The Politics of Globalization as the Gateway to African Development: A Philosophical Appraisal

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to critically examine the overall implications of globalization as a new form of consciousness or movement in Africa. Globalization aims at economic integration and international cooperation. This involves a critical examination and a detailed analysis of the conception of globalization from the purviews of African identity, cultural hegemony, socio-economic and political dependency of African countries on the Western world. The paper shall analyze the notions of political, economic, cultural and developmental dynamics relative to African condition and how Africa as a continent can be amenable to the global paradox otherwise known as globalization. This paper appreciates and appropriates the deeper theoretical insights offered by the quest for African development and how we can address the problems of the Third World as a result of corruption and ignorance. This calls for contemporary reflection by Africans to see how they can cooperate with other nations of the world to address their immediate fundamental challenges. Globalization has caused a great assault on the African continent as a result of the capitalist tendencies of the West which include among other things the conceptualization of globalization in its lopsided manner. Africa has a choice by keeping with the pace of globalization. Globalization aims at harnessing the African's quest for socio-economic and political challenges.

Key words: Globalization, Politics, Development, Humanism, Corruption.

1.1 Introduction

Globalization is an intercultural philosophical system that reflects the fact that different cultures and economic system around the world are becoming connected and similar to each other because of the influence of large multinational companies and of improved

communication (Hornby, 2010:636). Globalization is a global activity that affects the world community wholly or completely. Globalization is thus defined as that which reduces the world into one global village and completely obliterates national and state boundaries while enthroning super or multinational juristic entities (Okoli, 2009:64-65). The dynamics of globalization has assumed a new dimension of consciousness. The politics of globalization is geared towards African identity and the world in general. Globalization as a new form of consciousness has undergone various arguments and counter-arguments. But, the underlying spirit of globalization in relation to African sustainable development aims at international cooperation or the betterment of all in the world and social change. This agenda of a better world is embedded in the universal humanism, the need for mass democracy, human rights, equal opportunities among individuals and nations of the world, and to avoid the suppression of the minority group. The globalization debate has attracted academic attention, debate and counter-debate. Globalization is the conceptual analysis of contemporary social change and global interaction of nations in the world. Globalization is waning to a new form of consciousness, social change and social movement based on the fundamental understanding of the human person at the national and the international level. Communication and dialogue becomes the vital tool for the globalization process. The fundamental of globalization guarantees the flow of communication process and new form of consciousness among nations in the international community. Globalization is not only the theory of global social change but cuts across the cultural, economic, political/institutional and neo-liberal dimension.

Moreover, globalization is a form of inter-cultural philosophy and it is an interconnected network of peoples in the global world. Globalization is characterized by the lofty ideals of political systems, global governance, social and economic policies, justice and rule of law measured within the framework of revolutionary ideology. Globalization is the process of systematic change and the tendency to restore the balance of a lopsided political, economic and social world order. It has been observed that the globalization process has been flawed by the political systems of the West with their seeming incompatibility with Africa and the rest of the world. Globalization is a process of global network of cosmic - order and its goals reflect on the process of systematic change. Globalization is the authoritarian control of the world socio-cultural, and political economy from Western Europe, United States and the rest of the developed world. Moreover, the fundamental or lofty ideals of globalization aim at championing political and economic liberalizations across the globe.

Furthermore, globalization is a cross-national phenomenon, which forms and "forces" every part of the world into an identical outlook and culture. The phenomenon of

globalization as a defining ideology has been seen as a world political order; it is probably geared towards the establishment of a new world order. Globalization should be understood in socio-economic, political, cross-cultural terms alongside scientific and technology transfer (Ugwueye, 2007: 102-103). Globalization has attracted a lot of scholarly attention across the globe. Globalization has always been at the epicenter of most developmental dynamics of nations in the world. The politics of globalization calls for the beneficial scheme of social cooperation.

1.2 The Politics of Globalization

The politics of globalization is aimed at ensuring the betterment of our collective global humanity. The idea of globalization as a universal humanism has an inextricable nexus with African sustainable development. Our contemporary world today seems to be caught up in a new trend that seeks to enthrone a new form of humanistic dimension. Our world, however, appears to be caught up in a new trend that seeks to enthrone a new form of humanism that bridges the differences between human beings in all spheres of life. A concept that best captures this trend and some of the ideals driving it is the idea of globalization. Fundamentally, globalization seeks to express a sort of universal humanism designed to make the world a better place for all mankind based on equal opportunities, rights, and privileges (Asouzu, 2004:27).

