GLOBALIZATION, POST-COLONIZING MIGRATION AND NEO-SLAVERY: THE SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS TO TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AFRICAN STATES

Dr Jonathan C. Madu
College of Management Sciences
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
+234 (0) 803 812 9140; jnthn.madu@gmail.com;
jc.madu@mouau.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Globalization has been happening for millennia. Hence, it is argued to be a historical process and not a relatively new phenomenon, pointing out the evolution of global history at how the progression of human development overtime has contributed to broader societal advancement through the discovery of new and constantly improving technologies on one hand, but has been a highly uneven process characterized by unequal distribution of power, violence, discrimination and oppression on the other hand. In essence, it is argued by imperialists that it provides a historical response to contemporary questions surrounding issues of underdevelopment and global inequality. My paper argues that the process of decolonization, especially in Africa was incomplete and that former colonies were excluded from key economic decisions that came to have severe implications for their future attempts at developing their economies, which got worse with globalization. It articulates these discrepancies using the theoretical framework of dependency theory as analytical tool to understand current cause of global inequality, which has given rise to worst migration problems of 21st century and why the African continent is in a continual state of backwardness and ridden by civil wars, suffering from malnutrition, disease and social conflicts.

Key Words: Globalization, post-colonizing, migration, neo-slavery, Africa States, decolonization, global inequality

INTROODUCTION

Globalization is the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information. Countries have built economic partnerships to facilitate these movements over many centuries. Globalization as a term came to prominence in the 1980s and gained more popularity after the Cold War in the early 1990s, as these cooperative arrangements shaped modern everyday life.

In the early 1990s, globalization was greeted with euphoria. Capital flows to developing countries has increased sixfold in six years, from 1990 to 1996. The establishment of the World Trade Organisation in 1995 was to bring the semblance of the rule of law in international commerce. That was to mean that both developed and

the developing countries were to be winners (Renato Ruggiero, 1998). The belief was that globalization would bring unprecedented prosperity to all. The euphoria of globalization led to many to false dreams: "Available record show that an increased number of African economies have achieved mild to slightly strong economic growth performance in the last one or two decades and the outlook for the future is predicted bright given the increasing investor confidence in the continent" (African Economic Outlook, 2013 cited by Onyukwu et al (2014). Such assumptions were really a myth as termed by Gates and Gates (2014): "Seven of the ten fastest-growing economies of the past half-decade are in Africa". Not at all. The effect of globalization later became clear as another form of colonization and economic slavery to the developing countries (Madu, 2021, p 2).

In 2004, the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization issued a highly skeptical report, few lines which go a long way to understanding how much of the world feels about it:

> The current process of globalization is generating unbalanced outcomes both between and within countries. Wealth is being created, but too many countries and people are not sharing in its benefits. They have also little or no voice in shaping the process. Seen through the eyes of vast majority of women and men, globalization has not met their simple and legitimate aspirations for decent jobs and a better future for their children. Many of them live in the limbo of informal economy without formal rights and in swathe of poor countries that subsist precariously on the margins of the global economy. Even in economically successful countries some workers and communities have been adversely affected by globalization. Meanwhile the revolution in global communication heightens awareness of these disparities… these global imbalances are morally unacceptable and politically unsustainable (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004).

Five specific concerns raised about globalization are:

- The rules of the game that govern globalization are unfair, specifically designed to benefit the advanced industrial countries. Some of the poorest countries actually became worse
- Globalization advances materials values over other values, such as a concern for the environment or for life itself. Way globalization has been managed has taken

away much of the developing countries' sovereignty, and their ability to make decision themselves in key areas that affect their citizens' well-being. In this sense, it has undermined democracy.

- While the advocates of globalization have claimed that everyone will benefit economically, there is plenty of evidence from both developed and developing countries that there are many losers in both.
- Perhaps most important, the economic system that has been pressed upon the developing countries – in some cases essentially forced upon them – is inappropriate and grossly damaging. Globalisation should not mean the Americanization or Europeanization of either economic policy or culture, but often it does – and that has caused resentment. (Stiglitz, J. 2006, pp. 9)

DEPENDENCY THEORY AS ANALYTICAL TOOL FOR THIS STUDY

The author uses the theoretical framework of dependency theory as analytical tool to understand current cause of global inequality, which has given rise to worst migration problems of 21st century and why the African continent is in a continual state of backwardness and ridden by civil wars, suffering from malnutrition, disease and social conflicts.

