

Globalisation And Public Policy In Nigeria: Challenges And Prospects

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to look at the impact of globalisation on public policy as it affects the economic development in Nigeria. The main proposition of this paper is that Nigeria cannot confront the challenges of contemporary globalisation without a sustained effort to develop her economic foundations. This is because globalisation will most likely be utilitarian if its end can foster domestic development agenda. The paper was anchored on the Marxist Theory of State. The import of this approach to the paper is that it proceeds from a holistic examination of the country's historical experience and its implication for the present day political economy. The research design was historical-descriptive research design and the data were obtained through secondary sources. Content analysis was used in analyzing the data obtained. The paper concludes that many poor countries like Nigeria liberalised its economy without adequate preparation and precaution. The paper recommended inter-alia that Nigeria should formulate economic policies that recognises her specific needs and circumstances in order to promote inclusive economic development.

Keywords: Globalisation, public policy, political economy, socio-economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation emphasizes interconnectedness and interdependence of national economies. its characteristics and values transcend geo-political, social and economic boundaries. Globalisation is not a new phenomenon (Ekpe and Akpan, 2013). It had been argued that globalization has proceeded throughout the course of human history, though not in a steady and linear fashion (Mason, 2001).

It suffice to say that globalisation has assumed different forms and character in line with the dynamics of the international political economy. Its present form is shaped by the cataclysmic disintegration of the soviet union, the unification of the German nation and the collapse of the communist government in Eastern Europe which marked the end of the cold war. The sudden end of the half-century cold war represents a significant turning point in the structures of international

politics and economics. The events that resulted in the abrogation of the bitter rivalries that ensued during the cold war began in 1989 with the collapse of the iron curtain and came to a dramatic close in December 1991 when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R) got effectively dismembered.

Note worthy is the fact that the demise of the cold war has completely abolished the hitherto existing global arrangement of bipolarity and led to the creation of a unipolar world with the United States of America (USA) assuming total and relatively unchallengeable leadership position.

In cahoots with its western allies, the United States arrogantly asserts its hegemony over the entire world and immediately after the 1990-1991 Gulf War, the then American president, George Bush, declared the "American Century" and enunciated what is widely known to be the American New World Order.

Socially speaking contemporary globalisation entails closer interaction of people and homogenization of cultures and values and the transformation of the world into a global village. Politically, it means the complex network of global governance and shared political values culminating in the development of a tendency towards universalisation of global political culture. Economically, it expresses liberalization, privatization, deregulation resulting in a free market regime. Globalisation therefore has posed challenges to the *raison d'etre* of the state- the dominant actors in international relations (Ghosh, 2009).

Owugah (2003) defines globalisation as a technological driven process which breaks down national borders to ensure unrestricted movement of capital, technology, goods and services across national boundaries. Similarly, Khor (2003) defines globalisation as the process that results in the breaking down of national economic barriers, the international spread of trade, financial and production activities, and growing power of transnational corporations and international financial institutions in these processes. However, Ekpe gave a more comprehensive definition when he described it as "The process by which political, economic and sociocultural mechanisms are strategically used in order to integrate the world such that it would be easier to export embellished western cultural values and ethos for the benefit of the industrialized nations (Ekpe, 2005).

The different views on globalisation notwithstanding, a common thread runs through most of them, to the effect that globalisation relates to the growing interdependence of the world's people. It is about increasing interconnectedness and interdependences among the world's regions, nations, governments, business, institutions, communities, families and individuals. Globalisation fosters the advancement of a "global mentality" and conjures the picture of a border less world through the use of information technology to create partnership and foster greater socio-political and economic integration. The nature of globalisation as an all encompassing phenomenon in contemporary time has tremendous impact on public policy of countries.

The concept of public policy indicates that there is a domain of life which is not private or purely individual, but held in common. The term "public" has to do with what concerns the generality of the populace or people. Government is what everybody in the society has a stake in. Sapru (2011) stated that the word "public" comprises all dimensions of human activities regarded as requiring governmental intervention or social regulation. So, the term "public" connoted serving the general

interest as against private interest. Policy on the other hand is defined as "a proposed course of action of an individual, a group, and institution or government, to realize a specific objective or purpose within a given environment" (Basu,2005). Anderson (1997) states that "policy is a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern". Therefore, any purposive course of action being pursued to achieve or accomplish defined ends by those concerned can be described as a policy. The term public policy is viewed as a purposive course of action taken or adopted by those in power in pursuit of certain goals or objectives (Sapru,2011).

