INTERROGATING AFRICA'S PLACE IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES.

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores the position of Africa in a globalized world and the concomitant issues and challenges posed by globalization to the continent. It does this by examining how globalization affects Africa's economic base, and the continents ability to compete in the global market place on the one hand as well as the socio-political super-structures that make up the African continent as a whole on the other hand. The paper further goes on to shed light on the impact of globalization on Africa's cultural identity and the challenges that arise from the homogenizing effect of globalization on Africa's vast cultural diversity. Overall, this paper is an attempt to provide a concise overview of the complexities of Africa's place in a globalized world. The paper therefore seeks to examine the position and place of Africa in the global economy and to highlight key sustainable approaches which African countries can adopt if it is to benefit from the phenomenon of globalization. The Dependency Theory was adopted as a theoretical framework. The study is a qualitative one where data was gotten from secondary sources such as books, academic journals, newspaper articles, and Internet sources. Finally, the data generated was analyzed through a combination of discourse and qualitative methods.

Keywords: Africa, Globalized, Word, Issues and Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

The cliché "the world is fast becoming a global village" is increasingly used in modern literatures and discourse to describe the growing nexus between economic, socio-cultural and political interdependence and interconnectedness of nations into a unified global system. The earliest record of globalization dates back to the period roughly coinciding with the first century BC, when Chinese luxury products made their way to Rome, through the famous Silk road (National Geographic Society, 2022). However, it will prove a daunting task to trace the exact origins of globalization. Be that as it may, contemporary globalization is a post-world war II phenomena, which was further ossified by the "west" following the end of the cold war and it quickly formed the basis of a new world order which is still very much in play to this present day.(SaliuandAremu, 2013:227). Globalization itself is a phenomena that defies a single, universally acceptable definition, however, in spite of the pluralism in definition, one definition that stands out is one offered by (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2011) who conceptualized globalization in the following words "globalization encompasses many trends, including expanded international trade, telecommunications, monetary coordination, multinational cooperation’s, technical and scientific cooperation, cultural exchanges of new types and scales, migration and refugee flows and relations between the world's rich and poor countries". This definition encompasses what globalization is all about.

While some scholars argue that globalization is a positive force, the vast majority especially of Third world decent are skeptical and hold a critical view of its impact on Africa in particular and the global-south in general. The former often cite increased economic growth, technology transfer, access to new markets, cultural exchanges, better healthcare as some of the contributions of globalization to the continent, the later are however quick to point out economic inequality, exploitation of resources, cultural erosion, dependence on foreign aid, loan conditionality of the

Bretton Woods institutions (WORLD BANK and IMF) and their attendant disruptive Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) etc. as the maleficent contributions of globalization to Africa (Josphert, 2012). With the exception of a few, virtually all African states have implemented economic reforms in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), however, the so-called SAP's have done more harm than good to Africa and have ultimately not helped Africa to integrate into the global economy.

History has shown that Africa is undoubtedly one out of the seven continents in the world which has a knack for adhering to the Structural Adjustment Programs of the Bretton Woods Institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The advocacy for market liberalization took the front burner in many African economies, from the 1970's through the 1990's. The SAP's which held great promise of first stabilizing and eventually transforming African economies, ultimately engendered a nose-dive trend in many African economies, which unfortunately, a lot of African countries are yet to recover from till today (Dongeet.al. 2012). Unlike in Africa, the SAP's and the liberalization of economies yielded remarkable results in Asia, which further boosted their manufacturing sector and also snowballed into the development of other sectors, especially in East Asia (Sundra et.al, 2021). Both Dongeel.al (2012) and Sundaramet.al (2011) accede to the fact that domestic policies played important roles in affecting the outcome of globalization in those regions, it is however impossible to downplay shrewdness also as a useful tool in micro economic bargains. Hence the inability of the SAP's in addressing the economic woes in Africa can be attributed to the docile myopicness of African leaders, who did not foresee, let alone anticipate the economic effects of the extreme policies of liberalization. Similarly, although severely affected by the global oil crises at the time, other regions of the world were found more resilient in recovering from the said crises. (Josphert, 2012) contends that Africa's share in international trade is small and continues to decline and this is due in part to the fact that the main stay of most African economies is the export of primary products and the import of non-primary products.

It is therefore the case that while the rapidly spinning wheels of globalization continue to be beneficial to the "developed" countries of the world, propelling them towards the legendary El-Dorado, Africa appears to be perpetually trapped in the crushing jaws of globalization's wheels.

