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GLOBALIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

Globalization has become a major topic of discussion and concern in political and economic circles since the mid-1990s. It is clear that the trend towards more integrated world market has opened a wide potential for greater growth and presents an unparalleled opportunities for developing countries to raise their living standard.

The returns to democratic governance in Nigeria on May 29st 1999 is in keeping with the trend of political globalization. The effect of political globalization is that it makes it possible for nations to address political matters with utmost dispatch, as such matters are seen as national problems. However, more than four years of elected civilian rule in Nigeria have created a big disappointment of virtually all those who had staked high hopes in democracy as the panacea for our national woes and socio-economic predicaments. Instead of satisfying the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians, the past five years of democratic experiment have been characterized by heightened incidence of poverty, worsening economic situation, ethno-religious conflicts and generalized insecurity (Jega 2003).

But, under the challenges of Globalization, the Obasanjo's government seems to have lost control of the policy making process which would have engineer the much desired dividends of democracy. Also in the name of globalization the government is under pressure to accept dictation from creditor nations and financial institutions. In essence, the dictate of Globalization as manifested in such policies as deregulation, liberalization, privatization and

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commercialization has denied Nigerians of their social and economic rights and has therefore constituted a threat to democratic consolidation simply because democracy means nothing to people who cannot eat properly and have access to a minimum of decent health care (Jega 2003:3, Oham 2003, Aina 2003).

The objective of this paper therefore is to show how the globalization policies mention above impacted negatively on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Conceptualizing Globalization and Democratic Consolidation

Globalization is an amorphous concepts which is loaded with ideological connotations. Its meaning is contentious while its character is a point of dispute. It also has a history, which is mired in controversy. Although its ideological implications are relatively free of serious contestations, its implications for different geo-political zone of the international system constitute a moot point (Asobie, 2001). All these characterizations notwithstanding, globalization could be viewed from two perspectives, namely north and south perspectives. Viewed from the perspective of the north globalization refers to increasing integration of the activities and the practices of human societies around the world, involving increasing volume and variety of transnational transactions in goods and services, in international capital flows, in human migration and through a rapid and widespread diffusion of technology (Musa 2000, IMF 1997). The primary mechanism of globalization are said to include open policies with respect to international trade, removal of obstacles to international capital flow or international market integration, and international spread of knowledge. The implication of the above is that globalization may also be seen as "openness to trade, factor flows, ideas and information" (Yusuf 2000).

Thus, commenting on the concept of globalization, Friedman (1999) posits that it is the integration of markets, finance and technologies in a way that is shrinking the world from a medium size to a small size and enabling each of us to reach around the world farther, faster and cheaper than ever before. Like all previous international systems, it is directly or indirectly shaping the domestic

politics, economic policies and foreign relations of virtually every country.

Friedman's conception of globalization seems an all encompassing and an all embracing approach, which has vividly shown us that globalization is an octopus that has the goal of touching every aspect of a nation state.

Similarly, Kingston (2001) depicted the idea of globalization as a process of "corporate infiltration of every area of life, a process of exclusion, homogenization, environmental destruction and for many, "death". He thus shares the view of Friedman that globalization is expected to touch all the spheres of life of homosapien. Ihonvbere (2002) perceives globalization as structured or characterized by new ideas, new strategies, speed, technology, new mechanisms for penetrating foreign markets, higher volumes of movement of goods and skills, and shrinking of distances. He also observe that today's globalization seeks to bring all together in one global economic, social and political structure based on capitalist values and liberal democracy.

Viewed from the second perspective (the southern perspective) globalization is an old phenomenon, dating back to the middle age (Mussa, 2000:1-2). However, Drucker (1997) and Mohan and Williams (1998) have pointed out that contemporary globalization has certain specific features which define its distinctiveness. According to these scholars, contemporary globalization is characterized by transforming the global capitalism into "casino capitalism". Contemporary globalization is marked by the emergence and dominance of enormous amount of "virtual" money. Virtual money is not the traditional investment capital, but a highly mobile speculative capital or money dealing capital that is global in its operation. Its dominance as resulted in the transfer of economic policy decisions from national governments to global transnational actors. Furthermore, contemporary globalization is not solely market driven. On the contrary, it has a strong political dimension.

Globalization today therefore means "global governance". To begin with globalization is as much the product of the inexorable march of market forces as the by product of states consciously and

deliberately promoting the internalization of the strategies of their corporations and in the process, the internalization of state capacity. More importantly, contemporary globalization involves a conscious efforts by the government of the industrialized countries to govern the world, using such multi-lateral agencies as the World Trade Organization (W.T.O), the World Economic Forum (W.E.F), the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F), the World Bank, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (O.E.C.D), the Group of Eight (G-8), and the United Nations Security Council.

