CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL GLOBALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON AFRICAN NATIONS

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Abstract

Political globalism is a concept that affects all nations of the world. For centuries, globalization has progressively knitted together the world and created unity out of great diversity. Political globalism can be said to be the integration of different countries of the world into one political global order which is meant to benefit members of the entire society but, political globalism has not gone down well for most African countries especially developing African countries, as it has disintegrated what they used to have. This research therefore gives a clear meaning of political globalism in Africa, enunciates its importance and otherwise and discusses its effect on African political growth using the critical analysis method. This research work will also make possible suggestions on how Africans can manage political globalism such that will not be detrimental to African, culture, values, integration, unity, growth and development.

Keywords: Globalism, Africa, Politics, Growth, Development

Introduction

Globalism is a vast concept that cuts across all aspects of human existence. It is not restricted to a particular country but affects the entire world either positively or negatively. For centuries, globalization has progressively knitted together the world and created unity out of great diversity. According to Brittan (1998), globalisation is viewed "as a whirlwind of relentless and disruptive change which leaves governments helpless and leaves a trail of economic, social, cultural and environmental problems in its wake."(p. 2).

From obscure origins in French and American writings in the 1960s, the concept of globalization finds expression today in all of the worlds' major languages. Yet, it lacks precise definition. Indeed, globalization is in danger of becoming the cliché of our times (David, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton, 1999, p. 1).The phenomenon of globalization has indeed captured the centre stage of international relations in the post cold war world. Indeed, globalization mirrors cooperative as well as conflicting trends across states and civil societies between multiple ranges of actors, at varying levels, which shape contours of international relations. Understanding the trajectories of interactions between these multiple actors including nation states, international/regional organizations, transnational firms and banks, multinational terrorist organizations and international social movements etc; under globalization, is incontestably, a daunting task. For, perceptions and perspectives on the complex themes underlying globalization tend to vary according to diverse schools of thought in international relations as well as the spatial locations of scholars (Harshe, 2004, p. 9). Since the last decade, globalization in its accelerated form has been setting the pace as well as the logic of international relations. Nevertheless, being a constantly evolving and an ongoing process, the term "globalization", continues to escape definition clarity. Broadly, however, it is deployed to describe an ongoing movement towards conceiving the world as a single unit and building the consciousness of the people towards the world as a whole (Sadeeque et al 2015 citing Robertson, 1992 as cited in Harshe, op.cit, p. 15).

Intriligator (2003) posits that globalization is a powerful real aspect of the new world system, and it represents one of the most influential forces in determining the future course of the planet. It has manifold dimensions: economic, political, security, environmental, health, social, cultural, and others. Globalization has had significant impacts on all economies of the world, with manifold effects. It affects their production of goods and services. It also affects the employment of labour and other inputs into the production process. In addition, it affects investment, both in physical capital and in human capital. It affects technology and results in the diffusion of technology from initiating nations to other nations. It also has major effects on efficiency, productivity and competitiveness (PP. 1, 7). With all that has happened, one can say that Globalization has become an emerging reality. According to Ademola (1998), globalization refers to the increased integration across countries of markets for goods, services and capital

(P.107). It implies in turn accelerated expansion of economic activities globally and sharp increases in the movement of tangible and intangible goods across national and regional boundaries. With that movement, individual countries are becoming more closely integrated into the global economy. Their trade linkages and investment flow grow more complex, and cross border financial movements are more volatile. More importantly, globalization has been created, and continues to be maintained by liberation of economic-policies in several key areas. It is clear today that people and nation states can no longer think only in terms of individual states and actions, but, a component of global order. Mahathir (2002) defines globalization as, a word that seems to describe the coming together of all the countries of the globe into one entity. It was conceived by the rich countries, apparently in response to technological advances and the speed and ease of travelling (p.13). Globalization can be said to be the integration of different countries of the world into one global order. With the advent of science and technology, there is an equitable distribution of information of events happening around the globe. This is because people can now communicate, make transactions and meet people in all parts of the world.

