Globalisation and Democratisation in Africa

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Abstract

Globalisation has remained a prominent issue of discourse among scholars especially political scientist within the past decades. This work examined this process of democratization in Africa. As a process of increasing interconnectivity, inter-relationship and interdependence across national boundaries such that events in any part of the world increasingly impacts on other parts far away, globalisation has heightened the wave of democracy in the world. Democracy literally seen as rule by the people indicates that in collective decisions every member of the society is entitled to have his/her interests protected and given equal rights. This work adopted the dependency theory to explain the foundation of the globalisation process manifested in democracy in Africa. The theory explained how imperialism was introduced into Africa through colonialism that graduated to the democratization process. The work discovered that unequal relationships yoked in the globalisation process has affected the successes of democratization in Africa. The minimalist features of democracy cannot even stand the test of standard of measure of democratization in Africa because of the already established colonialist structure. The study commends that the technological wave driving the globalisation process be carefully integrated into our African setting and African leaders should reawaken the nationalist sentiments of the founding fathers of African nationalism that brought the independence that is being enjoyed today.

Keywords: *Globalisation, Democratisation, Interconnectivity, Inter-relationship and Interdependence*

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Background to the Study

Globalisation is an integral part of human history because there has always been forces that push for greater integration of human activities. The new dimension of these forces is the technological wave that has broadened the definition of globalisation as the process of intensification of economic, social, cultural, political, etc. relations across international boundaries. It is the process of increasing relationship across the globe. As defined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), it is greater integration of goods, services and capital between states in the International System. It is the heightening of inter-connections between states. According to Kegley 2007, the key elements of the globalisation process are the interconnection of sovereign states through trade and Capital flows, harmonization of economic roles that govern relationship between sovereign states, creation of structures to support and facilitate dependence and interconnection and the creation of a global market place. This is the link between globalisation and Africa.

Democracy is a people oriented rule that Abraham Lincoln defined as government of the people, by the people and for the people. The foundation of this idea is from the Greek word "demos" people and "cratis" rule. Democracy is synonymous with popular sovereignty or majority rule. It is a process by which a government derives its authority or mandate by popular vote. Democracy is a government based on majority rule and the consent of the governed. Guaba 2005 defined democracy as a form of government where the ultimate authority of government is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve the interests of the people. Democratization simply is the extent to which features of democracy are applied to a given political system. It is the introduction of democracy on a non-democratic system. It is the deepening of democratic qualities, the survival, sustenance and maintenance of democracy.

Africa is the world second largest and second most populous continent in the world with about 54 independent states. By the global division of the world, Africa is in the global South and is one of the least developed continent of the world. Africa got entangled in the globalisation process so much in the 19th century that the 19th century has been seen as the century of transition in African history. It was the century in which Africa witnessed immense cultural, social, political and economic revolutions. It is also seen as the age of imperialism. The foundation of these processes was laid by the Adventures/Explorers, Traders, Missionaries and Colonial Administrators. The legacies of imperialism in addition to the Western need for strategic raw materials imposed real socio-political and economic burdens on Africa. It was attempts to consolidate theses holds on African states that democracy was employed. A mechanism to fulfil these goals through democratization of Africa has remained a burden for Africa and serves as the focus of this paper.

Theoretical Framework

Theory as a set of propositions to explain the phenomenum of the globalisation process on democratization in Africa will be anchored on dependency theory. The concept of imperialism is the foundation of the dependency theory. According to Igwe 2005, Dependency defines a situation in which the policy or life of a state and its citizens are

exploitatively determined by an outside power or powers, usually through the simultaneous application of unequal socio-economic, political and cultural measures. For this study, the simultaneous application of political measures in the form of democracy is the bane of Africa. Imperialism basically as the extent of control by one state over another was introduced into Africa through colonialism.

