

## CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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### Abstract

These are the various processes of culture changes in terms of the three dimensions of course, which anthropologists subsumed under what is commonly referred to as mechanisms of culture change.

### 1.0 Introduction

The complex nature of the study of ethnographic study of indigenous materials for pottery decoration and its influence on change and continuity has given rise to a number of concepts generated overtime in order to understand the context within which culture change occurs. These are the various processes of culture changes in terms of the three dimensions of course, which anthropologists subsumed under what is commonly referred to as mechanisms of culture change. The three basic concepts that characterized the study of continuity and change include discovery or independent invention (Innovation or Modernization) diffusion and acculturation.

#### 1.1. Independent Invention or Innovation:

The concept of independent invention or innovation is the development or integration of existing ideas into something new and creative. It involves problems solving. “Faced with comparable problems and challenges, people in different societies have innovated and changed in similar ways, which is one reason cultural generalities exist. Innovation as one basic source of culture change has given new dimensions to the study and understanding of continuity and change for the African culture. It is perhaps the best process of creativity essential for the integration of cultural elements in order to bring about continuity in culture.

#### 1.2. Modernization

Related to the concept of innovation is modernization, as modernization as the process by which an underdeveloped region changes in response to inputs (ideologists, behavioural codes, commodities and

institutional models) from already established industrial centres. Modernization in this context emphasizes the need for underdeveloped countries to adopt modern technologies and other systems from advanced countries (developed countries) in order to close or educate the gap between them in the area of education, politics, culture, economy, etc. Modernization in some respects discourages appropriates or alternates technology but advises that underdeveloped countries should do away with their traditional values and characteristics which are “considered as obstacles to development and embrace modern values, if they want to developed.

#### 1.3. Diffusion

The term diffusion is “the process by which cultural elements as borrowed from another society and incorporation into the culture of the relevant group though, diffusion an idea that has been developed in one society spreads to another. Diffusion or exchange of traits from culture was recognized as early as nineteenth century by archaeologist as valid explanation for cultural change in pre-history and “throughout human history cultures have been truly isolated, Contact between neighbouring groups has always existed and has extended over vast areas” diffusion occurs through various ways, the most common being trade, intermarriage and war or colonialism whereby the dominant group imposes or forces its culture on the dominated group. One strike advantage associated with diffusion is that ‘borrowing sometimes enables a group to by-pass stages or mistakes in the development of a process or institutional”

**1.4. Urbanization:** Urbanization led to the movement of people from rural to urban centres. The presence of the European administration led to the growth of new cities. These new cities grew at the cost of bitter tensions with the local people who saw their value”. The year 1930 witnessed little from the rapid growth in urbanization which continued at accelerated rate after independence

in 1960, some of the factors that led to the movement of local people “irresistibly towards the towns” in quest for any easy means of sustaining life.

### 1.5. Functionalism

The systems theory f=draws attention to the interrelatedness of the various parts of the socio-cultural systems in most cases the essence of this relationship is to sustain or keep the system in a state of equilibrium. It means that each part has a function to perform towards the survival of the entire system. This underlines the importance of every part: so when a part fails to function, the whole system might be affected. On the other hand, there can be no part without the system.

**1.6. Colourmetric Analysis:** This is defined as the use of colour for qualitative work analysis where there is only one coloured substance present in the sample.

**1.7. Spectrometric Analysis:** This is a method whereby the analysis of the materials are completely objective, determining the expected as well as the unexpected elements of the materials, even the smaller qualitative of rare constitute.

Theories occupy significant positions in the study of understanding of continuity and change. Theories direct the course of research by providing the theoretical framework on which to base explanation in the analysis and interpretation of archaeological data. Explaining why things have happened and take archaeologists beyond their discipline and compel them to evolve a broad spectrum of social science theories in an effort to account for the behavioural patterns they have inferred from archaeological data. This explains why the researcher had explored the field of Anthropology and sociology.

