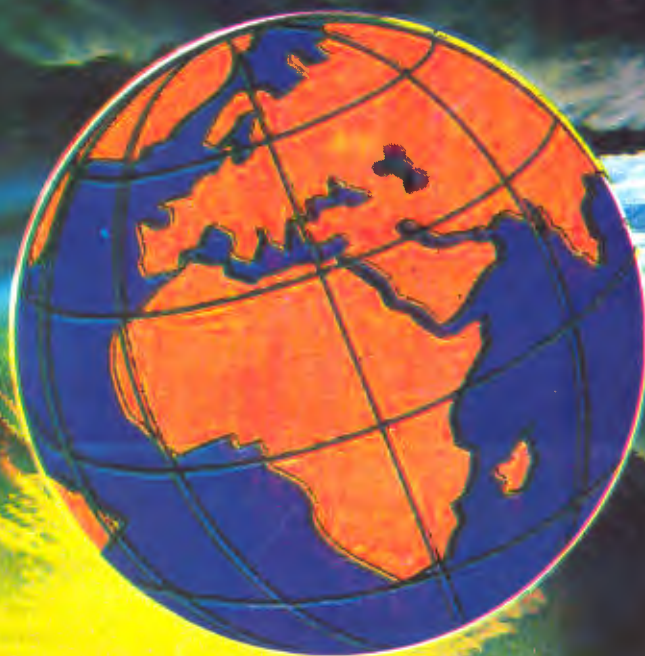


**GLOBAL JOURNAL OF
APPLIED, MANAGEMENT
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**
(Gojamss)



Global Journal of Applied, Management and Social Sciences (GOJAMSS); Vol.4 July 2013; (ISSN: 2276 – 9013)

July 2013 Edition, Volume 4
www.gojamss.com

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GLOBAL MODERNITY, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DISLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT INEPTITUDE IN AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Global modernity or the process of industrialisation where social, economic and cultural relations increasingly take on a global scale has been very uneven between the West and African nations like Nigeria. For many in Africa, it has not brought tangible benefits. Rather, it has led to an increasing disillusionment due to dislocations caused by slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism which today have been made worse by the workings of the global free market economy for which the West are the profiteers and Africa the losers. The paper examines the interface between the national economy and the global economy; the unfavourable role and manipulations of the World Bank, IMF and the WTO in the exploitation and perpetual subjugation in Africa. It also examines the effects of trade liberalisation and the growing inequalities between the rich and the poor in Nigeria. With an over-reliance on crude oil, the price of which is determined by the global market, policies and programmes of government have only helped to worsen the debilitating effects of inflation, unemployment, insecurity, hunger, poverty and hopelessness in the country, especially in the face of current global economic melt-down. A number of solutions have been proffered which it is expected will help capture the interests and needs of the Nigerian people and bring them into the mainstream of true global modernity.

KEYWORDS: colonialism, deregulation, global, globalization, merchant capitalism, modernity, neo-colonialism, privatization, slavery, trade liberalization.

INTRODUCTION

There has been great dissatisfaction with the current state of global play, both theoretical and practical. Modernity is a complex process involving many dimensions of change; hence it involves social patterns

linked to industrialization. It is also linked with the idea of progress or a state of continual improvement. A major issue in Global Modernity was clearly stated by Macionis (2002). According to him, “among the most important trends of recent decades is the development of a global economy, which is exacerbating inequality both within our country and around the world”.

During their evolution of tens of thousands of years, humans have progressively, although not without setbacks learned how to better feed themselves, make clothing, provide shelter, cure and prevent diseases, improve their health and modify their fertility. People have learned how to interact in societies, which were at first based on gathering, hunting and fishing. Many societies then experienced the agricultural revolution combined with the domestication of animals. The evolving increase in labour productivity and scientific advancements generated the industrial revolution and urbanization, the foundations of contemporary societies. The World's populations in the process have grown from very small numbers to be over six billion people globally.

