

# **IGWEBUIKE AS AN IGBO - AFRICAN HERMENEUTIC OF GLOBALIZATION: A REVIEW**

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Globalization has become an inevitable reality in recent times as experience increasingly shows that the world will be better in all ramifications if the unity in her diversity is highlighted above intemperate self-dependence of nations and persons. This means that barriers that hold peoples and nations apart are broken or lowered to the barest minimum in order to foster more access between them.

As inevitable as this trend has become however, many scholars project their dissatisfaction with globalization by amplifying the negative sides of globalization to the point of warning against it. It is against this negative hermeneutics of globalization that Kanu, in the paper under review, attempted a reinterpretation of globalization within the context of his philosophy of *Igwebuike* from an Igbo - African perspective.

The paper is basically divided into four parts: Introduction, Negative Hermeneutics of Globalization, *Igwebuike*: Reinterpreting Globalization and the Conclusion. The introductory part of the paper identified the wonder about the universe and the project of the Ionian philosophers of Ancient times to ascertain the basic unity in the midst of plurality as the historico-philosophical foundation of globalization. This is because these Ionian philosophers rendered their conviction in the existence of a fundamental core of reality commonly shared by all across the globe (p. 1). Consequently, Globalization as a concept, Kanu argues, presents our common humanity and the common yearnings and hope that this common humanity brings. Consolidating this premise, the definition of globalization by Fafowora (1998) was cited, according to which "globalization is a process that deals with the increasing breaking down of barriers and increasing integration of economic, political, social and cultural relations across international boundaries". To further clarify the concept of globalization, Ohanuabunwa's definition (as cited in Kanu, 2013) was adopted in which "globalization is an evolution which is systematically reconstructing integrative phases among nations by breaking down barriers in the areas of culture, commerce, communication and other fields of endeavour" (p. 2).

After a succinct clarification of the concept of globalization, Kanu dedicated the second part of the paper to an evaluation of some negative analyses of

globalization which he attributed to misconceptions by scholars of the meaning of globalization over the years. Such negative analyses of globalization by scholars according to Kanu, include that of Oguejiofor (2010) who considers globalization as a force in scuffle with traditional paradigms with eroding influence on traditional values; Ajjala (2010) who in line with Oguejiofor, considers globalization as recolonization in which the negative outweighs the positive; Joy (2010) who argued that globalization has brought about the de-origination of the Igbo language as new words have emerged from the encounter between Igbo words and English concepts; Dominic (2010) according to whom globalization packages look like bait for a fish or the Greek gifts. Other misconceptions of globalization cited by Kanu include the conception of globalization as the rampage of capitalism and an imperial policy which by its nature cannot exist without parasitic expansion (McEwan, 1990; Toyo cited in Kanu, 2013; Akinde, Gidado, and Olaopa, 2002). "They argue that its immutable and primary focus is to exploit African resources, disintegrate its economies and incorporate it into the international capitalist economy". Another misconception of globalization as cited by Kanu is by Madunaga (1999) who thinks that globalization was created by the prevailing social forces in the world to serve their specific interests (p. 2-3). Considering these negative conceptions of globalization, Kanu wondered if globalization is actually limited to these negativities especially for Africans, and if there is an alternative hermeneutic that can give more objective meaning to globalization from the African point of view. This is the background to the development of *Igwebuike* by Kanu as an alternative hermeneutic of globalization. What then is *Igwebuike*?

