Globalisation, social values and human rights NGOs in NIGERIA

Globalisation has brought new levels of human rights awareness to Nigeria - but in many other ways, it may be more of a curse than a blessing. By Edlyne E. Anugwom

Globalisation as a social phenomenon has assumed a compelling dimension in the last decade. In this sense, it has been seen as the variable underlying most efforts towards development, especially in the developing nations. The massive spread of globalisation and globalising influences has removed the boundaries between nations and aided the spread of values from one end of the globe to the other.

In spite of the ubiquity of this phenomenon, African countries have as usual been seen as late starters. Therefore, the idea of the uneveness of globalisation is often used in describing the experience of African countries in this regard.

Globalisation as a process involves a grand or widespread social change across national boundaries. In other words, it is a socio-political and economic process of change, interchange and interaction between various nations. The phenomenon of globalisation in this context should be seen as narrowing the socio-geographic boundaries between nations.

Thus, globalisation is significant in view of the impact it has on spatial reality, largely through decreasing the distances between places. The impact of globalisation in this regard has been made possible by the tremendous improvements in information technologies as well as the dominance of a development orthodoxy supportive of this process of intense interaction and deepening of relations on a global scale.

Opinions differ as to the benefits of this increased scope of interaction. A view that is somewhat accepted in the corridors of the international financial institution and multinational concerns and their sympathisers argues that globalisation can generate genuine economic growth and development, and thus provide a better quality of life for a larger number of people. However, some radical scholars like Ghai see globalisation as worsening economic inequalities and further entrenching the domination of the developed nations. In fact, this argument had been taken further to depict globalisation as implying the hegemony of capitalism and the triumph of imperialism.

However, the crucial fact is that globalisation has affected almost all spheres of life in the developing nations. This includes not only the tangible aspects of life but also the attitudes and values of people in the world. The influence of globalisation has therefore affected the value orientation of people and how they respond to things in their socio-political environment. For this reason, it may be instructive to pinpoint the influence of globalisation on social values in a country such as Nigeria. What dominant social values have been affected by globalisation, and how has globalisation structured such values in Nigeria?

It is important to realise that globalisation is a largely contradictory phenomenon. Thus, while preaching some consensus it gives vent to dissension. In fact, Cerny underlines this point by arguing that globalisation is a much contested concept. Globalisation all the same aids the spread of influences from the West or developed countries to other regions of the world.

The advent or prominence of globalisation in Nigeria can be dated back to the mid-1980s, following the introduction of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This was the era of liberalisation and privatisation, when massive influences and pressures from the West permeated the otherwise repressed Nigerian
society, suffering after years of military mismanagement. It was also this period that boomed the spread of ideas of human rights, human dignity, and democracy.

It is against this background that I attempt in this paper to ascertain the influence of globalisation on social values, focusing specifically on the human rights non-government organisations in Nigeria. In other words, this study seeks to establish a relationship between globalisation and the phenomenal growth of human rights NGOs in the past 15 years in Nigeria. The study makes use of a combination of documentary and questionnaire methods in describing a sample of 14 human rights NGOs in Nigeria.

Clarification of concepts

Globalisation, as I have already hinted, is a highly contested term. This mires its usage in both policy and academic circles in controversy. The idea of globalisation ordinarily implies the notion of a unified world or what political scientists would probably label a uni-polar world. In other words, the idea of globalisation derives from the much older notions of the global and globalising.

Despite this, globalisation as used in contemporary discourse denotes more than the mere notion of a world that is coming together or exchanges and flows between nations of the world. Used in this sense, globalisation has only been around for about two and a half decades. It is therefore unsurprising that Mittelman sees globalisation as the key to understanding contemporary international political economy.6

Be that as it may, the novelty of globalisation should be evaluated primarily in terms of the alarming widening of scope of interaction between different nations. Globalisation has undermined the physical constraint imposed on interaction and exchange between different nations.

Accordingly, globalisation is not necessarily about the absence or dissolution of physical boundaries between nations but about the reduction of these barriers and the opening up of new spaces and new times with new boundaries. The impact of globalisation in this regard has been made possible by the tremendous growth in technologies, especially in the areas of information, general communication and finance that have virtually merged hitherto distinct boundaries.