Moreover, the underlying notion of globalization is that human beings and nations should have access to equal opportunities, rights and privileges. Africa as a continent has been characterized by a slow pace in terms of developmental dynamics and strategies. The idea of globalization aims at ensuring a better world and international cooperation. Accordingly, we see the spirit underlying this trend very concretely expressed in all those cases where human beings make spirited efforts to surmount some of the artificial barriers that keep people apart and seek to join their efforts in building a better world. Globalization seems to take the form of compromise-readiness (Asouzu 2004: Ibid). Globalization is a linkage between peoples of the globe that enables them to understand and empathise with one another (Hoffman and Graham, 2009:497). Globalization has become a system whereby the disposition of some positive signs of human tolerance towards other cultures and ways of life of a people is allowed. Globalization assumes the fact that people concede to the positive ideals entrenched in this international system of dialogue and cooperation whereby people overcome their national and geographical differences or constraints. Globalization stretches from the areas of trade and commerce, to cooperation in science, industry, and technology. The same is applicable in the areas of sports, entertainment, transportation, tourism, religion, education, research, science and technology etc (Asouzu, 2004:28). The idea of globalization is designed to address plethora

of human problems with what Asouzu calls unity of purpose. The case of globalization involves positive efforts made by diverse international organization to address the problem of humanity. Azouzu, however, rightly posits that:

> This is the case with issues involving human rights, better-understanding among nations, ethnic groups, and people of diverse ideological inclinations. All this efforts are bearing good results with regard to people's perception of such issue as environmental degradation, war, global peace, minority needs, needs of perceived weaker nations, insignificant communities, ethnic nationalities etc. Globalization has been perceived as indications of a new form of consciousness and it points to a new understanding of the world as a community of nations with a common destiny (Asouzu, 2004: Ibid).

Nevertheless, globalization has an implicit liberalization, nationalization and internationalization of the human person, politics, law and justice. Globalization is an attempt to address the issues of corruption in governments or nations in the world. Globalization is geared towards driving lofty ideals towards ensuring that there is no suppression of minority groups. Globalization reflects the case with such issues as corruption in governments and multi-national organizations, marginalization and suppression of minority groups (Asouzu, 2004: Ibid). Asouzu went further that:

> The same is valid for the genuine attempts at bridging the divide between the rich and the poor, balancing the disparities in income and other deplorable inequity with regard to general socio-economic conditions of people that is to say, due to globalization, there appears to be a higher level of awareness concerning people's problems since they can now speak out, influence public opinion both at the national and international level (Asouzu, 2004:28-29).

Moreover, globalization has assumed a new form of consciousness and a coalition of interest that does not impede harmony or cooperation in the world. Globalization has become a movement that tends to surmount the paradoxical nature of the world situation today. Globalization is characterized by the collective human efforts geared towards a better world for the common good and benefit of all. The idea of globalization as a new form of consciousness, universal humanism and as collective human efforts has been misconstrued by many. This misconception of globalization as universal humanism has been termed as a global paradox (Asouzu, 2004:34). It is worthy of note that one of the main reasons for this paradox is because many have come to interpret some of the ideas

enshrined in globalization in a manner that easily equates the concept with a vile and sinister forms of internationalization where a few powerful and greedy individuals and nations seek to subjugate and exploit an unsuspecting majority of peoples and nations of the world.