In the third part of this paper which centres on a reinterpretation of globalization within the framework of *Igwebuike*, Kanu begins by rendering an etymological analysis of the word *Igwebuike* in order to conceptualize the philosophy it portrays. According to him, *Igwebuike* is an Igbo word which is a combination of three words. Thus, it can be understood both as a word and as a sentence. As a word, it is written as *Igwebuike* and as a sentence, it is written as *Igwe bu ike* with the component words being relatively independent in terms of space. In an explanation of the three words involved in the sentence form of the word, Kanu explained: *Igwe* is a noun which means number or population. *Bu* is a verb which means *is*. *Ike* is a noun which means *strength* or *power*. Put together, it means 'number is strength' or 'number is power, meaning, when human beings come together

in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force (p. 3-4). This, according to Kanu, provides an ontological perspective that presents being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations. *Igwebuiké* as an ideology, Kanu argues, is founded on the African principles of solidarity and complementarity. The argument is that 'to be' is to live in solidarity and complementarity. In other words, 'to be' is 'to be with others' in a community of beings and to live outside this framework, is to suffer alienation (p. 4).

*Igwebuiké* as a modality of being for Kanu in this paper, construes globalization as the realization of the fullness of being in which case, globalization becomes a journey towards the realization of the full potentials of being. This he corroborated with various understandings and interpretations of globalization ranging from the concept of the 'omega point' in Teilhard de Chardin, 'return of the absolute spirit' in Hegel, the 'dialectical contradictions in interrelatedness and interactiveness' in Karl Marx, to Asouzu's understanding of globalization as 'a necessary consequence of the character of our being as relative subjects seeking full actualization (p. 4). Globalization as a modality of being would mean, for Kanu, that it cannot be shunned. This, for him explains why the more some African scholars mourn the 'negativity' of globalization, the more they are globalized. "Thus, globalization offers all stakeholders a luxury of opportunities to access the mammoth richness of differences in order to better themselves, their communities and the world" (p. 4). Globalization, Kanu argues, is therefore not new to Africa but rather, "a global expression of that African nature of being present to the other more deeply and directly". Consequently, "globalization becomes the realization of a fundamental dimension of the African Philosophical heritage" (p. 4).

In the concluding part of the paper, Kanu asserted that "*Igwebuiké* interprets globalization as a process in which all the world is involved, generated by all, in all and for all" (p. 5). He therefore dismissed the negative conception of globalization as a product manufactured in Europe and transported to Africa as well as the attempt by some African scholars to alienate the being of the African whose being is defined largely by belonging. For Kanu, the 'African predicament' cannot and should not be blamed on globalization. He concluded the paper in the following words:

The employment of *Igwebuike* in the interpretation of the nature and logic of globalization has turned an acclaimed enemy into a friend, and the terrifying journey into the anticipation of a welcome reunion. Until African scholars begin to see globalization as a process, she would continue to remain un - strategically positioned, in fact, as a spectator, instead of a player in the incurably globalizing world (p. 6).

Kanu's "*Igwebuike* as an Igbo - African Hermeneutic of Globalization" is original, well researched with solidity of logical connections and flow within which the philosophy of *Igwebuike* holds a lot of promise for the understanding of, and participation in the inevitable process of globalization. From this review however, a few observations have been raised concerning this paper.

First and foremost, notwithstanding the prospects of globalization, its process can definitely be manipulated to produce winners and losers. *Igwebuike* as a modality of being therefore, only underscores the inevitability, necessity and prospects of globalization not necessarily a preclusion of possible manipulation of the process by some powerful stake holders for some 'unglobal' motive. The paper seems not to give allowance for the possibility of distortion of the process of globalization even in the midst of its prospects.

In a similar manner, the critics of globalization should not be outrightly written off in their claims rather while acknowledging the fact that globalization may have its negative sides, it should be highlighted that the prospects of globalization especially as explained within the framework of *Igwebuike* far outweigh the negatives, thereby making it worthwhile. It is now down to the stake holders to address the problems arising from the process. The originality, simplicity and relevance of the philosophy of *Igwebuike* is definitely commendable and globalization reinterpreted in this light, portrays it in a more acceptable manner as against the projection of Africa as being hopelessly at the receiving end of globalization. In other words, using an indigenous Igbo - African ideology to explain globalization, is capable of getting Africans to identify with globalization in order to avail of the prospects it holds.

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