Globalization and the Challenge of Integration in Africa

By

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Abstract

Over the years globalization theorists have been engaged in the hot debate of the advantages and disadvantages of globalization to the Third World economies of the world. The economies of the less Developed Countries (Africa) have been conditioned to play the role of suppliers of industrial raw materials to the highly Developed Countries (HDCs) and import mainly finished goods from the superpower of the world global economy. In order to content with the global system, African States have over the years taken steps to integrate their economies with the hope of bringing about economic growth and development. Available evidence shows that every attempt by African countries to develop their economies have been abortive as she has failed to engineer development internally, rather looking to the highly developed countries, the dominant superpowers in the global economy to help them kick start their development process. Using secondary sources of data the work X-rayed some of the challenges that have bedevilled the efforts of African states in their quest for sustainable economic growth and development since decolonization. The study recommends that globalization is not the only solution to Africa's development, but rather, effort should be made by Africans to engineer the process internally while not ignoring the global process as she has so much to benefit from it.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, globalisation theorists have argued passionately about whether the international system had a significant role in the tremendous change of the world economy. They claim that the system's market integration through capitalist forces ensures quick development and progress. A number of people think that the free movement of capital is a key component of globalisation that might lead to human liberation on many fronts, including politics, economics, society, and culture. From an outsider's perspective, this approach is crucial for understanding how human civilization entered its golden era (Waters, 1995:1). According to proponents of globalisation theory, the disparity in development between the "first world" and the "third world" will soon be outmoded as the world's poorest regions quickly become as wealthy as the wealthiest. Yet with so many people living in extreme poverty and inequality, globalisation has become a fantasy rather than a reality for progress in Africa.
There are those who believe that globalisation can only be beneficial if all economies are more linked. The world's poorest people are the principal benefactors of globalisation, as it is presently fostering significant growth in third world nations (The Economics, December 1997), according to an article in the World Free Markers House daily. The social and economic development index, however, suggests different. The people of Africa are today engaged in a violent war for existence. A UNDP study found that malnutrition affects over 840 million people in underdeveloped nations. Poverty has become a widespread occurrence in Africa. There is inadequate food to meet the bulk of the demographic population with the least daily consumption of calories (Canfield, 1998:332). The average household currently consumes around 20 percent less than in the early 1970s (UNDP Report, 1998). No doubt as it is obvious now all over the globe, globalization is marked by startling disparities, for example the wealth world's 15 richest individuals is bigger than the whole Gross Domestic product (GDP) of Africa (UNDP Report 1998). There is scant evidence to suggest that globalization and the world system has increased wealth or decreased suffering in the continent of Africa.

Following the advent of neo-liberal economic theories in the late 1970s, conceptions of free market powered by unregulated capital flows became the dominant approaches to the world economy. Globalization idea has been

presented to liberal capitalism with the supervision of the United States of America (USA) following the failure of the political and unaccountable endeavours in Soviet Union. Capitalism is characterized by the continuous drive for profit by a class that dominates the basic means of production, willing to find any rationales for its conduct. In reaction to the international crises of the 1920s and 1930s, its ideology abandoned the free market for restricted state programmes, which bourgeoisie intellectuals rationalised with complementary concepts. Presently, globalization is fostering underdevelopment in the continent of Africa and yet, partisans saw it as the only choice left for the African growth and development.

Currently, the international economic system is in violation with the fundamental aims of globalization. It is only the economies of the second world that provide signs of more fluid capital mobility at the cost of the third world, save in the extraordinary conditions of the "Tiger" and "Dragon" economies. In a sense, there was globalisation as no region is sheltered from the market system. Nevertheless, some governments are weak in comparison to the really powerful ones which impacts international events. The overall view of the global system is that of instability and full of injustices.

