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## THEME:

**GLOBALIZATION AND LOCAL INITIATIVES: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES.**

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**Globalization and local initiatives: issues and challenges**

**Musa Abutudu**

## **Introduction**

The world, it is said, is shrinking and at a fast rate too. This is not necessarily a reference to the quantity of matter that defines the physical world. It is more of a way of capturing the developments worldwide which are held to put in sharp focus the outlines of a global economy as distinct from an international economy.

Robertson (1992:8) defines globalization in terms of the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. Peoples, activities, norms, ideas, goods services and currencies are decreasingly confined to a particular geographic space and locality (Rosenau, 1999:60). Globalisation is therefore presented as one of rapid erosion of the constraints imposed by geography and national territorial sovereignty on world wide social and economic interactions.

Apart from this objective breakdown of barriers that mark the process of globalization, the awareness of the very fact of the fast subjugation of these constraints gives the concept another qualitative dimension. This subjective dimension is indicated in the individual's increasing awareness that he or she now operates in a globalised world. A concept that encompasses various phenomena, globalization as Mittelman (1997:2) points out, "interrelates multiple levels of analysis, economics, politics, culture and ideology". A global process of uniformisation is suggested in all these spheres. A supposedly emerging worldwide preference for democracy, and indeed, the evolution of a global civil society are held out as basic pointers to the emergence of a consensus of norms in the political sphere. Culturally, there is the world-wide diffusion of hitherto geographically specific food items, music dress forms, etc. (Berger, 1997),

Mittelman, 1997; Waters, 1995, Nayyar, 1997). Cultural globalization is clearly driven by capitalist production. However, the earlier forms of cultural globalism or at least, pretensions towards that end were based on the two monotheistic religions. Christianity and Islam. Perhaps, much of the tension between these two today may be the resultant effects of their often incompatible global hegemonic designs.

In general, however a critical evaluation of the concept and the reality that it captures suggests that a holistic approach be woven around the notion of capitalist economic globalization. In fact globalization in its contemporary form is essentially about the continuing journey of capitalism towards self expression on a world-wide scale. This tendency towards global self-expression has often been interrupted by events such as the two world wars, has often been interrupted by events such as the two world wars, the great depression of the 1930s, the cold war and of course the nationalist fervor of much of early post-colonialism. Successive self-reinvention and recent vast and rapid changes in technology, have vastly increased the rate of globalization in the past two decades.

Expressed in economic terms, globalization, according to Adams and Gupta (1997:1) implies a process of de-territorialisation in which “separate national economies are being replaced by a single, integrated global economy and basic political functions, traditionally the province of national authorities are being delegated to international institutions including multinational corporations. Apart from the critical feature of deterritorialism, this definition also implies a diminution of the authority of the national state in economic processes. Concomitantly, these authority structures are transferred to international organizations with some elements of supranationality. IN as much as it is the state that effects this transfer of authority, it may be better to see the state as being crucial to the negotiation of globalism rather than the popular view of “end of the nation state” (Ohmae, 1995),.

Of course, as is usual with the packaging of capitalism, the above definition also contains a hint, an assumption of neutrality, reciprocity and inevitability. Thus,

the concept of globalization assumes a mutual interpenetration of economies or ideas without reference to the actual economic, political, military or ideological capabilities or inclinations of those economies or states. These determine what agendas are globalised. The attempt at neutral packaging and presentation cannot be allowed to blur the ideological trajectory along which globalization is elaborated by its intellectuals and practitioners.

In practical terms, globalization is the increasing breakdown of barriers and obstacles to the worldwide diffusion of economic ideas, doctrines, products, services and practices originating from the western, industrialized world, especially the United States of America. Although this diffusion and the process of deterritorialisation supposedly proceeds according to the logic of the market, globalism actually comes across as a package of beliefs, a strategy of economic management and growth whose driving forces are capital, the state and international institutions. To understand the concept, its general motion, its wide ranging ramifications for our everyday lives, and of course feasible paths of engagement or counter action, it is necessary to deconstruct the term. Both in terms of discourse and practice, such deconstruction suggests that attention be paid to the following.