Dependency theory appeared in the 1950's as a critical reaction to the conventional approaches to economic development that emerged in the aftermath of World War II. There are two dependency theory traditions (Dos santos, 2002). The first is the Marxist influenced by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, and developed by Andre Gunder Frank. The second dependency tradition is associated to the structuralist school that builds on the work of Raul Prebisch, Celso Furtado and Anibal Pinto at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Both groups would agree that the core of the dependency relation between the centre and periphery lays the inability of the periphery to develop an autonomous and dynamic process of technological innovation. The lack of technological dynamism, and the difficulties associated with the transfer of technological knowledge are the main cause of the underdevelopment of the periphery with respect to the centre. The main contention between the two groups was ultimately related to the possibilities of economic development in the periphery. Marxists would argue that development in the periphery – meaning fundamentally catching up

with the centre – was impossible, while structuralists would argue that dependent development was feasible. The vigorous process of growth in some parts of the developing world in the 1950s and 60s seemed to justify the views of the latter group. However, the enduring process of stagnation after 1980s Debt Crisis has led to a reconsideration of the relevance of the dependency situations.

In particular some authors argue that a new situation of dependency has emerged, one in which technological backwardness and international division of labour are of secondary importance, and financial dependency or the original sin hypothesis, reflected in the inability of peripheral countries to borrow in international markets in its own currency, is the real obstacle to development (Vermengo, 2006).

Financial Dependency and the Original Sin

Tavares (cited by Vernengo 2006) argues that the technological division of labour in which the periphery concentrates in the production of commodities for the centre, while the latter produces manufacturing goods for the former is of very limited historical relevance. Industrialization and technical progress in the periphery was not sufficient to break the dependency ties with the centre. Financial dependency is reflected in the inability of the peripheral countries to borrow in international markets in its own currency, and constitutes the real obstacle to development. The new interpretation of dependency situation puts "international money – and not technical progress – as the expression of financial capital domination over the periphery in the 150 years (Tavares 2000, pp.131-132). The inability to borrow in international markets in its own currency reflects the inability of the domestic currencies of peripheral countries to acquire all the functions of money, as reserve of value, unit of account, and medium of exchange.

MIGRATION FOR VOLUNTARY SLAVERY OF 21ST CENTURY

The widening global inequality enhanced by globalization has led to worst migration problems of 21st century as African continent continues in state of backwardness and ridden by civil wars, suffering from malnutrition, disease unemployment and social conflicts. No doubt, as exemplified in Nigeria, the inability of the state to provide the crucial social and economic needs of the people, their suppression or marginalization could become serious foundation for radicalism and violent conflicts and migration for self-enslavement. Most African leaders claim that there is peace in the continent due to their wrong perception of what peace is and for

vision of need for human security. Neglect of the latter has incubated and escalated violence and radicalism to high proportion. While everyone or the state systems of most countries in the world claim the desirability of peace, there is little agreement about its meaning and how to realize it. Exploring the meaning of peace and why it has so much eluded the world is, therefore, important. Madu (2015) examines different opinions, defining it differently across cultures and social values.

Contrary to some views, peace is more than absence of war since absence of physical hostilities could still habour injustice, structural violence, exploitative social structures, abuse of human rights, political suppression, discrimination, living in fear and anxiety as well as the scourge of poverty (deprivation) and disease. Until we become conscious of interconnectedness of the global system and address collectively the injustices that exist in their different forms, each people's sense of security remains an illusion. Positive peace is the absence of all kinds of violence – physical, economic, political and cultural (Kent 1993: 379). For Miller and King (2005: 42), positive peace may be interpreted as the building of peace and non-exploitive social structures with a substantial component of justice and human rights.

In his UN General Assembly speech (23 September 2023), Minister of State Bassolma Bazié of Burkina Faso bemoaned the continuation of imperialism as he blasted numerous major institutions and countries for their "diplomatic hypocrisy" and condemned the West's double standard on equality and fairness: "While it's true that the West has raped, violated and robbed Africa, what's our share of responsibility as African leaders?". He regretted that African leaders had abandoned their identity. Exploitation of Africa states through weak its leaders supported by the West the worst form of colonialism has continued; the military takeover of governments of many former French colonies experienced in recent time.

SEEKING SOLUTION

It is worthwhile exploring various alternatives and measures to address the socio-political implications of this migration for voluntary slavery to twenty-first century African states. The neglected conflict prevention and human security that have fuelled migration for slavery and trafficking in persons we experience today. This study recommends the following issues for urgent attention:

- Consolidating security
- Strengthening political institutions
- Promoting economic and social reconstruction.