Dye (2004) defines public policy as whatever governments chooses to do or not to do. Public policy has also been defined as "the formal articulation, statement or publication of a goal that the government intends to pursue" in order to address a need or a problem (Waldt, 2001). Eminue (2005) stated that in formulating policy, policy makers must take into consideration the international environment. For him six issues in the international environment that have had, perhaps, the most far-reaching implication for policy formulation are unexpected/unanticipated developments in the international system, world economic recession, external debt, international public opinion, dependence on big powers and good governance. He tagged these factors "relationship of unequal exchange and exploitation"

Although, the agents of globalisation claim that globalisation is utilitarian for all countries (developed and developing), its opponents argue that in a highly globalised world, the economy is essentially a reflection of the interest of the most powerful states. The opponents argue that while globalisation is marginalizing the developing countries, it is at the same time elevating the economic fortunes of the North (Ekpe and Akpan,2013).

Globalisation reduces the level of independence of autonomous states, threatens the discretion of states everywhere and encourages decreasing national control and increasing control over the (internal) economy, politics and cultures (of the state) by outside players (Tandon,1998). Its universalisation of communication, mass production, market exchanges and redistribution, rather than engendering new ideas and developmental orientation in developing countries in general and Nigeria in particular, subverts its autonomy and powers of self-determination (Akindele et al, 2002). Globalisation has imposed heavy constraints on the internal dynamics of most countries as states now finds it difficult in most cases, to meet the genuine demands of the governed in many issues of national development. It has become obvious in the contemporary time that globalisation has made it cumbersome in Nigeria for government to provide social insurance - one of their central functions and one that has helped many developed nations to maintain social cohesion and domestic political support.

It is on the basis of the fore-going that this paper seeks to look at the economic globalisation and public policy in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. This paper proposes that Nigeria cannot benefit from the contemporary economic globalisation process without a sustained effort to develop the necessary economic foundations because globalisation will only be seen to be utilitarian if it results in advancing the domestic economic agenda of the countries involved.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND LINKAGES

It has been widely acknowledged that contemporary globalisation commenced in the last quarter of the 19th century and has occurred in three phases (World Bank 2002).

The first wave of contemporary globalisation spans the period 1870-1913. This period witnessed large cross border flow of goods, capital and people. By the end of the 19th century, the world was already highly globalised with significant volumes of trade accompanied by unprecedented capital flows (Aninta,2002).

The earlier attempt at modern globalisation ended abruptly with the outbreak of World War I. Consequently, the period encompassing World War I, the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II marked a giant step back in globalisation process.

The second wave of globalisation began after World War II and ended in 1980. The period was one that focused on integration among the rich countries (World Bank, 2002) and it was characterised by lower trade barriers and further development in technology and reduction of costs.

The third and most recent wave of globalisation started around 1980 and continues till today. It has been reinvigorated by the unprecedented ease with which information can be exchanged and passes as a result of breakthrough in computer and telecommunication technologies.

The current globalisation process is inextricably linked with neoliberal economic policies, forcefully propagated in the last three decades of the Bretton Woods Institutions - The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which manifested in unleashing market forces, deregulation of economic activities, trade and financial markets liberalisation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, minimising the role of the state among others (Ibadan, 2003a).

Suffice to say that one of the fundamental attributes of current globalisation is the "globalisation" of national policies and policy-making mechanism. National policies which were hitherto under the jurisdiction of state and people within a country have increasingly come under the influence of international agencies and processes or of big private corporations and financial players. This has culminated in the erosion of national sovereignty and narrowed the ability of government and people to make choices from options in economic, social, political and cultural policies (Khor, 2004). Most developing countries have seen their independent policy making roles eroded and have to adopt policies made by other entities which may not be in the interest of the countries concerned. The developed states where the major economic players reside and which also control the processes and policies of international economic agencies, are able to maintain control over their own national policies as well as determine the policies and practices of international institutions and the international systems.

