COVID-19 AND THE METAMORPHOSIS OF CULTURE: VOLUNTARY OR INVOLUNTARY?
(Political and philosophical presuppositions)

ONAH, Aloysius Uchechukwu
Department of Philosophy
L'Université Catholique du Congo.
Avenue de l'Université n° 2. B.P. 1534 Kinshasa.
onah4u2000@yahoo.com

Abstract

Extremists hold that culture is a pattern of living that cannot be changed in spite of the surrounding changes in the human society. In Africa, most people believe that ancestors will be disrespected if human beings allow any modification in the traditional ways of living and socializing. But a moderate point of view believes that culture is a way of life that admits partial alteration. The amendment in the cultural way of celebrating some traditional ceremonies requires the consensus of those living and the living-dead called ancestors. However, a more accommodating perspective holds that culture is dynamic. That is, a whole way of living of a people can change. The overhauling of culture and the adoption of a new one takes into account the good will of the ancestors for those living in a different time under diverse circumstances. That is way the present researcher thinks that there is need to reflect on how crisis situation like COVID-19 can bring about an automatic adoption of a new way of living: social distancing, wearing of face mask and self-isolation. In the history of humanity, great events have brought about cultural change. This paper considers the preventive hygienic measures to curtail the spread of Corona virus pandemic as emergence of a new culture – COVID-19 and the metamorphosis of culture. The study is interested in knowing whether in a situation of crisis such as COVID-19, if the adoption of a new attitude/mode/style of living or culture is as a result of political legislation or philosophical reflection. Considering the fact that human beings are choice making beings, it looks at the adoption of a new culture in times of pandemic as voluntary or involuntary.

Keywords: COVID-19, culture, involuntary, pandemic, philosophical, political, voluntary.

Introduction

There are circumstances and situations which make human beings to ask "am I really living according to my culture?" When human beings are confronted with certain disaster, like the COVID-19 which obliges people from every tribe, nations and religion to adopt certain social practices: social distancing, no handshake, no giving of peck, no embracing or hug, one develops the feeling that he or she is living his or her culture at a superficial level. Some political decisions such ban of travelling, wearing of face mask are imposed on citizens without their consent. The ravaging situation of COVID-19 constrained some individuals to adopt "official behaviours" such as not welcoming friends or visiting loved ones. The change of attitude raises a lot of questions: can political decision determine the transition from one's usual style of living (which I call culture) to another? Is the change in the style of living in the situation of COVID-19 voluntary or involuntary?

The above questions are motivated from the perception that the eruption of every major disaster is accompanied by cultural metamorphosis. I used "metamorphosis" in order to stress the degree of change such disaster could engender in the normal way of living. That is to say, when there is major outbreak of diseases such as the black plaque, the COVID-19, the terrorist attacks (9/11, Bataclan, etc), this brought about an alteration of culture and a modification of peoples' way of living and acceptance of social values like recreation. Sometimes, the evaluation of the COVID-19 outbreak appears to be a situation which forces people to modify or change from their usual way of doing things and to adopt another style of living in order to stay alive. At other times, it seems that it is government policies to manage the pandemic that impose a new culture in order to save her citizens from the present predicament. There are also philosophical reflections before or after a disaster which are geared towards making people to approve of and then implement a new culture.

In the light of the foregoing, the following questions will constitute the bases of my exposition: is the metamorphosis of culture voluntary or involuntary? Does the change from one cultural practice depend on policy making or philosophical reflections? The answer to the above questions will not be easy to provide. In my opinion however, the interaction between different factors will be helpful in understanding the change from one culture to another. Permit me to state that in this work, terms and phrases such as style of living, way of life and similar notions are synonymous to the concept of culture. What then is culture?

What is culture?

In the context of this work, culture can be described as "The totality of life evolved by people in their attempt to meet the challenges of living in their environment; which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms" (Chi, 2013, 2). This way of describing culture underscores the effort of human beings living in a particular challenging environment or period to survive. The necessity to stay alive involves the adoption of a new style of living and thus the emergence of a new culture.

From the foregoing, culture could be understood as a process by which people express their values in a changing society. That is to say, people try to modify their values and let go of certain habits which do not guaranty their continuous existence. They try to adapt the quality of their believe system into a new socio-political and economic situation independently of their will.