According to Lenin, Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. With colonialism, Africa became an extension of the European capitalist market. According to Ake 2001, the integration of Africa into the world Capitalist System by western imperialism and colonialism are the most influential events in the shaping of the economic and political development of contemporary Africa. Imperialism brought about the consolidation of the world as a single social system, while colonialism acted as the living denial of the ability of Africa to organize their own sovereignty because no country that is economically dependent can be politically independent. Neo-Colonialism as the various methods devised by the departing imperialists powers to retain economic and ultimately political control of the former colonial territories been an outstanding theme on African issues. According to Schumpetor 2011, Capitalism is associated with the emergence of a specialized and mechanized world and the growth of individualism and democratisation which became popularized by Immanuel Kant; Woodrow Wilson, Abraham Lincoln etc.

Thus dependency theory built on Colonialism and neo-colonialism are the foundation of democracy in Africa today. The fail-out of these foundation on the social, environmental, economic and the political processes in the African system have invaded the success of the entrenchment of democratic values in Africa.

Globalisation and Africa
Globalisation is simply the process of intensification of economic, social, cultural, political and environmental relations across international boundaries. It is the process of increasing relationships among states and stands out as one of the defining force of contemporary International Society. It is the process by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society or global society. It is the intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant locations in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.

Globalisation can be viewed, interpreted and defined from various scholastic dimensions, hence it is not a monolithic term. This various dimensions on globalisationis as a result of the technological attachment. The general idea is that information technology has created a context in which the global market rather than separate national markets has become the relevant arena for economic competition. This has led to the adoption of practices by firm and governments all over the world which have altered the international political balance. The nations that invent the technology have become the decisive force that determine the extent of economic and political interactions between and within states.

Chase- Dunn 1999, give five different dimensions of globalisation as;
1. Common ecological constraints, involving global trends due to our fragile eco-system and the globalisation of ecological risks.
2. Cultural globalisation that deals with two sets of cultural phenomena bordering on the proliferation of individualized valves originally Western origin to the ever larger parts of the world and the adoption of originally Western institutional practices.
3. Economic globalisation – the globe spinning economic relationships.
4. Political globalisation – The institutionalization of international political structures or global governance strengthened by the specialized and general international Organisations.

Owugah 2003 says globalisation is a technologically driven process which breaks down national borders to ensure an unrestricted movement of capital, technology, goods and services across national boundaries. According to Ake 1995 globalisation is all about growing structural differentiation and functional integration of the world. Nnoli 2000 see globalisation as a complex social phenomenon which interfaces with various elements of social life and is suffused with ambiguities, variations uncertainties and incompatibilities. For Khor 2001, globalisation is marginalizing some and rewarding some, with unequal distribution of benefits and losses. Globalisation is indeed a process transcending all facets of human life and endeavor from the political, economic to the social life and obviously a driving force in all human endeavors and interactions.

From historical account, globalisation in the form of trade, economic and Political interactions between states in Africa, Europe and Asia existed prior to 1492. The early kingdom of Egypt, Kush, Axum and Zimbabwe at their heights had spheres of influence as far as present day Palestine, Yemen, Rome, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Britain. The influence of Egypt is now known in areas such as the development of writing through the ancient form (Hieroglyphics), irrigation system, introduction of embalmment techniques unrivaled by modern Scientists, architectural designs such as the popular pyramids, the production of calendars, artworks, ornaments like vases, gold and Ivory furniture. Archaeological works have equally exposed the greatness of Kush, Axum and Zimbabwe and other notable developments in Africa highlighting evidence of globalisation. European presence became more entrenched in the activities of the 1880s, the period of the scramble and partition of Africa formalized in the Berline Conference of 1884-1885. The division of the African states by the European powers became visible in the World War as the African states participated on the part of their colonial lords in the Allied or Axis power. It was this participation that contributed to the development of nationalism in many African states and eventually led to their independence.

African states also got entangled in the politics of the Cold War. However, with the collapse of East Germany, and other Soviet blocs as well as the USSR into several independent states in the 20th century, namely Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Uzbekistan etc the rise of America as a world power was undeterred.

Events of the world Wars where Africans were recruited as soldiers made her mark on the rise of nationalism. Evidence abound that over 30,000 soldiers from the British West Africa participated in the World War 2. The ideas they were exposed to were those expressed in the Allied powers propaganda on the ideals of freedom, liberty, equality and self-determination from President Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points in World War I and the Atlantic charter in 941 by President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winson Churchill.

