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## GLOBALISATION AND TECHNOLOGY: KANO'S TEXTILE AND SOKOTO'S LEATHER INDUSTRIES IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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### Abstract

*The main objective of the paper is to examine the impact of the globalisation process on two selected industries, textile in Kano and leather in Sokoto. The methodology is largely qualitative and historical based on a linear trajectory of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in line with the historical evolution of globalisation. Two forms of data have been collected: the hard form from published works on economic and social history in books, journal articles, and news paper reports, and the soft form from e-sources and websites. The results of the historical analysis and interpretation show that the industries fared well in the trans-Saharan trade period because the technology of production was indigenous, and the market size was local and international. But the British industrial-led colonialism was a mixed development: it undermined the survival of the indigenous industries on local technology and modernised the techniques of production but for the local market on the other hand. However, the inability of the industries to keep pace with rapid technological innovations coupled with global free trade ideology in the contemporary phase of globalisation nailed their coffins. Kano and Sokoto lost out marginally and became dumping grounds for comparatively cheaper new imported textiles and leather goods, and cheapest second-hand clothing. To reverse the de-industrialisation process and recapture the lost pre-colonial global market, the paper recommends technological independence through the promotion of quality science and technology education.*

**Keyword:** Globalisation; Colonialism; De-industrialisation; Native Industry: Science and Technology, Education.  
**JEL Codes:** F6; N17; O33.

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### Introduction

The meaning and origins of globalization phenomenon are still controversial among scholars, and yet it is impossible to assess its implications in the development of nations without a clear understanding of what it means, at least operationally, and the circumstances that gave rise to it. Regardless of the controversies however, globalisation has to do with relations among political entities whether kingdoms, empires or nation states in economic, social political, cultural, and technological spheres. As Hans-Henrik Holm and Georg Sorensen, quoted by Aslan (2011, p30) posited, globalisation is “the intensification of economic, political and social relations across borders.” The “intensification of relations across borders”, being the main feature of globalisation cuts across the different epochs of human history since ancient times. This therefore explains the difficulty in fixing a specific date for its origins,

since the process unfolded gradually over millennia, and depended on which polities were developed and powerful enough to interact globally. To Hopkins (2002) for instance the origins of globalisation lie in the 15<sup>th</sup> century when the Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish explored many parts of the world. Although the Portuguese shipbuilding revolution had pioneered voyages to distant parts of the world, but in terms of global commerce the preceding Chinese Silk Road developed in the Han dynasty (202BC-226AD), was more revolutionary on the origins of economic globalisation. The road with the use of ships and camels commercially connected Eurasia, Middle East and Horn of Africa and lasted from 130 BC to 1453 AD when the Ottomans boycotted the trade and closed the routes (History.com Editors, 2019). According to Diamond (1997: p.253) China was the most technologically advanced part of the world in 1450 AD because of such inventions as compass, paper, printing and gun powder among

others. These provided the pioneering tools for the ancient economic globalisation: the compass for navigation, paper and printing for exchange of messages and record keeping, and gun powder for the security of trade routes against piracy among others.

Moreover, it was through the Road that the explorers- Marco Polo of Venice in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and Ibn Batuta of Morocco in the 14<sup>th</sup> century traversed to explore the Eastern world and became the human internet of their times by spreading information on diverse cultures and exotic commodities they discovered in their books. Whereas Ibn Batuta's book, the "rihla" described the cultural diversity of Islamic ummah community, which promoted meaningful contacts, The travels of Marco Polo inspired further European explorations to open up the world to commerce and Western civilisation. As the travels circulated in Europe in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Christopher Columbus was inspired to go to China but eventually landed in the New world and opened the flood gates to the Portuguese explorers: Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama, and European adventurers in search of wealth. This development, Smethurst (2006,p,37) argued, 'stirred Europe's colonial ambition..' which sowed the seeds of de-industrialisation and technological dependence in the case of Kano and Sokoto.

The paper is structured as follows: an introduction which provides a general background of the subject matter, followed by section two which reviews the related literature. Section three explains the methodology. Section four discusses the results, and section five conclusion and recommendations of the paper.