Globalization as a concept is all encompassing. It is not only restricted to the economic point of view but also encompasses the political, cultural, religious and other activities of humans. The AWAKE magazine of September 8, 1999, strengthens the above assertion when it posits that; Globalization is more than the flow of money and commodities. It is the growing interdependence of world people and activities through shrinking space, time and disappearing borders. Globalization creates a global village based on shared values. Technology and market integration processes have dominated the world economic system. The world has become a global village as we now see shared values, religions, and even cultures and ideas. The ideological viewpoints of humans are sharpened by the interrelationships that are now domiciled with humans irrespective of their religious, political, economic or cultural groups.

For Murad (2002), globalization exists majorly between developed and developing countries and in most cases, the developed country dominates the developing country's economy, religion, politics and even culture. This is not colonization or imperialism as globalism tends to be subtle and less harmful than the other concepts. Globalization is commonly understood to be a process of change, which comes in many forms. It has a number of direct effects on the

economical, political, cultural, religious, social, demographic, environmental and military spheres. Understanding these aspects of globalization is very crucial and important, because the interaction among them can be constructive or destructive. In recent experiences of some developing countries, globalization can trigger security problems, (p. 1).

This can be necessitated by the unnecessary intervention of these developed countries at every slightest security challenge.

Sadeeque et al (2015) assert that globalization is not only an opportunity, but, a possibility for underdeveloped nations like Nigeria to shake off the burden and constrain of development by harnessing and utilizing the abundant mineral and human resources in building a pique self reliance economy (p.2). It is also an opportunity that will enhance the political growth of nations as they get to partner and learn the political workings of other countries and improve where and when necessary.

Political globalism is a national policy of treating the whole world as a proper sphere for political influence. African countries have at one point in time or the other been dominated by British or European countries. Before independence, Nigeria's political government was controlled by the British government who made laws that the Nigerian citizens adopted. These influences always happen between developed and developing nations especially countries that feel that they need the assistance of the developed country to run their political affairs.

Sadeeque et al (2015) have also seen globalization as a trend that impacts everyone more and more each day. For centuries, globalization has progressively knitted together the world and created unity out of great diversity (p. 1). This research work takes a cursory look at political globalism and its implication for Africa with particular reference to Nigeria.

Globalism in Africa

Globalism has been a thing of concern for scholars over the years in Africa. While some argue that it has had a tremendous positive effect, others oppose it by seeing it as a concept that has done more harm than good in the African nation. From Sadeeque et al (2015), As trade between far-flung parts of the world produced a global integrated economy, so also ideas, innovation, technology, culture and political philosophy were exported as easily as raw materials.

Globalization is an emerging reality (p. 1). It is a reality that cannot be done away with. It is a reality that has come to stay in Africa. In the 1990s `globalization' has become a particularly fashionable way to analyze changes in the international economy and in the world politics. Advances in technology and modern communications are said to have unleashed new contacts and intercourse among peoples, social movements, transnational corporations, and governments. The result is a set of processes which have affected national and international politics in an extraordinary way (Sadeeque at al 2015, pp. 189-190 citing Ngaire, 2000). Sadeeque at al (2015) further argue that the concept of globalization has attracted debates among scholars in both developed and underdeveloped countries. While proponents argue in favour of globalization, opponents see globalization as another re-colonization of the weaker economies by the stronger nations. Globalization is the movement and integration of the world economies into one entity, by breaking down barriers to free movement of goods, services and capital (p.3). From the economic perspective, Garcia (1998) gives a classical definition of globalization as: Changes in the way production is organized as required by the general dismantling of trade barriers and the free mobility of financial and productive capital, in the context of accelerated technology change…technological development in the sphere of information and electronic services has been a catalyst for speeding the process, bringing about global production distribution and consumption (p.96). From this assertion, globalism in Africa can be said to be viewed as a link through which goods and services are disseminated from one country to another. Globalism was also felt in Africa politically. As globalisation gripped Africa, there was a rise in democracy through multiparty elections in countries like Kenya, Ghana and South Africa. Finally people had the power to elect the people they wanted through the ballot without fear of reprisals. Other countries moved from military dictatorships to civilian rule like Nigeria. Sudan had a referendum to decide its destiny and the vote was final-South Sudan was born.

Political Leadership

According to Chambers Dictionary (1993), political leadership can be seen as a system where there are democratically elected representatives who are vulnerable to de-selection and operate within, as well as influence a constitutional and legal framework. Their source of authority is a mandate:

'permission to govern according to declared policies, regarded as officially granted by an electorate . . . upon the decisive outcome of an election.'