The other concept that needs explanation in this paper is what is herein called democratic consolidation. Originally, the term democratic consolidation was meant to describe the challenges of making the new democracy secure, of extending their life expectancy beyond the short term of making them immune against the threat of authoritarian regression of building dams against eventual "reverse waves". However, the list of problems of democratic consolidation (as we all as the corresponding list of conditions for democratic consolidations) have both expanded beyond all recognition. It has come to include divergent items such as: popular legitimation, the diffusion of democratic values, the neutralization of anti-system actors, civilian supremacy over the military and the elimination of autocratic enclaves. Others are party building, the organization of functional interest, the stabilization of electoral rules, the routinization of politics, the decentralization of state power, the introduction of mechanisms of direct democracy, judicial reform, the alleviation of poverty and economic stabilization. Put differently, democratic consolidation means reducing the probability of its breaking down to the point where political actors can feel reasonably confident that democracy will persist in the near (and not-so near) future (Schedler 1998:95-107).

In his explicit formulation of democratic consolidation, Bratton (1998:52) drew the attention to the threat of silent regression from democracy to semi-democratic rule and incorporates the over-coming of this threat into his broad definition of democratic consolidation as the wide spread acceptance of rules to guarantee political participation and political competition.

From the foregoing, it is glaring to discern the fact that this concept has the problem of homonymy (one word meaning different things). Though, inimical to theory building and the accumulation of knowledge, it even frustrates such elementary operation as case classification. As matter now stands, the concept's classificatory utility is close to zero. Its boundaries are fuzzy and fluid. It does not allow us to order reality in any reliable way (Schedler, 1998:101). But rather than using the concept in ambiguous and inconsistent ways, we should attach one clear meaning to it. As Giovanni, (cite in Christopher 1984:958) once declared, "different things should have different names". Thus, for the purpose of this article, democratic consolidation means the capacity of the polity to nurture and sustain democracy over a very long time spell, with little or no threat to the abortion of democratic experiment in all ramifications

Given the Nigerian experience in the last five years we want to examine in this paper whether the capacity of the polity to nurture, sustain and strengthen democracy has been threatened by the dictate of globalization as defined in this paper.

Nigeria's March to Fourth Republic

Indeed, Nigeria's march to constitutional democracy has been a chequered one marked by anti-colonial struggle, crisis, coups, counter-coups and a thirty-month agonizing civil war between 1967 and 1970. Nwabueze, (cited in Ojo 1999:256) confirmed that Nigeria has passed through five different phases viz: "era of colonial autocracy and absolutism, emergence of constitutional democracy and return of autocracy and absolutism under military government, restoration of constitutional democracy and the second coming of military autocracy and absolutism". Since his observation in 1989, the polity has added three more phases to her democratization march. With the end of the Babangida regime in 1993, the inauguration of the Interim National Government (ING), the return of the military through the Abacha coup in November 1993 and the administration of General Abubakar consequent upon the demise of Abacha on June 8, 1998, which also culminated into the demolition of all democratic structures he had put in place, the national

commence another round of transition programme ab initio that gave birth to the fourth republic (Ojo, 1999).

Many Nigerians thought that democracy had arrived on May 29th 1999, with the inauguration of the elected Obasanjo civilian administration. Understandably, having yearned and strenuously struggled for democracy under authoritarian military rule, considerable excitement and anticipation accompanied the transfer of power from the military to the civilians. Under the successive military regimes, the Nigerian State had failed to stabilize the polity, secure the citizen and provide the basic socio-economic needs of the majority of the people. Given this context, many believed that democracy was going to immediately cure all of the Nigerian's ills, bring about security and stability and re-launch the nation on the part of sustainable socio-economic development. Five years of elected civilian rule have created a big disappointment to virtually all those who had staked high hopes in democracy and regard it as the panacea for our national woes and socio-economic predicament. This is so because the Obasanjo government is caught between embarking on policies that will alleviate the suffering of the Nigerian masses by providing for their socio-economic needs through increased public spending or implementing deregulation, liberalization, privatization and reduction in public expenditure, all of which, are policy initiatives of globalization (Jega, 2003, Oham 2003).