> *The United States of America who capitalized on the confused European set up after the World Wars advanced her agenda of internationalization and globalisation under new conditions that impacted on Africa. This agenda was perfected in her open door policy comprised of 3 measures: the principle of non-discrimination in trade and investment outlets, the principle of free convertibility of currencies based on the new U.S gold-dollar stand and the creation of an international institutional frame work to supervise the new system. These principles later became the basis for the creation of multilateral institutions; in 1944, the Bretton Woods Institutions including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Since this period witnessed high wave of self-determination, African states got independence and became members of the United Nations that marked the beginning of a truly international association based on equality. Retrieved 10/9/2019*

This period also seen as the post-colonial era witnessed increase in the spread of globalisation, but the succeeding spread in information technology further enhanced the globalisation process. Globalisation hinged on free-market capitalism where emphasis is strictly on maximization of profits as the guiding force with belief that such profits would trickle down to the masses created barriers in Africa. The international Monetary Fund (IMF) initiated these regulatory mechanisms including Privatisation, trade and financial liberation, commercialization and the empowerment of Transnational Corporation(TNCS). The result of all these strategies is concentration of resources in a few, enhancing income disparity, significant job losses, destabilization of Union activities and enormous profits for the Multinational Corporations who benefit well from the relaxed regulations to remit their profits abroad while the little for the states are rarely used for essential capital projects. The investments can hardly alleviate hunger, poverty or provide essential amenities for good living ultimately creating insecurity, Democracy in this situation faces an obvious terrain to thrive. Retrieved 7/10/19.

African states became minimally self-governing from the 1960s. the legacies of imperialism in addition to the Western need for strategic raw materials imposed real socio-political and economic burdens on African states. It was and still attempts to control the sources of theses strategic raw materials and others that necessitated imposition of dictators and authoritarian government to maintain the status quo and tamn democratic ethics that democracy in Africa became contradictory not to the political values but to the strategic interests of the West. The Multinational Corporations(MNCS) became the outlets for investment to defend their empires. The tensions created by the Cold War in the Pile up of arms created avenue for the

intervention of the MNCS into the internal affairs of the then Third World now global South States. However, there was a dramatic turn at the end of the Cold war as the status quo began to be questioned. This situation produced agitations and upsurge of political activities. Unprecedented demands for political freedom emerged as authoritarian regimes that were previously thought to be impregnable were being questioned e.g in South Africa, Zaire, Congo, Zambia, Nigeria, Liberia, Kenya etc.

America had used democracy to blackmail several African states insisting on evidence of democratization, political pluralism and respect for human rights as conditions for economic assistance. On the contrary, the very class that could implement democratization are also the ones that have profited and are still profiting from the system that democratization is producing great social and economic unrests in Africa. (Ake pp 129-142). Thus globalisation has remained a complex set of processes operating in contradictory and oppositional manner in Africa. The view that globalisation is the pulling away of power of influence from local communities and nation states into the global arena became a reality.

Democracy, Democratization and Africa
Democracy is generally a people oriented government. It is a government synonymous with popular sovereignty or majority rule, where the people are involved in governance. It is a process by which a government derives its authority or mandate by popular vote. Joseph 1991 defined democracy as the continuing responsiveness of the government to the references of its citizens as political equals. For a political system, democracy has the characteristics of being completely or most completely responsive to all its citizens. It was in this light that Macpherson 1972 says democracy by origin meant rule by the common people, the Plebeian.

The real understanding of the concept of democracy is equality. Patterson 1993 posts that democracy stresses purposeful and substantial participation of a majority of citizens. According to him, Democracy is a set of pleas and a system of government that possesses characteristics of a government created by the genuine consent of the people. The government must uphold the principle of the rule of law because it exists for the people. A democratic government must be responsive to the duties it owes the citizenry as a government.

The essential features of democracy include:
1. Universal Adult Suffrage.
2. Periodic election.
3. Fundamental human rights.
4. Independence of the judiciary.
5. Presence of majority rule.