The concept global has come to be employed widely since the early 1980's along with the concept of globalisation. This was also largely sparked by the phrase, “global consciousness” meaning consciousness of the whole world as a whole. The everyday life of people all over the world may be relatively or even absolutely global through the representation of “other cultures” in movies on cable or satellite television; through popular culture generally or everyday interaction, including internet and other forms of electronic communication. Whether the average person is or is not fully conscious of their “global membership” many (average people) nonetheless participate in increasingly reflective global consciousness.

According to Schaefer (2004) “Globalisation is the worldwide integration of government policies, cultures, social movements and financial markets through trade and the exchange of ideas”. However, it is necessary to state that while public discussion of globalisation is relatively recent, intellectuals have been pondering its social and economic consequences for a long time. Globalisation therefore implies a way of thinking about the world and the dynamics of political and economic relations within it. It is the process by which the economies of different nations and regions are being transformed into a single, integrated economy, which is worldwide or global in scope. This profound economic transformation is having great consequences for nation states and their societies where some nations and groups are winners in globalisation and some are losers.

There is need to reject the universalizing characteristics of much of the discussion about Global Modernity or the process of globalisation. Our emphasis therefore is to circumspect about its euphoric nature and question the problematics of its roots in particular traditions of thought and structures of power. We must politicize and historicize present considerations of globalisation. Also, globalisation cannot be addressed in a vacuum as it must reflect directly or indirectly the long-term developments in international capitalism and the inter-state system. This indeed is the crux of the matter.

WHAT IS GLOBAL MODERNITY?

Modernity is a term designed to encapsulate the distinctiveness, complexity and dynamism of social process unleashed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which makes a distinct break from traditional ways of living (Bilton et al, 1997). Modern societies emerged out of a period sometimes referred to as “The Great Transformation”. Polanyi (1973) refers to this period as the historical moment, characterised by massive social, political, technological, economic and intellectual change which marks the onset of this global modernity.

The question then of what global modernity represents is clearly shown in the issue of a global world economy. It paints a picture which shows the dilemma of understanding development based on the theories of modernisation and the theory of dependency. Modernity is a complex process involving many dimensions of change; hence it involves social patterns linked to industrialisation.

Much of the talk of “globalisation” is confused and confusing. It has become a buzzword and those using the term often have contrasting understanding of what it means. Globalisation refers to the accelerated worldwide diminishing of economies and cross-boarder traffic with communication becoming ever denser. It means global effect and global awareness, and therefore increasing it also means global engagement (Pieterse, 2001).

Globalisation is rooted in the dynamics of modernity and it encourages a growing integration and convergence of social and economic relations. Yet, at the local level, it involves diversity and unevenness. It has indeed encouraged rapid growth and poverty reduction in China, India and other countries that were poor about 20 years ago. In this same way it has generated increased inequality and environmental

degradation as experienced in Nigeria. Its key agents are transnational corporations (TNCs), Cultural and Media Agencies which are new political institutions that go beyond the nation-state.

Globalisation according to Erinoshio (2004) can be perceived as the “process of integration” of the World Community into a common system construes the process as involving the “growing economic interdependence among nations”. According to Akinjide-Balogun (2001), “the net result of globalisation in the end would be poverty, unemployment, instability and corruption”. To Norberg-Hodge (2005), globalisation is “a recipe for economic, environmental and cultural disaster”. He further stated that the ability of globalisation to benefit all and sundry depends much on its being re-localised.

Olubamise (2005) has also asserted that globalisation generally describes a world where market forces are the driving forces. Also, today, trade and investments are expanding the hitherto known boundaries of nations creating both positive and negative implications. We hear about liberalization, free markets, deregulation and privatisation of public enterprises among others as part of the globalisation process. Infact, the major instrument of globalisation, information technology has created a global village.

Aremu (2006) has also stated that globalisation is the emergence of extensive network of economic, cultural, social and political interconnections and processes that routinely transcend national frontiers. With globalisation, social welfare, social institutions and social relations are now entangled in the material processes that extend beyond the prerogatives of the nation-states. In addition, the transformation of these issues can no longer be wholly understood within an exclusively national framework.

However, the benefits of the process of globalisation are not evenly distributed among social groups, both nationally and internationally. Those adversely affected in the process include those who suffer from trade liberalisation due to their small, infant or weak uncompetitive enterprises as they are swallowed up by large foreign firms.