It is important to note that "Culture is not static, but dynamic; a force that produces change, action and effects. Culture is always changing and making progress" (Chi, 2013, 5). By implication, a culture that does not change does not develop; a people that do not experience a transition from one culture to another do not make progress. The progress of a people can therefore be evaluated through cultural dynamism. Lola Djomo makes the same point by saying: « la culture est plutôt souple et flexible. Elle s'assortit d'une construction et d'une dialectique. Elle se renouvelle dans un accomplissement circulaire autour d'un axe propre » (Djomo, 1988, 203). In other words, culture is not dogma but rather something that changes according to circumstance.

In the same perspective, Makumba (2007, 127) holds that "no culture is a closed system and that every dynamism of culture yearns for cross-cultural dialogue". With regards to the Corona Virus pandemic situation, Nigeria could dialogue from countries which have had similar cases and then integrate tested and approved preventive sanitary measures which helped them in time of disaster as a new mode of living in order to survive. The acculturation of the protective and hygienic measures from people of other nationalities and cultures brings about change. A culture which is ready to dialogue with another is tolerant and open-minded. By implication, men and women of open culture are always enriched.

In their view on the dynamism of culture Mezu & Nwala (2014, 286) stressed that: "An important characteristic of culture is its dynamism such that it can cope with

changing and changeable environments – what it was yesterday, it is not now and what it is now, it will not be in the future". Similarly, the new sanitary measures proposed to and/or enforced on many Nigerians now was never in application and it may not continue to be implemented in the future.

The notion of culture which I want to expound is different from "culture taken as a voluntary revolution" (Okolo, 1990, 10). This idea of culture is a conscious effort to improve on existing way of living. I intend to talk about the development of culture which is occasioned by unprecedented circumstances and disaster. In other words, there are situations, circumstances and unexplained events which influence the modification of a people's way of living and the adaptation of new mode of living. Over time, people adopt and integrate new behaviour in order to improve their cultural practice. With regards to the pandemic situation of COVID-19, I shall try to present various conditions which interact with each other in order to produce a new culture.

This means that the emergence of a new culture is not dependant only on political policies or philosophical reflections; just as such transition from not wearing face mask in the public places to wearing face mask in the public places is not entirely voluntary or involuntary. What are those events which have led to cultural change in the history of humanity?

Great events and cultural change

In looking at this point, I will like to show briefly some pandemic situation that bedeviled humanity and how such crisis situation led to a change in human relationships. There were also other events which modified the way of socialization of human beings in history. While illustrating those events, I intend to show the interaction of multiple factors which are responsible for the search of new mode of living as human beings.

A lot of pandemics outbreaks have occurred in the history of humanity. The first pandemic was named the "plaque of Justinian" because it infected the emperor who later survived it. The second pandemic was the bubonic plaque. This plaque was the cause of "Black death" in the 14th century. Some historians believed that the society became violent following the negative impact of the plaque. The third plaque was recorded in the mid-19th century. It is known as "modern pandemic" because it spread mainly to the major cities through the shipping routes. The disaster caused by this plaque gave rise to the idea of quarantine (Bubonic plaque:

Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development. ISSN: 2630-7065 (Print)
2630-7073 (e). Vol. 3 No. 12. 2020
Association for the Promotion of African Studies

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki,2020). In the 21st century, humanity is experiencing the outbreak of another pandemic called COVID-19. This pandemic has imposed new measures of socializing and living in the society (Cf. INSPQ, 2020, 1).

With the invasion of the African continent and her subsequent colonization, a new culture was installed. The new culture tends to subjugate Africans (Odimegwu, 2008, 58) and to make them learn a foreign culture (Akwanya, 2005, 58-60; Nwabueze, 2011, 72; Makumba, 2007, 111). The installed culture meted hardship on Africans (Nwabueze, 2015, 58), devalued the African values and created a hierarchical social structure (Teichman and Evans,1995, 121). These unpleasant experiences led to the development of "important themes on African personality, African unity, negritude, African humanism, African socialism, African consciencism and authenticity" (Makumba, 2007, 125-126).

Briefly, what most Africans considered as inhuman treatment led to the development of a new spirit and new perspective of living out African cultural values. The new spirit amplified the African concept of communalism and socialism as presented in the works of Mbiti (1989, 106) and Menkiti (1984, 1). Their exaggeration of those concepts undermined the individuality of the African person. Consequently, there is a misconception that an individual cannot achieve full realization of himself without the community.

