

THE PERSISTENT THREATS OF GLOBALIZATION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The entry of Globalization into Africa, or more aptly, Africa's Entry into the 'Global Village' has left the Continent at a more disadvantaged position. The emerging threats posed by Globalization and even the lingering effects have contributed, in no minute measure, to the present impoverished state the Continent now finds herself. The effects of these threats which still strongly persist till date form the thesis of this paper. Economically, Africa's underdevelopment can be traced to her integration into the currents of Globalization. Her Political woes can also be linked to the advent of Globalization on the continent, accounting for the failed states and governance she now experiences due to lack of proper and progressive growth of the globally imposed Democratic governance on Africa's governance model. The socio-cultural sphere is also not left out as Westernization via Globalization is subtly but surely eroding the cultural identity of Africa and her people. These enduring threats and more posed by globalization may end up annihilating the Continent if strong measures and will is not taken by Africans to radically re-orientate and reinstate a true African value and identity that will gradually be able to contend and prevail against the raging tsunami of Globalization on the continent.

Keywords: Globalization, Global Village, Poverty, Democratic Governance, Economic Development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globalization is not a new term. However, over the past few decades, it has gained more attention than, probably, any other term. It is recorded that globalization is taking place at a fast rate. (Dreher et al 2008:2). Globalization is the growing integration of economies and societies around the world.(Ayenagbo et al 2012:157). It affects all spheres of economic, cultural, environmental and social- up to relations between states and nations from the five continents. It includes an intensification of cross-national cultural, economic, political and social processes on scales which are at the level of global, supranational, national, regional and local. (Renne & Martens 2003:3). That the world has become a global village is a metaphor often invoked to depict the global interdependence and the increasing interaction and the integration of economic activities of human societies around the world. (Ajayi 2001:2). In more concrete terms, globalization is the intensification of cross border trade and increased financial and foreign direct investments flows among nations, promoted by the

rapid advancement in and the liberalization of communication and information technology. (Islam 1999:3, Aninat 2002:2).

Although globalization as a concept is loaded with ambiguities emanating from the different schools of thought, there seems to be a consensus, however, that it is a compression of space and time more than ever before in such a way that people from different and diverse areas of the globe are able to interact and associate more closely amongst themselves in such a manner that resembles a small village. (UNPAN 2002:4)

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The world has become a global village since the advent of Globalization. Due to this, the world witnessed an increased interdependence in the past three decades. However, it seems the developed nations are the beneficiaries of the dividends of globalization as their share of world trade and finances have been expanded at the expense of developing countries in general and Africa in particular. Thus, the process exacerbates inequality between the world's region and poverty in the developing world, of which Africa is super most. (Ayenagboet al 2002:110).

Globalization seems inevitable and its consequences invasive. Africa has long been at the receiving end of its negative effects, no thanks to her weakened economic and political systems. The region's poor performance accounts for the political and social instability and the rise of authoritarian rule that characterized most of post-colonial Africa. This has further weakened Africa's inability to deal with the threats posed by Globalization. (UNPAN 2002). The incorporation of African economies into the global capitalist system birthed significant changes on the African nations. Through Globalization, as we now know it, started around the end of the Cold War, the steady integration of Africa into the more aggressive and dominating global economy dates back to the slave era of 1500-1890. (Ogot 1999:43). This translated into the colonial era which lasted between 1884-1960. The period when most African nations gained National independence from their erstwhile colonial masters. But this did not, neither has it, stopped the continuous globalization of Africa. On the contrary, the decades between the beginning of Africa's decolonization in the 60s and the end of the cold war in 1991 further consolidated on the previous achievements of global integration of Africa. A trend that has now been consolidated as Globalization in the guise of developing and meeting up the standard of our previous colonial masters. (www.science.jrank.org)

Globalization, as we now know it, has gone a long way in cementing the imperialist's agenda in Africa. Most Africans and African Scholars are of the view that it has imposed rigid conditions and modifications on the continent as a whole and on the economy in particular. (www.science.jrank.org)