"It is not wise to expect much of political leadership, especially in a democracy" (Firlie, 1968, P. 58). Statements like this abound in contemporary literature on political leadership. However, nowadays, a crisis of confidence seems to emerge between citizens and politicians as people do not just vote for anybody but for who they feel can protect their interest. The particular leadership pacing political systems in Africa can give to us an interesting point of view to understand this phenomenon. To this effect, it becomes paramount for all citizens to understand what define them vis-à-vis their roles in the country they find themselves. The kind of power citizens have in their hands should also give them the chance to determine the positions of their representatives. It is also necessary to understand the roles of politicians elected as representatives and more significantly, to understand the necessity for all of us to have a critical look at what the core components of our societies are. Leaders are the objects of intense admiration in our society, due to their ability to shape the world surrounding them, and their natural capacity to lead and to have malleable followers. Leadership can only be achieved through responsibility and commitment, as "Politics… without belief is impossible" (Mayer, 1950; cit. Gane, 1997 pp. 549-564). The Brothers Karamazov from Fyodor Dostoevsky put forward one explanation as to why leadership is so important: "There are three powers, only three powers on earth, capable of conquering and holding captive forever the conscience of these feeble rebels, for their own happiness –these powers are miracle, mystery, and authority". The possibility to provide all three at the same time is only achievable by those able to grasp the immense complexity of the art of leadership. Political leadership can be put simply as the power given to an individual to manage power. It is the ability to exercise power over people or things.

Weber (1994) focuses his findings on Plato's fundamental question of 'who should rule', therefore, examining the qualities and abilities of the ideal leader. Leadership occupies a central place on the author's rationale, being fundamental for understanding politics. Again the theme of power is what drove Weber's attention, particularly as it is derived from the 'monopoly of legitimate physical violence' allowed in modern states. Therefore, as Weber claims,

"anyone engaged in politics is striving for power, either power as a means to attain other goals (which may be ideals or selfish in nature), or power for its own sake, which is to say, in order to enjoy the feeling of prestige given by power" (pp. 310-311).

African Political Conflicts

According to Appadorai (2004), man as intoned by Socrates is a social animal. This implies that the gregarious nature of man abhors in all ramifications the idea of isolated life. Therefore, man has to live in a politically organised enclave that is guided by laws. This is imperative because of the insatiability and seemingly selfish nature of man. To begin with, when we observe the life of men around us, we cannot fail to be struck by two facts: as a rule, every man desires to have their own way, to think and act as they like; and at the same time, everyone cannot have his own way, because he lives in society, where one man's desires conflict with those of another. The relations of the individual members of society with one another, therefore, need regulation by government (p.3). In trying to regulate the activities of human beings, a government is formed. This government consist of a body of persons that make decisions relating to the necessity and the essence of rules and regulations guiding our public life. What constitutes the body, the procedures and processes by which the laws are formulated agitated the minds of the political philosophers, whether by the assemblies of the elders (gerontocracy), the committee of the wealthy (plutocracy), the nobles (aristocracy), the experts (technocracy), and the general populace (democracy). This last form of political arrangement appears to be the best form of government (Okonkwo, C. and Felix, N. (2016) citing Okonkwo, 2015 in p. 91).

Africa can be said to be a continent faced with several political imbalances. At every point in time in African countries, there is always a case of political conflicts between one ethnic group and the other or between one political party and the other. Nigeria, for instance, has from time immemorial, battled with political instabilities and enthronement and dethronement. It has been a battle between the civilian and the military government. Democratic forms of governance were generally few and short-lived through the decolonialization and Cold War periods; most African regimes were autocratic and well over half of African regimes were ruled by ethnically-exclusive political elites. We

encounter political conflicts at various levels in Africa. From intra-party to inter-party conflict, ethnic clashes, religious political clashes and lots more. Intra-party conflict is the tussles and wrangling within a political party that are inimical to normal nomination and/or election of party flag bearers. It is a conflict that exists between members of the same party either in their clamour for positions or in trying to make their opinions count. Inter-party conflict exists between different political parties. To stress further, Okoli (2001) enumerated factors that are responsible for intra-party opposition as follows: Personality difference, clash of socio-economic interests, ideological incompatibility (P. 3).