The Global Economy and Africa

Debates have been made about Africa's previous engagement with the processes of globalization particularly, the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism (Rodney, 1972). The nations of Africa were obliged to perform the key role for the method of accumulating in the West. The bigger entry of direct foreign investment during the era of colonialism and the establishment of current transnational cooperations related with it enhanced the dynamics of domination and dependency that has defined the present globalization. According to Amin (1997), the problematic integration of Africa into the world economic system lays at the core of the continent developmental issues. Globalization as it is today has no strong platform to modify radically the development fortunes of the countries of Africa. This is connected to the fact that the fundamental impulses of the continent's economy are focused towards external demands instead of independent requirements for sustained growth. In essence under the present global reorganisation there is the prospect of relegating African states into the

ranks of the fourth world if not worst. The restructuring of the worldwide division of work within the spectrum of globalization movement has enlarged Africa's position as providers of essentially raw commodities, especially natural resources. In essence, the contemporary globalization has recreated the historical colonial division of labour, which required African States to export unrefined raw materials and consume goods from outside ones.
The notion of globalization advocates deregulation as the primary strategy to a free commerce, wherever items invade formerly protected zones. Facts demonstrate that commerce is increasingly being structured on a pattern of odds with the idea of globalization. Development in the third world nations are not towards free market but regional linkages and trade agreement as proven in the instance of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1992. It has been proved that this regional organization (NAFTA) is not really for global free trade. It does decreased trade and investment hurdles among the United States, Canada and Mexico, but in practical terms it keeps and create impediments between the three nations and the rest of the world economy. As noted by Kegley and Wilt Kopf (1995:247), despite its appearance NAFTA is a realistic step towards a regional commercial union that would serve as a counterpoise to Western Europe and Asian blocs. In actuality it was propelled ahead by United States producers' strong demands for management and have direct access to the market of Mexico. The global environment is now one of the new blocs, which Sanholz calls "regional neo-mercantilism" dominated by one or more of the economic powers of the great states. These hegemonic blocs restrict African States, despite a venue for the economic competitiveness of the three. By definition, African states now retain a more marginal position in the international economy. Between the mid 1970sand 1990s, the contribution of Africa's basic commodities trade to the world trade decreased from seven percent to less than 0.5 percent (Hoogvelt, 2001:173). Similarly, Africa's portion of industrial trade controlled by multinational businesses decreased from a tiny 1.2 percent in the 1970s to 0.4 percent in the 1990s (Hoogvelt, 2001). The economy of Africa is largely disarticulated, and conditioned primarily to service the industries of the global great powers as providers of industrial raw materials. The countries of Africa additionally act as marketplaces for imported and locally made commodities (sometimes of extremely low quality) by multinational corporations, who bring in critical raw materials and inputs from their parent firms and subsidiaries throughout the world. Nowadays, the

continent of Africa has lost its significance as exporters of raw commodities due to technological backwardness and synthetic alternatives made by urban corporations. It has grown increasingly difficult under globalization for African States to enter the markets of the wealthier countries. This is as a result of the many tariff and non-tariff hurdles established by globalization heartlands that are fighting against products and services from Africa. The problem however, is that even if obstacles to African goods and services are lifted, it would still be extremely challenging for them to compete against goods and services from the industrialised nations at the global market. This is tied largely to Africa's technological backwardness and the reliant structure of her economy. Africa's relative isolation in the international economy is also reflected in the number of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows into the region. Though globalization dogma offers an image of riches flowing endlessly and equally around the world, global investment pattern has been that of growing uneven growth. For instance, until 1960, roughly 50 percent of the world's investment moved to the Third World. It declined to 25 percent by 1974 and 16.9 percent in 1988 (Hoogvelt, 2001). Notwithstanding, around 37 percent of overall FDI migrated to the nations of the south by 1996, a number that prompted many globalization apologists to assert that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is broadly spread. The truth is that such investments scarcely penetrates the dispersion of economies. For example, between 1990 and 1995, just nine out of one hundred and 57 developing nations got 90 % of such investments, these featured prominently China, Malaysia, Singapore, Brazil and Thailand (World Bank, 1997). Africa's proportion of total FDI flows to the Third World nations declined from 13 percent in 1980 to roughly 4 percent in the late 1990s (Hoogvelt, 2001:173). Statistics also released by Global coalition for Africa reveals that in 1999, communist China earned US $40.5 billion as FDI and Hong Kong obtained US $276 billion in FDI. Also, Saudi Arabia obtained US $6.7 billion FDI, whereas the overall African continent acquired US $10 billion (African Social and Economic Annual Report 2000/20001). The picture is grimmer when the modest FDI influx is paired with the enormous capital departure from the continent following independence. Untouched, it seems Africa has become fundamentally inapposite in the modern world and the FDI flows to Africa are merely to make the situation less horrible. The two internationally biggest financial organisations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and global Bank (WB) have been utilising control over