It is important to note that the developments of philosophical reflections were influenced by the paradigm shifts in science. The work of Althusser (1967) gave a detail correlation between the major scientific revolutions and the history of philosophy. In summary, his work revealed that great philosophical revolutions always came after scientific revolutions. The philosophy of Plato was influenced by the Mathematics of Greeks; the Cartesian philosophy was shaped by the Galileo's construction of the physics; Kant's philosophy followed the pattern of Newton's physics; the philosophy of E. Husserl took after mathematical logic and K. Marx science of history had great effect on the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

From the preceding point, the precautionary hygienic measures proposed and government legislations to contain the Corona virus are supposed to modify the habitual cultural practices and values of different cultural groups living in Nigeria. The pandemic situation is also supposed to revolutionize the health system and

the system of education. The crisis-situation of Corona virus was an opportunity for "government of the people" to guaranty steady light supply and availability of water. Going by Althusser's analysis, I look forward to a radical revolution in the various sectors mentioned above and improvement in other sectors. This implies the revitalization of local industries and change of attitude towards work and creativity.

The term *industrial revolution* means technological change. The industrial revolution which took place between the 18th and 19th centuries marked a radical alteration in history. There was a modification in the normal way of production: from hand production methods to machines, there was increase in the use of steam power and water power, the development of machine tools and the rise of mechanized factory system. Major turning point in history was recorded during the industrial revolution: there was population growth, increase in income and change in the standard of living (Industrial revolution: http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/).

While many people see and talk of industrial revolution in terms of great production of goods and machines, little attention is paid to the Great Spirit who created the machines and other tools that help humanity to live well. The hygienic crisis caused by Corona virus is a perfect timing for owners of industries and industrial workers, engineers and scientists to modernize and transform the living conditions of so many Nigerians. While I hope that Nigeria will take advantage of this pandemic to develop her technological sector, it is good to ask: what could be the ecological effects of this change?

Human activities have greatly damaged the "common habitat" of human beings and other creatures. Human beings no longer consider other creatures as partners who share the universe with him but reduce the latter as a thing to be conquered and dominated (Ngimbi, 1996, 33). The whole idea of modernity increased the danger of pollution and incapacity to curb the domination of human being over nature (Fourez, 1988, 117-118). Modernity became equivalent to the destruction of beings, to reduction to nothing of all that produces (Cf. Malu, 1996, 101). In summary, the attitude of human beings towards nature and the universe gave rise to a "destructive culture" whereby the ecosystem is destroyed to the detriment of other living creatures.

When human beings discovered that her destructive culture threatened her very existence (http:/www.liberation.fr/page.php?Rubrique=TSUNAMI;http://fr.wikipedia/org./wiki/Katrina), it began to adopt new attitude of relating to nature. International and national policies on how to safeguard the environment were promulgated (Cf. Villain, 1967, 334). Individuals took initiatives of planting trees and philosophical reflections on the danger of "destructive culture" were published (Cf. Gagnon, 1981, 415-429; Ferry, 1992; Maritain, Jonas, 2000). In order to counter the destructive culture, it became important to make human beings to see, understand the world and his role in preserving nature (Cf. Mundaya, 1996, 218).

Besides the events mentioned above, there are other factors which can influence people's culture, their style of living and their way of socializing. With the increase in the number of terrorist attack and considering the ways in which they are perpetrated, there is no doubt that terrorism has conditioned human beings to adjust with regards to helping people at the airports, terminals and train stations.

The atmosphere of perpetual war and conflicts is another factor that could condition a group of people to alter their usual way of living and to adopt a new style of living which guarantees the security of lives and properties. It is also possible to include disaster, whether natural, industrial or nuclear. The awareness that these disasters could occur modifies the behaviour of human beings in a particular environment.

Philosophical and Political presuppositions

Philosophical and political presuppositions are meant to examine to what extent human efforts have charted the course of change from one culture to another. The basic questions which will guide my reflection are: can philosophical works influence people's perception of reality? To what extent can government policies in times of crisis like COVID-19 lead people to abandon her usual ways of socializing in order to embrace a new culture? The pretext that the enforcement of preventive sanitary measure can ensure the adoption of new attitude during crisis situation such as the Corona virus may not totally be real. Perhaps, it could be voluntary.