To further buttress this, Afegbua (2014) asserts that:

> Conflicts are common and unavoidable in all human society. All over the world, conflicts occur because society is made up of people with differing interests and values. In most societies, conflicts occur when parties in a state of independence perceives divergent views or believe that their aspirations or goals cannot be achieved simultaneously. Therefore, it is only natural that where there is inequality in access to the control of natural resources and political power for instance, there would be discontent, opposition and controversy (p. 1).

Since Nigeria assumed the status of independence, the political parties have been challenged by many conflicts of different dimensions. This as a matter of fact culminated in political instability in the countries. Political ideology is like a superstructure upon which every other thing is built on. It consolidates political party and precedes party structure, organisation and manifesto but when there is a clash of interest, it leads to political conflict. Diversified political ideologies have been one of the major causes of political instability in Africa.

African Political Xenophobia

Hågensen, L. (2014) asserts that fear of the unknown is something one can witness all over the world, and as the movement of people has accelerated with new technologies of transport and communication so has the fear of strangers. This fear of strangers is what we call xenophobia. It derives from two Greek words: *xénos* and *phóbos*, meaning 'stranger' or 'guest' and 'fear', respectively. Consequently xenophobia means fear of the guest or the stranger, though today it has the stronger meaning of hatred of strangers. (p.1). It is not just an African

issue alone, just like globalization, every society at one point in time or the other feel insecure with the inflow of immigrants or visitor who will come to fight over human and natural resources with them.

The causes of xenophobia in most African countries particularly South Africa can be discussed in three perspectives. The first is the socio-cultural reason. Here we find social identity theory, which focuses on a person's self-image; this derives from the social group(s) that the individual believes himself/herself to belong to (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40). As most individuals want to maintain or even enhance their self-image, it is important that the membership' of their group is perceived as something positive. In turn this leads to a need to reject and even express hostility towards the out-group. When this translates into nationalism it becomes a way of promoting one's status as a citizen; this therefore also rejects the foreigner. When a country is going through a political transition, as South Africa has been doing for the last 20 years, nationalism can take the form of hostility towards foreigners and this provides an explanation for xenophobia (Mummendey, Klink & Brown 2001:159-160). The issues of inherited culture can also be linked to this socio-cultural cause of xenophobia.

The second reason can be structural reasons. At this level, we have the relative deprivation theory, the theory of ethnic violence and the group threat theory. Relative deprivation theory suggests that social unrest comes from the perception that one gets less than one is entitled to (Hågensen, L. 2014 Citing Harris, 2002). This can create xenophobic attitudes and practices if the reason for this deficit is believed to be foreigners. It is seen as a zero-sum game where foreigners that have jobs are blamed for unemployment among South Africans (Du Toit & Kotzé 2011, p. 163). In other words the foreigners become 'frustration scapegoats' and this is why xenophobia occurs (Harris, 2002). The theory of ethnic violence by Horowitz (2001), states that external contextual causes in addition to immediate locality-bound causes must be taken into account when looking at violent outbursts. This theory also gives a step-by-step description of how violent ethnic event will unfold (Du Toit & Kotzé 2011, pp. 160-161). It points to causes that were present in South Africa prior to major xenophobic events, and therefore explains what caused these events to take place, thus providing an explanation for xenophobia in the country. Group threat theory suggests that inter-group hostility is largely a reaction to perceived threats from subordinate group(s). If the dominant group finds that its position vis-à-vis the

minority group is in jeopardy and fears that it might lose its advantaged social position, hostility can arise (King 2007, p. 1225).

Lastly, xenophobia can be as a result of institutional mismanagement. This consists of the roles of the state. Attitudes and statements from state representatives where they deny xenophobia, or lay blame for crime on foreigners, could generate xenophobia (Bekker, 2010, p. 126). There is also the belief that the government is not doing enough to solve the 'problem' of immigrants (Landau, 2011, p. 13). One can also look at the policies that affect migration into the country. There is a big gap between policy and practice in African countries particularly in South Africa, and this also worsens the xenophobic phenomenon (Bekker, 2010, p. 141). Furthermore Misago (2011) argues that a key trigger for violence against foreign nationals and outsiders in specific locations is localised competition for political and economic power. This competition has kept Africa where it is today. No one wants to serve; everybody wants to be a leader so as to get intoxicated by power.