### **Kano's Textile and Sokoto's Leather Industries in Pre-colonial and Colonial Eras: A Review**

For long Kano and Sokoto derived much of their prosperity and development through participation in international trade as exporters of textile and leather goods among others. As far back as the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kano was a major trade centre in which the routes radiated across to the Sahara, Volta region, Bornu and Yoruba land (Barkindo, 1993, pp. 124-5). But the assertion that Kano was then the Manchester of West Africa (Hopkins, 1973, p48) is an exaggeration because textile production not only in Northern Nigeria but in the whole of Nigeria was wide spread in many towns. Similarly, the contention of Shea (1993, p. 144) that Kano was the most important textile centre in West Africa has ignored the fact that the textiles that were exported from Hausa land to the markets of West and North Africa came from diverse weaving and dyeing centres because the technologies were the manually operated looms and dye pits. It is therefore more logically appropriate to

argue that the textiles of such magnitude could only be generated from the assemblage of the products of several textile centres within the region. For instance, Jega and Birnin kebbi were also producers of embroidered textiles, while the Nupe Guinea fowl shirts competed with Kano's glossy textiles, all of which were in high demand by the political elite in the Volta region (Anagbogu, 1980, p.43; Adamu, 1987, p. 60).

Moreover, although Sokoto was more renown in leather production and leather works, it was nevertheless an important textile manufacturer due partly to the presence of Nupe slaves whose males were excellent weavers and their females' fast spinners (Adamu 1978, p.12). Sokoto's niche in textile manufacture derived from its relatively fast indigo dyeing technology in which *Yodo* or (*rogeria adonephilla*) was used as mordant, compared to Kano's glossy brand (Kwaire,1992, p.39). The extent of Sokoto city's textile production in 1916 shows that there were 3,643 weavers,543 tailors,361 dyers and 674 dye pits (Kwaire,2014, p.39). This shows that Sokoto must be a contributor to Kano's fame as a supplier of textiles in West Africa. Thus instead of considering Kano as the 'Manchester of West Africa', it is more appropriate to accept Adamu's (1978) remark that Hausa land was the 'workshop of West Africa' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is more cogent because it accords with the nature of the pre-industrial production processes that is characterised by manually operated tools. For instance, in 1824, Clapperton quoted in (Abubakar,1979a, p.138) commented on the production of high-quality cotton cloths in Sokoto for home consumption and export to Kano and Hyffo. Moreover, a section of the Saharan trade route linked Katsina, Kano, Sokoto, Jega and terminated at Ashanti (Abubakar,1979a.,p.130), where Sokoto Caliphate's textiles and leather goods are exchanged for Kola nuts, an important item of trade highly valued in the Caliphate and the Sahara.

Kano being the emporium of assorted cotton textiles from the regional looms competed favourably with English and Arab textiles and survived the competitive trans-Saharan free trade regime. Several factors were responsible for their survival. Firstly, there was native preference for the local textiles because they were suited to the climate and culture of West Africa. Despite the importation of Indian calicoes and chintzes by the Dutch and English traders in the 17<sup>th</sup> century for the coastal West African consumers, they had to include the indigo dyed textiles of Nigeria which were in great demand in Senegal, Angola, Congo, Guinea, Brazil and Italy (De Nigri, 1966, p. 95-6)

Secondly, the technology, management and raw materials inputs were indigenous which impacted

positively on prices compared to imported ones where transport cost and custom duties had to be included in the prices. Thirdly, the native textiles were more durable and the native indigo dye relatively faster than synthetic indigo of the English textiles in which caustic soda was used as mordant which also caused clothes to rot compared to Sokoto's textile which used *Yodo* mordant.

Finally, Sokoto's leather export to the international market had some niches which withstood competition. The Moroccan leather valued by the British derived from the native Sokoto Red goat of the *Sokoto-Maradi* specie noted for softness compared to Kano and Bornu species which are excellent in meat. Also, the leather was highly valued for its glossy finish, and Sokoto sandals were comparatively cheaper than those of Katsina and Kano. Moreover the *Korino* emerald coloured hard leather was a brand peculiar to Sokoto. It was generally used as decorative finish on saddles, sheaths and elite sandals (Kwaire, 1992, p.39; Abubakar, 1979a, p.131). Most of the leather goods of Hausa land: sandals, bags, purses, saddles etc. however, moved to the southern termini of the trans-Saharan routes extension in Benue Valley (Abubakar, 1979b, p.117) and the Kola nut producing forest belt of West Africa such the Volta region (Adamu, 1978).