The importance of philosophical reflections in the transition from one culture to another cannot be underestimated. The significance of philosophical thoughts

leading to "Hitler's Nazism belief that the Aryan race was the most superior race in the whole world" (Chi, 2013, 8) is linked to the works of Hegel and Heidegger. This means that every philosophy is conceived in order to solve a particular problem bothering the people at a particular time.

Hence, Habermas elaborated a theory of communication in order to address the conscience of westerners who have become solitary, egocentric and who had little regard to what affected others. In an era when human beings were treated as mere things and people were still nursing the effects of the Second World War, Gabriel Marcel proposed a new idea of the human being to his contemporary (Cf. Mundaya, 1996, 222-224).

With regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, I think that philosophical reflection should have the character of "pensée-solution" (problem-solving-thought). Going by its nature, philosophical preoccupations should take into account the various aspects of human life. Considering the fact that philosophy helps human beings to develop critical mind vis-à-vis ethics, morals, religions, cultural belief system of people, this should be articulated in the context of the reality of life in Nigeria so as to enable government make proper decision on how to curtail the spread of COVID-19. I believe that theoretical propositions could offer clues on the best action to take as individuals in order to survive the ravaging effect caused by COVID-19.

Considering the doubts entertained by some Nigerians with regards to the veracity of the COVID-19, I think that the intervention of philosophers are necessary in order awaken fellow Nigerians to the fact that this pandemic is actually causing the loss of lives in Nigeria. The stepping in of philosophers is capable of waking up compatriots who are "doubting Thomas'" from "dogmatic ignorance". One who is dogmatically ignorant could be suffering from what psychologist call "bleak". It is difficult to convince such people to accept a truth other than what they hold as truth.

Moreover, there is no doubt that this pandemic has raised doubts concerning the continuity of certain traditional practices such as naming ceremonies, the celebration of marriages, burial ceremonies, just to mention a few. The rites which accompanied such ceremonies in Nigeria brought huge crowd together. With the promulgation of certain laws which restrict the gathering of large number of people (Cf. Cometti, 2020), I can imagine the fears of those who are attached to

Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development. ISSN: 2630-7065 (Print)
2630-7073 (e). Vol. 3 No. 12. 2020
Association for the Promotion of African Studies

traditional social get-together. If I am allowed to pierce their mind, I can imagine them asking the following questions: will there be continuity of our traditional and social practices? To what extent will the preventive sanitary measures against COVID-19 alter our normal way of life? And so many other pertinent questions.

In an attempt to respond to the concerns raised above and how the survival of the lives of Nigerians is dependant on the modification of their normal way of living and cultural practices, I make reference to the B. Abanuka who was also interested in the issue of "tradition and continuity". B. Abanuka proposed the political theory *Holosism* as a possible factor responsible for change of culture in crisis-situation (Abanuka, 2009, 79). In exploring this political theory, I intend to show how its application will be responsible for the modification of culture.

According to Abanuka (2009, 79), "Holosism stands on four strong supports: perceptive solidarity, the fundamental ethical principle, the ontological equality of all people and human freedom". This conjecture underscores everything that can help humanity to attain self-actualization. It therefore focuses on the progress, growth and holistic development of human being.

As a political theory, Holosism seeks to bring up to date what it believes to be negative aspect of culture. If I may transpose the basic ideas of this theory, culture focuses on particularity and does not admit cross-cultural influence. Holosism emphasizes universality. Holosism tries to bridge the gap that exists between the two extremes of culture and Holosim (or particularity and universality). That is why Abanuka (2009, 83) declaires: "In Holosism particularity is cherished and universality is put in its proper perspective". That is to say, in relation to the pandemic situation of COVID-19 which engenders cultural change, Holosism advocates for the modification of certain cultural habits and at the same time campaign for the application of hygienic sanitary measures which are in line with best global practice.

In my opinion, Holosism as a political theory is founded on the concept of ontology which considers the totality of reality in order to make a judgment or take a decision. The huge considerations given to events before a decision is taken give room for the accommodation of other values and are also responsible for the *laisser-aller* attitude towards real and old traditions. In the same perspective, this political theory can be evaluated in a purely African point of view of the relationship between the living and the ancestors. Concretely, this means that

alteration of culture in order to save human lives will certainly be in conformity with the wishes of the ancestors to preserve the living during the COVID-19.