In this technology-driven age, boundaries are becoming less relevant in terms of interaction, flow of goods and services and communication between different interests in different countries. The era of globalisation and its dominance has been boosted equally by the existence of a development orthodoxy (and this is crucial in the case of the developing countries) that has linked development and economic development to international interaction or trade. In this regard, it is argued that the opening up of national boundaries principally through a regime of liberalisation would ultimately guarantee the development of the developing countries of the world and reduce poverty worldwide.

This orthodoxy, that has a compelling finality, posits that apart from this route, there is no hope for the developing countries. The orthodoxy of globalisation-driven development (for want of a better name) has been championed by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), who see it as a reliable blueprint for development.7 In spite of the spate of criticisms levelled against the WTO’s role in this regard in the developing world, the orthodoxy has been seen as particularly useful to the developing world.8
Globalisation as both a process and a concept has drawn a variety of reactions from scholars. These reactions vary along the continuum of myth and reality. Hence, some writers have seen globalisation as more of a vague expression and a fad that will fade with time. and which represents essentially nothing new or distinct.9 In contrast, there are those who see globalisation as denoting something novel and distinct both in contemporary discourse and in relationships between nations of the world.10

This paper adopts the perspective of the latter, seeing globalisation as expressing a distinct and new phase in the continuing interaction between nations. In this regard, I share the view of Held and McGrew that globalisation should be conceived of as having two interrelated dimensions: both the increasing scope and heightening intensity of interaction between nations.11 Therefore, the novelty of globalisation can be conceived in the new scope and degree of intensity that characterise it. This light, globalisation can also be seen as creating new cultural and social values.12

However, apart from technology, the role of the international financial institutions and the WTO has been instrumental in spreading globalisation in the developing regions. Also, capital has been the pivotal mark of globalisation in these regions, particularly Africa. The role of capitalism in the globalisation enterprise has drawn the criticism of scholars and led to the notion that globalisation represents more than anything else the triumph of capitalism or the expansion of capitalist hegemony in Africa, especially since the advent of SAPs.13 The capitalist expansion under globalisation has often obscured the much more fundamental impact of the process on cultural and social values and images all over the world. To fully appreciate this fact, it may be in order to interrogate the meaning of the concept of social values.

According to Nwabuisi, social values can be seen as ends, not means, and their desirability is either unconsciously taken for granted or seen as a direct derivation from one's experience of some external authority. In this sense, values are closely related to attitudes, informing our affinity or dislike for situations, events and persons in our environment. But more than this, social values inform our general attitudes. It is also crucial to see values as a type of belief centrally located within one's belief system.14

Implied in this idea is that social values are products or properties of the social group that informs the attitudes and behaviour of individuals in the group. As Williams has effectively demonstrated, values are abstractions from the individual's and group's immediate experience.15

What is really significant is that our attitude to situations and challenges in our environment is determined by our values. However, values are of different orders of importance, with some seen as more fundamental than others. For instance, in the traditional African society the freedom of the individual and human life were of a high value. Thus, the taking of life in such societies was punished with severe penalties including banishment. This is also related to the fact that banishment or exile was the greatest infringement of human freedom and could only be used for severe crimes.

Furthermore, Eyo has made an insightful distinction between negative and positive values.16 Positive values that are cherished by the group are beliefs about what objects and actions are good and desirable, and what ought to be. While negative values refer to beliefs about what objects and actions are bad and undesirable, and therefore ought not to be. This distinction is very important in the context of this paper.

Thus, the human rights of members of society or the creation of a society where individual rights are guaranteed can be seen as based on beliefs about positive values that contribute to the well-being and growth of that society. In this connection, it should be understood that Western education and formal government have impacted on traditional Nigerian values.17

The respect for individual freedom that characterised traditional African society became mitigated as individuals surrendered their authority to a central government that, in the case of Nigeria, and especially during the long reign of the military, violated this trust and infringed on the rights of the individual at every turn. The notorious violation of human rights by the military in Nigeria was driven by the selfish need to use repression as a tool to perpetuate power.