Although relevant statistics is lacking for the magnitude of the trans-Saharan trade, as Hopkins (1982, p.80) discovered in his survey of the trade, yet other parameters are available to calibrate output to permit an assessment of gradual demise of the textile and leather industries of the towns. With regard to Kano's textile for instance, by comparing it to Manchester suggests the high quantity of its cloths export even though it was a central place in the collection and export of textiles from other textile centres in Hausaland. As regards Sokoto's leather industry however, apart from being a principal centre of livestock production and trade, the colonial statistics for 1916 showed that there were 522 butchers, 329 tanners and 133 leather workers (Kwaire, 2014, p.121) in a town that had a population of only 21,676 inhabitants in 1911 (Adedeii, & Rowland, 1973, p.180) This statistics and the popularity of Sokoto as the supplier of Moroccan leather to Britain is a testimony to the high quantity of the domestic leather production and export to the Saharan and West African trade.

### **Textile and Leather Industries under British Colonialism**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century European imperialism which ushered in the second phase of the globalisation process saw the British conquests of Kano and Sokoto in 1903. Being the outcome of British Industrial Revolution, the conquest and annexation

of Sokoto Caliphate by Britain was principally aimed at securing raw materials and a protected market for its manufactured goods. With this motivation at the background therefore, competitive industries in the colonies were systematically destroyed. In colonial India for instance, British colonialism destroyed the native textile to protect English wool and silk producers and to create a market for them in India. Accordingly, the handlooms and spinning wheels that had once made India a global producer of cotton textiles were destroyed. Britain banned the importation and use of Indian calicoes and chintzes and the English manufacturers illegally reproduced replicas of Indian brands without patent rights and flooded the local market. (Riello, 2014, p.47; Marx & Engels, 1978, pp.38-39).

Similar fate befell the native industries in Kano and Sokoto. Soon after his proclamation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1900, Sir Frederick Lugard, the High Commissioner embarked on an anti manufacturing policies in the Protectorate (Maiwada & Renne, 2013, p.5). Firstly, Caravan Tolls were imposed from December, 1903 to March 1907. In 1909 Customs Stations were opened in strategic places in Sokoto (Willis, 1972, pp 49-50), and other parts of the Protectorate.. These policies were aimed at discouragement of the Saharan trade and to divert all the international commerce to the Atlantic favourable to British. In the French Colony of Niger, similar policies inimical to the trans-Saharan trade were adopted: advalorem tax, Customs Posts and camel requisitions which impacted on transport (Kwaire, 2014, pp. 77-80). Thus in 1916, all the camels owned by French natives were sent out of Nigeria to assist transport services in Niger (Willis, 1972, p.55). Although Anjorin (1980, pp125-127) had posited the survival of the Northern Nigeria's textile on the grounds of cotton consumption by the modern mills which rose from 85,892 tons in 1959 to 150,300 tons in 1960, textile manufacture depended wholly on foreign technology over which Nigerians had no control.

Secondly, the production of raw cotton and peanuts became the predominant activity in Kano, while Sokoto specialized in hides and skins. Consequently, in the textile industry the native weavers and spinners competed with British firms in the purchase of cotton, while the leather workers also competed with English and other firms for hides and skins. For instance, in Sokoto the European and Syrian trading firms exported unprocessed hides and skins which discouraged tanning and dyeing and robbed the native leather workers of good quality raw materials and forced them to make do with rejected hides and skins, worn out motor tyres and tubes to produce sandals (Adamu, 1985, p118).

Thirdly, the abolition of slavery to release labour for the production of raw materials and construction of roads, railway and other infrastructure robbed the local industries of cheapest labour input which must have impacted on the price of products they made with hired labour. Moreover slave-based plantations for the production of cotton, indigo, and food lost free labour, while the acquisition of skilled slaves for industries ceased (Katharine, 2018, p.14)

Fourth, the British firms flooded the Nigerian market with English cotton goods. For instance in 1946, over 83 million square yards were imported which progressively rose to 149 million in 1950, and 211 million in 1960 (Ekundare, 1973, p.335). Paradoxically, the British colonial government introduced unsustainable modern weaving centres in Ilorin, Ado Ekiti, Oyo, Auchi, Aba, Kano and Sokoto to train Nigerians in the use of the modern broad loom, and spinning wheel under the supervision of European experts (Ekundare, 1973, p.302). Although Katharine (2018, p.22) had quoted a British Industry survey report which showed that an estimated 50 million square yards of cloth were annually woven on Nigerian hand-loom in 1960s, the trend was not sustained. The Sokoto hand loom established in 1949 was manually operated and had low output (Adamu, 1985, pp 124&138). By 1970, the handloom had closed down and one of its spinners, Alhaji Jibo Gagi had switched to modern dyeing with imported chemicals and dyes (Kwaire, 1992, p.66)