BENEFITS OF GLOBAL MODERNITY

While the benefits of the globalisation process have been stressed by its supporters, there has been increasing disillusionment among many policy makers in the south, analysts and academics. Khor (2003) stated clearly that globalisation is a threat or curse or the tool for exploitation of the third world countries or for engendering unequal relations among nation-states, the centre and the periphery or the north and the south.

The proponents or beneficiaries of globalisation show appreciation for all benefits underlying the revolution in information and communication technology, while they down play or ignore how the macroeconomic policy that has wittingly accompanied the process has contributed to the improvement of a sizeable proportion of human kind.

The reasons for the changing perception of and attitude towards globalisation are many. Among the important factors are the lack of tangible benefits to most developing countries such as Nigeria from opening their economies, despite the well-publicized claims of export and income gains; the economic losses and social dislocation that are being caused to many developing countries by rapid financial and trade liberalisation; and the perception that environmental, social and cultural problems have been made worse by the workings of the global free market.

So what has been observed among African nations especially in Sub-Saharan African is that globalisation has led to an increasing divide between the global economy that has become highly globalized and the local economies in most societies. Also, the benefits of globalisation are not adequately spread across countries as there is a growing polarization between winners and losers of the process. Just as globalisation favours the developed nations, it simultaneously causes high levels of marginalization to the developing countries. Coupled with all of these is the assertion that there is an increasing tide of uncertainties and insecurity across the world as more and more people are being robbed of their basic welfare and rights by the workings of the globalization process through Multi-National Corporations (MNCs), the global governance institutions and the developed countries manipulations.

THREE STAGES OF DISLOCATIONS IN AFRICA

The period of industrial revolution witnesses the movements from the country side to the city in a process of urbanisation. It also witnessed both forced and voluntary migration around the world such as the way in which the North and South America were rapidly populated by European migrants and African slaves.

The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was a crucial moment in the emergence of new ways of understanding the natural and social world. It heralded an era of great medical, scientific and technological innovation. Religious institutions and doctrines declined in influence, a process called secularization where secular intelligentsia, science and progress became the new faith.

Western expansion around the world was a crucial, but often neglected factor in the formation of modern societies. As early as the fifteenth century, Europeans began to travel the globe. According to Hall (1992), in the years that followed, contacts between the West and the Rest meant trade, plunder and eventually colonization. This expansion provided wealth, raw materials and later, markets, which drove European economic development. In other regions, it has led to the destruction of existing social forms in the face of the Western power.

It was the Portuguese who introduced the Atlantic slave trade in the early 16th century when the discovery of the New World created a demand for more workers. Not long after, the Spanish, French and Dutch and after 1560, the English also joined the trade and Merchants from Liverpool became greatly involved in trade. This process of rapine and carnage went for over four hundred years; for ferocity, it has no parallel in the diabolical annals of human oppression (Offiong, 1980). With the discovery of the Americas whose greatest need was for strong labour familiar to the ways of mining and agriculture, the special function of Africa as supplier of such labour was established.

Despite the lucrativeness of Slave trade, Africa's most important contribution to the development of European capitalism and of the American colonies-and of American capitalism does not lie on the trade itself. Africa's most important contribution lies "in slavery, in the unpaid and forced labour of millions of Negroes for over two centuries". In the 400 years of African slave trade, not less than 15 million Africans were enslaved in the New World. For every slave who arrived there alive, about five or six had died in the wars in this continent, during the trek to the coast, while in the barracoons, waiting to be transported to the New World, in the frequent insurrections aboard ship, and in the course of horrors of the six or ten weeks in the Middle Passage. Dr. Bu Bois, in his work "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade", notes that the royal African Company shipped about 60,000 slaves from 1680 to 1688, of whom over 14,000 died at sea.

It is clear also that in the trade between Africans and the West, Africans were in an inferior position; for the export of slaves and some extractive materials, they also bought manufactured European goods which included beads, trinkets, rum, guns and gunpowder among other things. It is difficult to see how this trade aided the development of Africa as the apologists for slave trade have often argued.