Studies carried out so far by social theories (archaeologists and anthropologists) both in the past and present have revealed the fact that the dynamic nature of culture is caused by change from within and outside involving various interrelated variables. It may be necessary to examine some of them that relate to this study. However, “it is only when society accepts an invention or discovery” and integrates it into her culture that change can occur, because not all innovations are accepted; many are accepted for a short time and then

discarded; some are never accepted; and only a few become part of the cultural repertoire. Human beings by nature do not easily respond positively to change especially, when there are no benefits attached to it. People are not sponges that automatically soak things around them. If they did the amount of cultural variation in the world would be extremely small, which is not the case. Evidently, in the receptivity of European culture in African, consideration was given to the “principle that innovation must be related to traditional patterns if they are to be accepted and transmitted as a part of the cultural heritage to future generations”. This could be in the form of modification because change as a product of innovation is not necessarily total; in the scene that it does not lead to a complete departure from the old. It entails a marriage of the old and new adopting what is good in the old tradition into what is good in the new for the purpose of improving an existing situation.

When pottery forms are studied rather than sherds, “changes in designs through time are understood in terms of the shapes on which they occur,” the areas in which they were made, their relationship with other areas and the similarities that may exist between them, and these can be used to identify processes involved in prehistoric culture change. In conclusion, pottery studies for the reconstruction of prehistoric societies need to emphasize more, the significant change that occurred on pottery forms and decorations, to be able to determine to a larger extent, how pottery has continued in an area. In other words, archeologists need to examine in more details pottery forms and decorations to ascertain if there are changes and similarities between them and those of past generations and the possible causes of such changes. In fact, the study of pottery forms and decorations should constitute an important aspect in the study of change and continuity particularly when dealing with contemporary pottery communities as this will help to enrich the ethnographic data needed for the understanding of change and continuity. In Ekpene Ukim, the local /traditional potters use designs and materials for decoration of pots from nature, as we already mentioned above, they prepare these materials locally and use them to make decoration on the body of their pots. In Afikpo and Ishiagu, colour from fruit, leaf and nature are used in the decoration of their pottery and other materials like the roots, stems and coloured stones

are ground and used in the design motif for the decoration of their pottery wares. So that what is common in one culture in the profession is seen in another culture. However, as a sign of continuity and change in pottery making, we noticed that these indigenous raw materials could also be processed physically, chemically and be used in the contemporary pottery making in any area.

### 1.8 Modernization Theory

Two explanation of modernization advocated by Spencer and Max. In this, a distribution is made between modernization theory which emphasizes “internal factors of change from that which, stresses external factors and use terms like borrowing “diffusion” or imitation” (Burke, 1992) Herbert Spencer, one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century scholars was a cultural evolutionary thinker as well as an anthropologist, who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” and believed that present social order was imperfect, but that it was constantly adapting to become more acceptable. Thus, Spencer views modernization as a process of change that is essentially developing from within, while the outside acts only as a stimulus to the social system, where the process of modernization is seen as series of parallel developments in different regions of the world. This theory emphasizes independent discovery and invention “as a process of much significances in understanding the means by which people develop new aspects of culture”. Innovation, invention or exploration of new ideas and concepts is seen as survival strategy to adaptation which enables society to grow from its rudimentary form to a complex one characterized by high efficiency in technology, politics and ideology. Emphasis is on adaptation and change, change that resulted from a society’s long-term accumulation of specific behavioural adaptive responses. Marx’s model of modernization can “be described as a model or theory of sequence of societies (social formation) which depend on economic systems (mode of production) and contain internal conflicts (contradictions) which lead to crisis, revolution and discontinuous change,”. “Karl Marx wrote widely and critically on the human condition.” highlighting the need to study individuals, their ability to act as agents of change in society insisting “on the necessity of recognizing the presence of conflicting parties and of the