All these features show democracy as a people centered government that must ensure that the rewards and burdens of citizens are shared with equality. Apparadon 1968, defined democracy as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves. Schumpter 2011 says democracy is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decision in which

individuals acquire the power to decide by maintaining a competitive struggle for the people's vote. According to him, classical theory centered on the proposition that if the people hold a definite and rational opinion about every individual questions, they give effect to this opinion in a democracy by choosing representatives who will see to it that the opinion is carried out. Dowen 1985 asserts that Democracy is meant to ensure that each citizens feel a stake in democracy's survival in the face of the ever-shifting demographic, economic, social, environmental and geographical contingencies. Dahl, 2001, see Democracy as characterized by political practices that guarantee representation, accountability and participation under the condition of liberty provided by the rule of law.

> *The indispensable requirement for a country to be a democracy is that all its principal positions of political power be decided by regular, meaningful, free and fair elections. This means that it must be possible to turn the incumbents out of power if the majority of voters prefers a different party or coalition of rulers and whoever is elected must have real power to rule. At the point where elections become free and fair, the people become a part of the decision making process of their state. The basis of democracy being people oriented comes to focus, as power in its form becomes transmitted from the people to their elected leaders. However, even if this minimalist definition of democracy is used as a standard of measure of democratization, a vast number of states including African states will obviously tag behind. Among states said to be practicing democracy in its limited form, there are hardly any whose leadership at the head of governance, that has been over turned by the electorates through the voting system.*

Democratization

Democratization is simply the introduction of democracy to a non-democratic system. It is the extent to which democratic principles are instilled in a political system. It is the transition to a more democratic political regime. It may be the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, or a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi democracy or transition from a semi authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. Democratization is influenced by various factors, including economic development, history and civil society. The ideal result from democratization is to ensure that the people have the right to vote and have a voice in their political system. Democratization involves the ability of the electorates to choose freely on a regular basis between competing persons, parties or groups of potential actors to steer the wheel of the state.

Democratization in the words of Sandbrook 2000 is potentially valuable not only as a defence against tyranny, but also as an institutional means of channeling and managing dangerous conflicts. Democratization is a comprehensive process of social transformation geared towards producing leadership that reflect the will and opinion of the people. It calls for a great deal of clarity and concentration of purpose for the society at large. It also calls for social consensus especially on the legitimacy of the leadership. Democratization is the introduction of democracy, the deepening of democratic values and the survival, sustenance and maintenance of democracy in particular democracy. Democratization has been seen as a panacea for global peace. According to Immanuel Kant, the only remedy to international

conflict was the universal acceptance of democratic values by all nations. President Woodrow Wilson carried this message to the Versatile Peace Conference and the Paris Conference that created the League of Nations. He was convinced that world Peace could only be established by a compact among democratically governed states.

Democracy and African States

Africa political institutions were traditionally monarchical or gerontocratic. Prior to the 16th century, monarchical administrations existed among the states in the Niger Delta, Bornu, Sokoto, Ghana and Dahomey in West Africa, Uganda in East Africa, Zulu in South Africa, Egypt and Libya in North Africa and others. Their effectiveness and strength were evident in the fact that they controlled the administration and prevented the take-over of their states even by the European traders and explorers. However, from the use of protection treaties to the introduction of consuls and the imposition of protectorate system, African states subsequently lost their authority that was assumed to have been subjected with the granting of independence from 1956 starting with Ghana.

In the African states, the policies of the colonial masters regarding land use and exploitation, harnessing of resources, taxation and general administration coupled with the acquisition of Western education aroused the quest for a representative or responsible government devoid of segregation. Prominent nationalists like Herbert Macaulay, Senghor, Nkrumanetc led campaigns that culminated in the formation of political parties as well violent struggles for freedom in many African states. All these efforts set the stage for democratic governance in Africa. However, despite the difficulties experienced by most African states in upholding democratic values resulting in military take-overs for ample number of years, globalisation as advocated now, emphasizes the adoption and enforcement of democracy. The United States emphasizes it as the ultimate in the administration for states, hence its involvement in the maintenance and institutionalization of democracy.