The economic history of the world teaches us that the evolution of societies, particularly or economic reasons, and always induced crisis whose resolutions have often found an end only through the application of conflicts of all kinds and by the use of coercion or submission. The relations of domination have been established in a systematic manner, just like what the great economies are now trying to impose through a more peaceful way but whose effects can lead to implications where violence can be a constant feature. Nowadays, in the era of

Globalization, new ways of dominations are insinuated, whose innovation consists in the economic strangulation of the least developed, particularly of the African countries. The same cause always produces the same effect regardless of the evolution of people.

It is not certain if those who are still denied a fair share in the distribution of the fruits of global growth, economically, politically and socially, are much longer willing to passively suffer immoderate increases in the development gap between the rich and the poor, as in this case, those of Africa which continue to grow. (Sapkota 2009:14). We shall consider these aspects highlighted above in detail.

2.1 Africa's Economic Globalization.

In actual terms, there is no other aspect of Africa that has been affected negatively by the forces of Globalization as her Economy. Economically speaking, Globalization has reinforced the economic marginalization of African economies and their dependence on a few primary goods or which demand and prices are externally determined and controlled. This has led to a high rise in poverty and economic inequality as well as the inability of many Africans to play active roles in the political lives of their countries. (UNPAN 2002).

Economic stagnation has in real terms triggered the brain drain from Africa, further weakening the ability of African Nations to manage their economies effectively and efficiently.

Globalization limits the ability of African Governments to take proactive and conscious measures towards facilitating the emergence of local or indigenous entrepreneurs by insisting on the need for the African market to open up for imported products. Local contents need to be encouraged and exports needs to take pre-eminence over imports.

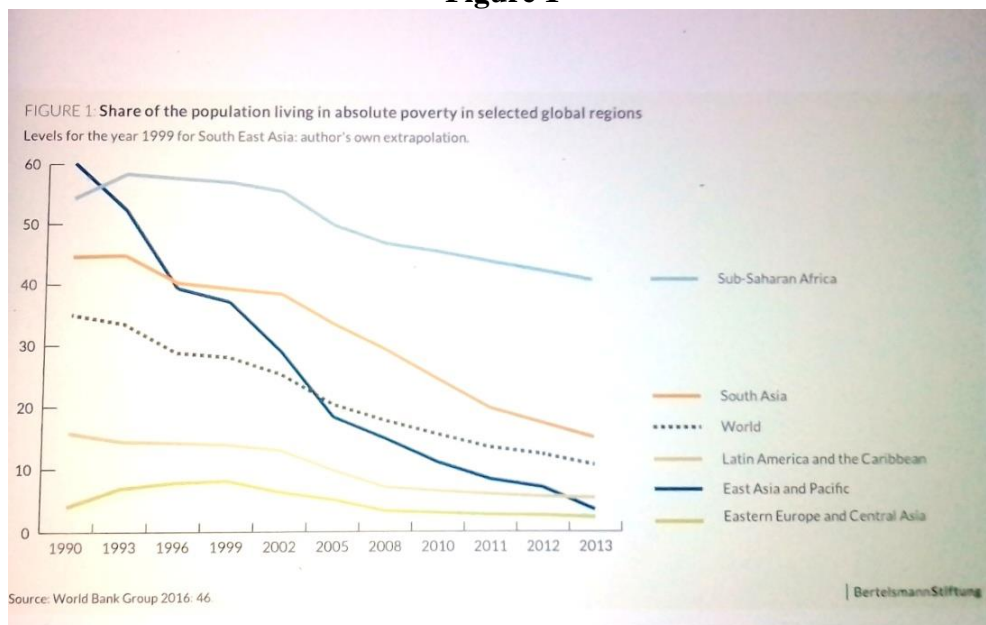
Globalization's ideology of free-market liberalism and property-based democracy remains a continuous licence or cultural imperialism and the institutionalization of both political and economic domination and exploitation of the weaker parties (i.e the developing economies) through their internal agents. (Tandon 1998A:2).