Manifestations of Globalization and their Harmful Effects on Democratic Consolidation

In the post cold war era, the strategy for national development pushed by the industrialized capitalist countries and multilateral financial institutions, especially for Africa, Asia and Latin America is Globalization. Define as the Universalization of capitalism it entails the full integration of their economies with the world capitalist economy through extensive and rapid liberations. These countries of the south are made to believe that there is a new global consensus on this "best" strategy. To consolidate their full integration with capitalism, these underdeveloped countries are urged and/or pressurized to open up their economies to international

import an export trade. They must encourage an accelerated inflow across national frontiers. They are made to believe that, in a globalizing world, foreign aid is no longer critical for development and therefore, the role of multilateral institutions should be largely to create global frameworks that facilitate the unfettered functioning of the global market (South centre, in Asobie, 2003).

However, there is no homogenous view of globalization from the developing democracies. In particular, the official position of Nigeria is ambivalent. In 1999 for instance, President Olusegun Obasanjo cautioned against embarking on full and extensive globalization, and advocated strategic, selective insertion of Nigeria into the globalization process. As he puts it:

While we must embrace globalization, we realize that we have to be very careful in applying the principle of liberalization. There are already Nigerian industries, which are on the threshold of international competition, especially against imports from countries, which are adept at dumping (Economic policy, Vol. 1, 1999:17-18).

This position was reinforced by the provisions of the Nigerian constitution of 1999, which prescribes the following foreign policy and economic objectives: promotion of a just economic world order; promotion of African integration and support for African unity; as well as non-privatization of the 'major sectors' of the Nigerian economy, except those already privatized by 1999 and as directed by law, passed by the National Assembly.

Surprisingly, the government made a U-turn when it adopted a new position in 2001. As if to conform the argument that the government had lost the policy-making autonomy to globalization, the position articulated (and being faithfully implemented by the Obasanjo administration was that:

Nigeria must demonstrate the preparedness to exploit the inherent opportunities offered by the phenomenon of globalization in the

area of technology acquisition, trade expansion, manpower development and capital transfer through foreign direct investment. And to do so, Nigeria must embark on full-scale privatization of its economy and adopt creative negotiations with the relevant international agencies (NILA 2001).

As a practical manifestation of the government's preparedness to embrace globalization, public enterprises, which are estimated to be over 1,000 have either undergone full or partial privatization. According to President Obasanjo (2000:2), the privatization of the Nigerian economy is unavoidable. As he put it:

We are privatizing for the benefit of our economic recovery and our social life. We want to remove the financial burden, which these enterprises constitute on the public and release resources for the essential functions of government.

Thus, numerous State-Owned Enterprises (SOES) have undergone various stages of privatization and commercialization. Notable among them are NEPA, NITEL, Cement companies and others. The implication of this policy is that Nigerians have had to pay more for the services rendered by these enterprises thereby exacerbating the poverty situation in the country (The Comet, August 1, 2002:2).

The justification for the exercise as given by President Obasanjo is based on the premise that privatization will improve micro-economic efficiency and at the same time enhance macro-economic growth. It should be noted however, that even though private sector declares huge surpluses, such surpluses are not necessarily indications of efficiency but are rather due to the incidence of natural monopolies (Ochogwu, 2003:10-12).

Similarly, the government has embarked on the deregulation/liberalization of the economy as manifested in the deregulation of the petroleum sector. Deregulation is also

pseudonym for price increase and since the adoption of the policy in 2001, the prices of petrol, diesel and kerosene which stood at N22.00, N21.00 and N17.00 respectively is now sold for N50.70, N58.50 and N52.60 per litre of petrol, diesel and kerosene respectively (The Punch May 30, 2004).

Expectedly, the implementation of the globalization policies by the Obasanjo administration has impacted negatively on the living standard of Nigerians. Every increase in petroleum price, communication systems and electricity is often accompanied by a general rise in market prices with multiplier effects on the goods produced and services provided. For instance, the rise in price of Garri, adjudged as the "poor man's food" becomes much more frightening. A kongo of Garri sold for N10.00 in 2001, as risen to N60.00. Similarly, prices of rice, beans, yams, and ingredients etc. have gone beyond the reach of many families. In addition, these policies led to increase on operation cost of most businesses thereby putting pressure on business operators to source for more funds. In some cases, the new capital needs might be large enough to put the company out of business if alternative lines of funding are not available. This as made it difficult for some industries to operate at full capacity and in some cases some industries have had to close down. A corollary to the above is the likely increase in unemployment. Already the country is saturated with jobless graduate roaming about the streets (Sunday Vanguard, December 23, 2001, the Punch June 7, 2004).

The situation of unemployment mentioned above will breed poverty. According to Adedeji (in Sunday Vanguard December 23, 2001:14), a United Nations report which focuses on poverty shows that 48.5%, that is roughly 55 million Nigerians are living below poverty level as at 1988. By the year 2001, the World Bank estimate is that close to two-thirds (2/3) of Nigeria are living below poverty level; that is almost seventy (70) million people. When there is poverty people will want to look for prosperity at all costs. At this point, there would be no conscience. The souls would have been sold to the devil. And the next thing is to venture into any thing to make money like taking to political thugery, ritual killing, political assassination, armed robbery etc.