money to compel African governments to relinquish protectionism, market limits and state ownership. Such "Liberalism" started by the authoritarian administration of Sadat in the north African country of Egypt with its Infitah (opening) plan in the mid President Mubarak still spoke about constructing a "Tiger on the Nile". Thirty years after the beginnings of Infitah, however, expansion in the genre of "Asian Tiger" remains a distant future. The situation is been reproduced in most African states, or circumstance that has started the inevitable attacks on the political, social and economic life of the people. One of the primary challenges that have handicapped Africa in the worldwide battle is the near lack of the continent in the calculation of the world's "digital divide". Many UNDPs Human Development statistics suggest 88 percent of internet users dwell in developed nations and not in the continent of Africa. Though an average American user spends less than US $10, to join up to the internet, it takes approximately US $100 for an African to do so, (Adeneji, 2002, 28).

African nations are also left out of the high technology determination, which has garnered increasing relevance in the global economy. Consequently, African nations are bound to be technologically dependent on the worldwide super economies. Contrary to the notion of globalization, nations of the capitalist heartland have been defensive of their technical achievements through the World Trade Organization (WTO) processes. This has been created in the Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) and the Intellectual Property Rights (IPRS). Intellectual Property Rights legislation allows metropolitan enterprises and governments a twenty-year copyright on Intellectual Property, the age many technologies may be classed as antique. These strategies render technical transfer to the continent a fantasy, thereby forcing repetition of technological dependency on the super powers of the globe who are believed to be the major participants in the "game" of globalization.

Challenges towards Integration in Africa

The poor condition of Africa in the global system requires a fundamental rethink towards finding a place for the continent within the new international order. According to Adeniji, (2002:29), the strategy of African integration will provide a useful role in the global process. Since the dawn of liberty, African States, and their leaders have been consumed with the urgent challenge of economic growth and

transformation. As part of the effort to overcome the challenges associated with underdevelopment, some of the leaders have made efforts to come together in order to address the current state of poverty collectively through regional economic groupings as demonstrated in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The notion of African progress via inclusion has long been championed by African leaders in political speeches, conferences and several types of formal treaties, but with little or no effect. Without theories, the advantages of integration are enormous. For instance, wider markets will surely enhance options for African producers and consumers as against little markets that may not be strong enough to compete in the global system. No doubt there is wide distributed understanding of the current efforts by African government to attain continental integration with the paradigm of the international system through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The adoption of NEPAD is an example of one of the ambitious endeavours at African Integration within the backdrop of globalization.

Despite endeavour at unity throughout the continent of Africa, the approach has become a fiction. There is stronger commerce between African States and the industrialised economies of the capitalist nations than among African countries. African economies are vertically tied to global capitalism; thereby militating against horizontal linkages, which is a desideratum for African progress. Based on available statistics on ECOWAS between 1976 and 1980 to generalize for the rest of Africa, the share of import among West African States was miniscule, while higher quantities of import came from the industrialised nations. Similarly, exports among African States is less than 10 percent, whereas exports of primary products to the industrialized super power states average 90 percent. The dependant character of African economies on the advanced capitalist states militate against economic integration and cooperation throughout the continent under the worldwide market system of globalization.

Imperialism, a symmetry of globalization functions as a centrifugal force, which limits the progress towards economic unification. Imperialism fastens most African governments into groupings of neo-colonialist type making it hard for Africa to extract itself from the structural link of commerce with the centers of the world's capitalist economy as appendage. The standing of Africa in the equation