Imposing economic specialization based on the needs and interests of eternal forces transforms the economies of African nations into a series of overseas appendages but with very little linkages among them. Division among the African nations are accentuated and the emergence of a common consciousness such as Pan Africanism, is frustrated. (UNPAN 2002).

The reduction of poverty, or more precisely, absolute poverty is very salient to the less Developed Countries (LDCs). Judging by the internationally accepted standard, a person is poor if he or she earns less than \$1.90/day as purchasing power parity. As at 1990, when Globalization made its debut, 35% of the world's population, about 1.85billion people were adjudged to be living in absolute poverty. But as of 2003, less than 11% of the population in the world, about 800million people, were poor, despite the increase in world population.(world bank group 2016).

As encouraging as this figure above looks, it is pertinent to note that absolute poverty varies from region to region with the developed, industrialized nations having practically none. In Eastern Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin American countries, figures have it that not more than 5% of the people in this region are absolutely poor. However, this is not the case with the Continent called Africa as shown in the figure below. In the case of Eastern Asia, her economic rise was predicated on her integration into the global economy which resulted in a huge decrease in the number of people living in poverty in this region. Within the period between 1990-2003, the number of people living in poverty dropped from 60.2% to a mere 3.5%. (World Bank Group 2016). However, in Sub Saharan Africa, the figure only regressed from 54.3% to 41% within the same time frame, indicating a relatively low reduction in poverty and also an indication that these LDCs benefitted little or nothing from globalization.

Figure 1



Source: World Bank Group 2016. (Sub Sahara Africa is the topmost line)

Thus, while emerging economies gained a lot from globalization, this cannot be said of African nations as Globalization has only impacted negatively on their already shaky economy. Globalization has thus become more of a threat to the poor African Nations rather than an opportunity for global action to eradicate poverty. (Obadina 1998:32).

Controls and regulations by international financial organizations like the IMF and World Bank, which are not auspicious for the economic growth of these LDCs in Africa further affect their level of indebtedness, vis-a-vis foreign loans and conditions of payment. The race by the LDCs to meet up these economic conditions leads them into further economic crisis

Also, import tariffs, which is a very important source of revenue for the government of these developing African Nations, is steadily being reduced in the face of Globalization. About 10%-30% of public revenues in sub-Saharan Africa is generated from import tariffs. A sharp contrast to a developed nation like Germany which only has less than 1% of her public revenue being generated from import tariffs. (Giesbert, Pfeiffer & Schotte 2016:9). This

causes a shortage of cash flow necessary to better develop these less developed nations of Africa. This problem arises as a result of the integration of these LDCs of Africa into a global Economy.

The heavy burden of foreign debt has greatly eroded their capacity to run their own affairs and respond to the demands of their own people.

It should be noted, however, that the bastions of Globalization are hypocritical in theory approach considering the fact that the western nations forcing the poorer nations to open up their doors to free-market are advocating policies they did not follow. The governments of virtually all developed nations gave their Agriculture and Industrial producers some level of protection at crucial stages of their economic development. But today's western leaders conveniently forget Economic History. (Tandon 1998:33). This is further buttressed by the fact that the same globalization process that champions the eradication of the great divide between the East and the West is negating the dissolution of the North-south Division.(CASS in Guardian 1999:14).

Two- thirds of LDCs are in Africa. A food surplus continent, 30 years back is now a food deficit. (UNDP HDR 1996:2). This is a disturbing statistics in Africa, which according to Thorbecke is the only developing region where poverty is increasing. (Thorbecke 1997:4). This development is also reflected in the GDP per capita growth which is growing more slowly in Africa than elsewhere in the world. It implies that per capita income gap between Africa and the rest of the world has consistently been growing since 1980, in both absolute and relative terms as indicated in the table below.

Figure. 2

TABLE 1: GDP per capita in USD purchasing power parity, ranked by percentage change.

