

## **Western Culture and Civilization's Impact on Africa and African-American Blacks**

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### **Abstract:**

*There are various phases to the ways that western civilisation and culture have impacted Africa: globalisation, individualism/family values, liberal democracy, neoliberalism, etc. Once more, all of them fit neatly into the larger context of the impacts of western civilisation. As the cradle of western civilisation, the Christian worldview is combined with neoliberalism, liberal democracy, consumerism, and commitment to consumerism. The political effects of colonialism and liberal democracy, the economic effects of neoliberalism, and the social effects of missionaries will all be considered. The great African cultural theorist Edward Wilmot Blyden made this observation as early as the late nineteenth century, and Ali Mazrui summarised it as "the triple heritage" in the late twentieth century. This observation offers a broader perspective on the phenomenon of Westernisation and its effect on African-America.*

**Key words:** *western civilization, Neoliberalism, liberal democracy, globalization, etc.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The two exterior influences—Arab-Islamic and European-Christian—that the continent has been subjected to for well over a millennium have converged upon the indigenous heritage, which is, in reality, a significant truth about African cultural history. These customs' corresponding values and lifestyles have been absorbed and mostly indigenous throughout the continent and its diaspora in other parts of the world. This observation, which was first made by the renowned African cultural theorist Edward Wilmot Blyden in the late nineteenth century and summarised by Ali Mazrui in the late twentieth century as "the triple heritage," offers a broader perspective on the phenomenon of Westernisation and its impact on African-America (Irele, 2010).

There are various phases to the ways that western civilisation and culture have impacted Africa: globalisation, individualism/family values, liberal democracy, neoliberalism, etc. Once more, all of them fit neatly into the larger context of the impacts of western civilisation. As the cradle of western civilisation, the Christian worldview is combined with neoliberalism, liberal democracy, consumerism, and commitment to consumerism. The political effects of colonialism and liberal democracy, the economic effects of neoliberalism, and the social effects of missionaries will all be considered.

### **II. Political**

Understanding the processes of Westernisation in the Black world at large requires an understanding of the colonial factors that drove migration and settlement. African societies that had previously been well-organised were completely distorted in every aspect of life, which demonstrated the extent and potency of colonisation in the process of westernising African societies and their customs. Among the political effects are:

- Distortions of natural boundaries without due recourse to antecedent institutions and cultures.
- The western civilisation submerged and dismantled indigenous institutions and, in their place, a foreign rule was established and it continues. Traditional institutions before then were regarded as not only political authorities but also custodians of cultures
- Introduction of British liberal democracy: This does not just work in Africa alone. It is not that Africa did not have its own pattern of democracy before imposition of liberal democracy but the typical democracy in Africa and its processes were submerged by westernisation to migration in African Americans. However, the point is that the so-called "Kabiyesi syndrome," which has been attributed to the lack of democracy in modern-day Africa, is really a betrayal of a lack of knowledge about the inner workings of the continent's traditional political systems as well as a result of the illiteracy and immaturity of the African American migrant population. This claim is hotly challenged on the grounds that it is unhistorical and, thus, untrue when discussing Black people. According to our theory, before Europe and Africa came into contact, the

latter not only established reasonably sophisticated state structures but also "sophisticated systems of political rule" with solid democratic underpinnings in the form of emerging pre-colonial African states. It states that these cultures' purported incapacity to maintain democracy in modern (postcolonial) times could not have been attributed to a lack of a democratic culture on their side. Instead, it is the legacy of imperialism's limitations that have dominated African peoples' experiences since the fourteenth century. These constraints are primarily defined by slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, military rule, and the handmaiden experience of these forced migrants in the dominant American political and cultural sphere.

The democratic liberal What impact does Africa experience from adopting Western democracies is the question. Many will argue that it is the best course of action since it fosters chances for involvement in activities and that liberal democracy advances progress. Should the concept of substance be used to define and contextualise democracy? Is it not obvious that liberal democracy cannot function in Africa? Is using Western type required? Is it not possible and appropriate to use African forms, patterns, and procedures to arrive at the ideals of democracy?

