

RE-COLONIZATION OF AFRICA: A DISCOURSE ON THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has conquered the world. It is an endless process of integration and compression of the world economy, culture and politics in to one interconnected whole. The concept has been interpreted by scholars in different perspectives and viewed as a process that will accelerate rapid economic development around the globe. However, this paper viewed it from a different perspective. The aim is therefore to examine the negative impact of globalization on African states. Data was obtained through secondary sources, where library materials such as textbooks, journals, papers, magazines, and internet materials were used. The paper believed that globalization is a strategy or grand plan towards recolonization of Africa. It is a new form of colonization motivated by the desire for exploitation, imperialism (on the basis of empire building) and promotion of capitalist market economy, hence its accompanied features of free capital flow, trade liberalization and the exaggerated powers and influence of supra-national institutions on global political economy at the expense of nation-states.

Key words: Globalization, Recolonization, Supra-national Institution.

INTRODUCTION

The post-World War II period has provided three possible ways of understanding the fundamental dynamics of changes in the world-development, globalization and imperialism (Mc Michael,1996, in Veltmeyer, 2003). Both the three concepts were invented as a means of directing the future of those societies involved in the process of liberating themselves from the yoke of European colonialism. The concept of development was initially adopted toward the success of that project. As an ideology, globalization is not a model of development as claimed by some scholars, rather, it's a „project“ created to streamline the African economy and direct its trade. Writing on globalization and imperialism, (Veltmeyer, 2003:18) stated that „...the notion of globalization is clearly based not on science but on ideology, a manifesto as it were of advanced capitalism in which it serves as a shorthand reference to development and outcomes that are deemed to be highly desirable.

However, the idea of development as ideology has experienced „crack“ in the late 70s when the „world capitalist system underwent the condition of major crisis“. Thus globalization project was adopted and „designed to create a global economy of free trade and free movement of capital, where free market, rather than the state, was conceived of as its motor and private sector as its driving force. It is in this sense „that the term was apparently coined in 1986, in the context of eighth Round of GATT negotiations(Ostry,1990). Since then, phrases such as „global village“, „global

interconnectedness“, „world system“ and „internationalization“ were used to justify the process of globalization and to convince the world that it is a new phenomenon. However, the tendency towards Africa’s recolonization is manifestly spelt in the „global Village“ politics. The term „global village“ is used to describe the level of integration and social relations among countries of the world to the extent that events, activities and political actions happening in one country are increasingly influenced by events, activities and political actions happening in the other side of the globe. Today, globalization is viewed as a new fashion of Africa’s recolonization, exploitation and entrapment. It is meant to conquer and spread capitalism to where colonialism and neo colonialism has not reached under the guise of a New World Order which has resulted to declining capacity of nation – states and reduced the importance of territorial boundaries of states. The fear that an emerging global identity will inundate local and national identities and erode state sovereignty has for over three decades been a subject of debate; with many advancing their argument in favor of the global emerging trend (globalization) and the others accusing it, (De globalization).

Since the early 60s when majority of African states gained political independence from their former colonial masters, many political analysts and African intellectuals have continued to question its nature, character and suspected its practicability. Since then, political concepts such as “neo-colonialism”, “recolonization” and “post-colonial” etc were used to describe African states and expose the nature of its social relations with west and its former colonial countries. This social relation is that where African economic freedom has undermined by global forces. Despite the formation of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) in 1963 and the renewed African determination towards neutrality and non-alignment, African States were unable to break away from the economic apron of their former colonial masters.

Although many African writers who were intellectually intoxicated by western values and orientation have describe globalization as a process that enhanced rapid economic development and liberation of Africa, this paper believed that globalization is the re incarnation of colonialism through variegated network of technological innovations and foreign capitals. It is a means to an end, not an end in its self. It is as a form of re colonization characterized by inequality, marginalization, international extortion and banditry. Its evil machinations and operational mechanisms are rapidly spread than that of colonialism.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Globalization in one of the most popular concepts in social sciences that assumes several meanings and as such attracts interpretations, leading to a variety of definitions that lacks specificity and single universal acceptance. Giddiness, in Haralambas, (2000), defined globalization as the intensification of the world wide social relationships which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice –versa. This is manifested in such a way that people, cultures, societies and civilizations previously more or less isolated from one another are now in a regular and almost unavoidable contact. Kwanashi (1999), defined globalization as a process of integration in which market is created with the power of decision making to force all nations to participate across the world. According to Randal and Theobald (1998), the concept of globalization could be defined as a process that reflects on cultural, economic and political aspects of nation-states and their citizens. And, as a process, it represents in