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	Change (in percent)
Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan	4,503	5,526	7,695	11,461	13,236	+ 194 %
Sub-Saharan Africa	1,159	1,681	1,921	3,217	3,828	+ 230 %
Latin America and the Caribbean	4,586	6,382	9,003	13,471	15,470	+ 237 %
Advanced economies	10,122	19,669	29,223	40,027	45,924	+ 354 %
Emerging and developing Europe	4,400	7,277	9,921	17,161	21,372	+ 386 %
Emerging and developing Asia	560	1,338	2,783	6,909	9,997	+ 1,686 %

Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook Database October 2016. Downloaded on 20.1.2017. | BertelsmannStiftung

Source: IMF economic Outlook database. October 2016.

This severe and adverse effect of Globalization on the African Continent was brought to limelight in a UNDP report conducted as early as 2002, shortly after the phenomenon set in. The report had it that 22 sub-Saharan African countries had lower per capita income in the year 2000 than they did in the years between 1975-1985. (UNDP report 2002). Six years earlier in 1996, the same report had it that the gap in per capita income between the industrial

and developing worlds tripled from \$5,700 in 1960 to \$15,400 in 1993. (UNDP Human Development Report 1996:2). There is no doubt then that Globalization has created a vast Chasm between the North and the South. (Tandon 1988:3).

Furthermore, industries in sub-Saharan Africa have suffered significant loss due to cheap imports. The textile industries, for instance, in Nigeria, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania have been devastated by cheap imports. A consequence of premature and indiscriminate free trade propelled by the waves of Globalization. This has resulted in a decline in average annual growth rate of value-added in the industry in sub-Saharan Africa. It witnessed a decline from 2.2% to a mere 1.3% in the period between 1975-2000. Annual average gross national savings as a percentage of GDP also nose-dived from 20.6% to 12.8% between the same period. (World Bank 2002).

With a human development index of less than 0.500 for 2000, sub-sahara Africa ranks the lowest of all geographical regions in terms of Human Development. (UNDP Report 2002). All 24 countries at the bottom of the index and 30 out of the 34 at the bottom of the index are sub-Saharan Africa. (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization 2004). These and more woes are what Africa gets in a "Global Village".

The colonial imperialists are not relenting in their efforts to subjugate Africa and its people. In the year 2000, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was passed by the United States Senate during the era of President Bill Clinton. Also, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) spearheaded by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are part of the instruments put in place by the Western Developed Nations to further deplete whatever is left of Africa's Resources. These are devices to roll back whatever gains the LDCs of the Third World were able to make, economically, during the Cold War years. (Tandon 1998A:5).

To say that both the AGOA and the MAI were traps aimed at foisting- without much conscious resistance by the victims of the so-called 'Global Constitution'- a 'Global Economy' on Africa and other developing Economies would be an understatement. These constitutions allow the powerful international corporation's unfettered freedom to operate anywhere around the globe without any limitations by the policies of host Nations irrespective of the consequences of their operations to the Interests of the host Nations. (Obadina 1998:32).

2.2 Africa's Political Globalization

Democracy is alien to Africa. If it cannot be refined or reformed to sit well on the different social and cultural fabrics of Africa, there will always be friction and resistance and consequently and abuse in its execution resulting in failed efforts in nations where it is being artificially transplanted.

In the case of Africa, her leaders have been pressurized or coerced into adopting and enforcing policies and measures not beneficial to her people but rather to the foreign powers and their institutions all in the name of Globalization.

Liberal democracies, as we know it now, is causally related to the emergence of capitalism and market economies. This process was however preceded by the emergence of strong states

that rose from feudalism, which not only encouraged the rise of capitalism but also promoted the liberal economies powerful forces in the building of national cohesion and the emergence of nation-states. Till present times, strong government play a pivotal role in stimulating economic growth and ensuring the smooth running and stability of socio-economic and political means in society. (UNPAN 2002).