Globalisation as a strategy of economic development.

Globalisation as an ideology.

Globalisation as an expression of power relations on a world scale.

The concrete situation of globalization at the country level, with particular attention to Nigeria.

### **Globalisation as a strategy**

The allocation of resources through the instrumentality of the free market mechanism has always been seen as central to the facilitation of capitalist economic growth. However, this was modified in the immediate post world war two period to inject the notion of state intervention in the allocative function as acceptable and legitimate. This Keynesianism held sway in much of the western

world for nearly four decades, providing a basis for state owned industry and massive public investment in social welfare programmes in the western industrialized countries.

In the eastern part of Europe, the fact that socialism held sway ensured that the allocative function rested in public authorities. Most third world countries gravitated between these two extremes. Their general nationalistic disposition and the imperative of economic development ensured a crucial role for the public bureaucracy in the allocation of economic and social resources. Industrialisation in these countries was generally based on the import-substitution strategy, and of course, the protection of infant industries. A basic needs approach to development often complemented this and thus gave some meaning to the notion of welfarism in the third world. However, the advent of Thatcherism and Reaganomics in Britain and the United States respectively in the late 1970s and early 1980s marked the beginning of an all-fronts attack on state intervention in the economy in the western world. A comprehensive restructuring process that was meant to deepen the market in its allocative function while rolling back the state gained renewed vigor as the canons of domestic economic practice. Once this conscious and fundamental restructuring process was put in place as the new economic orthodoxy in the western industrialized countries, the next step was to push for "adjustment to that restructuring in the rest of the world" (Ould0-Mey, 196:1) Martin and Schuman (1996:48) summed this up as follows.

*What the G-7 countries had decided for their own areas, they gradually pushed through in the rest of the world. The IMF, in which the G-7 countries have the main say, was the ideal instrument for this. Wherever the IMF potentates have granted loans in the last ten years, they have imposed the condition that the relevant currency be made convertible and the country opened up to international movements of capital.*

Thus, the famous standardized IMF conditionalities-privatisation and private-sector led economic development strategy, liberalization of external trade, a liberal interest rate and foreign exchange rate regime, massive currency

devaluations, removal of so-called subsidies from agriculture, health, education and of course, petroleum products, etc were energetically pushed in third world economies, in co-operation with the World Bank. Pushed as the new strategy of economic development in the third world, and the plank of their economic restructuring they also constitute the basis of the motion of the process of globalization in these countries. This has of course meant the abandonment of protectionism or infant industries, and the dumping of the basic needs approach, all in favour of earning foreign exchange as the central point in the development process (Cox, 1997:22).

### **Globalisation as Ideology**

Some kind of belief system has been woven around globalization in order to ease the interpretation of economic action or events, critique and act as a guide to action or for the purposes of it. Thus globalization is packaged and presented in ideological terms. There is the myth of the market friendliness is enjoined as the action guide. Prices are to be aligned with world prices. Where this is not done, economic processes are held to be distorted. This would price of course stands for the price in London or New York. But there is silence on the issue of aligning incomes with those of New York or London. State intervention distorts, so roll back the state! Produce only for exports and do not put fetters on the path of imports! In all these, integration into the global economy is presented as the only viable model of economic growth. Where there is contraindication in the economic history of some countries, there is systematic intellectual engagement with that history that attempts to deny it. Thus the ideology of globalization is currently engaged in a battle to downplay the Japanese and South Korean Developmental paths which laid stress on state intervention and selective integration into the world economy (South Centre, 1996) ideologies thrive on the divide between insiders and outsiders, a 'we' versus 'they' syndrome. IN the case of the ideology of globalization, the division is between 'reformers' and 'non-reformers;'. Through massive propaganda, the failures of 'reformers' and mass immiseration brought on by policy failure is denied or played down or simply put down to poor implementation, never to wrong policy choices. ON the other hand

the achievements of non-reformers are invariably denied while their failures are attributed to wrong policy choices.