Poverty breeds illiteracy, illiteracy and democracy are incompatible. Because of poverty, a lot of people withdrew their children from school and then knowledge breaks. Professor Adebayo Adedeji, former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa observes that illiteracy is one of the factors that complicate our unity and stability because according to him, illiterates are excluded from important things going on in the polity. He opined that half of our population are excluded from the flow of information and they do not what is going on except the occasional vernacular radio programme that they listen to. He asserted that if we must have sustainable democracy it must be participatory and for it to be participatory, the citizens must be educated. Unfortunately, majority of Nigerians are wallowing in abject poverty occasioned by the globalization related policies of deregulation and privatization. This has promote high level of illiteracy with its attendant negative consequences in our nascent democracy (see Sunday Vanguard, December 23, 2001:14, Tell September 17, 2001:23).

It should also be noted that pauperization breed discontent and socio-political upheavals, thereby questioning the legitimacy of the states, at the same time that inter and intra class conflicts and struggles in the sphere of accumulation gave justification for military coup and counter-coup detats which for instance ended abruptly the democratic government of the Second Republic. Presently, there are ominous signs that the current democratic dispensation (Fourth Republic) may be met with similar fate. The so-called security breach (attempted coup detat) announced by the federal government recently and the Mass Action planned by the Nigeria Labour Congress to protest the current increase in petroleum prices slated for Wednesday, June 9, 2004 which is expected to last for 21 days in the first instance as stated by the NLC and other civil society groups are signs of discontent that are inimical to sustainable democracy. And as Vice-President Atiku Abubakar rightly observed, NLC's planned Mass Action is a threat to democracy as according to him, the strike if allowed to take place will have negative effect on the economy and our efforts to consolidate democracy (see daily

Sketch, March 13, 2001:2-7, daily Independent June 4, 2001:1-2. The Punch June 7, 2004).

Also, the pursuit of deregulation policy under the civilian regime has further made the Nigerian masses become more vulnerable economically. This is because the government now finds it difficult in most cases to meet the genuine demands of the governed on many issues of national urgency such as the hike in the prices of petroleum and related products and its attendant crippling national strikes by the Nigerian workers between 2000 and 2003 (Daily Champion, 2003).

The inability of the government to cater for the citizenry as a priority is a challenge of globalization on the economy which is inimical to democratic consolidation. The reality in Nigeria today is that globalization has made it immensely difficult for government to provide social insurance – one of the central functions and one that has helped many developed nations maintain social cohesion and political support. The worsening economic situation in Nigeria occasioned by globalization policies such as trade liberalization, deregulation, privatization and commercialization of government companies is threatening the survival of the nascent democracy. This is because democracy will become meaningless without economic and social rights. It means nothing to people who cannot eat properly, have access to a minimum of decent health care. This position is not unconnected with the general assumption that democracy must necessarily bring out better life. Jerry Gana, a former Minister of Information under Obasanjo's first tenure also buttressed this position when he lamented that:

*You know the mentality of our people
if democracy does not produce clean
water, if democracy does not produce
good roads, transform agriculture
cultivate industrial development
sanitize society, give us power supply
democracy will lose credibility and they
may say and democracy we go chop?
(The Punch 2001).*

• The caveat is that where democratic processes do not yield economic returns, a regression to dictatorship cannot be ruled out. This point is clearly stated by Larry Diamond thus:

*Many new democracies in Latin
America, Eastern Europe, Asia and
Africa will probably breakdown in the
long run unless they can reduce their
often appealing levels of poverty,
inequality and social injustice (Larry
Diamond, cited in Ojo 1999).*

Conclusion

Defined as the universalization of capitalism or full and extensive integration into global capitalism, globalization may be good for developed democracies, it is certainly not good for the new or emerging democracies such as Nigeria.

The market fundamentalist policies thrust upon Africa by the Bretton Woods institutions and enthusiastically embraced by the Obasanjo's regime as panacea to Nigeria's economic woes ended up worsening the Nigerian condition. The "dividends" of the IMF policies, till date, remain the deepening poverty and social and political upheavals for a country that is potentially too rich to be poor. Among the doctrinal thrust of the new globalization are trade liberalization, minimal government and a free reign of market forces. When these are in place free market economists tell us, the foundation for prosperity of nations would have been laid. On the contrary, however, the lesions of history are quite different and Nigerian leaders must be willing to learn them fast. All developed nations at some point of their journey to economic development and democratic stability adopted protectionist policies of some sort and Nigeria should not be different (Aaron 2001:29). Herman (1999:4-5) was substantially right when he observed that:

*The claim of the proponent of globalization
that free trade is the route to economic
growth (and political stability) is also
confuted by longer historic experience: no
country, past or present, has taken into*

sustained economic growth and moved from economic backwardness to modernity without large scale government protection and subsidization of infant industries and other modes of insulation from domination by powerful outsiders. This includes Japan, Germany, South-Korea and Taiwan, all highly protectionist in their earlier take off phases of their growth process.