In the case of Africa, this was not the pattern as it followed a different path in that the economic changes brought about by our colonial masters were never designed or intended to promote true liberal national economies or consolidate the nation-states. Instead, the colonial powers brewed economies that will serve their own overseas interests and act as an extension of their territories and economies. This was why at independence, African nations inherited fragmented economies dominated by capitalists who were neither indigenous nor committed to the prosperity of the African Economies. They were rather interested in continuing and consolidating the leftovers of the colonial powers. They were not interested in building successful national economies and nation-states similar to those which they had in their own nations. (UNPAN 2002).

In the case of Africa, the fundamental principles of democracy have been lumped together with specific institutions, forms and processes that were conditioned by particular historical, social and cultural factors. There is utmost need by African countries to resist the attempt to equate or reduce the basic principles of democracy to a single, uniform arrangement so as to be able to develop their own methods of realizing the tenets or principles of democracy, most of which are embedded in documents such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's rights. (UNPAN 2002).

The cold war contributed significantly to the emergence of authoritarian rule in Africa which came in the form of one party or military regimes. This was a structure that was beneficial, not to Arica but to the two power blocs contending for dominance. With the end of the cold war, the powers withdrew their support for the majority of the African countries as they were considered no longer strategic in importance. This resulted in the 'failed states' spread across Africa within the past two to three decades. This singular development has impacted negatively on the democratic and developmental oriented regimes in Africa. (UNPAN 2002).

The end of the cold war together with the loss of strategic importance of Africa has also given rise to a reduction in Africa's international negotiation power and her ability to manoeuvre in the international system with a view of gaining a modicum of freedom of choice, autonomy and leverage in her dealings with the other powerful and not so powerful international governments. (UNPAN 2002).

This erosion of sovereignty also spreads to the economic and financial matters caused by the imposition of models, reforms, strategies and policies of development on African countries by the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Thus, Globalization has mostly not facilitated the establishment o the right economic conditions needed for genuine democracy and good governance to take roots in Africa. (UNPAN 2002).

Likewise, "The heavy burden of foreign debts has greatly eroded their capacity to run their own affairs and respond to the demands of the people"(SAPEM 1996:2). This unwholesome development has turned the continent into an empire of Chaos. (Akindele et al 2002:16).

The political globalization of Africa has impacted negatively on her Development and Democratic governance by the reduction in the capacity of her governments to determine and control events in their own countries, given the fact that the context, institutions and processes by which these decisions are arrived at are far from democratic. With the United Nations Security Council under the whims and caprices of the United States of America and her close associate-nations and their interests abound, the cases of external military interventions, influence or invasions into the affairs of these African nations, cannot be ruled out, as a matter of fact, has never been ruled out as cases like Libya, Sudan, Ivory Coast are only recent examples.

Thus, rather than being a plus or democratic governance in Africa, Globalization has eventually turned out to be more of a liability.

2.3 Other threats by Globalization on Africa.

The Americanization of the world system in the Era of Globalization came about as a result of the vacuum created by the demise of the Soviet Union. This has subsequently transformed into an increasingly growing American influence on all spheres of not only politics and economy but also Culture, technology and military. This buffers America's dominance on international issues and decision making, including those within the purview of major international institutions such as the UN, WTO and the Bretton-Woods institutions. To this extent, Globalization has increasingly but steadily taken the form of an imperial system under the American Hegemony. This has done a lot of harm in reshaping the indigenous African outlook in a globalized world. (UNPAN 2002).