The demise of communism in the former Soviet bloc has reinforced the ideological hegemony and the self-confidence of capitalist globalisation. As the countries of the former Soviet bloc have either joined or are scrambling to become members of the IMF, World Bank, or the World Trade Organisation, (WTO) while struggling for some attention at the periodic G-7 meetings. The propaganda value of this for the ideology of globalization has been immense. The message bears no repeating that there is no alternative to integration into the world market. Globalisation is represented as a finality, as the logical and inevitable culmination of the powerful tendencies of the market at work (Cox, 1997:23).

### **Globalisation as an Expression of Power Relations on a World Scale**

One of the most interesting aspects of the ideology of globalization is to represent all countries integrating into the world market as mutual beneficiaries of the process. It assumes a mutuality and reciprocity of penetration among integrating economies and therefore a mutuality of gains. This blurs the power element in these relations.

Actually there are wide differentials in the capacity to globalise, to put ones project in the global agenda, or define what the global agenda should be. Ideas or products originating in one part of the world do not have an equal chance of finding expression in other parts. The project of globalization is constituted by economic interests and through economic and even military might. This is precisely why contemporary globalization often comes across as the westernization of or more precisely, the Americanisation of the World. It connotes a hierarchy of states in which the G-7, with their dominance of the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO, etc, determine and control the global agenda. The rest of the world are in varying degrees, the subject of this agenda.

This polarisation is not only between nations, it also express itself within nations. Cox (1997-26) suggests a three-part hierarchy of the social structure of the world

as shaped by the force of globalization. At the top are the global economy managers and the relatively privileged workers “who serve global production and finance in reasonably stable jobs.” At the second level are those who serve the global economy in more precarious employment. These are those who first get the boot whenever ‘restructuring’ occurs. The bottom level consists of superfluous labour – those whose lot is exclusion from the global economy and who serve it only as a potentially destabilizing force. This level also constitutes the “object of global poverty relief and riot control” Whole regions of Africa belong to this bottom level.

### **The Concrete Situation of Globalisation at the Country Level**

The agenda of globalization within countries is not simply pushed by impersonal market forces. The internalization of the global project takes place at different levels of intensity and is usually pushed by different agencies and actors. At the most active level, these agencies and actors are the state (both local and foreign), international organisations represented principally by the IMF, the World Bank, WTO, and of course the Creditor Clubs of London and Paris. The international organisations and the foreign capitalist state, including the European Union, EU, usually mount pressure on the local public authorities for the local adoption of the global agenda. In most African states, including Nigeria, this has usually been by way of IMF/World Bank conditionalities. This soft underbelly that primes economies for this action is usually debt induced economic crisis. Brought to bear decisively on this process are all the carrots and sticks that are symptomatic of the asymmetry in the power relations that underlie the global equation. As the recent World Bank officials’ tour of Nigeria on the issue of reforms of the educational sector shows, international organizations are no longer content to remain simply intergovernmental. They are now also engaged in ‘dialogue’ with civil society.

Domestic capital is also active as globaliser. However, it is not all factions of domestic capital that stands to benefit from globalism. IN Nigeria, the factions of capital most favourably disposed to virtually all aspects of economic globalization have been the banking and finance sector as well as commercial interests.

Agriculture and industry, the real sectors have exhibited different degrees of hostility for quite obvious reasons. They have suffered most from the liberal interest rates, trade and unstable foreign exchange rates regimes. On the other hand, these measures mark the precise points of huge profits for commerce, finance and banking. It is no wonder then that as commerce and finance boom, the real sector has been on rapid downward spiral. The passive process of internalization is propelled by a different set of factors. First is the massive technological strides which have created a high level of instantaneous and simultaneous apprehension of events across the world. Real time apprehension of events through the satellite television, 'the internet' and to a lesser extent, e-mail signify this trend. Images and information increasingly defy national boundaries or sovereign censorship. Only a few have access to these facilities in Nigeria and they are the dominant elite. These foreign media exposure shape their tastes and acculturates them and this creates a ready but largely imperceptible ideological content in policy making or at least, its articulation.