Even till date, some of these countries still subsidize agricultural production and adopt protectionist policies for some sector of their economies. The recent row on the United States protectionist policy on Chinese steel is a case in point. What this suggests is that Africa in general and Nigerian government in particular must take the globalization sermon on deregulation, trade, liberalization, reduction in public spending, privatization and commercialization of state owned enterprises (SOES) etc. with a pinch of salt. For imprudent globalization, Rugumamu (2000:56) notes, is likely to create problems of balance of payment, revenue losses to government, de-industrialization, massive unemployment and poverty. Thus the possibility of a young democracy surviving in an environment characterized by these stifling economic predicament and social decay can hardly be imagined.

The five years of the Obasanjo administration were supposed to be period of genuine transition to democracy, during which we can systematically dismantle all the vestiges and legacies of military rule; create the institutional and other frame works for sustainable democratic governance; begin to satisfy fundamental basic needs of Nigerians; and lay the foundation for sustainable national development premised on democracy and good governance. Unfortunately, none of these has been successfully and satisfactorily carried out (Jega 2003).

The government is more interested in globalization policies that have only succeeded in compounding the socio-economic predicament of Nigerians. The phenomenal growth in the incidence of poverty under this government has created conducive atmosphere, which has effectively nurtured conflict with damaging

consequences. Not only is the incidence of poverty now 70%, the percentage of those classified as core poor has risen to over 30% (see Ijaiya 2003). With hopes dashed, and majority of Nigerians being marginalized economically, crises and conflicts have persisted and sustainable socio-economic development significantly constrained if not totally obstructed, with the result that the foundations of democracy are very feeble and tenuous thus making the task of democratic consolidation very precarious.

Be that as it may, the present democratic government needs to embark on social spending which has reduced drastically as a result of removal of subsidies on agricultural products, petroleum and other items in line with globalization policies. Government must ensure that public service including transportation networks, electricity, water and telecommunication and also health services, and education are provided in reliable and cost-efficient fashion so as to cushion the harmful effect of globalization, provide social and economic security and restore the confidence of the citizenry in democracy.

In conclusion, the federal government should have a rethink and jettison the idea of deregulating petroleum sector as advocated by various commentators on the issue (see Nigeria Tribune March 14, 2004:18, The Punch December 24, 2001:14, Tell January 7, 2002:8 and The New Age, May 30, 2004:2). Thus, what the people need now is democratic dividends in terms of sufficient improvement in living standard and not acute poverty will all it anti-social ills. We need to sustain this nascent democracy and the sustainability of the peace in the polity. Unfortunately, the government is seemingly determined to go ahead with the unpopular policies and this will further heat up the economy and the polity. One only hope that the federal government will turn away from this perilous cause they have chosen. Already, Nigeria nascent democracy is been pampered now so as not to lose it. And a pampered child is doomed. Democracy is at great risk where there is a grinding poverty.

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THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW AGENDA AND THE CHANGING WORLD

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Introduction

The UN represents the collective effort of the international community to prevent the outbreak of a war of the magnitude of World War I and II. Its formation drew heavy inspiration from the League of Nations Project. The failure of the League to prevent the Second World War rendered it undesirable. The new efforts spearheaded by the Allied Powers in the Second World War led to the formation of the United Nations in San Francisco, USA in 1945.

The central aim of the UN, like the League of Nations, is the preservation of world peace. Also as envisaged in the League Project, collective security is the platform through which it seeks to preserve world peace. In its original formulation, the principle of collective security is expected to operate on the premise that an attack on any member of the world body will be considered a collective attack on all other members. Therefore, it must be repulsed. The power to determine which attack poses a threat to international peace and the appropriate steps to take to redress it rests with the Security Council. The Council decides on security cases based on the expert advice it receives from the Military Staff Committee composed of military experts from a handful of influential countries. Another dimension to this is that the Security Council too has the mandate of the member states to determine the point at which internal crisis poses a threat to the world community. After determination, the Council is statutorily mandated to take its decision on intervention on the basis of a request made by a recognizable authority or authorities in the affected nation. Thus, the UN was