It is necessary to add that European attitude about Africa developed into a set of derogatory myths. Africa was depicted as a Dark Continent of the jungles and Dark, mysterious swamps, and Africans were thought of as savages with no history and no "culture". African dependency was thus consummated some 5 centuries ago. With the help of their naval fleet, Europeans were able to travel to Africa and with the help of their superior weapons, they were able to put Africa under total subjugation.

THE STAGE OF COLONIALISM

It is difficult to say when slave trade ended and when colonialism began; because before slavery ended, colonialism had established its roots in the African continent. During this period, our colonizers (exploiters or robbers to be specific) complemented themselves and rationalized away the inhuman treatment they meted out to Africans by saying that we were racially, culturally and even religiously inferior to them. They fashioned a relationship of unequals of rulers and ruled, superior and inferior, and also went ahead to establish political and legal systems meant to maintain and perpetuate this supremacy and domination.

In pre-colonial Africa, the most senior elder in the extended family made sure that everybody in the family had a piece of land to farm so that no body would go hungry. The traditional African subsistence economies were able to provide sufficient diet for the African communities. At no time did any part of Africa ever suffer a chronic famine in the past. But under colonialism the situation changed rather dramatically. Both the British and the French used what was essentially an indirect method of getting Africans to work for Europeans. They introduced a Tax System which had to be paid in European monies. This meant that in Nigeria for example, people were forced to leave their homes, sometimes hundreds of miles away, to work for Europeans, since they alone had money acceptable for tax purposes.

The result of this forced labour was that young and able bodied men were driven out of their homes to work for Europeans hundreds of miles away. Several Villages in Nigeria were denuded of their "fit adult males" for more than Six months a year. The whole fabric of our traditional order was disrupted and many lives ruined. "The gross effect" of all this was serious and continuous dismantlement of the pattern and structure of social life... And this was compensated by no corresponding gain in understanding advancement by the men who went away to industrial work. Africans were treated like beasts of burden. They were unfairly treated as they had no human rights. (Davidson, 1971)

In fairness to the colonial powers, it must be said that they built roads, railroads and communication systems. However, the roads and railroads were designed primarily to serve the export-

import trade and not to encourage internal trade and communication. Within Nigeria, the major lines run from North to South, to and fro from the Ocean, while east-west lines were few. There was no railway running between Eastern and Western Nigeria and the only decent road was built after Nigerians came to power.

As part of the strategy of Keeping Africans perpetually underdeveloped, the colonial government also monopolised economic activities, thus preventing the rise of an indigenous entrepreneurial class. Sir Taubman Goldie successfully eliminated Africans from the lucrative Niger trade by imposing taxes that Africans could not afford. In the export trade, Africans were strongly discouraged as they were charged more export fees than Europeans (Crowder, 1976).

In the late 1930's UAC (United African Company) alone controlled well over 40% of Nigeria's export-import trade, and in 1949 it controlled 34% of commercial merchandise imports in the country, and bought on behalf of the Nigerian Marketing boards, 43% of all Nigerian non-mineral exports.

In 1939 the British colonial government established a monopoly over the purchase, export and marketing of all West African agricultural products. It turned out that the large expatriate firms were beneficiaries of that official monopoly. It must be added that during this period in Nigeria, there was a deliberate refusal by European banks to give loans to Nigerians as the Foster-Sutton Commission of Inquiry had acknowledged in 1957. This prompted Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, then premier of Eastern Nigeria, to divert some money from the public treasury into the African Continental Bank, in order to make funds available to African entrepreneurs.

According to Crowder (1976) "the African found himself the simple producer of raw materials for which Lebanese were the agents of sale and European companies the exporters. Conversely, these same companies imported the goods which Africans bought, mainly at the shops through the agencies of Lebanese traders, with money he earned from the sale of his crops". To Green and Seidman (1968), it is true that some form of "development" occurred during colonial rule, but this took place in sectors limited almost exclusively to production for export, the import trade, and the related collection and distribution services. These sectors limited almost exclusively to production for export, the import trade, and the related collection and distribution services. These sectors did not directly affect the bulk of the population, who continued to engage in low-productivity food and handicraft production predominantly for their own or sale in local market.