The globalization of the struggle against dictatorship in Nigeria and elsewhere owe much to these new media forms. Processes of 'globalisation from below' – that is the possibility of concerted action by those marginalized by the global project – is also hinged on an ability to network facilitated by these media forms. The siege on the WTO by grassroots activities and NGOs during its annual conference in Seattle, USA, in December 1999, was to a large extent facilitated through this networking. The same goes for the recent IMF conference in Prague, Czech Republic. But it is still a pointer to the asymmetry in technological access that Africa's presence was hardly registered even when it came to efforts at globalization from below.

Perhaps, most crucial to the passive internalization process is the struggle for the survival of the middle class as a middle class. The adoption of SAP in Nigeria, for example confronted that class with the threat of extinction. Some of the more visible trappings of the class—a car, basic electrical and electronic household equipment, etc were getting out of reach as a result of dwindling incomes, inflation and the devaluation of the Naira. One way out was the massive importation of used vehicles, refrigerators, electronic equipment, spares etc. As

the 'tokunbor' comes to the rescue of the middle class from the threat of status loss, it has also become a shaper of aspirations. Those who aspire to middle class status build their dreams around the acquisition of 'tokunbor' items. This is the 'tokunbor' mentality, and it reinforces the 'tokunbor' culture which grew out of the survival imperatives of the middle class. As the 'tokunbor' creates a ready market in Nigeria for Europe's discards, it simultaneously becomes the principal form in which the global consumer culture is realized in Nigeria. Significantly too, it is not surprising that the growing 'tokunbor' culture has sometimes provided a basis for intervention in policy matters by the middle class.

There is another dimension to the 'tokunbor' mentality. This is elevation of foreign exchange earning as a cardinal principle of economic reproduction by individuals and households. Increasingly, economic security is constructed around the possession of foreign exchange or the capacity to earn it. Domestic production processes that do not generate the life wire are only useful to the extent that they keep body and soul together while opportunities to earn foreign currency are explored. Hence, individuals and households find themselves drawn directly or indirectly into global processes. Massive transfers of population from the country, often under hazardous circumstances, becomes a major element in economic reproduction for individuals and households.

'Tokunbor' culture has its beneficial effects. There are many households whose economic survival has hinged on foreign remittances from migrant relations. It could be speculated that a sizable volume of construction works by individuals as well as urban and rural transportation has been sustained to a large extent through the 'tokunbor' network. The 'okada' and the 'kabu-kabu' thrive on the 'tokunbor' network. However, 'tokunbor' items are used items and they may be so old that they no longer meet the technical and environmental standards of Europe and America from where they are imported. The pollution and health hazard implications are likely to be enormous although there are no systematic studies of these that one is aware of in the locality. Equally critical are the implications of the importation of 'tokunbor' items for the economy. Local manufacturing has not only fallen victim to the massive liberalization of imports that is associated with globalization, 'tokunbor' items have sounded the death knell to many an

industry. The textile industry is one of such. The 'bend down' boutiques have created a massive market for used clothing and discarded wears from the west. And with this, the textile industry groans. Its agricultural feeders suddenly find themselves with little or no market, even as there are massive layoffs in the industry in the face of production cut-back and complete shut downs.

### **Life at the Margins: Coping Mechanism at the Local Level.**

Globalisation has induced economic stress in almost all sectors of the economy. Gains in welfare achieved in the first two decades of post-colonial Nigeria have almost been totally eroded. As expatriates return to take control of executive positions in major companies relinquished to Nigerians more than two decades earlier, it is clear that it is not a question of the wholesale reassertion of foreign dominance of the economy that we are confronted with. The country is also faced with the psychological problem of self-doubts about our ability to manage our economic problems.

In the midst of these crises, how have people, especially the mass of urban poor and the rural dwellers been coping? Are there lessons to be learnt from the coping mechanisms for the rest of the population? How can these initiatives be improved upon? An analysis of coping mechanisms suggests that some are simply measures adopted to meet everyday practical needs of life. On the other hand, there are also initiatives of more 'strategic significance' (Mackenzi, 1992:2) These are the kind of initiatives that are kinds of initiatives that attempt to reconstitute economic processes at the local level, and thus, actively empower.