economic sphere an organization of production and consumption of goods and services at global level with the primary aim of securing maximum return on capital. In cultural sphere, it represents an increased cultural interaction among individuals and groups that transcend national boundaries simply as a result of development in communication and information technology which turns the world into a village and in political sphere, it represents a global process of promoting liberal democratic culture which has to do with the virtues of good governance, effective public service, human and press freedom, multiparty politics, gender among others. On his part, Akindele S. (2002) viewed globalization as an evolution which systematically is restructuring interactive phases among nations, breaking down barriers in the areas of cultures, commerce, communications and several other field of endeavor. This indeed represents the process of integration that redefined social relations and economic transactions among international community by removing hither to barriers to socio-cultural, economic and political contract in the world. Ostray, 1990, in Henry veltmeyer,2003), also sees globalization as an upsurge in Direct Investment and liberalization and deregulation in cross-border flows of capital, technology and services, as well as the creation of a global production system. Akindele (1990, in Ahmadu,2013), further defined globalization as the process of the intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across international boundaries.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of scholars have expressed their views about the negative impact of globalization and how it affects the third world societies, particularly Africa, leading to plethora of literature which has remain a subject of debate for some decades. Tendon (1988:2) and Toyo (2000) firmly established that globalization is a form of “New Fashion and pattern of capital expansion”. They established a linkage between globalization and the old „imperial“ policy of the west. Tendon (2000) argued that:

“There is no doubt whatsoever that globalization is one of the most challenging developments in the world history. In the generic and broad sense, it is part of the movement of history, an imperial policy and the final conquest of capital over the rest of the world which is rooted in history and quite explainable within the context of the one-armed banditry and exploitative tendencies of capitalism. Which its nature cannot without parasitic “

Coopers (1995) and Recopero (2005), further described globalization as harmful process of economic integration. To Coopers, the economic changes brought by globalization have brought about industrial dislocation and losses in many countries, altered the consumption pattern creating relative price changes that consumers are having difficulties adjusting to. Commenting on the negative impact of globalization on Nigerian economy, Daniel A. (2005), further accused globalization for weakening the economy of the less developed societies and enhancing inequality and marginalization. He stated that:

“...the whole idea rests on the assumption that globalization carries with it a form of inequality ad marginalization. Although as outstanding development in human history, its nature and character as well as purpose do not favor Nigeria as a

developing country. Rather than strengthening the Nigeria economy, globalization seek to weaken it.”

Globalization is also seen as a new order of marginalization of the Africa continent, Ake, (1996). Rather than engendering new ideas and developmental orientation in Africa, globalization subverts its economy and powers of self-determination. It is rather by design than by accident that poverty has become a major institution in Africa.

Previous studies (Dudley (1975), Stewands (1985), Ogwumike (1991), UNDP (2005), Aluko (2003) etc have shown that there is poverty in Africa, with at least majority of its citizens living below one dollar per day. how in which the third world is always at the receiving end. In a public lecture title “what exactly is globalization? delivered at the 14th annual conference of the Nigeria Association of Law Teachers, (2004), Yusuf Bala Usman criticized the global village politics of being unjust to Africa. He sees it as a form of social inequality and exploitative. He stated that:

“what sort of village is it, in which the villagers in one part of the village, are totally prohibited from going to the other part of the village, even though most the good things in life in the village are to be found over there? The only ones allowed to go in, are those who are going to further enrich the richest part of the village, or from what they have stolen or somehow cornered from the poorer part of the village, or from the education the poor villagers have paid for them to have from their meager earnings, hoping that they will stay and serve them. Are we really now living in anything which anybody sensible can call a village, global or otherwise?”

FORCES OF GLOBALIZATION

As earlier mentioned, globalization process is punctuated by variegated technological innovations and asymmetric of global capital and finance, its one armed banditry ethos is being enforced by the International Monetary Funds, World Bank and the World Trade Organization Aluko (2003) rightly observed that today, there are three axis that influence global policies- European axis, North American axis and the Pacific Rim axis, notably Japan. He stated that:

“Globalization policies are carried out by IMF and World Bank and those policies in the third world are mere extension of the domestic policies of the three axis powers”.

Rifkin (1996) further states since the end of World War II, the World Economic Powers, notably the United States, direct global policies. Acting on its behalf, the IMF and World Bank enforces these policies which with all intent and purpose seek to protect and promote neo-imperial interests. He rightly pointed that:

“In this global age, transnational companies, pension, funds, Banks, the Brettonwoods institutions and the WTO have acquired overwhelming influence. IMF, for example has been assigned to the task of overseeing the functioning of the international monetary system. The World Bank has

special responsibility for development strategy and projects and for helping development countries to reduce poverty generated by helping developing countries to reduce generated by GLOBALIZATION, while is responsible for dealing with global trade rules with the principal objective of ensuring that trade flows as smoothly predictably and freely as possible.