Globalisation, social values and human rights

The impact of globalisation on the human rights scene in Nigeria can be seen in terms of creating both the awareness and support for a determined bid by civil society for a return to a society marked by the guarantee of the freedom of the individual. This globalisation was able to achieve through its impact on culture and social identities around the world. Particularly of significance is the influence of the media and new information technologies that have consistently put across an image of a world in which human rights are taken for granted.

The main source of this influence is from the West, which prides itself on having a social environment with no constraints on the freedom and rights of individuals. Its is important to understand at this point that the guarantee of individual rights is related to the idea of liberalism and the free flow of goods and ideas from one end of the world to another that is the cornerstone of globalisation.

In the words of Sawyer, "given the essentially unidirectional flow of images and information, a strong tendency towards homogenization of culture and thinking has become manifest".18 This is really the basis of any argument on the impact of globalisation on social values. Liberalisation viewed in this way has informed the massive spread of human rights support and ideologies from one end of the globe to the other, including Nigeria.

The media, as I have pointed out, has been the conduit of these global social values and identities. In fact, Rosow goes as far as arguing that globalisation is produced within the new media and popular culture.19

It is a fact that the mass media play a big role, not only in the process of globalisation but in moulding values as well as the ways existing values are interpreted and used as the basis of action and interaction by members of society. The influence of the mass media in this case can be expected to be massive in the developing societies where some of the programmes of the media are not only novel but also attractive to the general public.20

More than this, as Robertson has succinctly argued, globalisation has created a cultural process in which people's perception of themselves as subjects or citizens of a particular nation is undermined by the crystallisation and dissemination of global images and identities. In this sense, one can talk about cultural globalisation or a situation where people's ideas and attitudes as well as reactions to obviously domestic situations are influenced by global images.
But even in this process of unification, globalisation has been seen as creating a global village that is not just characterised by a unified culture but an intensely speeded up world in which cultural fragmentation is seen as undermining all grand narratives and socio-political projects from below rather than from above.

This means essentially that globalisation, apart from a cultural unification, also decomposes individual cultures and obstructs the construction of a consistent universal cultural image or identity. But this obviously does not seriously contest the reality that even in the process of both unification and fragmentation pulling in different directions, some crucial uniform social values become consistently related to a liberal globalised world.

This is the context in which I locate the relationship between globalisation and human rights in Nigeria. This is especially plausible when it is recognised that globalisation even in the promises of a better tomorrow has created marginalised individuals, especially in the economic and political spheres. Globalisation, according to Cerny, creates an enterprise state.21 This erodes the social embeddedness of the state and leads to a ruthless triumph of economic rationality.

In response to this situation, some groups will arise, ironically drawing impetus also from globalisation to try to alleviate the impersonal acts of the state and safeguard the rights and privileges of the individual in the face of such an affront. It is mainly in this guise that I see the human rights project in contemporary Nigeria. Therefore, the strong emergence of human rights associations in the period of globalisation in Nigeria can be viewed as a positive social value resulting largely from the culture of liberalism, freedom and democracy characterising the era.

Globalisation and human rights NGOs in Nigeria

Human rights agitations in Nigeria, that peaked in the 1990s, can be seen as representing positive values spawned largely by globalisation influences. The emphasis on liberalisation, democracy and freedom is one aspect of the globalising trend across the world. Against this background, I set out to discover how much of an impetus the human rights NGOs drew from the international arena.

In the case of Nigeria, the globalisation project became prominent in the late 1980s following the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), that was the flagship of globalisation in most of Africa. The human rights associations in Nigeria can be perceived as organisations that arose largely out of the desire to achieve the human rights agenda of the United Nations recognised all over the developed world. These associations, which are mainly NGOs, recruit their members from and depend on the larger society, international human rights NGOs, international development agencies, the UN, governments of the developed countries and so on.

The human rights agenda can be broadly located within the Declaration of Human Rights. However, as Mutua observes, the regional African human rights system is also based on the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, otherwise known as the Banjul Charter, which came into effect in 1986.22 Mutua characterises the African Charter as an innovative human rights document, which departs substantially from the narrow formulations of other regional and human rights instruments. It weaves a tapestry that includes the three generations of rights: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and group and people’s rights. With this as background, my examination of the relationship between globalisation and the human rights NGOs in Nigeria will focus on the external influences since the mid-1980s that have shaped the human rights environment in the country.