The sovereignty of state system has come under the attack of globalisation. Although, the states still exist and perform their powers and authority in certain respects, the core essence is sovereignty has been deeply eroded in the globalising world. The concept of sovereignty pertains to a specific reference to a specific territory where government exercises absolute authority. But the agents of globalisation has rendered the territorial limits less imperative. So, there has been a

detritorialization of countries. The state in a globalising world has to work along with the forces which are not under its control (Ghosh, 2009). In this case, states formulate policies that will align with the interests of people beyond its shores. The state remains a state, it is just that the range of policies and decisions it has the capacity to control have shrunk. According to Shively, (2008), the state is not challenged in its formal capacity but is hollowed out of a shrinkage in the range of things it can actually do.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This study is anchored on the Marxist Theory of states. The Marxist Theory of States conceives the state as a capitalist state (Girigiri, 2005). The major protagonist of this theory are Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels. According to this theory, the state is the product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonism (Lenin, 1984). The state which arose from conflict between classes, is as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by this means, also becomes the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed (Jekubowski 1973). Thus, according to Marx (1971) "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie". The state autonomy in this class society is more apparent than real for the state remains the instrument of the dominant classes for exploitation and suppression of the subordinate classes.

Marxist scholars stress that the state serves capitalist interest through legitimation, repression and accumulation. The legitimation function of the state takes the form of maintaining consensus among the citizenry in basic capitalist ethos. Repression involves debarring people from engaging in activities that are detrimental to the state and the capitalist system, which the state must protect. The state function of accumulation involves the propagation of policies that are conducive for the accumulation of capital by members of the capitalist class.

The Nigerian state owes its origin to colonialism. Ake (1985) observed that the colonial state in Nigeria was a crude tool of colonial capital. The European colonialism ran its full course of brutality and exploitation in Africa. A period of pseudo-colonization followed. They then granted African countries flag Independence, while retaining essential colonial economic relationships in import-export trade, domination of major sectors of the post-colonial economy by European transnational corporations, foreign investment e.t.c. For Nkrumah, neo colonialism is the process of handing independence over to the African people with one hand, only to take it away with the other hand (Nkrumah, 1961).

The primary aim of neo colonialism is the maintenance of the former colony as a dependency, as a controlled source of raw materials and markets for investment and the sale of goods manufactured in the metropolitan countries.

Ake (1981) noted the fundamental forces in the Nigerian socio-economic formations: a ploy to coerce Africans and by extension Nigerians into commodity relations, to change their pattern of production and to prevent the emergence of Nigerian bourgeoisie that could be capable of competing favourably with the metropolitan bourgeoisie

It therefore becomes obvious in Ake's view, why public policy in Nigeria has often been detrimental to the interest of the masses. The truth is that the state is constituted mainly to serve the interest of the metropolitan bourgeoisie and their Nigerian collaborators.

It is within the context of the specific character of the Nigerian state that one can understand and explicate the disposition of the Nigerian state in its drive for globalisation. The import of this approach in this study is that it would afford us the necessary analytical tools to examine the effect of globalisation on public policy in Nigeria.

GLOBALISATION AND PUBLIC POLICY IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The contemporary globalisation has a tremendous impact on public policy in Nigeria. Since Nigeria became an appendage of the international division of labour by embracing neo-liberal ideology, the trend of Nigerian public policy projections have tilted towards the direction of globalisation.

The key elements of economic globalisation are trade, finance, production and labour. In the words of Ravenhill (2005) "Economic globalisation is the confluence of secular trends and patterns of world trade, capital flows, transnational production and labour flows which affirm the validity of globalisation thesis".

On trade, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has subjected all countries to the same rules and regulations. Consequently, the regional economic unions such as European Union (EU), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) no longer regulate the level of world trade because of the regulatory influence of WTO. Under the present rule which is universally applicable, regionalism is required to be compatible with the multilateral trade order.

A clear trend in the contemporary time is that world trade has witnessed a shift away from the traditional dependence on the export of primary commodities to the increase specialisation in labour intensive, low technology manufactured products.

Another component of economic globalisation is finance. In line with the regulatory agencies of globalisation, WTO, IMF, WB e.t.c, more countries were compelled to liberalise their national finance markets. This has resulted in the expansion of the geographical scope of global capital flows. Given the fact that global finance has transcended national borders, the activities of individual sovereign countries cannot regulate it. The global finance market is self-regulating and the only role of the state is to foster cooperation and coordination within the international finance market (Balaam and Veseth, 1996).

Production is another fundamental aspect of economic globalisation. In the contemporary time, production of goods and services has been globalised. The major factors that currently influence global production are the structural change in the global economy and the policies of national government (Bernard, 1994).