European powers have also adopted measures to enhance the spread of democracy through subtle interventions such as aids, assistance and trade policies. In Nigeria for instance, the independent Electoral Commission (INEC) has steadily been given assistance by the European Union and the U.S hence their visible presence as international observers and independent monitors. Their presence is also evident in elections held in several other African states like Ghana, South Africa, Kenya etc. The European Union, the U.S government and several other European governments are getting well involved in the meetings of the African Union and in disarmament projects because conflicts in the states would threaten the budding democratic governments in the continent and the spread of their values. The essence of democracy is that people exercise the governing power either directly or through their representatives. The democratic state must provide institutions for the expression and supremacy of the popular will of the people and must work towards enhancing;

1. Right to vote and be voted for
2. Free and fair elections
3. Protection of fundamental Human Rights
4. Independence of the judiciary

5. Majority rule – Decision of government for general interests or interests of the majority.

The social environment, economic resources, natural endowments and the political process decide the extent to which the basic human rights are enjoyed and the characteristics of democracy upheld, observed, protected, promoted, entrenched. African democratic traditional form of government in which emphasis on governance was more on communal rights than individual rights but the individual is entitled to have his/her rights interests protected and given equal rights. Democratic principles give every individual the chance and right (Franchise) to participate in choosing who represents the generality of interests in the society. North African states that are in the Arab League have common experience with democratic globalisation because of the immense tension among the desires of the Arab leaders to flow in the trend. Democracy advocates asserts that the lack of good governance in the region is the reason most Arab states score low in socio-economic development indicators. The cases of Libya and Iraq defies this assertion. Western democratic globalisation have greatly impeded development in these states. The economic standard of Libya and Iraq before their invasion stood among the fastest developing states in the world though under the shackles of dictatorial rule for more than 3 decades. It is this wave that was the driving force in the Arab uprising where demonstrators were demanding to be partakers in the decision making process of their states and calling for an open political society and unprecedented challenge to the authoritarian rule.

However, the speed of the democratic phenomenon is such that the Arabs and the Muslims see it as Americanization that is a threat that should be destroyed. Some African states today classified as democracies like Coted' ivoire, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique etc appear ambiguous and may be better classified as electoral authoritarian according to Diamond, 2005. By extension, other states including Egypt, then under Hussin Mubarak over 30years rule, Ben Ali's then Tunisia, then Mugabe's Zimbabwe and many others can at best be termed competitive authoritarian rather than democratic states. Colonial experience eroded the peculiar administrative set ups in African states. Various African states in attempt to face up to the realities especially with the propagation of democratic governance adopted Parliamentary or Presidential systems of government. This systems have also not fared well.

Democracy as a multilateral regime which gives everybody the opportunity to vie for their interest with such groups processing their conflicting interest according to some rules, standards and procedures must take cognizance of the environmental realities. The process upon which democracy is consolidated rest on the extent which the different groups seeks a compromise for the interest of all through the framework of the law. This has created so much burden on Africa.

Conclusion

Globalisation process has obviously integrated Africa into the global system with varying implications. Democratization stands as one of the offshoots of the globalisation wind. The unequal relationships pervading the international system have affected the successes of

democratization in Africa. The minimalist definition of democracy cannot even stand the test of standard of measure of democratization of Africa. Nations that portend to be democratic cannot even boast to implement free, and fair elections even though regular. However, the absence of it being free and fair negates the fulfilment of that feature of democracy in Africa. Thus democratization in Africa is threading on rocky soils rooted on globalisation that came from the forces of imperialism and Colonialism.

Recommendations

In the face of the reality of the feasibility of democracy in Africa, we make the following recommendations.

1. Adjustment of the globalisation wind to the realities of the African environment.
2. Globalisation should be properly harnessed for the development of Africa.
3. Democracy should be sincerely integrated into our already existing communal system of living that is people driven.
4. African leaders must be driven by that nationalist sentiments of our earlier African leaders that laid the foundation of independence of African states we are presenting living on
5. Colonial punctuations in Africa history must address issues of governance by states in Africa as the fulfilment of the triumph of democracy lies on it.

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