Effects of Globalism in Africa

Political globalism in Africa has both negative and positive implications. According to Akindele et al (2005),

> Africans received globalization naturally with hope. Flows of capital in developing countries would grow promisingly: they were multiplied by six, in six years (from 1990 to 1996). People thought that all men and all countries – would benefit from globalization, which was supposed to help developing countries "create better economic environments', jump into the information age, accelerate development and enhance global harmony.

But this believe did not go down completely well for Africans. The reality, today, is that the globalization of information and communication technology through the use of the internet and satellite images have narrowed and constrained states from taking political actions especially against their citizens without global condemnation or support. For example, the April 14-15, 2014 kidnapping of Chibok girls and the reluctance of the former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration to take action, gave birth to global condemnation and the 'bringbackourgirls movement' in Nigeria and across the globe, forcing the government to accept responsibility and promise to take action in rescuing the

girls, even though the whole episode looked improperly-stage-managed. Such is the powers and interconnectivity of the globe today, thereby eroding political sovereignty (Sadeeque et al, 2015. P.3). As a result of globalization, most African countries cannot comfortably take decisions without the globe being either fully or partially aware or involved in it. The breakthrough in information technology has broken down barriers and enhanced the world interaction by collapsing it into what we now refer to as the global village. Thereby, presenting African countries and their political governments unclothed. Today, information spreads like wild fire disseminating both true and false stories.

Also, globalism has helped positively to bring the world together. Politically, leaders in different countries hold meetings and conferences which are meant to benefit their citizens and during the course of such meetings and conferences, innovations which are meant to boost the political, social and economic life of the general public are introduced.

Conclusion

According to Sadeeque et al, (2015),

> "The world economic and political arrangement is a single social community. This social community is a mix of wealth and poverty, progress and despair, exploitation and assistance, dependence and interdependence. For sure, some countries are rich and some others are rather poor. The rich countries have certain common characteristics. They are economically prosperous, politically stable, socially harmonious and technologically sophisticated. Given the link between politics and economics, the rich countries are very competitive in international trade and exchange relations, while in contrast, poor countries are in the majority, and are characteristically backward in economics, unstable in politics, socially disharmonious and technologically dependent" (p.3).

For the poor countries of Africa, globalization has changed the pattern of international economic relations. The new pattern is to promote growth in the motive force for globalize economic system. It has been argued by both proponents and antagonists of the global drives for globalization, that the new doctrine is facilitating a lot of crises and conflicts in the world. This has made many scholars and leaders alike to argue that globalization has not only created

more crises but has also complimented in deepening inequality and underdevelopment (Sadeeque et al, 2015, p. 4). This clearly shows the need for complementality of countries to help build the political, economical, sociological power of other countries especially the developing countries. Political globalism needs to be embraced to be in the growth of other smaller countries but this should not be an opportunity to exploit them. Undoubtedly, globalization has created more problems than solving the existing ones. Therefore, the challenge before countries like Nigeria is on how to re-position the economy through diversification and building the capacity of her citizens to visualize, theorize, innovate and develop the critical skills and spirit for national growth and development

Recommendations

I recommend the following:

1. African countries should build policy thrust to protect and enhance her industrial growth and development especially in harnessing and utilizing the huge human demography at her disposal.
2. There should be a creative utilization of the human and natural resources as there is a general believe that, creative utilization of the human being is the engine of growth and development.   This will in turn liberate them from being parasites and thorns on the skins of other countries. What make growth and development happen in any society, is the ability of individuals and groups to imagine, theorize, conceptualize, experiment, invent, articulate and manage problems and do hundred things with their minds and hands that contribute to the progress of the individual and the society in general (Sadeeque et al 2015 citing Harrison, 1985).
3. Most people today in Africa aspire to higher standard of living, longer lives and fewer health problems, education for themselves and their children that will increase their earning capacity and leave them more in control of their lives (Sadeeque et al, 2015, p. 5). This opportunity should be created by the government of African countries.
4. Developed countries should be made to play only advisory and supportive roles and not to impose orders on the developing countries.
5. Political decisions should be based on consensus and the interest of the general public should be taken into consideration when the government make policies.

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