Conceptual Clarification

Globalization is one topic which has fallen victim to definitional pluralism. This is evident in the multiplicity of definitions that abound. It is imperative to note that when it comes to conceptualizing globalization, two broad categories often compete (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2011): The first category which conjures a rather optimistic and congenial depiction of globalization, the (Optimistic view) view, sees globalization as "the fruition of liberal economic principles" (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2011). Flowing from this standpoint, Friedmann (1999: 1-2) as cited in (SaliuandAremu, 2013:224) asserted that "Globalization is the integration of the markets, finance and technology in a way that is shrinking the world from a medium to a small size and enabling each of us to reach around the world farther, faster and cheaper than ever before. Like all previous international systems, it is directly or indirectly shaping the domestic policies, economic policies and foreign relations of virtually all states". Similarly, Cerry (1994) opines that globalization consists of the "increase in trade and investment due to the falling barriers of the interdependence of countries". Also towing the optimistic line of the conceptualization of globalization, Tandon (1998) posits that "globalization seeks to remove all national barriers to free movement of international capital and this process is accelerated and facilitated by the supersonic transformation in information technology". Still within the ambit of the optimistic view, Ibrahim (2013) argued that "globalization is mainly a phenomenon of capital mobility. Its prongs are: (i) Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and (ii) International Portfolio Flows (IPF's)".

The second categorization which is critical of and views globalization through a rather cynical lens, the (pessimistic view), sees globalization as a construct "created by the dominant forces" in the world, "to serve their specific interests" (Madunagu 1999 as cited in Ibrahim 2013). This perspective is "based on the understanding that while globalization projects a situation of equal opportunities for all countries to tap from global resources, there is yet, a paradox of unequal capability, especially on the part of the developing countries"(SaliuandAremu, 2013:226). Flowing from this standpoint, Ibrahim (2013) points out dictatorial regimes, social conflicts, international tensions such as the cold war, whose outcome has further stymied Africa's development as some of the vestiges of Globalization on the African continent. (Bush.sR, 2008) as cited in (MuthokaSila et.al, 2015) posits that "Africa's underdevelopment was designed and is being effected by western powers through the arms of subservient local politicians". This position clearly points to the complicity of comprador bourgeoisies within the African continent who continuously collude with their western contacts to subvert, scuttle and ultimately stymie Africa's growth and development. Further going down the rabbit hole, Ajayi (2003) opines that the subaltern position African economies occupy within the larger framework of the global economy, is as a result of the perpetual isolation from "the global market through market controls and unwelcome policy regimes".

Theoretical Framework

The Dependency Theory has been adopted to give the paper a theoretical base. Dependency theory has its roots in the writings of prominent scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank, Raul Presbisch, Theonio Dos Santos, Enrique Cardozo, Edelberto Torres-Rivas and

Samir Amin. Dependency theory at best attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions.

Offiong (1980:73) conceptualizes dependency as "the situation that the history of colonial imperialism has left and that modern imperialism creates in under-developed countries". Similarly, Johnson (1972: 72), posits that dependency is imperialism seen from the perspective of underdevelopment. Vied from this standpoint, dependency is an evolutionary process through which the (developmental or otherwise) histories of various societies have evolved into the contemporary reality of such societies. (Jacob et.al. 2020).

Underdeveloped nations have passed through three stages of dependency, Theotonio Dos Santos (1970) posits. The first stage; colonial dependency, which began as early as the sixteenth century in some parts of the world, mainly outside Europe, witnessed the colonization of other regions of the world and the establishment of monopolies over land, mines, and labor by European powers. European control over trade relations in those regions granted them the veritable tool to appropriate surplus wealth from those regions. The economic fate of the colonized regions was powerfully shaped and permanently sealed by their subordination to European powers.

Financial-industrial dependency constitutes the second form of dependency as surmised by Theotonio Dos Santos (1970). This form dates back to the late nineteenth century. The overarching feature was the metastasizing of Europe's industrial capital base to the underdeveloped regions of the world. This form of dependency was an intrinsic part of the monopolistic phase of capitalist development. Financial-industrial dependency involved heavy investment of big capitalists in the world's backward regions mainly for the purpose of extracting raw materials to be exported back to the core nations. Emeh (2013).