of global economy as peripheral capitalism cannot furnish the impulse for economic unity. The yearning for economic unification can only be fostered in the core capital sector. Multinational cooperation's influence on Africa's economy hinders the regions hands in pursuing autonomous international trade strategy. Foreign firms discharged the mission of widening the interaction between the dependent economies and industrialised economy without actual adjustments. Some of these firms are UAC, Nestle foods, Coca-Cola, Cadbury, Lever Brothers to mention but a few. The parent corporations of these international enterprises are typically the management agents, technical partners and foreign equity holders. Thus, industries in Africa thus act as subsidiary or associate of worldwide firms. The core of these firms is that they operate in the form of storage, packaging and assembly activities. Production is dominated by consumer items such as detergents, lotions, perfumes, beverages, alcoholic drinks, food, automobiles, cell phones to mention just a few. The lack of backward and forward ties in these firms inhibits growth. In numerous industries, inputs and raw materials and plants are imported from the wealthier nations. Assembly and packing activities for breweries, textiles, motorbikes, autos, radios, refrigerators, medicines and so on depend on very high import content of above 90 percent. For example, a beverage firm like Coca-Cola imports both its content and the bottles to Africa (Akinsanya, 1986). Local production by most medications involve simply the latter steps of manufacture or of repackaging imported completed goods which frequently have expired. Industries in Africa are extensions of metropolitan capitalist production, thereby impeding the establishment and spread of independent African industries that would compete against multinational collaboration within the international economic environment.

Africa’s progress is principally constrained by the lack of the strategic element in the capitalist replication process, the capital good industries which are referred to as department 1 (Mojuetan1995:168). This implies reliance on the capitalist centers for capital products, hence continuing a neo-colonial relationship. It is in opposition to this that Frantz Fanon calls industrialization in the poorly developed third world as neo-colonialist (Fanon, 1963:141) as a result of the neo- colonial nature of the African development, economy is dominated by small peasant production. An integration of non-subjection of production to capital. Pre-capitalist rural link of production had not collapsed but operated as an auxiliary

in the path of accumulation of global capitalism at the cost of Africa. Several African States have been caught in debts owed to the advanced nations of the western capitalist world and Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary funds (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). Between the 1980s and 1990s, Structural adjustment Programs (SAP) was forced on African States by Bretton Woods Institutions and Western capitalist creditor states as answer to the continental economic issues. SAP was remarkable mostly for its austere qualities, trade liberalization being one of them and an ideology of globalization. Africans foreign debts grew from US $84.4 billion to US$235.4 billion between 1982 and 1997. (World Bank Report 1997). Debt issue has been a conservous worry and the factor that attached the area to the global economic system. By 1997 Africans debt was at US$370 for per person and hindered the yearly productivity of most governments in the continent of Africa. As far back as 1994 Mozambique's debt was 450 % of its Gross National Product (GNP); Congo was 454 % of the GNP and Ivory Coast 339 percent of GNP (World Bank Report, 1996). Similarly this position is not different elsewhere in Africa, as practically all African nations are entangled in the debt crisis which has placed an obstructing factor in their search for equal development and prosperity over the years.

The escalation of economic issues such as production slumps, food worries, drought, indebtedness crises and rising deficits in the balance of payment forces the continent to search for the capitalist nations for answers. The parallelism of Africa's economic backwardness and development issues have made it difficult for nations within the continent to aid one another, thereby needing dependency to the industrialised economies for assistance. In return for the subsidies supplied to African countries, donor nations from the North imposed on recipient state with tough economic policies, which militate against not only growth and development but also that of unity and integration.

The comprador bourgeoisie type of the elite in Africa has also been identified as one of the hurdles to integration. There are no national bourgeoisie but surrogate to the world capitalist system who ensured the continued appendagization of the continent to the world economic system, rather they serve auxiliary functions in the global system. The state as represented by the political leadership or

intellectuals is considered the engine of economic growth. However, the continent has not been reorganised to develop modernizers in genres of Japan Meiji's and the bourgeoisie of Europe. At best, the continent of Africa has produced underdeveloped and emasculated political class, who lacks the requisite zeal for revolution. The leadership of Africa is often defined by surrogates and looters of state money. The work of leadership seems to be much more vital incorporating momentum.

