, cash based transactions predominate the exchange of goods and services in the rural area. Social, mediated and virtual or online interactions are becoming more fashionable than the face to face personal interaction reminiscent of rural life. Identification and transaction are facilitated by a set of numbers referred to as pin (personal identification number) while kinship relations remain the basis of identification in the rural area.

The consumption behaviour of rural and urban dwellers varies greatly. Consumption pattern of the urban dweller tends toward durable, energy-dependent goods like automobiles, electricity, etc. Most urban families rely on the use of kerosene, cooking gas or electricity for cooking. Electronic devices like the refrigerator, electric iron, washing machine, heater, air conditioner, lift, and others are more common in the urban centre. Urban public and private businesses are technologically driven therefore, powered by commercial and non-commercial forms of energy. The urban consumption pattern is a function of the labour markets, wages and household structure. On the other hand, rural life to a large extent is dependent on nature for survival and less of technology. A great proportion of rural dwellers use fossil fuel (fire wood) for cooking and heating. Farming in most rural communities in Nigeria are predominantly elementary. Seasonal farming prevails due to reliance on rainfall with local implements.

Cultural values are the embodiment of a peoples' tradition, custom and the moral standard of acceptable behaviour that are transmitted from one generation to the other through oral tradition. They constitute the social control mechanisms which preserve and guide the behaviour of people in the rural communities. Urbanization brings about a crash of cultural

values and the emergence of new sub-cultures. The heterogeneous nature of an urban centre creates a dichotomy between rural and urban dwellers that dissipate previously shared values. Urban cultural diversity and mix undermines the traditional basis of social control. Although many Nigerian urban dwellers maintain strong and close ties with the roots, there are no shared values, norms and expectations in the urban centres. The nature of the urban setting and patterns of human interaction constitute part of the collective impulses of urban life.

Expectedly, the intersection of the global system for mobile communication, internet, cable and other forms of new media messages within the reach of villagers have inadvertently increased the penchant for urban lifestyle particularly in fashion. It is common among the young fans of European football leagues and clubs, actors and musicians to mimic the different hair and dress styles of these celebrities. As the global village closes in on the rural areas they are integrated into the consumption of modern industrial goods even as the socio-cultural components of urban spaces move towards a state of flux. Thus, individual choices and village dress styles are shaped by the flow of messages across national boundaries. Pervasive changes in the urban area leave impressionable marks on urban residents changing orientations.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated how the pervasive influence of urbanization led to cultural diversity and mix particularly in relation to dress styles of urban dwellers with a ripple effect on those of rural dwellers. Urban spaces are melting pots of variety of cultures, races, ethnic groups and religions. This process produces diverse cultures harmoniously co-existing simultaneously at a place in a given time. A blend of other factors such as westernization, new media messages and globalization contribute to the changes in behaviour and world view. Urban areas are also points of attraction due to the urban based system of development in Nigeria. The paper argued that urbanization influences the dress style of residents while the rural dwellers exhibit the tendency to catch up. This pervasive influence on social life marked by the process of collective consumption is a key insight of Wirth and Castell's urban expositions. The study expressed the view that the urban praxes offer insight into the influence of urbanization on cultural values and dress styles.

The study showed the intersection of factors beyond the scope of this work that increasingly affect individual choice shaping social life. Nevertheless, the pervasive influence of new media messages and expanded reach of information on rural and urban lifestyle have not quenched the thirst for urban life due to the urban biased system of development in Nigeria.

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