Finally, the introduction of modern textile and leather industries on the principle of import-substitution industrialization strategy with focus on domestic market did not place Northern Nigeria's industrialization on a solid foundation. Eager to exploit the large domestic market, the Kano Citizens Trading Company started on a wrong footing. The textile factory was built with Lancashire reconditioned looms and equipment discarded when the factory modernised its machines (Ekundare, 1978, p.303). It began production in 1952, and by 1960 it was producing 1.1 million yards per annum (Bashir, 1989, p.107). Thus, the colonial state deliberately pursued industrialisation policies that rendered the local products uncompetitive. The modern textile factories and the modernised hand looms competed for market share among themselves, and between them and imported British textiles. The high maintenance costs in cooling, regular servicing and replacement of unserviceable parts for the modern factories in Kano and Kaduna rendered their prices uncompetitive in comparison to imported textiles.

Similarly, the Sokoto leather industry faced competition from plastics following the establishment of plastic and canvas shoes factories

in Lagos in 1930s, and Kano in 1959 which was compounded by cheaper shoes imported from Czechoslovakia, Japan, and Hong Kong (Wells & Warmington, 1963, p.114). Moreover, although tanning was in the curriculum of Government Crafts School, Sokoto, and a United Nations Development Programme experimental tannery had been opened in 1950, the fate of Sokoto leather industry remained in limbo in the absence of any shoe manufacturing since the Bata Shoes factory was established in faraway Ikeja, Lagos (Kwaire, 1992, pp.68&85). It is this chaotic market situation anchored on technological dependence that prevailed after independence and the emergence of contemporary globalisation based on rapid innovations and severe contraction of distance. Anchored on foreign technologies, the textile and leather industries of the towns faced unbridled competition from the cheaper Asian brands and European second hands.

### Methodology

The paper's methodology is historical, and in the purview of economic history. However, although quantification predominates in the economic history method, the conventional qualitative approach has been adopted in the paper. The method of data collection, analysis and interpretation is premised on Stewart's technological dependence thesis (1981, pp.364-374) which posits a bi-polar structural dependence of the developing world on the developed one, with four undesirable consequences on the former: high cost of imported technology; loss of local control; lack of domestic suitability; and the tendency to inhibit learning by doing for future technological independence.

The data is collected exclusively from published books, unpublished dissertations, journal articles, news paper reports, e-books and articles, and relevant web sites. The analysis and interpretation provided the substance for the findings.

### Discussion, Results, and Findings

The contemporary globalisation which contributed in the demise of the Nigeria's textile and leather industries in Kano and Sokoto respectively is characterised by contraction of distance and rapidity in innovations occasioned by the dynamics of science and technology. Although globalisation is a mixture of opportunities and challenges as Kohler pointed out (2001, p.9,) the opportunities had been lost as a result of technological dependence.

Firstly, the foundation for the demise was laid in the colonial rule which enshrined policies that entrenched technological dependence in the economy of Nigeria. In Kano's textile, (Andrae & Beckman, 1999, pp 118&125), have pointed out that 9 of the 19 factories were foreign dominated: the Lebanese in 1962 and later the French CFAO in

1976 dominated the Northern Textile Manufacturers, (NTM). Similarly, the largest Gaskiya Textile Mills established in 1985 was technologically dependent on an Indian technical partner, Arvind Mills. (Andrae & Beckman, 1999, pp.128 & 129). Although it started with the latest technology, the rapid technological innovations that contemporary globalisation requires to withstand completion remained with the Indians. Now, the Western world having surrendered low tech textiles and leather manufacturing to the developing world, it is China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan etc that dominated and shared the global market.

Thus, although India was a victim of technological dependence, she pursued policies that encouraged the domestic manufacture of needed components (Hodder, 1976, p.188), compared to Nigeria where 60% of national import was on machinery, 14.2% on chemicals, 12.1% on manufactured goods, and 4.2% on fuel in 1989 (Nelson, 1990 :11.) Thus, as a result of technological underdevelopment the whole of West Africa has been marginalised in textiles exports in international markets because products are not competitive and catered only for domestic markets. (Rudolf & Herbert, 2006, p.23)

Similarly in Sokoto, the Sokoto Leather Tannery (SOLETA), the UNDP tannery, Leather Products Limited, Dange Leather and Alu Dan-Iya tannery which all flourished on imported machinery during the oil boom had closed down by 1980s when oil boom and crisis led to the adoption of World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986. Unable to upgrade or sustain old machinery, the modern tanneries have closed down, and the hides and skins merchants (including the UNDP tannery) exported the raw materials either to Kano for the Lebanese buyers or direct to overseas markets (Kwaire, 1992, pp.120-122). The Bata and Lennard shoes factories which should have provided vent for Sokoto's leather had by 1990s folded up giving room for flooding the local market with foreign shoes from Italy, Brazil, China and India.