social, political and economic inequalities that both separate them and lock them in struggle”, Marx’s work has been very useful “to social theories in a wide range of disciplines, including archaeology. Prominent among them” was V. Gordon Childe, an Australian archeologist, “who found Marx’s writings valuable in accounting for forms and changes in the culture and societies of ancient times.” Thus Marx’s model of modernization is an analysis of social change which emphasizes crisis and revolution. Apart from endogenous explanations emphasized by Spencer, there is also a place in Marx’s model for exogenous explanations of social change. His model offers a more global account which stresses connections between changes in one society and changes in others. Conflicts or Crisis such as wars and revolutions act as catalysts or accelerators speeding up social change. “Change is viewed in essentially dialectical terms. In other words, emphasis falls on conflict and on consequences which are not only unintended, but very opposite of what was planned or expected”. Marx’s model appears to be concerned with both small and large scale “acts of oppression and resistance that contribute to long-term change” in a given society. Marx and his followers recognize the interactions that exist among cultures (societies) of the world as among the possible causes of social change. According to them, diffusion of ideas from one place to the other is inevitable since societies were/are in close contact with one another through trade, migration, immigration, conquest, inter-marriage and even slavery, etc. It was the exogenous explanations of social change provoked by encounters between cultures that led anthropologists to being interested in the study of culture contact to develop the concepts of diffusion and acculturation. Proponents of Marx’s model disregarded or de-emphasized independent inventions as a process of cultural change” contending that it was easier for people to borrow new ways of behaviour, new institutions and new artifacts from others than it was to discover or invent them for themselves. Functionalist theories in sociology imply a social evolutionary mechanism which archeologists refers to as system theory, explains the functions of each part of the society. The functionalist perceive society as consisting of a number of separate parts which are interdependent or connected, so that changes in one part produce changes

in at least one other part and since these parts are interdependent, these tend to keep the society in a state of equilibrium. Functionalists liken society to a living “organism in which each part of the organism contributes to its survival. Emphasis are on what maintains a system, not what changes it.” To them a change is means of maintaining the equilibrium of a society. Thus, functionalists believe that each institution and customs has functions and the reason for their existence is precisely the contributions they make for the survival of society. And the idea of social equilibrium is to keep or “maintain” society as a whole. However, they acknowledge the fact that not all the institutions that contributes to society’s “stability all the time”, nor do they “assume that only particular part can fulfill any given function”, a fact that led to the term “dysfunction which refers to an element or process of society that actually disrupt or harm a social system or lead to a decrease in stability”. No institution in a given society is indispensable in “the performance of a given function. In different societies or periods, different institutions may act as functional equivalents, analogues or alternatives. The theories are relevant to my work in that it stresses the development of pottery from the crude method of pottery production to the mechanized system.

### 1.9 Empirical Literature

No single literature has been discovered to have dealt directly with the topic under discussion, but there are scholars who have related and relevant information, for the study under discussion/examination.

In an attempt to carry out a survey of Afikpo traditional pottery focused basically on the identification and analysis of clay samples found in the area, the production techniques, as well as the processes of clay prospecting. In addition drew attention to the deplorable state of Afikpo traditional pottery with emphasis on forms classifications and their functions and the negative consequences of modernity in their traditional pottery as a whole. While others made similar attempts to study the traditional pottery of Ishiagu, Inyi, Enugu Agidi, Ezeagu, and Okigwe areas respectively. Pottery to an archeologist is almost an object of sedentism. Its appearance and development signifies an important stride in the progress of man. Archeologist research in many parts of the world points to its antiquity and

universality. Potters classification and identification was and has continued to occupy prominent position in the reconstruction of ancient culture. Though most of the pottery finds encountered by the archeologists appear in form of sherds, there are instances where these sherds are used to reconstruct and identify a particular pottery shape before analysis begin. When pottery form is studied in its entirety. It provides the archeologists with important behavioural data about a society because pottery forms and decoration are culturally based, they reflect the people’s belief system and other practices for the re-creation of life. Similar attempts to study the traditional pottery of Ishiagu, Inyi, Enugu-Agidi, Ezeagu, Ikeredu, and Okigwe area respectively. They also identified certain pottery forms produced by the traditional potters in their areas of study. However, they went further to study the type of decorative techniques adopted by the potters, which include incision, impression, relief and colour decorations (using colours derived from plants, characterized by geometric and semi-abstract motifs derived from nature). Some of the forms were adopted from the economic fruits such as cashew, oranges etc. but failed to prove whether these forms are as results of certain changes in the economic life of the people or had been the case since the prehistoric era. Fieldwork in certain Igbo pottery areas (Afikpo in Ebonyi; Inyi in Anambra State, Nrobo and Ehandiagu in Enugu State). Modern ceramics industry, Umuahia and the Ceramic Department of PRODA Enugu’ where he observed and documented the various processes of pottery making and decorations of both levels-modern and traditional. Another area emphasized by the works of these scholars is the classification of Igbo pottery forms into ‘Ite’ and ‘Oku’ categories, a classification that had already been identified in his broad study of Igbo pottery. Ochi is probably the first indigenous scholar to attempt abroad way survey of Igbo pottery locating the following pottery areas: Afikpo, Inyi, Ishiagu, Ugbo, Enugu-Agidi, Ogugu, Anam, Okija and many others; identifying some of the forms produced from each area, particularly those from Ugbo, Ishiagu, Inyi, Ozalla and Ogugu. His study like those of his counterparts covered various areas of pottery production techniques (hand building, drying, decoration, firing to marketing with specific examples from these parts of Igbo land. Another broad study of