In line with the foregoing, the economic policies in Nigeria are driven by globalisation with emphasis on the reform prescription of the Britton-Wood institutions. In proffering solution to the myriad economic woes in Nigeria, the agents of globalisation advised Nigerian government to

engage in the "downsizing" of government institutions as well as engage in liberalization, privatisation and deregulation policies. This was religiously done by the Nigerian state. Contrary to expectations however, the application of the Bretton Wood solution in Nigeria rather worsened the degree of dependence of Nigerian economy on the metropole and so deepens the level of economic woes of Nigeria. Ekpe (2007) submitted that the existence of the widespread poverty, high unemployment rate, inflation, debt and food crisis as well as balance of payment deficit serves as a pointer that Nigeria's economy is still many miles away from self-reliance

Economic globalisation advocates free trade and economic liberalisation. The conception of free trade suggests that states only engage in commercial activities where they have an advantage, whether comparatively or absolute (Candidiasis et al, 2001). However, a truly competitive market will not benefit countries that engage in the supply of raw materials like Nigeria. Also, wealthy countries and multinational corporations use forums like WTO to engage in selective liberalisation (Smith and Moran, 2001). For instance, intellectual property rights allow multinational corporations to monopolize the manufacture of certain goods for a lengthy period of time usually to the detriment of poor countries like Nigeria.

In Nigeria, record has shown that privatisation has not yielded the expected result because it was hijacked by powerful groups and those with political connection (Aaron, 2005). Apart from the popular notion that the privatisation exercise benefited friends and clients of top government officials, it was also criticized for unevenly benefiting a section of the country. Umaru Dikko in an interview published in Today Newspapers (www.n-today.ndtilda.co.uk/cover159.htm) pointed out that 68% of the equity holdings of these public entertainment favoured citizens of Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Lagos and Delta states.

Also, deregulation policies of the Nigerian economy resulted in a massive increase in the rate of capital flight from the country, as foreign monopoly investors take advantage of the liberal environment to repatriate profits, dividends, royalties, technical fees and all manner of payments including transfer pricing, to the detriment of the local economy's poverty alleviation plans (Eze, 2010).

It is noteworthy to state that the decade of market reform in Nigeria is yet to show any evidence of utility and progress. A lot of jobs have been destroyed in Nigeria due to de-industrialisation, massive inflation and devaluation of the currency, increasing poverty, virtual cancellation or reduction of subsidies on social services (Eze, 2010)

Globalisation has serious negative impact on economic development policies in Nigeria due to foreign debt. Foreign debt has greatly eroded Nigeria's capacity to run her own affairs and respond to the demand of the people. This negative development has resulted in legitimacy crisis for the governments. The fact that Nigeria is highly indebted to the developed nations leaves her with little or no control over its national economies. This is because the relationship between the debtor nations and the creditors has been reduced to that of slave-master relationship. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was recommended to Nigeria as a solution to the debt burden, but according to Ekpe (2002), the lofty ideals on which IMF model is based are more academic than real. In contrary, rather than help debtor countries to reduce their debt-stock, the prescription had worsened the level of indebtedness of developing countries. According to Raghanyan (1992), the

essence of economic reforms is to restructure the economies of the debtor countries so that they can better save foreign exchange to service their debt. So, what happens to the real economy of debtor countries is of secondary importance (Collasmonsod, 1989). Given the pressure exerted by the IMF, it is not surprising that most of Nigeria's resources were diverted for debt settlement.

The relevance of Nigeria to the global economy is not based on its contribution to global trade but because of its position in the international division of labor as the supplier of raw materials and market for finished goods from leading capitalist economies of the world. The Nigerian political and economic elite formulate policies and form alliances with the transnational corporations and foreign governments that will help in mortgaging the resources of the country for peanuts. The policies are usually geared towards satisfying the conditionalities imposed by the agents of globalisation which will expose the country to exploitation and rape.

Anugwom (2006) observed that globalisation as presently structured is too impersonal and market-oriented to address the social plights of Nigeria. Nigeria's exposure to market economy since 1990s has not improved the case of poverty and the ever increasing social inequality. Owugah (2003) averred that in Nigeria the national wealth through decades of leadership irresponsibility are in the hands of few individuals. Prominent among them are retired senior military officers, corrupt politicians, wheelers and dealers in the business and finance world. According to Owugah, this class of citizens feed fat on stolen national wealth, the rest of the people ekes out a living in a highly unfriendly economic environment. This negative development has led to the feeling of deprivation and frustration by a section of the population thereby leading to the proliferation of ethno-regional militant groups challenging the continued legitimacy of the Nigerian state.