The African concept of reality presupposes the relationship between the living and the dead (who are called ancestors). Ancestors, who are believed to have attained their full self-actualization in the land of the dead (Cf. Abanuka, 2014, 95) collaborate with living human beings in order in order to adapt to changing situations in the physical world. This relationship between living human beings and ancestors forms the basis of the African ontology. From the African ontological understanding of reality therefore, the modification from habitual cultural practices during COVID-19 requires the collaboration of those mentioned above. Custodians of the different African cultures have the responsibility of communicating to their ancestors on the need to alter some aspects of their cultural practices while retaining the essential.

Having considered the ability of philosophical reflection to influence the course of human action in history, I also examined the pertinent questions concerning "tradition and continuity". I attempted the above question by relying on a philosophical political theory of Holoism. What possible changes can government policies create during a pandemic situation such Corona Virus?

There is no doubt that the outbreak of COVID-19 was a crisis which required a political intervention in order to curtail the loss of human beings. The Federal Government of Nigeria issued communiqués in conjunction with the federal Ministry of Health. They gave guidelines which solicited a change of behavior with regards to the usual ways of living and of socializing. While government interventions are applauded by those who think that political doctrines are meant respond to urgent situation of crisis (Makumba, 2007, 126), I would like to raise the following questions: what is actually responsible for the alteration of the usual way of living – government policies or the imminent danger to life due to the crisis of COVID-19? More precisely, I will like to ask: what is responsible for the change from one culture to another?

Let's find the answer to the above question in the following analysis: In Chi's opinion, the state (government/politics) has little or no influence in determining the transition from one culture to another. According to him: "culture which is the expression of the spirit of a people or of an age is beyond the competence of the state, the state reflects it and does little more" (Chi, 2013, 10). In other words, the

state exists in order to guide, put order and regulate the emergence of a new culture in particular and the transition from one culture to anther in general.

In the same perspective, it is important to note that "The state has little power to make custom, perhaps least to destroy it. Even dictators do not have the power to change the custom of a people. It is the principle of International Law that the conquering state should not interfere with the custom of the people" (Chi, 2013, 10). This goes to say that change from one's former way of doing things depends largely on other factors rather than political might.

From the foregoing, it is possible to argue that in itself, government policies and strategies to curtail COVID-19 pandemic is not responsible for the modification of people's attitude. In my opinion, it is perhaps the various preventive sensitizations on how to protect oneself and avoid contamination of others that are responsible for the adoption of new approach to living. On the basis of the efficacy of various hygienic sensitization against COVID-19, I think that the awareness created (Ayeni, 2020) rather than government legislations is the cause of the acceptance of the new style of living.

The new style of living consists in obeying the sanitary measures being proposed to fight against this pandemic. My point of view is in line with Makumba's (Cf. 2007, 128) declaration that any new culture which is being proposed to any group of people must be solidly grounded in the heart of those people in order to bring about a change of attitude. With regards to the situation of COVID-19, it is most probable that it is the various sensitizations that caused a change of attitude.

There is also a condition which can make people to give up their usual ways of doing things in order to be guided by government policies. In an atmosphere of trust between government and those whom they govern, it is easy for people to change their usual attitudes and practices in order to embrace the objectives of government policies (Cf. Makumba, 2007, 128). The Nigerian situation could be a case study in order to enable us draw a conclusion.

However, in a crisis-situation such as that of COVID-19 where government promulgates laws and tries to enforce them (Shitu & co, April, 2020), I am tempted to ask whether the compliance to those laws is voluntary or involuntary. If it is voluntary, then human beings are responsible for the change in their usual way of living. If it is involuntary, then human beings must have been constrained either

Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development. ISSN: 2630-7065 (Print)
2630-7073 (e). Vol. 3 No. 12. 2020
Association for the Promotion of African Studies

by the difficult situation or the efficacy of government policies put in place to adopt a new style of living in order to survive.

Voluntary and involuntary metamorphosis

My intention here is to examine if human beings are actually conscience or not of the transition from one culture to another. In the context of this work, it is really difficult to affirm that they are truly responsible for the transition from one culture to another. The complexity is due to the fact that there are other factors which cannot be verified, such as the attitude of the generation vis-à-vis an old custom, the inadaptability of certain cultural practices (like initiation ceremonies) in modern society, etc.