Igbo pottery was conducted. Specific reference were made to Awha, Ishiagu and Awgbu, but still drew attention to their local pottery processes which he lumped together without specifying the area associated with such processes, but they are no doubt common to pottery centres in Igboland. A study of pot-making in parts of Igboland from an archaeological perspective with particular reference to manufacturing processes and decorations of pots in Aguleri, Inyi, Owerre and Ezukala. He observed that in Igboland decorations are not intended for aesthetic considerations but to convey meanings, which are of cosmic and ritual significance to the people's world view. He learnt from the local potters in these areas, that before the emergence of other containers, local pottery products were in high demand and participation in the craft was also very high because of its position in the economic well-being of the people. But today the situation has changed, the profession is no longer buoyant as a result, the number of practicing potters have reduced drastically, the women have embraced other jobs which they consider lucrative and less tedious. An ethno archeological study of pottery in Okigwe with particular reference to Ishiagu and Isuochi; the two major pottery centres which had/have been responsible for the provision of pottery needs of the people of Okigwe area since the pre-colonial era. As archeologists, they went beyond the usual documentation of pottery processes, techniques of decoration, classification of types, forms and functions, pottery distribution or marketing to include "petrographic studies of potsherd derived from both ethnographic and archeological context," which according to him would enhance the understanding of "possible source(s) of pottery wares and the human behavioural patterns associated with pottery production" in the area. The above studies appear to be the only ones that have provided a rich insight into the traditional pottery of Afikpo and Ishiagu, though they did not mention Ekpene Ukim which is one of the centres, under the study but the ideas of the pottery qualities are almost the same, all over the world where it is practiced. There appears to be some measure of agreement among them as they all focused on the traditional techniques of pottery production, clay prospecting and processing, types and methods of decoration as well as the marketing of pots. The same model of classification of

pots according to form and functions first adopted by Ochi seems to have spread through the writings. Relevance to the understanding of the relationship between the past and present works of Igbo pottery communities. The relationship of ancient Igbo-Ukwu arts and culture and that of modern Igbo involving the analysis of materials, styles, motifs, decoration and technology, which contains a richly documented and illustrated account of pottery produced in parts of Nigeria including; Afikpo, Ishiagu areas. They also drew attention to some of the factors responsible for the decline and survival of traditional pottery, with particular reference to the influence of imported and locally manufactured containers, their utilitarian and ideological functions. Special attention was given to the characteristics forms, motifs and techniques of decoration in traditional African art including pottery, as well as their origin. The scholars identified the environment, culture and cosmic bodies as the main sources of the forms and decorations produced by the artist, which he copies or abstracts for this purpose. Cosmic bodies refer to the moon, sun and stars, while the environment refers to its content such as plants, animals, birds, fishes etc. which can be adopted for various creative possibilities. Aniakor analyzed the aesthetics of Igbo pottery decorations, while Ali and Anozie outlined the various types recurrent in Igbo pottery in the past and present.

Only very few of the works above provided some hints on the impacts of modernity occasioned by the introduction of related products such as plastics, glass, aluminum products etc. on the traditional pottery of the areas studied. There are, however, some other studies which although do not provide direct information on the pottery of these areas, they are no doubt relevant to this study. These group of scholars raised pertinent issues on what they regarded as the impediments on the growth and development of African indigenous pottery. Unlike Ochi and his counter-parts who drew our attention to the discontinuity in Igbo traditional pottery, they identified and high lightened specifically certain factors, which they consider are responsible. The problems of Africa traditional technology to the emergence of modern products, introduction of modern machinery (improvement in production methods) and the European religious exploits in Africa. The disappearance of