### III. Economic Effect

- A major effect of European colonialism was the progressive integration of Africa into the world capitalist system, within which Africa functioned primarily as a source of raw materials for Western industrial production.
- There was imposition of taxation, which forced Africans into wage labor.
- Colonial economy also caused agriculture to be diverted toward the production of primary products and cash crops: cocoa, groundnut, palm oil, sisal, and so on.
- There was sudden shift in production mode from production of food crops to cash crops, a situation that caused hunger and starvation in Africa. Africa began to produce more of what she needs less and produce less of what she needs most those who could not produce, surrendered and shifted.
- Africa was perpetually turned to producer of primary raw materials, a situation that caused unequal exchange.
- The plunder age method and systematical kleptocratic enterprises established in the colonies to expropriate natural resources of Africa to Europe has, in the perspective of Rodney, facilitated "underdevelopment of Africa while engendered the development of Europe".
- This required a total reorganization of African economic life, beginning with the introduction of the cash crop and inexorable alteration of economic pattern. In the settler colonies—notably in Kenya and Rhodesia—the alienation of native land complicated the economic situation of the indigenous populations (Alkali, 2003).
- Economic Plan: it also altered the way they produce, create and recreate as well as what they consume.
- The infrastructure undertaken by the local governments for colonial administrations was minimal, developed strictly as a function of the requirements of the new economy, which saw the rise of the colonial cities.
- Neoliberalism: It is an economic process that distrusts the state as a factor in development; it is a nineteenth century philosophy that has continued to be repackaged, its latest form is monetarism. It believes that market mechanism is the most efficient allocator of productive resources and, therefore, to have an efficient and effective economy, forces of demand and supply must be allowed to play a leading role. This changed economy of Blacks life from communalism to capitalism and, lately, Neoliberalism.

### IV. Social Effect

- **Family/Social Relations:** nuclear family replacing extended family. African traditional family values are disintegrating quite quickly. The nuclear family has replaced the extended family, which was a fantastic social safety net in our community. It makes sense that younger people now find it extremely difficult to meet older people; there is no longer any regard for age or for the ideals that were formerly considered indisputable in Africa.
- **Individualism:** They now have children of single parents, a phenomenon that is identifiable with America. People no longer communalise, nobody wants to be anybody's brother's keeper.
- **Building Pattern:** The way they build now is different from the way it was; they no longer take into cognizance our own peculiarity in the building process. We now build houses without ventilation.
- **Urbanization:** It led to rural exodus and the displacement of large segments of population.
- **Corruption:** western civilization has promoted corruption; leaders in Africa now look up to Europe and America as safe havens for looted funds. It is a consequence of Western civilization vis-a-vis the local American capitalists have plundered the lebowresonra and exploited opportunities.

- **Sexuality:** The way young children view sexuality has fundamentally altered; their ambition to emulate Westerners has led them to become promiscuous and engage in behaviours that were unthinkable just a few years ago. But in no way does this justify cultural isolationism. Globalisation precludes the possibility of cultural isolationism. Though cultural ideas and values are boundless in their growth and dissemination beyond national boundaries, we should never lose sight of the fact that cultural domination is more likely to occur in weaker cultures. For the past century, Black people have been extremely weak and defenceless. Cultural imperialism, a degree of mental servitude, and the necessity for mental decolonisation currently plague Africa. Black people can barely withstand the overwhelming force of Western civilisation, which makes the trend of Western civilisation in Africa and the Western Diaspora pitiful. The wave is now unstoppable due to its extreme strength.
- **Language:** Proficiency in our language is declining in Blacks because they are compelled to embrace Western culture and civilization as Western language; Western language has created a dichotomy between an elite and mass of their people who still cannot do business with foreign language. It causes alienation for people who cannot speak English or French. Language is a vehicle of culture; they are in a very serious problem. They must define and design means of helping Blacks out of this language, cultural logjam.
- **Christianity:** The impact of Christianity has to be considered, for this has been the most important single factor in the process of Westernization in Afro - Americans. Western education, involving literacy and the mastery of a European language, became the condition for entry into the modern sector. For most of the colonial period, education was in the hands of the Christian missions, who sought not only to convert migrants but also to inculcate Western values. Christianity challenged traditional belief systems and promoted the diffusion of new ideas and modes of life; in particular, it sought to impose monogamy and nuclear family as the norm.
- Ironically, the drastic reduction of infant mortality it has made possible has also complicated the demographic issues in Blacks, with consequences for agriculture and social services. Although no major effort of industrialization took place during the colonial period, and there has been no significant development since, Western technology has long entered the lives of Africans and African Americans through familiarity with manufactured for use.
- The cultural alteration provoked by the pressures of colonial rule and the Christian missionaries in all spheres of life are pervasive enough to qualify as the signs of a new cultural imposition. This is more noticeable in the area of science and technology on African experience and consciousness. Modern medicine has largely taken precedence over traditional methods in matters of health.

## V. CONCLUSION:

Black values and culture are now seen as inferior to those of Western civilisation, as a result of the widespread and persistent trend of cultural westernisation of Afro-American culture. Similar to other nations and cultures in the so-called Third World, Black people's experience with Western civilisation has led to a discontinuity in living forms across the continent. As a result, there is now a cultural dualism that frequently manifests in tangible, everyday circumstances as a genuine conundrum. Put another way, there are conflicts in the Afro-American experience of modernity at every level of the social and communal contexts.

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