Table 1 shows that most human rights organisations do not predate globalisation in Nigeria, but rather the other way round. Moreover, the majority of these organisations were founded in the early 1990s, which coincides with the wave of international indignation over human rights atrocities in the country. Therefore, these organisations arose out of the favourable coincidence between domestic turmoil and international responses to it. Given the military dictatorship then in power in Nigeria and the impossibility of getting directly involved, many international agencies and countries saw the use of NGOs operated by local people as a reasonable means of negotiating the domestic situation and maintaining some presence as well as creating in the process the much desired peaceful and stable environment for economic activities by international interests.

A look at activities of some of these NGOs reveals that apart from covering the gamut of human rights issues, they also concern themselves with matters that hitherto were of much importance to Nigerians. A global wave of human rights awareness directed at the developing world helped in waking up Nigerians to the reality of human rights.

For instance, before the emergence of PRAWA, most prisoners and their families were unaware of the extent of the rights a prisoner was entitled to and the fact that prisoners are supposed to be treated as human beings. These organisations also got involved in such ‘novelties’ as women’s rights and empowerment, youth rights, legal advocacy, and so on, that were previously considered Western practices. All the same, the role of external influences in the emergence of these organisations and the cultivation of values conducive to their growth by Nigerians cannot really be over-emphasised.

Table 2 reveals that these NGOs depend to a large extent on external sources for funding. Such external funds come under different guises, including donations, grants, aid and sponsorship. The important fact is that these external sources of finance are instrumental in the realisation of the objectives of these associations. However, most of the funds are tied to specific projects or activities of the NGOs. This is especially the case when it comes to sponsorships.

But it is necessary to state here that human rights activism, especially in the developing world, depends heavily on external funding. This results directly from the poor state of the economies and the anti-human rights posture of some governments on the continent in the past two decades.

It is also fair to note that some of the NGOs in Nigeria drive substantial funds from internal sources, and hardly any of them now depend exclusively on external funding. Thus, some make money from membership dues, while others make money from charity or the sale of products. All the same, the external sources of funding remain a vital and significant part of the funding mix for most NGOs.

Table 3 reveals the international organisation to which the various Nigerian NGOs are affiliated. It should be noted here that most of the human rights NGOs were reluctant to divulge their international affiliations. Quite a number raised the legality of the question, arguing that affiliation is quite different from collaboration. This point was conceded, but they were still uncomfortable with the question. However, based on what data could be found, the table shows that the majority of the organisations are affiliations.
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Source: Author's

Since this period was the most crucial in Nigeria’s socio-political history in contemporary times. The period tallies with the height of the pro-democracy and human rights campaigns, which culminated in the eventual introduction of a democratic government. The human rights organisations, usually working in loose coalitions, were in the forefront of the democratic struggle.

This period also witnessed massive support from the international community for the activities of these organisations. Apart from any genuine altruistic motive, the international community was fed up with the atrocities and unpredictability of the military in Nigeria.

In the view of the organisations studied, three main factors account for the huge increase in human rights NGOs in Nigeria. These factors are the authoritarian and oppressive military regime, the unprecedented human rights violations, and pressure from the international community. Apart from the three factors, the interviews with the NGOs highlighted the proliferation of human rights associations in the country.

The NGOs also pointed out that considerable changes have taken place in the organisations themselves, especially in terms of their strategies, over the last three years. They see themselves as having expanded in scope, recognition (nationally and internationally), and in networking, among other things. In addition, a few mentioned that they have abandoned confrontation and embraced dialogue and constitutional approaches in light of the new democratic spirit in the country.

Support from the international community

The human rights NGOs studied were unanimous in acknowledging the support of the international community and external influences, especially since the 1990s. Such support goes beyond funding to include in some cases logistics, training and sponsorship in other forms. The response of these NGOs typically ranged from “providing technical assistance, training, texts, funds”, to “support and encouragement”, “very useful in providing grants and training” and “unflinching support through aid and grants”.