Anugwom (2006) subjoined that economic globalisation which builds on mere economic restriction without building up the requisite economic infrastructure only engender poverty and inequality. In Nigeria, for example the economic policies of the government, while creating limited opportunities for external participation and visible involvement of local economic and business elite, have greatly pulperized the less privileged citizens. This is due to the fact that participation has been based on economic logic beyond the understanding of ordinary Nigerian.

Ekpe (2007) noted that one of the hallmarks of an economy which has recovered from decline is the capacity for such an economy to either adapt foreign technology to suit its peculiar circumstances or to evolve and apply it on technology which is relevant for the attainment of self-reliance. But on the contrary if the crucial condition is lacking, such as in Nigeria, the implication is that the economy will be heavily dependent on the metropolises thus negating all the trappings of self-reliance.

Obadina (1998) observed that globalisation has become a "threat to the poor rather than an opportunity for global action to eradicate poverty'. He opined that the concept of absolute freedom that underlines the rationale for globalisation is the same notion used to justify slavery and colonization. In line with this position, Obadina argued that the free market undertone of globalisation is anchored on greed and ethos of winner takes all. He summarized his position thus:

Western relations with (the) underdeveloped countries are not predicated on a desire to eradicate mass poverty but on the penchant to impose the free market system founded on the notion of absolute freedom.

Akindele et al (2002) noted that the foregoing is even absurd given the fact that these same Western nations that are clamouring for respect for human right and fundamental freedom are at the same time pushing for globalisation and economic policies that encourage the abuse of the rights, including the denial of the right of economic equality. For them, the predicament of the people of the Niger Delta offers a case in point. This predicament are explicable within the context of the (deliberate) inability of the Nigerian government to equitably protect the interest and environment of the people of the Niger Delta from the forces of globalisation ably represented by the multinational oil companies. According to Piate (2014) a manifestation of these negative impact is the replacement of the traditional economy that was founded on fishing, farming and hunting for economic sustenance with a petro-dollar economy. The attempts by the people of the Niger Delta to challenge the capitalist wastages of their marine life and environment through protests was smothered by the Nigerian state using the instrument of coercion.

The major challenge facing policy-makers in Nigeria is how to strike a balance between the visible hand of the government and its regulation and the invisible hand of the market. The contemporary Nigerian economy has an external orientation, where the major manufacturing industries are not only controlled by multinational but rely heavily on imported raw materials and other vital inputs.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon, but it has intensified in its ramifications in the last three decades and attracted so much attention. It has remained a powerful force shaping world economies for good or for ill. As a multi-dimensional phenomenon, the political, social, cultural and environmental dimensions of globalisation are no doubt important, but the economic aspect which is the centre of this paper is at the heart of the process. Many poor countries like Nigeria went through the process of economic liberalisation without adequate preparation and precaution. So, careless and hasty liberalisation has been accompanied by grave risks and dangers of economic crisis. If globalisation has not favoured Nigeria and some other developing countries, should they reject it? The answer is no. This is because no country can exist in isolation. The world is now a global village because the powerful forces of globalisation has resulted in the shrinkage of space, time and national borders. Therefore under the present circumstance poor countries like Nigeria should avoid premature liberalisation and proceed with it in a measured way after careful preparation and meeting of pre-conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Nigeria cannot turn its back completely on globalisation as autarky is not a viable option in the present world which is highly inter-related. We therefore recommend as follows:

1. Nigeria should formulate economic policies that recognise her specific needs and circumstances in order to promote inclusive economic development that will spread its benefits to all segments of the society.
2. The Nigerian economy requires a major commitment to policies and institutions that will promote manufactured exports in area of comparative advantages.
3. A strong state is needed to caution the impact of the market and globalisation. It will also help to create a positive environment for the development and renewal of entrepreneurship as well as promote labour intensive manufacturing.

4. Nigeria should liberalise its economy but such liberalisation must meet the pre-requisite of macro economic stability, adequate problem supervision and regulations of domestic economic institutions and market.
5. Nigeria should formulate policies that will direct its attention to adaptation of technologies that can enhance the competitiveness of the economy.

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