By exporting the profits created by African labour to Europe, the development of Europe was assured while dialectically, this meant the underdevelopment of Africa. The formal ending of colonial rule ushered in neo-colonialism. But before they left, the colonial powers imposed upon the people constitutions that would ensure conflicts among the different groups which was basically the case in Nigeria. They worked hard to place in power those who will continue to promote their interests after they had gone. This therefore meant the preservation of colonial relationship of Western dominance and African dependence by means other than direct political control, after granting them pseudo political independence.

STAGE OF NEO-COLONIALISM

European powers did not establish colonial states to carry out a programme of political development or change, but to erect efficient and effective administrative states for purposes of economic exploitation and this largely explains many of the problems faced by African nations after independence. African leaders were engaged in corruption, and their alliance with the international exploiters in the industrialised societies is a great factor in African underdevelopment. It is a fact that corruption exists in both the industrialized and non-industrialized societies; and as the Watergate inquiry revealed, it became abundantly clear, that, a society like the U.S is rife with corruption. However, the marked difference is that while the monies stolen from the American people are reinvested abroad and vast amounts find their way into Swiss banks.

According to Nkrumah (1966) while writing on neo-colonialism, he believed that a state in the grip of neo-colonialism is not master of its own destiny. Neo-colonialism is the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. Nkrumah further stated that at the centre of neo-colonialism lies the multinational corporations.

By 1960 when Nigeria gained Independence, all it simply attained was "flag" independence because it lacked functional sovereignty. With manipulations in its political system created by the west, there was so much chaos in the government of the first Republic. With so much Corruption in the country coupled with unaccepted Census figures and the crisis in the Western Region, what logically followed was the first military Coup which rocked the foundation upon which the country was built.

With successive Military governments coupled with periods of civilian rule affected by military hangover, from Alhaji Shehu Shagari's administration of 1979-1983, the 1999-2007 administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, to the present government of Alhaji Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, the Nigeria's economy has dwindled drastically to very unbearable levels. Today, the country relies on the existence of crude oil which is the mainstay of its economy due to the neglect of Agriculture, to the detriment of human and natural resources, especially in the Niger Delta region. Consequently, with severe levels of poverty, squalor and misery in the affected communities coupled with violent acts such as pipeline vandalization and kidnappings by aggrieved youths and counter attacks by the federal government, the country has remained at the peripheral level in the World Capitalist system.

MANIPULATIONS OF THE WORLD BANK, IMF AND WTO

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) from its inception in July 1944, was established to promote international Monetary cooperation; promote the stability of the exchange rate and maintenance of an orderly monetary arrangement devoid of competitive policies; assisting in the global multilateral payment system devoid of foreign exchange restrictions; and shortening the duration as well as lessening the degree of disequilibrium in international balance of payments of its members.

In recent times however, globalisation has widened the functions of the Fund. For instance, as a result of financial crisis that erupted in South East Asia in the 1990s, the industrialized members of the IMF and the World Bank cast the institutions into the position of ensuring "forceful, far reaching structural reforms to correct possible weakness in the macroeconomic policy design and management styles". Consequently, the IMF and the World Bank would only give out loans if such country(s) comply with certain conditions. So, in terms of transparency of member nations, the IMF now requires them to disclose as well as publish their policies including the ones they agreed with the institution (IMF) itself.

The World Bank is the largest and arguably the most influential public development institution in the world. It was initially setup in 1944 by the Bretton Woods as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) for "the reconstruction of the devastated countries of Europe after the ravages of the Second World War". Just like the IMF, the economic clout of the Bank coupled with its ever-expanding mandate of reforms conditions it attaches to its loans makes it capable of causing social and economic changes within the countries which it lends. Similar to IMF, the World Bank is seen by many as disproportionately accountable to the World Powers and less accountable to developing countries that deserve its reconstructive and developmental mandate.