Meeting the practical everyday necessities of everyday life has elicited recourse to what Mustapha (1992) calls multiple modes of livelihood in Nigeria. As income from one's major occupations is eroded, moonlighting has become a ready response. Public and private sector workers take to what is popularly referred to as PP or 'private practice'. This response is global and is essentially meant to shore up incomes. Women are also drawn increasingly into greater commoditization of their production in addition to household production. The informal sector, burgeons, and seems capable of taking all comers. But often too, it only sustains life at a very marginal level. While most of the informal sector

activities rely on local sourcing, it is an irony that others thrive directly or indirectly on the globalized processes. For example, the ubiquitous hawker or apple fruits in our urban center finds subsistence in the unbridled policy of import liberalization 'Okada' commercial transportation has become, perhaps, the greatest avenue of youth employment in the country. But it is also a major expression of the 'tokunbor' phenomenon in contemporary Nigeria.

In general, the more imaginative coping mechanisms are built around the development of mutual self-help organizations. These takes various forms and may be constituted on various principles, including, village, lineage, occupation, gender, residential proximity, or Old Boys or Girl networks. In the rural areas, these mutual self-help organizations are really thriving and they have been known to organize for the provision of credit for members, pooling of labour to work in members' farms on rotational basis, or forming collective farms (Abutudu, 1994; Abutudu, Forthcoming). Through their loan schemes, farm implements, household utensils and other working tools are acquired. In some cases, the introduction of school fees into public schools on the onset of economic crisis in the early 1980s led to the extension of the credit schemes to making funds available to members for the payment of children's school fees. Loans specifically targeted towards educational objectives tend to be interest free.

Moreover, some communities have been known to collectivise their efforts to construct classroom blocks, or basic infrastructure such as tarred roads as the state increasingly abdicates its responsibilities in these regards (Abutudu, 1994). An interesting observation here is that the funds that made these possible are not derived from high profile and occasional fund raising ceremonies. Rather, they are sourced from well structured arrangements through which communal resources are harnessed on an on-going basis.

Most of these mutual self-help processes are deep rooted in African culture. They are not new processes. Their massive resurrection in recent times is an indication of the capacity of the people to reinvent themselves in the light of prevailing circumstances. More significantly, these efforts are based on democratic

participation in decision-making, self-reliance and accountability. These are all values from which state managers can learn useful lessons.

### Concluding Comments

That economic globalization does not hold much in terms of gains for much of Africa has become apparent, although a tiny majority derive immense benefits from it. The question that arises is: What is to be done? At the very general level, Cheru (1989:69-70) suggests among others, maintaining existing productive facilities and rehabilitating those that have been run down, regaining capacity utilization levels for both the productive and service sectors: financial and managerial discipline priority for consolidating existing capital stock rather than adding new ones, and increasing food self-sufficiency through greater attention to the needs of the farmers.

These are obviously very useful measures, but they hardly tell us what do about the fact and manner of integration into the world economy. On this point, globalisers will obviously insist on more integration. Underdevelopment theorists such as Samir Amin have advocated for de-linking from the structures of global capitalism. This is perhaps, impracticable, but that does not mean that the idea of de-linking does not hold some practical hints for economic emancipation. For example, a process of selective integration could be embarked upon. This would require, for example, that the agricultural sector is linked to the outside world by way of exports, and not imports. This of course means that trade liberalization is selectively engaged. For instance, Nigeria has no business importing rice. A ban on it and its rigorous enforcement can place Nigeria in the league of exporters of this commodity within a relatively short time. Huge resources have been spent on the importation of the commodity, even at official level in Edo State, an area that is reputed to be in Nigeria's rice producing belt. This does not suggest rigour in policy making.

Selective integration must also involve a deliberate policy of protection for local industries. The infant industry argument must be given full weight in industrial and commercial policy. There is hardly a country that has achieved the status of development without this facility in place. Competition between unequal's is

decidedly a 'no contest'. Finally, a policy of selective integration should consider the virtual removals of controls on external transfers. It is obvious that the removal of such controls has exacerbated the problem of capital flight in the country. At the local level, there should be more intervention on behalf of the small producer. There are already structures devised by these small holders to cope and restructure their socio-economic space. These structures and their organizational principles i.e. participation, self-reliance and accountability should be upheld in any mode of intervention – by state agencies or NGOs. Micro-credit schemes are important forms of intervention that can make a real difference. Greater attention to extension services are also needed.