Just like most Latin American nations the governments of African countries have been un- willing to compromise sovereignty for integrating programmes that disagrees with the economic interest. For example according to (Bond, 1978:419), the earlier nine American economic system to establish a Latin American integration were stopped by worries of nationalism, national rivalries and hazards to national security. In West Africa, numerous Francophone states were uncertain that mighty Nigeria was going to undermine their economic interest and national security by integration project. For instance President Wade of Senegal earlier underscored the concern that functional integration will empower a nation like the Federal republic of Nigeria unfettered dominance over Sunny Girls economy. On the other side, governments like South Africa and Nigeria perceive integration on the continent as a thinly concealed effort by the last partial state to share in their rising power and wealth.

In safeguarding national interests, entrepreneurs from African nations are barred from launching retail operations in sister African countries. Certain economic activities include retail and small commerce and importation and anticipation of various commodities are reserved for their residents and multinational businesses to the exclusion of other African countries. According to (Hoogvelt, 2001:187), these affected African states such as Sierra Leon, Sudan, Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, Ivory coast, Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia and Eritrea, are all organised by the market fundamentalist policies first start on African by the Bretton Wood institution that led to brutal riots, the exacerbation of malnutrition and the disintegration of states and the wars across the continent. Relatively, some African republics are not immuned from banditry, warlordism and low-intensity warfare. The situations of those who live in harsh African nations has rendered integration basically irrelevant since the pre-opition of many is the war for

existence of the numerous different governments. It is vital to note here that some of the present African internal, both communal and state violence has imperialist links, notably provision of arms, acquisition of commodities like as gold, oil and Diamonds, therefore perpetuating an economy of war. It is in relation to this that (Kaplan,1994:72) stated, the unfurling massacres in Africa in recent times are ultimately related to the fears of resource control, which has propelled ethnic cleavages into growing violence. Analysts are beginning to unravel the private interest nexus between the state and the war Lords on one side and foreign businessmen on the other. In the context of Sierra Leone, where war Lords were in control of the diamond rich areas clandestined supply of diamonds went into Liberia. Thereby making a hefty pay-out from the fight. According to (Smillie, etal, 1999) bulk of the smuggled stones were in turn sold to Canadian businesses working for De Beers Company. The intertwining global rivalries for Africa's natural resources and resource wars are not unique to regions that have gone by means of full scale war but other countries as in the case of Niger Delta crisis of the South-South region of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as a consequence of crude oil exploration and exploitation in the area.

Available data shows that transaction of commerce with African nations are minimal. Their financial systems are not complementing and not competitive. They are retarded in industrial output capabilities. As suppliers of industrial raw material in the international division of labour, they necessarily compete for foreign capital technology and markets. According to (Ravenhill 1979), similar contests contributed to the breakup of the East African Community (EAC). This scenario was not simply isolated to Africa, but comparable organizations such as that of the Central American Common Market (CACM) and that of the Latin American Free Trade Area (LAFTA) that had greater integrative power confronted the issue of fair trade. This is connected to the fact that the less developed member states of the organization reported they imported more from its member nations than they exported to them. The imports were judged to be more costly and inferior than identical items from the United States of America and other Western European nations. The posture of the continent of Africa must be distinct from those in CACM and LAFTA, a condition that normally, detracts members from the aims of integration.

The problem of Africa has been significantly confounded by diversity of currencies, as well as what Senghor of Senegal called "very niggling, very complex exchange controls", that had delayed prior endeavour at West African Economic Union (West African, 1972). In most circumstances, trading in Africa is made difficult by extended delays in payments since most currencies are effectively inconvertible. Meanwhile, poor transport capacity and infrastructure puts the cost of delivering products in Africa among the highest in the global economy. Ironically, it is usually simpler for individuals, products and services to be transported to develop regions of the world than across African countries. It has been difficult to effect freedom of movement, persons and commercial and industrial activities within the borders of another state in Africa. Efforts to actualize this freedom has occasionally produced friction in specific administrations where the work force felt threatened by the potential of invasion of employment, scramble and rivalry (Edozien and Osagie, 1982:118).

Wrestling with the Stumbling Blocks

One most fundamental challenge seems to focus on the topic of national sovereignty. The degree of African leaders who campaigned for independence did so, based on the nation states and the right of each country to control it. Thus, there was a very strong sense among the African nationalist that political and economic independence lay inside the sovereign states. The immediate objective was to structure their country first before giving priority to regional integration. For economic integration to come to fruitfulness or help to alleviate economic predicaments, it must be established on a good economic basis. The productive basis of the economy, which is precapitalists is not large and mostly rural-driven. When we integrate African economies into the global economy, they represent the back waters of the world's market system. Against this backdrop then, they cannot remove their structural dependency rather, it only leads to collectivization and deepening of dependence and underdevelopment. (C. Ake, 1983).