indigenous iron mining and smelting technology in Nigeria, for instance, owe in part the competition from imported bar-iron and cheap ready-made iron blades from Germany. The change in indigenous pottery to the discovery of new use of ceramic products in modern technology. The problem to the death of renowned traditional artists, who during their life time and because of weak apprenticeship system could not pass on the skill to the next Generation. When they died, having not trained capable hands to take over from them, society would have lost the services of renowned women who in the past greatly contributed to the development of African indigenous technology. The problem was narrowed down to the African indigenous pottery technology to the impact of the use of modern containers such as plastics and enamel wares “informed by the adverse impact of Western education on traditional societies.” Some scholars are however optimistic that the extinction is because of the values both the modern and traditional societies still place on some aspects of the pottery types. Disappointment were expressed over the attitudes of the Africans who after the Europeans had left continued to import these goods to the detriment of traditional products. The British perception of the traditional art of Africa as an important factor responsible for present state of African indigenous technology. According to him, the British missionaries looked upon the African indigenous products as “mere products of raw or untamed emotions which had no particular realistic cultural importance to the Africans” but were rather objects of idol worship inimical to Christian evangelism. As a result, they “came in full force with all the materials, spiritual and psychological instruments needed” to destroy the technology of Africa, to be able “to spread and perpetuate their religion in Africa”. The primary purpose of Christian missionary activities in Africa was to sweep aside the culture of the people and plant in its place their own culture, which they consider civilized. And as observed, since Christianity is culture-bond, the missionaries used it as powerful instrument to change the people’s way of life. Historical and predictable rates of change are not characteristics of African, past or present. Change is volatile and has considerable influence on art. But, art, unlike language or social structure may change without dramatically altering the shape of individual cultures.

According to them, characteristics historical processes that resulted in change can be identified from the available evidence in African art. They went further to add that such historical processes might contribute to the evolution of an art style. However, arguments that apart from the European and missionary activities that have contributed to the changes in African indigenous technology, ‘in most parts of Africa, there are complex systems of occupational stigmatization’ such as caste system, norms, taboos, or sex discrimination and the attendant ideologies or beliefs systems that had negative consequences on the development of African indigenous technology. He identified blacksmithing and pottery making as the commonly stigmatized indigenous technology in many parts of Africa, namely: Darfur, Nupe, Orba-Nsukka, Amogwu-Aku, Afikpo etc. In support of this argument, some scholars added that the collapse of African cultures was not only as a result of European contact but also due to their state of decline and corruption before the emergence of the Europeans. He noted that inherent weaknesses in these cultures themselves caused by corruption and intertribal wars gave room to the new ways of life brought by the Europeans. Others include research works is by the view that the economy of the people of Ishiagu largely depends on the availability of some local crafts and industries in the area such as pottery, smithing, weaving, carving and mining. He noted that pottery, for instance, has over the years proved a viable occupation which offered employment for a sizeable number of women in Ishiagu and has remained the only craft still in practice. He claims that the availability of clay rocks (montmorillonite and kaolinite) which are essential raw materials for pottery making, is probably responsible for the practice of pottery in Ishiagu and may have helped to sustain it till recent times. In study of urban life and urban development in Igboland traced the growth of urban centres from the pre-colonial to the present and how this development was fostered by the emergence of British missionaries and administrators, and the implications on Igbo cultural life. Factors responsible for continuity in traditional pottery in some communities. The characteristic forms, technical qualities and cultural peculiarities which are lacking in contemporary or modern pottery and other related products. However, its relationship with the cultural system, pottery as part of