New dependency is the nascent form of dependency. This type of dependency began in the aftermath of World War II and is present till today. This form of dependency witnessed the emergence of Transnational Corporations, engaging in extensive ferocious economic investments in Third World countries. Theotonio Dos Santos (1970)

In trying to conceptualize the Dependency theory, (Randall and Theobald 1998, 120) contend that "the condition of underdevelopment is precisely the result of the incorporation of the Third World economies into the capitalist world system which is dominated by the West and North America", this therefore suggests a situation whereby the survival, growth and development of a country or region is directly dependent on the support or otherwise it receives from a way advanced and "developed" nation or region. Stemming from this definition, the third world countries are the least economically developed and the "underdeveloped" countries of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, who share certain common characteristics such as distorted and highly dependent economies devoted to producing primary products for the developed world and provide markets for the finished goods of the developed world; traditional rural social structures; high population growth and widespread poverty (Woldu, 2000). Woldu still adds that despite the widespread poverty of the countryside and the urban shantytowns, the ruling elites of most third world countries are outrageously wealthy. Also endemic to the third world are high poverty rates, lowlife expectancy, high birthrates, and more often than not, economic dependence on the advanced countries of the World who are in contrast known as The developed world, "the core" or "the first world".

As observed by Sunkel (1969), dependency proffers explanation to the economic underdevelopment of nation states in terms of the external influences, be it political, economic or cultural, on the national development of the third world. The historical aspect of dependency is emphasized in the definition given below by Theotonio Dos Santos:

"Dependency is...an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economics...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected" (Dos Santos, 1971).

One major point to note from the definitions given thus far is that, dependency stratifies the International system into two compartments, comprised of the core/periphery or metropolitan/satellite, which can be roughly interpreted as the developed and underdeveloped nations of the world. The developed nations are the advanced and highly industrialized nations of the world, whilst the underdeveloped nations are the dependent states of Latin America, Asia and Africa, whose economies are extractive in nature and also reliant on the exportation of usually a single commodity (usually raw materials), and the importation of a variety of goods, usually finished or semi-finished goods.

Secondly, external forces have stakes in determining the direction the economies of the dependent nations are stirred. External forces often exist in the form of multinational corporations (MNC's), international commodity markets, foreign aid/assistance, International Financial Institutions, and any other mechanism through which the Industrialized countries promote their interests.

Third, the word "dependency" it self-connotes an unequal form of relationship.Several different mechanisms through which dependency brings about underdevelopment have been proposed by various theorists, and more than one is sometimes proposed even by the same theorist. Four possible dependency mechanisms are most frequently suggested in the current dependency literatures (Chase-Dunn, 1975; Delacroix and Ragin, 1981; Barrett and Whyte, 1982) Exploitation through Repatriation; Elite Complicity; Structural Distortion; and Market vulnerability.

In trying to answer the question "who is responsible for Africa's Underdevelopment?", Guyanese historian and political activist Walter Rodney avouched that Africa's economic retardation can be attributed to the activities of the imperialist system in place and that the system is constantly rigged and manipulated by the agents and the African cronies of the imperialist powers. Dependency theory at best attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions.

COMPONENTS OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon that assumes different forms and dimensions, often ranging from political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Primarily, Globalization stresses interconnectedness and the synthetization of different elements into a single universal or global system. The following components are considered to be integral to the globalization process.

Trade Liberalization: The removal of barriers, obstacles and limitations that impede international trade and investments has always been a salient feature of globalization. International trade is hence seen as a tool for engendering international cooperation and integration of economies into a unified global system. The famous Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank) as well as the

World Trade Organization (WTO) all function as the institutional mechanisms through which the goal of trade liberalization is not only achieved, but maintained and advanced as well (NOUN; pg63). Trade liberalization is a salient feature of globalization. (Williams, 1996) contends that trade liberalization induces economic growth, with the examples of East Asian economies often cited. Globalization is primarily predicated on the theory of free trade as exemplified by David’s Ricardo's postulation, who showed how, both England and Portugal can benefit from trade by adopting a trade liberalization policy which gives room for specialization, such that England specializes in the production of textiles since of course it has the absolute advantage in terms of better being able to produce more cotton than Portugal, while Portugal on the other hand channels its resources towards the production of wine, since of course it has more favorable conditions that enables it produce wine more effectively and efficiently, hence through free trade, both nations can have higher returns than in the absence of free trade.(Siddiqui, 1995).

Migration: This entails the movement of people across national borders. Globalization has availed people the opportunity to move across national borders, often times in search of better opportunities and improved living conditions. (Castles, 2018). The advancement in transportation and communication technologies have facilitated international migration by reducing the time and the cost involved in voyaging as well as making it easier for migrants to stay in touch with their families and communities back home (Massey, Durand & Malone, 2014). A 2016 World Bank statistics showed that between 1990 and 2019, the number of international migrants rose from 153 million to 271.6 million, a 77.5% increment, over a period of 29 years, accounting for 3 to 4% of the world's total population.