Table 1: Distribution of organisations by year founded and major activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Year founded</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shelter Rights Initiative (SRI)</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Socio-economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Law Service (HURI-LAWS)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Legal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA)</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Penal reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEE)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Education; legal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Rights Agenda (MRA)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Press freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Shepherd Community (GSC)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Penal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional Rights Project (CRP)</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>General rights education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR)</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Research and Resource Development Centre (LRRDC)</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Women's rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Law and Enforcement Centre Nigeria (WLDCN)</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Youth rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee for the Protection of People’s Dignity (COPPED)</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>All rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO)</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>All rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Defenders of Democracy (UDD)</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Democratic rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Development and Civic Education (CDCE)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Civic rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Agenda (HRA)</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>All rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s fieldwork.

Table 2: Distribution of organisations by source of funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRI</td>
<td>Grants / donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HURI-LAWS</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAWA</td>
<td>External / internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEE</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>Donor / international agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSC</td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>External / internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDHR</td>
<td>External / internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRRDC</td>
<td>Grants / internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLDCN</td>
<td>External / internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPPED</td>
<td>Donations, grants and dues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO</td>
<td>External / internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDD</td>
<td>Sponsorship / membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCE</td>
<td>External / internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRA</td>
<td>Grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s fieldwork.

Table 3: Distribution of organisations by peak year and external affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Peak Year</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRI</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Habitat International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HURI-LAWS</td>
<td>1997/8</td>
<td>PRL, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAWA</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>OMIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Akebono, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSC</td>
<td>1993 and beyond</td>
<td>Ashoka, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDHR</td>
<td>1993-99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRRDC</td>
<td>1992 and beyond</td>
<td>ICJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLDCN</td>
<td>1997-2000</td>
<td>Various; at least six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPPED</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Youngs for Environ, Sanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLO</td>
<td>1989/90</td>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDD</td>
<td>mid-1990s</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCE</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRA</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>GERDES Afrique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s fieldwork.
The Constitutional Rights Project was somewhat modest in its response, granting that the international community has been useful "to the extent that they offer some financial support and help pressure government to accept policy changes or reforms as recommended by the NGOs". But the response of the Media Rights Agenda was particularly insightful:

They have been of great help by providing training for numerous human rights activists, funds for numerous projects and other such helps as collaborative efforts to handle various human rights abuses.

Furthermore, the Civil Liberties Organisation was quite impressed with the external support and help they received. For this body, the international community had been very encouraging, as they had "provided funds and sundry support, they have been wonderful".

This, coming from the CLO which is one of the oldest and best established human rights NGOs in Nigeria (and in fact the oldest of those we studied), lends credence to the argument that the international community and external influences have provided invaluable impetus for the Nigerian associations. Thus, while the focus of these organisations has been on alleviating domestic socio-economic and civil problems, the enabling capacity to pursue these noble objectives has been drawn largely from the international community.

In relation to globalisation, it must be emphasised that the entire human rights issue should be seen within the context of efforts towards liberalisation in all sectors of national life. The human rights situation has been a key factor in the globalisation process in the developing world. It is easy to understand that a hostile domestic environment and a tyrannical or autocratic leadership can hardly facilitate the spread of capitalism or attract foreign investment.

The Bretton Woods institutions have tied the growth of the economy (through liberalisation) to the emergence of civil society and multi-party democracy. Thus, a high degree of respect for human rights is becoming synonymous with democracy and development.

The limits of globalisation and development in Africa

In assessing the relevance of globalisation to development in Africa, Mensitseab argues that the rise to a hegemonic position of a neo-liberal ideology has spawned a development approach that is essentially based on two basic propositions:

On the one hand, integration within a global economy through globalisation is seen as the most effective development approach, while on the other the less the state intervenes in the economy, the greater the development. As he rightfully posits, these assumptions were made clear with the imposition of structural adjustment on many developing countries. Yet structural adjustment and other features of globalisation, including the emphasis on liberalisation and privatisation, have not really boosted development in Africa.

The point has been made that there is not enough empirical evidence to support the assumption that openness or the triumph of market forces through the reduction of the role of the state achieves considerably or significantly more development. History shows, rather, that this assumption has not been proved true time and again, in countries as diverse as Britain, the Netherlands, Russia, Japan, China, and the Asian Tigers.

