Bridging the North-South Divide: The Socio-Economic Implication

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Abstract

North-South separation and opposition or dissimilarity in the economic welfare, political stability and culture among the countries of the North and South has become the greatest challenge facing the global governance. The economic political differences which exists between the developed and the underdeveloped or developing countries, including the social differences has created cultural clashes among these groups and deter cooperation. Bridging the gap between the North and South, would have promoted cooperation, economic interdependence other than exploitation which the South canvass against as well as an egalitarian global community. In view of achieving this, the countries of the South, proposed for the establishment of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), though it effectiveness in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor countries has not greatly been felt, it has given or created a room for the North-South dialogue. This paper offers an explanation of the socio-economic implications in bridging the North-South divide. The paper uses the multi-disciplinary approach and the dependency theory in its analysis.

Keywords*:* Development, North, Cooperation, New International Economic Order (NIEO), South

Introduction

The issue of the North-South divide is a global issue, which has seen the fractionalization between the countries of the North (Developed) and the countries of the South (Developing) in virtually spheres of life ranging from economic, social, political and

otherwise. The South as a matter of concern are crestfallen and dejected to a dependent status in the global community, to which without the North (Industrialized or developed countries), their (Developing countries) economic, socio-political standing, cannot be guaranteed even after their (LDCs) political independence. According to Perez (2017), the global South lacks the essential resources which would have made them developed, the global South which is made up generally of countries that includes, but not restricted to Africa, Asia and Latin America suffers from high poverty rate, lack of human right, depletion and abuse of natural resources and as such, could not pilot the affairs of their development, rather than depending on the outside, which is the countries of the North consisting of America and western Europe, Canada etc…(Golub, 2013)

The North on the other side, are reluctant to assist the countries of the South towards their development because they (South) are the engine room of their (North) development, (Thomas, 2010). According to Afinotan (2014), the South in order to bridge the widened gap between the North and the South, demand for a New International Economic Order where there would be equity in economic, political and social relations. This was made possible through the 1973/74 OPEC instigated crisis, which was seen in the Arab oil boycott of western countries, the rise in oil price between this periods, (Mimiko, 1997). This made the North agreed on the need for negotiation for a new world economic order, (Brown, 2004). Despite the breakdown in the dialogue, the countries of the south are still pushing in hope that their heartfelt desires will one day come to reality and if that happens in due time, with which the hope is very challenging and slim to achieve, the socio-economic implication of the bride in gap is the central point and contention in this paper.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is propositioned on the dependency theory or model, in assessing the connection among the North and the South and elucidating its relationship. The dependency theory pursues to inaugurate the factors that have driven or contributed to the development of the underdeveloped countries. This theory is of the assumptions that the possessions flow from the "periphery" otherwise known as the poor and underdeveloped states to the "Core" also known as the wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. The contention or the central standpoint and standpoint of the dependency theory according to Todaro (2003), cited in Aluko & Arowolo (2010) is that the poor states or countries are impoverished and the rich ones enriched by the way the poor countries are integrated into the world system.

The dependency theory argues that the poverty of the countries of the periphery otherwise known as the countries of the south, is not because they are not integrated fully into the

world system but because of how they are integrated. According to Momoh & Hundeyin (1999), the bourgeois scholars believes that the underdevelopment and consequent dependency of most of the LDCs is as a result of the internal contradiction. They explain that the problems of the LDCs is their lack of close integration, diffusion of capital, technology and institutions, bad leadership, corruption and mismanagement etc. To them, the underdevelopment and dependency of the LDCs is internally afflicted and not external.

As against this, Andre (1979), noted that the Neo-Marxists debunked the world perception of the modernization theory or the bourgeois by opining that the incorporation of the LDCs within the process of world capitalist development is the cause of the underdevelopment of the LDCs. The dependency theory is premised on the assumptions that:

1. Poor states offer natural resources, low-priced labor, an endpoint for outdated technology and marketplaces to the wealthy nations, without which the second could not have the characteristic of existing they enjoy.
2. Wealthy nations vigorously disseminate a state of dependency by various means. This influence may be multi-layered, linking economics, media control, politics, and banking and financed, education, culture, sport and all spheres of human resource increase.

The theory arose around 1950 as a reaction to some earlier theories which held that all societies progress through similar stage of development. Dependency theorists contended, to the opposition of the free market economist, that underdeveloped countries needed to reduce their connectedness with the world market so that they could pursue a part more in keeping with their own need, less dictated by external pressure. The dependency theory is in judgment that dependency of less developed countries (LDCs) on developed countries (DCs) is the foremost and chief cause of the underdevelopment of the previous. This theory originated from the literatures of some rare Latin American Economists whose transformations began to give the impression in English language in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. The protuberant among them are: Sunkel, Frank, Santos, Furtardo etc… (Thomas, 2010).