Cultural Exchanges: Cultural exchange as the name suggests, allows for the sharing of cultural practices, values, beliefs and behaviors between individuals and or groups from different cultural backgrounds (Tomlinson, 1999). Appadurai (1966) contends that globalization has availed human beings the opportunity of interacting with others from different cultural backgrounds, with the ultimate aim of learning about their perspectives on various issues in life. This exchange of ideas often leads to a better understanding of cultures other than one's own culture and the breakdown of stereotypes and prejudices. Cultural exchange has remarkably been in the entertainment industry, in the form of music, movies, fashion and food (Held & McGrew, 2007). Nye (2004) also observed that the exchange of culture can also lead to the exchange of language. He argued that as globalization has created a world where different cultures interact, the exchange of language can help bridge the cultural gap between people from different cultures.

Challenges/Problems of Globalization in Africa

Globalization has been beneficial to Africa in many ways, including creating new opportunities for firms and individuals, more access to capital flow, just to mention a few. However, in spite of these positives there is still an overwhelming torrent of issues and challenges the globalization process has wrought on Africa. The following are some of the issues and challenges posed by globalization in Africa:

1. The negative role of Multi-National Corporations: Multinational corporations have undeniably played vital roles in Africa's development, however, many instances abound where their impacts have been far from positive, as they (MNC's) have been accused of exploiting Africa's natural resources, contributing to environmental degradation and further worsening social inequality. A study conducted by Hauk et al. (2017) discovered that MNC's in the mining sector in Africa have engaged in many unethical practices such as environmental pollution, land grabbing, and disregard for human rights. Also Paul

and Appiah-Adu (2018) observed that the operations of MNC's in the agri-business sector in Ghana have contributed to the displacement of local communities, as well as the degradation of natural resources. Similarly, in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, Shell corporation has been accused of numerous harmful activities, including oil spill, gas flaring and environmental degradation just to mention a few. These have left in their wake, insecurity, widespread poverty and environmental hazards as people whose means of livelihood have been disrupted by the harmful effects of Shells operations resort to one form of criminality or another, in order to make a living. According to a 2018 report by Amnesty International, shell has failed to take adequate measures to prevent oil spills and to clean up those that have occurred, resulting in widespread pollution of the region's waterways and land. Shell has also been accused of colluding with security forces in violating the rights of innocent citizens (Human Rights Watch, 2019). These allegations have led to numerous law suits against shell, including a $111 million settlement in a case brought by the Bodo community in Rivers State in 2012, which later saw shell pay the sum 55 million Pounds as compensation to the community (BBC, 2015). These negative impacts have raised concerns about the role of MNC's in promoting sustainable development.

2. Unequal Distribution of Benefits: Borrowing from the point above, MNC's often exploit African countries for cheap labor and natural resources, which more often than not results in huge profits for the corporations but little benefit for the local population. For example, the oil industry in Nigeria generates billions of dollars in revenue for MNC's, but the country's people continue to live in poverty, with little access to education, healthcare or basic infrastructure. A world Bank report released in 2022 showed that "as many as 4 in 10 Nigerians live below the national average

poverty line", this is in spite of the billions of dollars pumped in to the coffers of the Nigerian state as revenue from oil sale annually. Similarly, the cocoa industry which provides chocolate for many Western countries has been linked to child labor and low wages for farmers (US Department of Labor, 2019). The growth of international trade is exacerbating income inequalities as well, both between and within industrialized and less industrialized nations.

3. Protectionist policies in industrialized countries prevent many producers in the Third World from accessing export markets: Protectionist policies have created significant barriers for African manufactures to access the global export markets. These barriers often assume the form of high tariffs, subsidies and other trade barriers that stymies and ultimately discourages African producers from competing and eventually benefiting in the international export niche. A 2021 report by of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), revealed that African Nations face a range of none tariff barriers such as technical regulation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and trade-related intellectual property rights, which stymies their access to global markets (UNCTAD, 2021). Similarly, African countries face an average tariff of 6.9% on their exports to industrialized nations as against the 2.6% for the exports of industrialized nations to Africa (World Bank, 2021). Hence protectionist policies ultimately marginalize African producers, hindering them from fully benefiting from the global trade system.
4. Brain drain as a result of migration: Globalization has on one hand created opportunities for individuals to improve their economic situation, however, on the other hand, it has led to negative effects such as brain drain and reduced economic growth Kaba (2018), especially in Africa. Brain