Most importantly too, a guarantee of outlets for the products of rural dwellers and small scale producers is called for. In this regard, it is necessary to take a closer look at those urban based market guilds which deny to the peasant farmers the opportunity to directly market their products. This problem may well rank on equal terms with the more globally structured system of exploitation in denying income to the peasant farmer.

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### Summary and Discussion

When presenting his paper, Dr. Abudutu declared that hardly a country will achieve the status of development without putting in place deliberate policy of protecting local industry. This policy should be of selective integration to be able to reconsider the removal of controls on external transfers which if remove can worsen the problem of capital flight in the economy. However, structure have already been devised by small producer to cope and restructure their socio-economic space that should be upheld in any mode of intervention by state agencies or NGOs. By so doing, poverty shall be eradicated with the structuring of the appropriate mechanism globally, and must especially in Nigeria with the co-operation of the elites, and the general public.

A participant in his own contribution advocated that we should not, in all the sense, see globalization as being demonic. That the concept, in itself, economically meant well for the entire development of the globe. But finally agreed that globalization empowers the minorities in the expense of the majority.

Another participant commends LAPO for its laudable programmes on political and economic actions, and thanks the chief speaker for his enlightened presentation. He further enjoined Nigerians especially the youths to deviate from the purchase of “used goods” by citing the Republic of Ghana as a typical example where the country’s locally made textiles are used in designing various attractive dresses. The presenter of the paper opined that globalization is a class project that brought about the struggle to the attainment of monastarism by the capitalist system which victory is seen as monastarist. That there are some element of the bourgesises who are the beneficiaries of the so called globalization.

A journalist from the Guardian Newspaper said right from the 1960’s Nigeria has always deviated from her foreign policies. These changes have been manifested on the movement of international capital. He buttresses his point by saying that it is not possible to escape from political action but that a political inaction is a problem in itself. H concluded by saying that, globalization and the influence of

western world is breeding poverty in Nigeria economy, hence globalization is a transformation of colonialism otherwise known as neo-colonialism or a modern means of slavery.

- Local industries should as well be improved upon through the provision of grants and loans for operations.
- The misappropriation of public fund should be curbed through groups in order to minimize the effect of globalization.
- All possible means of global agenda to the detriment of the entity and the citizenry should be resisted by all and sundry.

### Conclusions

- A deliberate legislation of protecting local industries through the empowerment of infant industries, and the full backing in industrial and commercial policy should be promulgated.
- Existing productive facilities need be maintained, and those grounded are to be rehabilitated
- The linking of Agricultural sectors with the outside would by means of exporting, and not importing is imperative.
- Micro-credit Scheme organizations should emphasize more on the implementation of organizational principles.
- The outlets for the products of rural dwellers and small-scale producers must be guaranteed.

### Recommendations

- Self-help organizations should be formed amongst various groups in order to foster meaningful development amongst members, and especially in their communities.
- The importation of goods that can be produced locally should be discouraged, hence government should strive to boost production through loans to prospective producers at free interest rate.

- Government should wake up to her responsibilities by assisting farmers with the necessary tools and equipment at the lowest subsidized rate in a bid to boost agricultural produce.
- Labour forces of various sectors should be adequately remunerated to allow them meet most of their demand, and to be able to compete with their colleagues from other parts of the world.
- All able-bodied youths should be gainfully employed in their respective domain to discourage rural-urban drift.
- People's discretion should be task to decide what they purchase, eat and wear in a bid to deviate from the impact of the scourge- globalization, without which all efforts embarked upon will be a failure.
- The misappropriation of public fund should be curb through groups in order to minimize the effect of globalization.
- All possible means of global agenda to the detriment of the entity and the citizenry should be resisted by all and sundry.