Notwithstanding whether cultural changes are based on government policies, voluntary or involuntary, I think that such changes are fundamental because they determine the capacity of people to adapt in a circumstance of crisis.

There is a voluntary transition from one style of living to another if people understand the necessity and the benefits of accepting the new mode of living. Voluntary acceptance of a new culture presupposes that those who want to adopt another style of living are doing it in order to guarantee their survival and also because of its advantage to the survival of humanity in general.

Crisis-situation such as the outbreak of COVID-19 aroused in some people the necessity to protect their lives and those of others. While responding to a question a good Nigerian said: "I am happy, because I am with my family. I don't go out, I don't attend mosque, I pray at home. I do it for the sake of my health and my family" (Krippahl, 2020).

There are several reasons why people adopt a new way of life without giving their consent. Involuntary metamorphosis of culture presupposes partial consent or lack of consent in the adoption of a new culture. Where this arises, it could be as a result of imposition from a stronger authority. It could also be as a result of the fact that people have no choice but to abide to the rules which will shape their style of living.

Krippahl (2020) reported that some Africans clerics reacted angrily to the prolongation of the lockdown rule. Such negative reaction did not exempt them

Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development. ISSN: 2630-7065 (Print)
2630-7073 (e). Vol. 3 No. 12. 2020
Association for the Promotion of African Studies

from adhering to the rules. Krippahl (2020) stated that "many Muslims, however, including journalist Baballe Mukhtari, agree with the confinement rules, even if they have deeply affected their lives". In this case, the enforcement of the lockdown made people to comply. The question is, to what extent will people internalize such rules?

From the foregoing, it is clear that circumstances influence the change from one culture to another. In the case of COVID-19, the voluntary metamorphosis does not mean that people actually planned for such transition. The crisis-situation made them to adopt measures in order to survive. Where there is a desire to curtail the spread of Corona Virus by the government through the promulgation of laws and obligatory sanitary measures, will the enforcement of those laws and sanitary measure be effective in adopting a new style of living? This question necessitates an evaluation of the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria.

Evaluation of the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria

It is too early to evaluate the success or failure of the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria. A comprehensive evaluation is supposed to come when Nigeria would have been declared COVID-19 free. However, this does not prevent intermittent evaluation with regards to the compliance of certain hygienic measures put in place. On the one hand, the level of conformity to hygienic rules and regulations will help ascertain the effectiveness of government policies in the fight against COVID-19 and on the other hand, the degree of observance of safety procedures in order to protect oneself and others will determine the level of modification in the style of living. It is important to note that in the evaluation of the fight against the Corona Virus pandemic, some difficulties are involved. What are those obstacles?

The outbreak of COVID-19 was so sudden and needed an urgent response. There was hardly enough time to make decisions or to make preparations on how to curtail further contamination of the population. The suddenness of its occurrence in Nigeria and the immediate reaction probably gave rise to the following difficulties:

- Porous border and incapacity to control immigrants;
- Harassment of doctors, pharmacists and other essential workers;
- Nonpayment of salaries of health workers. This probably brought about laxity in the treatment of identified patients;

Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development. ISSN: 2630-7065 (Print)
2630-7073 (e). Vol. 3 No. 12. 2020
Association for the Promotion of African Studies

> ➢ Lack of transparency in determining the number of cases of those actually contaminated. This made people to resist compliance to sanitary measures.

In spite of the above obstacles, I rely on accurate and viable statistical research which is always objective in order to evaluate the metamorphosis of culture. It is for this reason that I am relying on the work done by Iboi et al., in order to assess the extent to which compliance to some sanitary measures have invariably led to change in cultural attitude. Hence, this appraisal will be focused essentially on how people have been able to adopt a new attitude or culture of "sit-at-home", maintaining social distancing and wearing face mask. These criteria are widely accepted as measures that could curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Iboi et al. (2020, 8) hold that the implementation of travel restrictions, closure of borders and "sit at home" are good ways to curtail the spread of the pandemic. The Federal Government of Nigeria issued a statement for its implementation beginning from 23 March 2020 and similar initiative was made by other states (Cf. UNDP, 2020, 3 & 9). How effective was this law in Nigeria?