drain is a significant challenge for African countries as it often leads to a shortage of skilled workers in critical sectors. Anyawu and Erhijakpor (2014) pointed out the direct correlation between brain drain and economic growth. Anyawu (2014) for instance observed that the loss of skilled professionals such as doctors, engineers and academics has led to a shortage of skilled labor in Nigeria, which has in turn hindered Nigeria's economic growth and development. Erjiapkor (2014) was however quick to point out poor working conditions, low wages and limited career opportunities as some of the key catalysts of brain drain especially among young professionals. Both scholars agree that brain drain can lead to a reduction in economic growth and a decrease in public services.

5. cultural uniqueness is lost in favor of homogenization and a "universal culture" that draws heavily from American or the western culture: The advancement in technology has resulted in the invention of more sophisticated gadgets that makes it easy to access information from any part of the world. The growing popularity of American music and movies in Africa as well as the fashion sense has led to the Americanization/Westernization of the value system in Africa, thereby supplanting local music, movies and fashion with American one's and ultimately dissipating the unique cultural identity of many African nations (kraidy, 2010).

Recommendations

Infrastructure facilitates the integration Africa into the global economy (African Development Bank, 2019). Infrastructure undoubtedly plays an important role in engendering economic growth and development, hence, to fully integrate and benefit from globalization, Africa needs to prioritize infrastructural development. Improving road and rail networks facilitates the movement of persons and goods. Sea ports and airports can also boost trade and tourism, and all these can enable Africa to better integrate with the global economy, as captured by the (International Finance Corporation, 2018). Other critical infrastructures such as telecommunications, improved and reliable energy systems, all have a role to play in better integrating Africa to the global economy and there by positioning Africa in an advantageous position to reap the sweet fruits of globalization.

Corruption: Corruption is a perennial cankerworm that has hindered Africa's growth and development. A 2020 Transparency International Publication shows that over $148 billion is lost to corruption in Africa annually (Transparency International, 2020). In order to escape the shackles of developmental stagnation cum retrogression, African governments need to block all forms of leakages that facilitate corruption, strengthen their legal and regulatory frameworks, strengthen their anti-graft agencies, promote transparency and encourage accountability. International anti-graft agencies also have a role to play, by tipping the local African authorities about illicit funds stashed by African government officials in foreign banks.

A 2018 report by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) revealed that only 34% of the African population has access to formal financial services (IFC, 2018). To address this issue, financial inclusion policies must be adopted by the respective governments in Africa. Sensitization towards promoting financial literacy must be embarked upon by the respective governments as well as creating an enabling environment for micro financial institutions to thrive.

The role of a stable polity in ensuring the growth and development of any society cannot be overemphasized, hence, African governments need to strengthen their democratic institutions, promote good governance and venerate the rule of law. Additionally, international institutions can lend a hand of support to African countries to enable them build strong and democratic institutions and promoting peace and security.

With an estimated 30 million children out of school (UNESCO, 2020), Africa undoubtedly has the highest number of out of school children. Since education has always been the driver of development in many societies, African governments can remedy the situation by investing in education and training programs that will equip her citizens with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to compete in the global economy. Additionally, African countries can promote international partnerships to enhance knowledge and capacity building.

To mitigate the huge problem caused by brain drain, African countries need to create conditions that will encourage skilled individuals to stay back and work in their countries. Akinyemi (2019) noted the importance of investing in education as well as creating jobs in key industries as the panacea to retaining skilled workers. Additionally, African leaders can create a business friendly environment that will attract foreign investments as well as skilled workers, by offering incentives to companies that invest in their countries.

Conclusion

Africa's place in a globalized world is complex and multifaceted. While the continent has experienced some growth and development over the years, there are still many challenges that must be addressed if she is to fully realize her potential and attain her destiny.One of the key challenges facing Africa is the persistent issue of poverty and inequality, which was exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic. In order for Africa to thrive in a globalized world, Africa will need to address this as well as a host of other issues and also ensure that all members of society have access to resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Overall, Africa has the potential to play a significant role in a globalized world, but there are still many challenges that must be addressed by her leaders, in order for the continent to fully realize its potential. Through investments in education, infrastructure, and through the development of strong partnership with other nations of the world, Africa can build a bright and prosperous future for its people and the entire human race as a whole.

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