Consolidating Security:

Without peace and security, efforts for growth and development would remain wasted dreams. Consolidating Security aspect of peacebuilding involves disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Disarmament involves the relinquishing of arms by former fighters, as well as in many cases, civilians**.** "Disarmament is the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. It frequently entails the assembly and cantonment of combatants; it should also comprise the development of arms management programmes, including their safe storage and their final disposition, which may entail their destruction. Demining may also be part of this process" (UN 2000). Disarmament of the warring parties would allow meaningful peace process to take place. It is essential as a confidence-building measure in society aimed "at increasing stability in a very tense, uncertain environment with nervous participants and a wary population" (Douglas et al. 2004, p. 29). Its goal is to ensure that societies return to normal situations in which people will favour non-violent means of conflict resolution. It strives to reduce the number of guns that remain in circulation among populations, and the possibility of weapons being used in the future (ibid). This demands a lot of incentives to the aggrieved people and inclusive and responsible governance.

Demobilization refers to "the process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation into civilian life" (UN, 2000). The phase involves ensuring that combatants are counted, registered and monitored, and prepared for discharge with identification documents, while ensuring that they obtain the necessary information to be able to integrate back into society.

Reintegration involves supporting former fighters to acquire civilian status, and supporting them to reintegrate socially and economically into civilian life. These processes aim to create a smooth transition of returnees from the war to civilian life and ensure that they are able to earn a livelihood through peaceful means. Reconciliation should take place during the reintegration phase so that communities welcome former combatants and are able to assist them in their reintegration. Reintegration goes further, in providing the resources, both financial and in-kind, for former combatants to settle back into their communities. Nigeria has not been effective in reintegration programmes, which could help persuade ex-militants not to re-join their earlier groups.

Strengthening political institutions

Participatory and inclusive governance is essential for peace and development. It needs implementation of practical strategies to promote good governance and governance reforms. In Nigeria, political and democratic institutions, especially the three arms of governance (executive, legislative and judiciary) should not only be developed but made to function effectively. Without proper checks and balance and independence of these institutions, one of them (most often the executive) could be domineering and carry out destructive agenda rather than peace and development of the people. As noted in the United States Institute for Peace report (2007, p. 7),

> "Government that receives substantial income from natural resources may have less incentive to enter into power-sharing arrangements or promote democracy-building efforts because they have the means to buy off or intimidate their opponents. In those cases, in which there is little government accountability or financial transparency, government officials are more likely to take bribes, funnel public funds into private accounts, and ignore environmental degradation, resource-related violence, and human rights violations".

Economic and Social Reconstruction

Efforts in this dimension entail rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of infrastructure, emergency humanitarian assistance, provision of social services (e.g. health, social welfare and education), and inducing economic development and growth through trade, investment, employment creation and regulatory and legal reform (de Coning 2005). One of the greatest challenges of peace in Nigeria today is coping and dealing with issues like internal displacement of the people arising from terrorism and insurgencies, communal clashes, unemployment, corruption and unaccountability in governance. The inability of the state to provide the crucial social and economic needs of the people, their suppression or marginalization could become serious foundation for radicalism and violent conflicts as well as migration for self-enslavement. Reforming and addressing the problems of globalization should involve need giving attention to: foreign assist and debt relief, making fair trade, limitation of liberalization, and protecting the environment.

CONCLUSION

Dependence of African states on the industrialized countries, as Dos Santos (2002) sees in the case of Latin American countries, "cannot be overcome without a qualitative change in their internal structures and external relations, the dependent structure that deepens and aggravates the fundamental problems of their peoples. Bassolma Bazié of Burkina Faso, made it clear that the world's "dream and hope for a just and fair world" has continued to be illusive because of "the discrepancy between what the leaders say and facts on matters of principles contained in the UN Charter, including justice, equality, dignity, integrity, the right to self-determination, the sovereignty of states, the inviolability of territory and respect for international law".

Globalization has improved some people's lives, but for many more it has done more harm. The income gap between the world's richest and poorest countries has widened in recent decades. Expansion in trade, foreign investment and new technology has bypassed many, especially in Africa. The rapid growth in global markets has not been accompanied by the development of economic and social policies geared to the needs of people. Rules on international trade, investment, finance and migration are all unfair to developing countries, which do not have an adequate say in governing the global economy. Similarly, workers and the poor have little or no voice in this process. The harsh impact of the globalization cannot be better understood than in the willingness of youths to migrate for voluntary slavery, even when many of them die in the sea and desert, trying to escape their more endangered homelands. Better world is possible, but the current path of globalization must change.

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