Going by the result of the work done by Iboi et al., (2020, 10-11) on mild effective level of social-distancing, moderate effectiveness level of social-distancing and strict effectiveness level of social-distancing, it is clear that 0.4383 of Nigerians adopted mild effective level of social distancing. Which means that there was little change of attitude with regards to the usual way of socializing. The above studies show that for there to be a perfect change of attitude (or of culture), the moderate and the strict effective level of social distancing have to be implemented.

The wearing of face mask in public places and in public transport was also strange to Nigerians. This culture was associated to medical practitioners in order to prevent post-operative wound infection (Ahmad et al., 2019, 93) and to those living in populated areas like in China, Korea, Japan, etc (Cf. Eveleth, 2019). With the outbreak of Corona Virus pandemic, it is estimated that if Nigerians adopt the habit of wearing the face mask, the pandemic will be reduced to 50% (Iboi et al., 2020, 13). In the context of this work, the compliance and efficacy of this sanitary measure means adoption of a new culture. What is the level of conformity to this new culture? According to Iboi et al., (2020, 13) the level of compliance of the use of face mask cannot be certainly and realistically attained in Nigeria or anywhere in the world. By implication, the change of attitude depends on individuals.

On the whole, it is possible to conclude, based on the mathematical studies done by Iboi et al., on the possibility of rapid transition from one culture to another if and only if there is serious implementation of various preventive sanitary measures like restrictions on travel, social distancing and wearing of face mask.

Conclusion

As the entire world battles with how to contain the sanitary crisis (COVID-19), I deemed it important to examine how the crisis-situation can influence a radical change from one pattern of living to another. This presupposes a cultural change, a change in the normal or usual way of living to the adoption of a new style of living. Hence, I described the dynamic nature of culture. This perspective of understanding culture made it easy to examine whether or not the Corona virus pandemic and the safety-health measures proposed are capable of modifying the attitude of Nigerians.

My objective was to respond to these preoccupations: can political decision determine the transition from one's usual style of living (which I call culture) to another? Is the change in the style of living in the situation of COVID-19 voluntary or involuntary? The answers to the questions raised above were to be found in the efficacy of hygienic legislations promulgated and enforced by government, in the role of philosophers in enlightening the population and also the responsibility of individual Nigerian vis-à-vis the effort to curtail the spread of Corona Virus.

Owing to the fact that the outbreak of COVID-19 was so sudden, there was no vaccine or cure for those who were contaminated, the Federal Government of Nigeria proposed certain precautionary sanitary measures to which all Nigerians must obey. This work evaluated the level of compliance of Nigerians to the hygienic rules with the intention of knowing the correlation between the level of conformity to those laws and the change of attitude (or culture). The *Mathematical modeling and analysis of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria* on which I based my analysis revealed little change or insignificant change in attitude.

From the foregoing, my point of view remains: cultural changes are caused by many factors like I explained above. In crisis-situation such as COVID-19, the interplay of government policies, philosophical reflection and individuals are responsible for cultural change. I went further to explained the importance of sensitization and the atmosphere of trust that could persuade Nigerians to adopt a new mode of living that is being proposed.

Works cited

ABANUKA, B., (2014). *Reality and individuation. An examination of appearance,* Enugu, Snaap Press Ltd.

ABANUKA, B., (2009). *Further critical studies on the Igbo world,* Enugu, Snaap Press Ltd.

AHMAD, M., et al., *A survey among plastic surgeons wearing a mask in operating room,* in *World Journal of Plastic Surgery* Vol. 8 (Jan. 2019), n° 1.

AKWANYA, A.N. (2005). *Language and habits of thought,* Enugu: New Generations Books.

ALTHUSSER, L., (1967). *Philosophie spontanée des savants,* Paris : Maspero.

AYENI, T., *How Nigeria is fairing nearly two weeks into COVID-19 lockdown,* Friday, April 10 2020, https://www.theafricareport.com. Consulted 23/06/2020 at 17:23.

BUBONIC PLAQUE: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki,2020. Consulted 24/06/2020 at 10 :00am

CHI, E. V., (2013). *A history of Nigerian peoples and cultures. From antiquity to contemporary times,*

COMETTI, L., (2020). *Coronavirus: « La personne qu'on aime est morte seule… » Le deuil, plus terrible encore en période de confinement.* Disponible sur : https://www.20minutes.fr/societe. Consulté le 23/07/2020.

DJOMO, L., *La dynamique de la personne dans la religion et la culture tetela,* Kinshasa, Faculté de Théologie Catholique, 1998.