In addition, globalization aims at subverting all forms of draconian exploitative socio-economic policies and it addresses all perceived forms of divisions among nations of the world. Globalization is applicable to all those draconian exploitative socio-economic policies and measures devised to foster division, inequality, and repression among people. All these are happening in world where democracy, human rights, and freedom of self expression are celebrated as the canons and treasures of modernity and civility (Asouzu, 2004:30). On the other hand, Asouzu duly observed that, the lofty global ideals is not only restricted to merely economic, cultural and socio-political matters but easily spreads to more fundamental issues of scientific and technological relevance. Globalization aims at radical openness and it epitomizes international tolerance, communicative dialogue as principles of cohabitation among nations in the world. Our world today is experiencing global paradox. According to Asouzu:

> This global paradox is one of the greatest challenges of our New World Order as it pertains to individuals, groups and nations. It is not merely a political or economic challenge. It is a challenge that goes deeper to the very foundation of our being. In this paradox, lies the problem of the challenges, of the ambivalence of our situation. Responding to questions associated with this complex situation constitutes the new complementary challenges to philosophy (Asouzu, 2004: Ibid).

It is worthy of note that philosophy has a role to play to the politics of globalization. Globalization is both economic and cultural, yet its contemporary significance is that it reflects the effective enculturation of developing nations who are at the receiving ends of Western technology and economic aids, and by implication, the Western social and cultural values (Dukor, 2008:16-17) Globalization is a practical and philosophical concept of economic integration, socio-cultural cooperation, scientific assimilation, information technology and communication highways, justice and fairness for mankind under the aegis of the United Nations and the concepts of man as an ends in himself.

1.3 Globalization and the Question for African Development

Globalization and the question of African development call for serious philosophical scrutiny. Development is an all-embracing concept. Development can either be partial or

comprehensive. African development has always undergone slow pace due to the hydra-headed nature of corruption among African leaders. Globalization is not really antithetical to African development. When we talk about development we are simply referring to the "de-envelopment' of human needs such as standard of living, literacy, science and technology, telecommunication, housing, water supply, transportation (land, air, sea), provision of health facilities, good road networks, good governance, good economic policies and the implementation of these policies. The major impediment to African development is solely caused by corruption and ignorance. African leaders are very corrupt. Corruption flows in their veins. They see corruption as a way of life. We have lose the sense of our African rationality and identity due to the problem of corruption and ignorance in Africa. We should stop blaming the effects of globalization on the African continent. The fundamental question, is therefore, who is globalizing or under developing who? Globalization and development have to do with universal human affairs and socio-material needs. Logically speaking, when a statement is true it is true. Propositions are those statements which are either true or false. A statement cannot be both true and false at the same time. A is A and B is B. A cannot be A and B or B cannot be B and A at the same time. The principle of identity explains the lofty ideals of true statements. The question of identity in relation to the human person simply reveals that when a person is an African, he is truly an African. The African person is exhibiting the character of both an African and a European. A person cannot be here and there at the same time; this simple truth contradicts the laws of thought.

Furthermore, the African person of today seems to have just done that and become a victim of identity crises in the globalized world. The African people have assumed a double personality and this is a contradiction. What have become more intense in the globalization process is the attendant effect of identity crisis, cultural alienation, ideological, socio-economic and political hegemonies by the Western world (Wang and Francisca, 2008:52).

1.4 The Problems of Globalization in Africa

The conceptualization of globalization in Africa has undergone some misconceptions. It is worthy of note that any characterization of globalization that excludes the role of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will be too reductionist since the primary goal of globalization is the issue of global capital (Ugwueye, 2007:104). Asouzu aligns himself with Luke's position. Accordingly, on the international plane, this form of understanding globalization easily equated with Western imperialism led by and championed by the United States of America and her allies against the rest of the world. In this connection, such world bodies as IMF and WTO are perceived as the very evil arms

of these agents of international conspiracy designed merely to sap vital life blood out of already weak and poor nations (Asouzu, 2004:31).

Globalization has assumed what Asouzu (2004) calls a new form of enslavement. Africa and other poor nations of the world have always been at the receiving ends of these entrapments of globalizations. Globalization has had a very negative consequence to the people and governments of Africa. However, in African countries, all the central planks of the process of globalization have been implemented as Structural Adjustment Programme. The idea of globalization in Africa has undermined the internal productivity of various African countries (Ugwueye, 2007:104). Africans today, can rarely define the rules and regulations of their economy, production, credits and exchanges of goods and services due to the rampaging menace of globalization. Globalization has posed very big ideological constraints on many African countries. Globalization has imposed heavy constraints on the internal management dynamics of most politics in Africa.