As regards local tanneries the high cost of labour and foreign chemicals prevented them from survival. Gradually, Sabaru Company Fata and the tanneries at Karaye, Unguwar Rogo, Korino Tsamiya, Rumbukawa had either ceased production or had been transformed into tanning reptiles skins, production of dried prayer skins (*Buzu* or *Agalemi*) and export of unprocessed hides and skins (Kwaire, 1992, pp. 110 & 129-130). Only a handful of leather workers mainly at Madunka are still producing souvenirs leather cushions, bags for an elite market. Lamentably the Leather and Allied Products Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (LAPAN), had observed that the country's leather policy operated since 1958 until recently when experts

gathered in Sokoto to validate a leather policy that would make Nigeria one of the leading exporters of leather finished products in the world. (Auwal, 2018). Accordingly the Federal Executive Council approved a national leather and leather products policy in October 2018, which according to Dr. Onu, the Minister of Science and Technology would change the present situation of export of raw and semi-finished leather products. (Mudashir, 2018)

Secondly, technological dependence prevented the country from reaping the benefits of contemporary globalisation. The use of outdated technology resulted in poor quality products, while the cost of imported parts denominated on United States dollar and Chinese Yuan made the prices of the domestic goods higher than foreign equivalents. A study on textile manufacturing in Nigeria linked the preference for foreign prints by Nigerians to the problems of obsolete technology and the low value of the naira among others which curtailed output and quality (Aluko, Akinola & Fatokun, 2004, p. 125). An Abuja resident hinged her preference for original second hand clothes and shoes more than made in Aba shoes and cloths because of quality (Chung, 2009, p.29). Lamentably, the Aba shoe makers complained about lack of modern machines, poor quality leather from Kano, lack of good quality gum, chemicals, and competition from the much preferred Chinese products. The shoe makers had to attach Chinese labels on their products to pull Nigerian buyers. (Effiong, 2009. p.10).

Thirdly, the technologically advanced countries promoted free trade ideology which they imposed on the technologically dependent developing countries through the institutions of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. The free trade principle not only stifled industries of the developing nations according to (Makinde, Fajuyigbe & Ajiboye, 2015, p.335; Brooks, 2015, p.221; Aluko, Akinola & Fatokun, 2004, p. 125), but also the US an advocate of free market policy. Unable to compete with foreign gladiators, many Nigerian textile and leather industries were either wiped out or declined considerably. Since the adoption of SAP in 1986 and the membership of WTO in 1996 the number of textile industries in Nigeria have declined from 175 in 1985 to 16 in 2015. (Muhammad, Agboola, & Lola, 2018, pp.44&49). The Kantin Kwari market has been dominated by Chinese textiles resulting in the decline of Gaskiya and Adhama textile factories (Kazaure, 2000, p14)

Finally, the massive decline of textile and leather factories coupled with the comparative low quality and high price of domestic products have created room for the smuggling and dumping of foreign substitutes. Moreover, the economic contraction has heightened poverty and the entrenchment of

*Tokumbo* (second hand) taste for textile and leather goods. Cheaper leather products and textiles from East Asia and illegally imported second-hand clothing from affluent countries of Western Europe and Asia are hot cakes to most poor Nigerians ( Brooks, 2015 pp.144-145)

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Globalization, from the period of the Hans dynasty in China to the British Industrial Revolution and the contemporary Asian economic transformation has been driven by advances in science and technology. The marginalisation of Kano's textile firms and Sokoto's leather industry as the paper argues derived from two factors: technological dependence and pre-

mature acceptance of free trade policy which, in combination, hindered home grown innovations and capacity to compete globally. Dependence on importation of outdated technologies contradicts the dynamic nature of economic globalisation where survival depends on the capacity to innovate to outdo rival competitors as China and India have demonstrated. In this regard the paper recommends the position of Mr. Akomolafe, the President of the Nigerian-American Chamber of Commerce (NACC) that Nigeria should create her own technology to address its peculiar needs instead of dependence on foreign technologies (Adekoya, 2019)

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