Similarly, scholars such as Okolie and Anugwom argue that, in the case of Nigeria, the process of the non-involvement of the state and privatisation does not guarantee economic growth or the good of the greatest number. Keeping this in mind, the role of globalisation should be re-appraised in Nigeria.

While the non-intervention of the state may be food for economic growth at least in theory, the rate and scope of this non-intervention policy should be carefully weighed in the case of developing nations where the state still remains the provider of the last resort and where crude capitalism can easily take root. Therefore, globalisation as it is presently structured, in spite of the positive social values it promotes (including human rights and democracy), has been more of a detriment than a blessing to Nigeria.

A thorough examination of present trends in economic and social values would reveal that Nigeria has not benefited significantly from the process of globalisation, starting from the structural adjustment period in the country. In this case, globalisation represents an extreme monetarist response to Africa's development crisis and, as Ibonnere argues, a very high degree of human suffering, disillusionment, anger, alienation, rural decay, urban dislocation, suicide, marital crises, prostitution and crime have accompanied monetarist responses to the African crisis.

This notwithstanding, the role of the US Department of State, the UK's DFID overseas development agency, the United Nations Development Programme and other bodies in monitoring human rights support of the governments in Nigeria, and providing logistics as well as, more importantly, funding, cannot be over-emphasised in the globalisation push for respect for human rights. The human rights groups in Nigeria overwhelmingly arose in the context of the struggle to unseat the military and install multi-party democracy.

Conclusion

The proliferation of human rights NGOs can be seen as emanating from the acquisition of new social values from outside by Nigerians. The nascent origin of these organisations shows that they are relatively new phenomena in the social history of Nigeria. Moreover, their roles in society have been very positive for the growth of the nation and the coping capacities of the individuals who live there.

These organisations were invaluable in the fight for democracy in Nigeria as well as the restoration of human rights and the sensitisation of Nigerians to the full extent of their rights as captured in the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Banjul Charter. In sum, these organisations can be seen as part of the spread of positive values arising from the increasing narrowing of the world occasioned by globalisation.

The advent of globalisation created an awareness among Nigerians that a society could be built on respect for human rights. The proliferation of human rights NGOs can be seen as the product of a coincidence between domestic realities (a resilient civil society and a repressive military government) and external or international impetus.

Globalisation enabled the permeation of the Nigerian environment by a heightened awareness of the fundamental importance of human rights and provided the crucial means (through logistical and financial support) for the actualisation of human rights.

It is equally relevant to note that the impact of globalisation on the human rights scene in Nigeria can be seen as part and parcel of the drive to create a conducive environment for the intro-
duction of acute capitalism, which can only be assured through a free and unencumbered civil society and democracy. Therefore, globalisation brought respect for individual freedom and rights back to the fore of Nigeria’s national values by recreating a value system seriously eroded by years of military rule and human rights abuses. After all, the fundamental rights enshrined in the human rights declarations of the UN and Banjul Charter are consistent with social values identified as characteristic of traditional Nigerian society.27

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Notes & references
18 Sawyer 1999, 2.
21 Carty 1997.

Call for papers
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Submission Deadline: 30 June 2002

Africa Insight reflects thinking about theoretical and practical developments in African studies, and about contemporary affairs and issues on the continent. The journal's purpose is to provide insight into the processes of change in Africa.

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1) To make a major methodological contribution through this assessment
2) To provide bench marks for monitoring
3) To promote public debate

Some key issues include citizenship, law and rights; gender; conflict issues; representation and accountability; land reform; and nationalities. Submissions are invited from researchers from a variety of disciplinary and cross-disciplinary backgrounds, using a variety of approaches. Comparative studies, or studies looking at the wider Horn of Africa area, will also be encouraged.

Notes for Contributors to this Special Issue:
To allow for a variety of contributions, manuscripts should be kept to a 4000-6000 word limit (including notes and references). Selected manuscripts will be sent for peer review. The usual style guidelines and notes for contributors apply. Please send an abstract of 100-150 words, to begin with, followed by an electronic manuscript (on disk or by email) along with full contact details, by 30 June 2003.

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