It is a fact that the BrettonWoods Institutions, have become the most important instruments for streamlining and downsizing the post-colonial states, (Korwa and Ajulu; 2002). These institutions are solely responsible for enforcing the policies and mission of globalization, first, by controlling and regulating international finance and secondly, by controlling and directing the national government of states. States that fail to comply with the directives and regulatory policies of the Brettonwoods institutions were denied certain financial and technical Aid and are simultaneously described as a „Paria“ states. In more recent times, the World Trade Organizations promote global agenda through trade policies which were mostly determined by the three axis.

GLOBALIZATION AND AFRICAN STATES

Globalization and its venomous process of economics integration and neo-imperial potency have subverted efforts of developing countries towards achieving national development. As Wohleke (1993) argued, globalization is a form of entrapment of Africa; that apart from its evocation of powerlessness, it creates a process through which poor countries in Africa are dominated and exploited by the rich countries, and a vicious circle of poverty created permanently. Globalization has presented a new pattern of social relations of „equals and unequal, and envenom of injustices between the palatial centers and the slums of the villages where a preponderant majority of the people are poor. Through the internalization and interconnectedness theory of globalization, African states have lost their capacity to pursue trade policies, determine the exchange rate of their national currencies and initiate independent policies that would put them on the verge of greatness. As argued by David G.; Anthony M and Jonathan P. (1997), that globalization has always presents itself is an antidote to policy implementation and development in African continent. Ajulu (2003) further stated that:

“African states have been increasingly compelled by the Brettonwoods institutions to retreat and abide by the logic of marked... furthermore; these institutions have increasingly been politicized, manifestly pursuing the political agenda of the most economically powerful states.”

Ahmadu I. (2013), also opined that globalization is seen as having a negative impact on Africa. To him, Africa“s position in the international system has been considerably weakened by the fact that it has been losing the race for economic development in general, and human development in particular, to other regions, these poor performance by African countries accounts in part for the political and social instability and risk of authoritarian regimes that have characterized much of postcolonial Africa, further weakening the ability of African countries to deal effectively with globalization. He further identified following negative impacts of globalization to Africa: As great African native rulers were manipulated in to signing treatise that eventually subjugated them and

robbed the off their rights to authority, so African political leaders are today been manipulated by imperial USA and other European and china, through signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements. The consequence of these agreements is the taking over of their economic freedom, one of the very features of re colonization. Manipulative tendency of globalization is being echoed by Arkosash-darbon, in a Ghanaian Newspaper,2019 where he stated that:

“After centuries of colonization, slavery, exploitation, marginalization and excruciating poverty, African politicians have yet to grasp the nature of manipulative globalization. Years of relative economic retrogression have taken a horrendous toll on all parts of the African economy. To add insult to injury, the African continent inadvertently welcomes with open arms a colossal dose of the negative impacts of globalization. The nature of the African economy itself continues to limit gains from the enormous opportunities in the liberal globalization. Clearly, globalization by all odds has enabled the African continent to be used as a tolerating and warm-welcoming place for natural resource exploitation and industrial waste dumping. Economies lacking innovation and value creation are largely to blame for these huge miscalculations, and the lopsided relationships”

The use of Africa as dumping ground of toxic waste is another taste of re colonization of the continent. The same trend was adopted during colonial are when the continent was made the dumping ground for European surplus goods. The end results of these virulent tradition is an avalanche impeding the continent’s capacity to progress and its ability to handle modern economic and political challenges. Thus with the recent upsurge in information and communication technology(ICT) and the unprecedented rise of supranational institutions as key players in international relations, African reliance on foreign technology is past becoming inevitable and inescapable. No doubt, a new era has emerged.

CONCLUSION

The rate at which European countries, USA, China are „scrambling” for spheres of neo-colonial influence in Africa, confirmed that the continent is under re colonization. It is a fact, not an ideology. Re colonization takes place through four main mechanisms such as,1) the use of humanitarian intervention led by giants” supra-national institutions (2) massive transfer of technology and professional services to Africa (3) foreign direct investments, aids, grants, assistance and loans, and (4) interference in the domestic affairs of African states, and streamlining its economy by IMF and World Bank. The magic of scientific innovations and its resultants global interconnectedness, integration and universalization of economic and political actions shows that no country in the world will escape globalization. African leaders must take note of this fact, and get ready to face the challenges as those before them faced in the era of nationalist struggle which decolonized the continent. They must realize that cooperative globalization is necessary for Africa to redeem itself off the venom of exploitative globalization. They must also realize that it is better for one to live in the jungle as king than a malnourished messenger in the city. Africa is not and must never be a beggar, because without its enormous raw materials, natural resources and market,

global economy would have been stagnated and Europe will be impoverished and perhaps abandoned by history.

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