EVELETH, R., *As air pollution gets worse, a dystopian accessory is born.* Available on https://www.vox.com. May 19, 2019. Consulted 26/06/2020 at 12:02.

FERRY, L., (1992). *Le nouvel ordre écologique, l'arbre, l'animal et l'homme,* Paris : Grasset & Fasquelle.

FOUREZ, G., (1988). *La construction des sciences,* Paris : Edition Universitaires.

GAGNON, M., *La philosophie de la nature est-elle encore possible?,* in *Dialogue,* Vol. XX (1981), n° 3.

HAUTE AUTORITE DE SANTE (HAS), *COVID-19. Fin de vie des personnes accompagnées par un établissement ou service social ou médicosocial,* Validé par la CSMS le 6 mai 2020.

http://fr.wikipedia/org./wiki/Katrina. Consulted 27/06/2020 at 17:45.

http:/www.liberation.fr/page.php?Rubrique=TSUNAMI. Consulted 27/06/2020 at 17:00

IBOI, E., SHAROMI, O.O., NGONGHALA, C., GUMEL, A.B., *Mathematical modeling and analysis of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria,* June 2, 2020, retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.22.20110387:. Consulted on the 23/06/2020 at 20:26.

Industrial revolution: http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/

INSTITUT NATIONAL DE SANTE PUBLIQUE DU QUEBEC (INSPQ), (21 mai 2020), *COVID-19 : Mesures sanitaires recommandées pour la population générale*, Québec.

JONAS, H., (2000). *Pour une éthique du future,* Paris : Payot é Rivages.

KRIPPHAL, C., *Nigerian religious leaders demand lifting of COVID-19 lockdown,* 19/05/2020, available on https://m.dw.com/en/nigerian-religious. Consulted 26/06/2020 at 14:15.

MAKUMBA, M. M.., (2007). *Introduction to African philosophy. Past and present*, Limuru: Paulines Publications Africa.

MALU, M.N., *Initiation a la discorde du langage africain. Approche sémantique et épistémologique,* in *Recherches Philosophiques africaines* (« Philosophie africaine : Rationalité et Rationalités »). actes de la XIVè Semaine philosophique de Kinshasa, du 24 au 30 avril 1994), Kinshasa, Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa, 1996.

MARITAIN, J., (s.d.,). *La philosophie de la nature,* Paris : Téqui.

MBITI, J.S., (1989). African religions and philosophy 2nd ed., London, Heinemann.

MENKETI, I. A., (1984). *Person and community in African Traditional Thought* in *R.A. Wright* (ed.) *African Philosophy: an Introduction.* Lanham, University Press of America.

MUNDAYA, B., *Rationalité et philosophie africane: Les enjeux d'un discours philosophique African,* in *Recherches Philosophiques africaines* (« Philosophie africaine : Rationalité et Rationalités »). actes de la XIVè Semaine philosophique de Kinshasa, du 24 au 30 avril 1994), Kinshasa, Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa, 1996.

NGIMBI, N., *De La « philosophie » a la « pensée de l'être ». la Raison philosophique à la recherche d'elle-même,* in *Recherches Philosophiques africaines* (« Philosophie africaine : Rationalité et Rationalités »). actes de la XIVè Semaine philosophique de Kinshasa, du 24 au 30 avril 1994), Kinshasa, Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa, 1996.

NWABUEZE, E. (2011). Visions and re-visions. Selected discourses on literary criticism 2nd edition, Enugu: Abic Books.

NWALA, T. U. (ed.) (1992). Critical review of the great debate on African philosophy (1970-1990). Enugu: Hilly Press.

ODIMEGWU, I., (2008). *Integrative personhood. A communalist metaphysical anthropology,* Berlin: LIT VERLAG.

OKOLO, O., *Identity et developpement,* dans *RPK* Vol. IV (Juillet-décembre 1990), n° 6.

SHITU, I., & co., *Nigerian governments' initial measures and palliatives to business in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic,* 21 April, 2020, available at https://iclg.com/briefing/11546. Consulted on 26:06:2020 at 13:33.

UNDP, *The COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Potential impact on the North-East,* Brief 2, April 3, 2020.

VILLAIN, J., *Socialisation ou destruction de la nature,* in *Etudes* (Mars 1967)