The trends of globalization have led to developed nations to have economic and political support from other weaker nations of the world. These trends have been duly dictated by inequality in the status of various nations of what Luke calls a villagized world (Ugwueye, 2007:104-105). African countries are faced with the inability to resist imposed policy by the two world bodies (IMF and WTO). The problem with the African continent is that of ignorance and corruption which must be drastically addressed by African leaders. The amazing issue in African continent is that of ignorance. Strictly speaking, the problem goes beyond ignorance. The major problem is that of corruption. The problem of corruption has become a bane to African development or her quest for sustainable development or developmental goals or dynamics. We cannot eat our African cake and have it. We as Africans must begin to steer a new course in our African mentality. African's quest for development in connection with the global capitalist system has also been hampered by religious bigotry, economic sabotage, political instability and cultural chauvinism. Our African identity has been dislodged by socio-economic and political lock-jam. The million-dollar question we need to ask ourselves is that where do we go from here?

The overall implications of the decadence in the African continent is that African leaders have become benefactors of an already impoverished system in the African soil whereby poverty, diseases, poor economic system, lack of political ideology, epidemics, religious bigotry, bribery and corruption, and the culture of wastage reign supreme among African leaders. Politics has been devoid of ideology and has been seriously monetized and bureaucratized. The pace of globalization and developmental dynamics or strategies as far as Africa is concerned is at its lowest ebb. Political stability and economic growth in many

African countries is very slow. Globalization has intrinsically eroded African culture. What we are experiencing in Africa today is cultural inferiority caused by Western imperialism. African languages must be resuscitated and revived. Without language there is no culture. According to Luke to kill a language is to kill a culture. The end-result is not just cultural betrayal but a serious case of de-humanization and outright self-subversion both in terms of dignity and self- esteem (Ugwueye, 2007:104-105).

1.5 Africa and the Way Forward

Africa has no choice as far as globalization is concerned. Africa as a continent must keep pace with the rest of the world. The whole acceptance of globalization as the "absolute truth" in Nigeria and other African countries has been likened to that of a moving train which Africa and Africans must keep pace with, regardless of whether the latter has similar destination in mind, because Africa has no choice. Globalization has become a mere camouflage (Ugwueye, 2007:106-107). Globalization has both a twisted and lofty ideals. Africa as a continent must drastically reduce its dependency on world powers. For Africans to get out of this entrapment, it needs to decline its dependency on the Western powers. They must sever the apron-strings of domination by the developed world by categorically and practically resisting the inequality inherent in a globalized or villagized world. Globalization as a new form of consciousness should take the form of international integration and interaction (Ugwueye, 2007:108).

Globalization ought to involve the cross-cultural borrowing through increased integration and interaction among peoples in dissimilar political and cultural situation. African countries should take it upon themselves to tackle the problems of poverty, corruption, economic sabotage, political instability rocking the African continent. Corruption, as a new way of life among African leaders has become a jigsaw puzzle which has drastically hampered African development. Development is an all-embracing concept and Africa as a continent must key in this developmental dynamics/strategies of the cross-cultural, socio-economic, political reconstruction among the African peoples.

1.6 Recommendations

Africa's problem is not religion or globalization. Africa's problem is ignorance and corruption. African countries should curb the evils of corruption through strong political will and good economic policies. What is hindering African development is corruption. Globalizations should be the new form of consciousness whereby human complementary relations both at the national and international level can solve the problems of humanity. The racial and Eurocentric implications of globalizations should be discouraged.

Globalizations should be a form of ideological frame work and a united force of the contemporary human world.

Nevertheless, the hybridization of culture and homogeneity as some of the implications of the globalizations should be encouraged. Globalizations should not be seen as hegemonic system but and integrating force of international interaction. The socio-political and economic liberalizations as the implications of globalizations should be accelerated to ensure human betterment or global humanism. We as Africans must contribute to the economic and political growth of Africa rather than sapping the natural and human resources. Globalization should not be seen as a sham. Africa as a continent should free itself from its own predicaments. Africans, many a times, are the cause of their own problems. We should not blame it on the entrapments of globalization. Africa as a continent cannot survive on its own and Africa needs other continents of the world to grow and develop. Africa must embrace the developmental dynamics and strategy as caused by the new trend of globalization. Globalization is janus-faced; it is both negative and positive. We as Africans must reject its bad side and embrace the good side of globalization; it should not be seen as a new form of enslavement but as a new form of cosmic consciousness, global cosmopolitanism, social change or movement that is geared towards bettering the human world and the benefit of all in an emancipated global society. It should be seen as a new form of emancipation. Globalization is an emancipatory project and it is a universal humanism that has to do with human betterment. Globalization should bridged rather than create an uneven distribution of benefits and resources. Globalization should be seen as the gate way to drastically reduce the growing inequalities among nations of the globalize world. Globalization is characterized by information exchange and technology transfer.