The initial step to growth, which will be capable to resist the relentless assault of the world global system is the internal reform of individual states. For instance, European Union (EU), came into being after individual European states prospered as opposed Africa that is pursuing development through continental integration.

Essentially, EU was not an integration aiming at bringing about the growth of European economy, but to operate as a counterpoise to North America and wield economic power in the world economic system. Infact, Africa regional integration might impose difficulties on the urgent requirement of local development. Any integration by African states in their present underdeveloped and dependent stage is an anomies and only a precursor to continuous collective poverty and underdevelopment. Finding answer to the concerns of nation building paid the route to sustainable development sooner than original economic cooperation. Within the framework of the Third World Countries, nation building means tackling the issues of economic growth and reliance, which works as a basis for other problems to be controlled. This often means that economic growth must take place before political stability and other connected problems can be handled. However, the truth still remains that strong leadership is one of the cornerstone upon which financial prosperity may be built upon.

The dearth of competent and responsive leadership in Africa adds in a great degree to the difficulty of country creation. Hence, the hunt for competent leadership should be pursued effectively before regional integration can be realised. The states as represented by the political leadership cannot bring about integration due to the fact that the states are controlled by a class that is bent towards capitalism and dependency to the detriment of development and integration. Africa should be preoccupied with the hunt for modernizers who will transform the continent. Since independence, it has been a depressing narrative that the political class has always been the largest stumbling impediment to Africa's growth and permanent prosperity. It is fairly apparent that integration of the continent in its present shape under the scope of globalization can neither offer the push for growth, nor compete successfully in the global arena. A number of issues in the procedure of globalization and its connection to the underdevelopment of Africa has been emphasised as it has been shown that African petty Bourgeoisies and that of the political leaders are devoted to a capitalist part of development: but capitalist development necessitate in national the bourgeoisie or a nationalist state, the tool for advancement in the now developed state. Africa is deficient in each of these dimensions of development. The deficiencies of the local bourgeoisies is aggravated by the incapacity of the African states to play an effective interventionist role in the economy, which is

vital to the development process. There is, accordingly and urgent need to build a visionary road for autonomous progress of African countries.

Conclusion

Several faultfinders of globalization are not totally against globalisation, but believe the international system should be devoid of injustice, imbalance and exploitative economic ties and exchanges. This suggests that the great economic powers should make equivalent concessions to the Less Developed Countries by liberalizing their trade connections with the LDCs. It would amount to a mistaken confidence to expect the nations of the capitalist core to shift grounds for the growth of the LDCs. It must be realised that capitalism, which globalization is serving is not is not a ''santacluse'', accordingly, it will be erroneous for destitute nations like those of Africa to think that they may be benefitted in the calculation of the international system. The role of globalization in Africa readily embraces imperialist products through trade liberalization. This method is connected with incorrect aims, imports reliance and raw resources, unsuitable technology and other related concerns. The significant presence of foreign capital in Africa accounts for the vast repatriation of money, stifling of progress and slavish technological dependency. Globalization cannot be the means to an industrial ''take off'' in the continent of Africa, as it generates and ''enclave economy'' with no linkages to the local economy to supply the push for it change.

The malignant implications of the international system is the huge theft of African's national economic inheritance by foreign capital in cooperation with the political elites. Ambivalent reactive strategies such as ''privatization'' have so far proved in effective by design and rationale. This underscores the essential need for a revolutionary reaction in terms of full ant-imperialist measures within the context of successful restructuring of African countries. In the absence of international bourgeoisie oriented to rising the state may assume the role as agents of transformation. That is difficult and urgently needed for a state as portrayed by the political leadership in the style of Germany's junker in Europe and that of Japan's Meiji's of Asia, for the continent of Africa to be important in the categorization of nations in the world global system without the which Africa would keep falling under in the race to achieve sustainable development and integration within the committee of nation states in the global environment.

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