Prior to the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), multi-lateral trade rules were decided through series of ad-hoc round tables which brought government around the world together to negotiate non-legally binding agreements. However, it was thought that a permanent institution was needed to implement these agreements. The rules of GATT and its associate agreements were thereafter revised many times with the last one being Uruguay Round (1986-1994). The Uruguay Round later developed to include new set of rules governing trade in services and the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights when the WTO was established in January 1995.

It is important to state that while globalisation has generated new markets for the various economic actors across the globe, its economic agencies- IMF, World Bank and WTO have not dealt fairly with the developing countries. This has been shown from the 1986 strangulating SAP Programme experienced in Nigeria and unfair trade agreements.

The situation is so because of globalisation particularly in the 1990's, both the IMF and World Bank have expanded the level of conditionality they impose on members accessing their facilities including conditions on domestic governance and institutional framework of economic policy making. While the WTO also introduced new set of binding commitments on member states irrespective of their level of economic development.

The consequent effect of this is that with globalisation, issues which were hitherto within the perspective of national governments have now been taken over by these supra-national organisations and it has become unfair to hold national government's fully accountable for some policies. This again calls to question the issue of accountability of these international institutions.

Infact Stiglitz (2002) stated that the economic consequences of IMF's operations are too frequently negative. Also, its activities are characterised by lack of transparency and accountability, just as it is interested in protecting only the interest of credit nations. In addition, experience from developing countries show that there have been a high degree of excessiveness of IMF's conditionality which have often overlapped into their domestic policy regimes.

Unfortunately for Nigeria since 1995 when it joined the WTO, there has been no improvement in its economy as its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the various sectors of the economy- manufacturing, processing, and trade e.t.c have steadily declined. There has been no accelerated economic growth, level of poverty, unemployment and insecurity have risen very high just as its population growth has relatively increased.

In spite of the country being the sixth crude oil exporting nation in the world, it is classified among the 15 poorest nations in the world. This indeed is a paradox for Nigeria has become “a rich nation inhabited by poor people”.

SOLUTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The socio-economic and cultural dislocations experienced in Nigeria as in most parts of Africa have produced both winners and losers in the process of globalization. Third World Nations like Nigeria are at the receiving end, while the powerful states of western Europe, North America and in recent times Asia, have considerable control over the pace and direction of global Modernity.

Nigeria today is experiencing deepening poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, insecurity and the World Bank, IMF and WTO have played major roles in the coming into being of these unfortunate issues. Nigeria therefore must ensure a regulated and rational relationship with the West and it must move from a dependent relationship of perpetual subjugation, to one of interdependence.

It is important to state that globalisation which involves the integration of economies and societies through trade, investment, finance, information, culture among others has become an inescapable feature of the world today. For the developed world, globalisation has led to substantial economic and social progress; the same cannot be said for most third world countries.

For globalisation to succeed, its activities must be seen in positive light across nations all over the world. Globalisation has become a forceful process that is unlikely to be reversed. What is important today is not whether developing countries open their economies to the process of globalisation, rather, how they can take advantage of the consequent liberalisation to their own advantage while also avoiding the disruptive impact of the process. With regards to Nigeria, this will involve examining how it formulates, designs and implements its domestic economic policies so as to benefit from the process of globalisation.

Good Governance built on democratic principles, respect for rule of law, social equity and human rights is very necessary if globalisation is to succeed. There is a need to establish appropriate policies that will integrate the informal sector of the domestic economy into the economic mainstream so as to raise the productivity in individual domestic economy.

There is also the need to encourage the adoption of the right technologies and also empower local communities so as to strengthen local economic capacities.

It is also necessary to take advantage of appropriate economic integration and regionalism through which multilateral issues can be jointly addressed. Unfair trade rules and barriers to market access must be removed particularly as they affect goods where developing countries possess comparative advantage. Rules on intellectual properties should not be to the detriment of developing countries' development aspirations.

It is expedient to add that an important requirement for globalisation to thrive in the third world is by ensuring that instead of rapid liberalisation, sequencing or selective approach to liberalisation will be in the interest of the developing countries. This will provide appropriate balance between opening the markets of these countries and protecting the markets in the interest of infant economic activities

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