Furthermore, African countries should see globalization as the genuine humanization of the world ideological order. We should aim at a global vision that does not destroy human freedom but which guarantees one cosmic reality and polity that cannot endanger the whole humane race. Globalization is the gate way for African development. Development is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted (Roney, 1-2). Development in human society is a many-sided process. Development is governed by universal condition. Development was universal because the conditions leading to economic expansion were universal (Rodney, 3-4). Globalization has assumed a new form of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism contends that globalization can be a whirlwind of trade and investment that builds economics and spurs development in even the world's poorest countries. Globalization is a form of universal brotherhood. Globalization reflects the principle of progressive transformation (Enuka, 2006:52), what we may call the principles of harmonious complementation

(Asouzu, 2003:155). Globalization reflects the politics of inter-subjective mutual recognition and the idea of common good among nations in the international community. Perhaps politics is really a cooperative affair, so that political activity is first and foremost a way of binding together groups of people with common interest? Rather than presuppose disagreements and conflict, it may be that politics is best thought of as the pursuit of the common good (Mackenzie, 2009:5). Although, some scholars see globalization as a mirage and it is characterized by a lopsided process of world change. For Dukor:

> Some have highlighted the benefits of globalization as being sourced from Western technology and development ideas, artifacts and products or tools of globalization tend to wholly emanate from the West and the developing world tend to be mostly recipients. Western program highlight the advantage of email services, internet computer software services, the entire realm and components of information highways and technologies to express the paternalistic benevolence of the West as the agent and benefactor of globalization. Western ideological structures in forms of the campaign for rule of law, human rights, democracy, deregulation and privatization are primary and indelible complements to technology transfers, and information highways. Globalization as construed by many is, therefore, a lopsided process of world change which constitutes a negative influence on Africa where poverty, disease, hardship, lack of infrastructure, low per capita income and GDP, Political instability, and misrule have held up tenaciously the socio-political process. Secondly, the real globalization process where there will be no centre and no periphery may be a mirage (Dukor, 2008:22-23).

Globalization presupposes the need for what we may call human communality (Dukor, 2008, Ibid). The lopsided globalization process must be drastically inverted to pave the way for the much needed economic progress and political stability in Africa. Dukor, however, observes that: It is in this consideration that lopsided globalization in favour of an existing centre or the West is not globalization in the real sense (Dukor, 2008: 23). It will be therefore reasonable to support a globalization that recognizes African values and ideas about the world as a function of global village or global community as well as redress the unprogressive striking contours of African polity where the totalitarian states are failures in the function of providing the much needed economic progress, socio-material needs, scientific-technological advances and political stability (Dukor, 23-24). Globalization is not all about new form of consciousness or universal humanism and brotherhood but it is an

extension of global communalism. The idea of globalization is an extension of the philosophy of communalism…This concept is one of the offshoots of the idealism and concepts of brotherhood of mankind arising from the fact of global trends in human relations (Dukor, 24).