Due to the advent of the Electronic and Internet mediums (the 'E's and 'I's) and gadgets in the era of Globalization, more people across the world can now better access the knowledge of others culture more than ever before. The 'E's and the 'I's mediums facilitate express and speedy cultural interrelations. This hasn't gone without its demerits. The American/European culture has deeply dominated and corroded the African culture immensely. What is termed 'pop' or 'popular' culture which originated from the western world has indeed become the 'pop' culture in Africa. A lot of the younger generation of Africans have lost or are gradually losing their identity to the wave of westernization coming from Globalization. In dressing, speech, music and even eating, Africa has been 'Globalized' into imbibing western culture to the detriment of ours. And with each passing day, the epidemic of Westernization brought about by globalization is gradually erasing the true African Identity and replacing it with the Globalized Identity. (Hamdi in www.iiste.org)

The world is gradually moving in a unidirectional manner and the tendency towards uniformity has never been so appealing as it is now. Consequently, there is a serious concern that nations like Nigeria whose contributions to the internet pool is low may lose their identity. (Otokhine 2000:2). If this trend continues, a sort of cultural imperialism which will seek to enslave the African mind leaving in its wake a cultureless or culturally disoriented people may become a permanent feature of Africa and Africans. (Otokhine 2002:2).

However, it can be argued that the above woes are not solely a consequence of Globalization. Combined factors of poor institutions, poor governance, corruption, widespread of political and civil unrest (mostly triggered and sustained by Foreign Governments), eroding

educational systems and human capital and lack of diversification of the economy also contributed to it. But it is obvious that the global hegemonic ideology of globalization blocks the search and even the attempt and efforts at propounding solutions to these myriads of problems.(Samir 1985:54, Ake 1995:69).

3.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusively, the planetary phenomenon of Globalization is nothing but a new order of marginalization of the African continent. Its universalisation of communication, mass production, market exchanges and redistribution, rather than engender new ideas and developmental orientation in Africa, subverts her autonomy and powers of self-determination. (Akindele et al 2002:46). These factors clearly raise the problems of marginalization in Globalization, which is in reality, the dynamics of underdevelopment- the development of underdevelopment by agents of development. (Ake 1996:14).

The result of Globalization in Africa is basically a competition between the palatial centres (Developed World) and the slums (Africa) of the village where a preponderant and majority of the people daily sink deeper into poverty and misery. (Madunagu 1999:53)

The threats or negative impacts posed by Globalization in Africa far outweigh the positive. To brace up against this scenario, Africa must meet two major challenges which include introducing far-reaching changes in the assumptions, values and objectives of the existing states so as to transform them into truly developmental states that are strong without being authoritarian. Secondly, African Economy needs to be diversified away from dependence on only a few primary commodities, especially, depleting natural resources which constitutes enclaves in the overall economy in order to ensure a balance between agriculture and manufacturing thus increasing the competitiveness of African goods in the world market.

Developing countries should retain the idea of an activist state in reacting to the effects of Globalization. (Ohiorhenuan 1998:14). This view was also propagated by Samir Amin and Tandon in their earlier works. The crux of this argument is that Africa's revolutionaries and activists must actively become engaged in creating and building alternative (new) structures of power for organizing production based on the core values of humanity and environmental sustainability. (Tandon 1998:36, Amir 1987:86, Amir 1990:37).

We need to value re-orientation in Africa. Africans need to make conscious efforts to educate and enlighten themselves so they don't keep perishing in the ignorance of Western-oriented Global utopia. We need to be more conscious of our own identity than any other that is being sold to us in the name of Globalization or Civilization, after all, civilization started in Africa way back in the land of the Pharaohs. African leaders must cease to be mere onlookers who are either cowards or traitors on issues affecting their economic, social, political and cultural lives. They must not resign to fate, vis-a-vis the ferocious claws of globalization and they must realize that it is better to be a 'king' in a jungle than a deprived and malnourished messenger in the 'city'. (Fanon 1961:8). Thus "the people of Africa will have to empower themselves to repossess their own development. (Ake 1996:122).

In addition, a gradual but steady process of rebuilding a healthy national image should follow. Mechanisms like fighting corruption, encouraging own cultural performance over foreign infiltrations and negotiating their terms of membership in the global village will help

restore Africa's lost glory. These will, however, necessitate a strong commitment and will that is truly African in nature. (Akindele et al 2002:45).

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