the cultural system performs certain functions which combined with those of other parts to sustain the system. In turn, these functions have made possible the survival of pottery in the society. New uses of traditional pottery and certain modification that have enabled it to fit into these uses. Modernization, through the process of imitation, invention, innovation or exploration has been identified as an important instrument for the adaptation of traditional pottery into utilization. The evidence provided by the archeological work done in various centres in Afikpore no doubt useful in the reconstruction of the link between the pottery forms of the ancient society and that of the present generation. Also, the account of the excavation works at various centres at Igbo-Ukwu, Nok, Ife, Oyo, Essie, Benin, etc. involving the analysis and classification of decorative pattern and types of pottery. Finally, pottery studies are significant as they provided some rich insight into the origins and migrations of Afikpo people as well as their ecology and economic life in general. A study of historical archaeology in Nigeria with emphasis on iron and pottery making. He used pottery making in Ilora and its relationship with old Oyo pottery finds as point of contact with other pottery centres in Nigeria. He examined the various processes of pottery manufacturing, the decorative techniques, forms and functions. An ecological technological approach to the study of pottery production and craft specialization has been successfully applied to archaeological Ceramics from various centres and region in the America and continental Europe. Although pottery production in the historic period in Britain has commanded the attention of Ceramics specialists, the study of pre-historic pottery has been directed heavily towards the identification of trade. For most of the first half of this century, pottery studies were based almost exclusively on Morphology and decoration. Pottery vessels were often regarded as little more than chronological indices or cultural sign-posts symbolizing the ethnic affiliation of their owners. Major stylistic variation was interpreted explicitly as the materials manifestation of new “culture whilst” minor adjustment in shape and decoration were seen as representing a later phase within a culture zone. Most of the writers on Paleolithic art, seem to suggest that pottery forms in the Paleolithic period was essentially animal and human figurines, indicating limited use to

which pottery vessels were put at that time of human development. The reason is not difficult to find. Pottery did not start with the making of pots, long before vessels were made “(as far back as 25,000 B.C) small figurines representing human beings were moulded in clay and baked, at first in the sun”. As we examined the life of the Paleolithic communities, particularly those of the early Stone Age. People of this period did not settle life and as nomadic hunters gatherers, whose pre-occupation was to move from one place to another in search of food and wild animals, which they ate raw. Sometimes in situ, the production and usage of storage containers might have been those derived from organic materials, such as gourds, ostrich egg shell, sections of bamboo etc. which later became the characteristics of pottery vessels forms “in low levels of culture, Ibeanu has also claimed that the fact that these materials “could not withstand cooking on fire, might have led them into copying with clay some natural objects.”

## **2.0. Relationship of Pottery with Archaeology**

Archaeological survey, however, is the study of pottery/potsherd derived in archaeological sites to help archaeologists to understand the cultural setting of the community they are studying. Besides, potsherds constitute over 80% of cultural materials found in archaeological sites. This is because potsherds indestructible and a pot can break into one hundred pieces. This made potsherds ubiquitous in archaeological sites. Before the introduction of absolute dating methods, pottery was used by archaeologists, primarily as a chronological indicator and to reconstruct its various forms, sizes and decorative motifs. Recently, however, emphasis has shifted toward the study of internal fabric of pottery such as inclusion (both natural and cultural) and clay minerals. This type of study helps archaeologists to trace source(s) of raw materials and possible centre(s) of pottery production and distribution. These studies have prehistoric trade contacts between different communities and possible exchange routes or distribution patterns. It has been observed that the present is key to the past. That is to say that by studying the present material culture items as they are made, used and changes in their functions, it will help us understand how these artefacts were possibly used in the past. For instance, potsherds when excavated by archaeologists

cannot tell much about their marker(s) until the archaeologists undertakes a study of present societies and pottery centres in and around the archaeological sites. This will help the archaeologist to establish whether or not there is any relationship between the site and the present occupants of the area and or their distant relations. The insight gained by studying the present society would enable the archaeologist to classify the potsherds from sites into pottery types and functions. In this way we gain an insight into the possible uses of these pottery wares in the past and their socio-cultural milieu. Archaeologists therefore study pottery from two perspectives; physical attributes and cultural insight archaeologist can gain about the society that made and used the pottery wares.

### 2.1. Pottery in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Era

It is noted that traditional pottery in Southeastern Nigeria, which the project centres on, though emphasis here, in the study is on Afikpo, Ishiagu and Ekpene Ukim. Lack adequate documented history. In Nigeria there is no properly documented history of pottery development comparable with what is obtained in china and Europe where the process of technical development in pottery has been fully documented.

### 2.2. Conclusion

It has been observed that the present is key to the past. That is to say that by studying the present material culture items as they are made, used and changes in their functions, it will help us understand how these artefacts were possibly used in the past. For instance, potsherds when excavated by archaeologists cannot tell much about their marker(s) until the archaeologists undertakes a study of present societies and pottery centres in and around the archaeological sites.

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