1.7 Evaluation

Globalization is the springboard of intercultural philosophy. Globalization has become a monistic and intercultural philosophy. It is also regarded as a borderless system of world capitalist economy. Globalization is the idea of borderless economy. Globalization seems to be the answer to a new era. Globalization aims at solving certain economic social and problems that knows no international boundaries (Dukor, 2008:26). Dukor believes that the world recognizes the need for globalization because social and economic problems are epidemic viruses that know no international boundaries. Globalization is multidimensional and cross cultural relations of peoples in the world. A concept of development that respects cultures, individualities and authenticities of races must be the answer to the inherent contradictions in globalization the current world order…a culture of scientific, technological, and economic development must be cultivated and propagated from within Africa in the global age (Dukor, 2007:v-vi). He concludes that a social-economic problem is no longer the problem of any particular country or nation as wealth or fortune of any nation is not estimable without a comparative assessment with that of the entire committee of nations with the aid of information and travel technology, cross-cultural relations have become an important rhythm of human existence (Dukor, 2008, 26-27). Globalization is the spread of worldwide practices, relations, consciousness, and organization of social life. Globalization can be analyzed culturally, economically, politically, and institutionally (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2014, 571-572). Globalization means economic liberalization, global integral-ness or social integration. Consequently, when we talk of integral social political existence, we imply the entire network of social existence and its political challenges. Social political issues are fundamental to human existence that, at times, some scholars are tempted to reduce the entire gamut of human mystery to sociopolitical and material factors (Nwankwor, 2013, 331). Globalization is the process of ever-increasing cross border flows of goods, services, money, people, information, and culture (Ferrante, 2003:539). Globalization is simply cultural imperialism. It is against this theoretical background that globalization is seen as a natural outcome that negated the fictional or created boundaries and identities among human race (Dukor, 2010:311). Globalization is deeply rooted in the relational constitution of nations in the world community because the human person as a person has not only self- sustainability or autonomy. He has also a network of relationships in radical openness to other human beings and nations of the world (Iroegbu, 2000:45). Globalization reflects an expanding

footprint of economic liberalization, socio-political existence, scientific progression and assimilation and technology transfers (Wangari, 2009:253). Globalization reflects a network of relationships in the areas of socio-political, ideational, cultural, scientific and technological transfer and economic activities. Globalization is the philosophy of social change and it reflects an intercultural philosophy. Globalization is aimed at socio-political coexistence and economic liberalization.

Furthermore, at bottom globalization is, philosophically speaking, the paradox of drawing and demolishing boundaries at the same time. Globalization does not only talk of demolition of physical and geographical boundaries but also intellectual and cultural ones as well(Ramose, 2002, 131). Globalization thus holds that the only way out for humanity is to obey the deadly commandment of its dogma. This then is the reasoning behind economic fundamentalism (Ramose, 131-132). However, globalization rests on homogenization (samenisation) which is identified as one of the intentions of globalization. Globalization is anchored on the universalist perspective of internationalization (Ramose, 140-141). Globalization is a process and not yet an established fact (Ramose, 143). Globalization focuses on human relations. Human relation is the major context as well as the primary focus of human rights (Ramose, 145). Globalization aims at the promotion of human rights and it guarantees an emancipated global society.

1.7 Concluding Remarks

Globalization is a practical and philosophical concept of economic integration, socio-cultural cooperation, scientific assimilation, information technology and communication highways, justice and fairness for mankind under the aegis of the United Nations and the concepts of man as an ends in himself. It is worthy of note that having critically examined the overall implications of globalization as a new form of consciousness or social movement in Africa, this theoretical discourse argues that globalization is simply described as cultural imperialism or cultural hegemony and global cosmopolitanism. Globalization aims at economic integration and international cooperation. This involves a critical examination and a detailed analysis of the conception of globalization from the purviews of African identity, cultural hegemony, socio-economic and political inter-dependency of African countries and the Western world. The paper, therefore, concludes that globalization is seen as the notions of political, economic, socio-cultural liberalization and developmental dynamics relative to African condition and how Africa as a continent can be amenable to the global paradox otherwise known as globalization. This paper appreciates and appropriates the deeper insight offered by the quest for African development and how we can address the problems of the Third World as a result of bad

governance, politico-economic instability, poverty, underdevelopment, corruption and ignorance. This paper therefore calls for a concerted effort by Africans to see how they can cooperate with other nations of the world to address their immediate fundamental challenges. Globalization has caused a great assault on the African continent as a result of the capitalist tendencies of the West which include among other things the conceptualization of globalization in its lopsided manner. Africa has a choice by keeping with the pace of the globalization process. Globalization aims at harnessing the African's quest for socio-economic and political challenges. The contemporary significance of globalization is aimed at the beneficial scheme of social or international cooperation.

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