Conceptual clarification

The conception of the global North and South (North-South Divide), is an expression in transnational political economy or international economic relations to term the variance in wealth or material health among the rich countries in the world, majorly find in the Northern Hemisphere and the poor countries located in the Southern Hemisphere, (Therien, 2020). According to Wikipedia.com, the two groups (North-South) are often

defined in terms of their differing levels of wealth, economic development, income inequality, democracy and political and economic freedom. States that are generally referred to as the global north tend to be wealthier, less unequal and considered more democratic and to be developed countries who export technologically advanced manufactured products. Whereas the south, in the words of Afinotan (2014) are countries collectively referred to as the south and are those countries that are geographically located at the Northern part of the equator. They are countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Characteristically, the South is very low in production capacity, with mono cultural economies, with majority of its inhabitants engaging in agriculture. Mimiko (1997) reflecting more on the features of the states in the global south, distinguished that they have minute export control and remain debt cantered, and practically certain to act as market and conduit of raw materials for the technologically advanced countries. Administratively unbalanced, scientifically and industrially retrograde, with great birth rate and high death rate, high populace with lack of industrial input, disarticulated in financial prudence, disposed to over-all poverty, high degree of joblessness and redundancy, absence and nonexistence of innovativeness and inventiveness as well as inadequate investment equipment, (Patricia, 2003).

The North

The Global North as Mimiko (1997:38) emphasized, is consisted of the industrialized nations of North America, Western Europe and Japan. The North in features represents the economically robust states, per solid military volume, Low-slung Natal and Death amounts, extraordinary industrial and technical advancement, systematically exceptional, Stumpy ratio in joblessness etc. The North in the global economic condition comprise of four fifth (4/5) of the biosphere's revenue, whereas on the opposite or contrary lies the South containing of Africa, Asia and Latin America with the amount sum up of three quarter (3/4) of the world's populace nevertheless access only 1/5 of the world's income. Life anticipation in the North averages 70years, however that of the South account for 50years.

The global North are those with profuse manufacturing firms and democracies, where private enterprises give directives and order. North is administratively steady and self-same constant with well-develop independent establishments (Ajayi, 2004:1999). With 90% of the globe manufacturing activities in the South possessed and control by the North (Afinotan, 2014:65).

The South

On the other side of the coin, the Global South consists of countries that are less develop, characterized by low production capacity, mono cultural economies, high birth and mortality rate, political instability, premature democracies, technologically and scientifically backward, high population rate and many internally displaced persons. To worsen the situation, they are the den of poverty and of high corruption rate with little control over export and also they are debt ridden and more saddened, the market of raw materials and the consumers of the finish goods of the North production, Heidensohn (2004). According to Patricia (2003), as far back as some 15years ago, the world development index of 2006 reveals that extreme poverty in the South fell from 28 in 1990 to 19% in 2002. Over same period, the number of people inhabiting the South grew 20% to more than 5billion, leaving more than 1billion in extreme poverty.

Causes of the North-South divide

The divide between the North and the South did not just start without any cause. Though scholars have argued differently as to what the causes of this division is. Notable among the causes listed according to the perspective of the South is that: the long term colonialism and exploitation of the countries in the global South, is the main reason for the inability of the countries of the South (LDCs), to catch up with the western capitalist countries (DCs).

1. **Colonialism as a cause of North-South Divide:** Most of the scholars of the South put forward the argument that the longtime .of colonial rule and experience has made the North to dominate the global economic and political relations. To them, the divide was created from the onset while most of the LDCs were still under the administration of colonial rule, (Mayrzedt, et al 1981)...
2. **Exploitation of the LDCs:** They also of the opinion that as a result of their contact with the European, they were exploited of their (South) treasures, for which the North used in developing the North at the expense of the development of the South. Exploitation of the South was one of the major reasons why the south could not bridge the gap that exist between the North and them. To the South, their exploitation by the North, is not only on their natural resources but also their human capital, this instigated short of human capital, Chossuclovsky, (1998).
3. According to Brown (2004) other factors as outlined by the Royal Geographical Society includes but not limited to: availability of natural resources, different levels of health and education, the nature of the country's economy and its industrial sectors, international trading policies and access to markets, how countries are governed and the international relationships between countries,

conflicts within and between countries and countries vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change.

Socio-Economic Implication of Bridging the North-South Divide

Bridging the gap between the rich countries of the North and the poor countries of the South, would be a pleasing thing to the south, as it will give them the hope of feeling belonging to the affairs of the international community. The signification of closing the gap between the rich and the poor, the developed and the developing or less developed are outlined below:

Economic Cooperation: Bridging the widened gap between the developed countries, otherwise known as industrialized and the developing or underdeveloped so to say, will give room for economic cooperation, where there will be equality in the relationships between these countries. The south being incorporated into the global economy without and tag of being underdeveloped, will spouse the development process of the LDCs of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Culturally, the countries of the South, will be liberated from the experience of retard social class labelled on them in the international relations. There will be more fair society on the part of the LDCs.

On the other side of the coin, the implication of the bridging of gap between the North and the South, to a greater extent will be a blow to the North as it will affect their dominance in economic and political ground. The South, will desire to be technologically advanced, in order for them to fend for themselves, which will be against the smooth ground that the countries in the North has set for themselves. There will definitely be class of interest, which will instigate another disparity.

Conclusion

The relationship between the global North and the South, has been on the basis of inequality and disparity. The only means through which the issue of inequality and disparity between these two can be solved is by bridging the widened gap for which its implication will be much of negativity to the countries of the North rather than the South. The very reason why there is a widened gap is because the North has realized the importance of the South in its development. Hence, refusing any means through which the south can reach the level to which it is at. Since the North would not allow the South to developed, depending on them, the as a means of stepping up, should look inward, towards promoting the South-South cooperation, and trust in the things of the South. It is

a verifiable fact that the both side cannot stay in isolation, thus, the South through their cooperation, should create a medium for international cooperation, not on dependence but on mutual agreement and satisfaction.

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