

Globalisation Dimensions and Community Development: the Case of Uganda

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Abstract. *This paper addresses the contradictory trends in economic development programmes that are merging up the rich and poor countries of the world today into one global village. The development trends of the developed world appear to be top-down. Compared to the trends in the developing world, where the rural community dominates, development plans and strategies are down-top and sometimes these have been described by the developed countries as being traditional and backward. Taking cognizance of this irony, this paper examines globalization with the view to pave ways for identification of new solutions for the development of the third world.*

Keywords: Globalisation, Third world, Economic development.

Introduction

This paper discusses two aspects; globalization and community development. The role of globalization in aiding the development of developing countries has been very much accredited by the western partners in development. This is however questionable when it comes to community or rural development. The situation on the ground does not seem to measuring up to the expectations. Rural communities of the developing world and Uganda in particular are still infested with high rate of poverty, poor infrastructure and poor service delivery. The dream to achieve well-being is still at stake.

Globalisation and Community Development

First of all, development is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. According to Todaro (1992:100-102), the three core values of development are; life-sustenance, self-esteem and freedom from servitude. The definition of development by Todaro overlaps the narrow understanding of development just to mean 'economic growth'. I can perceive the manifestation of these core values of development as being more practical in rural areas than in the urban settings. The core values of development are relatively similar to the definition of community development being, the goal of community people aiming to achieve, through collective effort, a better life, and occurred throughout history. Globalization on the other hand, meant to be the new pattern of development in which both the developed and the developing countries are going to be stakeholders, may not be beneficial

to the majority poor of the inhabitants in a developing country such as Uganda.

Integration of both the developed and developing countries would mean the improvement on the quality of life of the people on either side. This has also been examined by Wolf, M. (2004) who observed that, a world integrated through the market should be highly beneficial to the vast majority of the world inhabitants. In the search for truth, let's look at the two things that are happening between the developed countries and the developing ones. It is assumed that development is moving from the developed nations to the poor ones. This is an imaginary perception since it is from the developing countries where community development is prevalent, by now poverty in should have been reduced remarkably. To the acknowledgeable global citizen, such disparate views are a cause of some confusion and concern. This was also observed in the international forum on Globalisation, in Goldin et.al (2007) that, while promoters of globalization proclaim that this model is the rising tide that will lift all boats, citizen movements find that it is instead lifting only yachts.

Is Globalization a New Form of Community Development?

In popular accounts, globalization is a recent phenomenon while poverty has deep historical roots overtime. Ordinary changes of values between and among ethnic groups do not measure up to globalization prospects. To answer this question, this paper investigates on where the effects of globalization have an impact. This was done by looking at economic dimensions and the dimensions of poverty.

Economic Dimensions

At a broad level, globalization is an increase in the impact on human activities of forces that span national boundaries. These activities can be economic, social, cultural, political, technological/or even biological, as in the case of disease. For example, HIV/AIDS is a biological phenomenon, but it affects and is affected by economic, social, cultural, political and technological forces at global, regional, national and community levels (Goldin & Reinert, 2007).

On looking at trade, finance, aid, migration and ideas as economic dimensions, this paper establishes ownership of these factors and the dilemma they impose on the developing countries such as Uganda. In terms of trade, there is an influx of goods from the developed world into the developing world. Some of these goods are sub-standard but they

have to be dumped here to give room for other manufactured goods in the west. Financially the Uganda shilling has less value as compared to American dollar, Pound sterling or Euro etc. This reduces Uganda's capacity, and any other developing country to compete in the world market. Aid involves the transfer of loans and grants among countries, as well as technological assistance for capacity building. But this is one sided. It is only the developed countries which are able to donate. Developing countries have almost nothing to donate in return. Migration takes place when persons move between countries either temporarily or permanently, to seek education and employment or to escape adverse political environments. In as far as migration is concerned, citizens from Uganda, or any other developing world are curtailed from participating in this migration because of poverty and such status that requires one to move across boards, even within Africa, for example. It is only the rich people and their familyhoods that can. There are also strict migration laws coupled with expensive costs to acquire passports.

Ideas are said to be the broadest globalization phenomenon. They involve the generation and cross boarder transmission of intellectual contracts such as technology, management, or governance. This idea phenomenon is still very lacking in the developing world, Africa in particular. In as far as economic dimensions are concerned, the rural poor majority people are not part of it. When we talk about rural development programmes, they are temporal and they don't cover the whole country such as Uganda.

Dimensions of Poverty

The notion of poverty is not as straight forward as it would appear in everybody's own perception. The word poverty is normative and multi-dimensional. Because of this, a number of different concepts and measures of poverty relate to its various dimensions. Hence, poverty in one place may not be poverty in another. According to Goldin & Reinert (2007), the measures of poverty we consider here are those that encompass; income, health, education, empowerment and working conditions. The dimensions of poverty are linked to the other economic dimensions, trade, finance, aid, migration and ideas. The linkages are illustrated below; without income, neither a nation nor community households cannot be involved in trade as the financial status becomes very poor resulting into lack of purchasing power and generally poor financial status that erodes on the wellbeing of people, creating total vulnerability. The background to one's education depends on the family

financial status. The working conditions are related to employment and unemployment.

Critically examining the two, economic dimension and poverty dimensions, they impact negatively in the developing world. As a result of this it puts and narrows development to only a few people. Entirely, globalization emphasises trade at international level which has no connotation with community development at all. Probably it would be necessary to establish how a nation's being part and parcel of globalization benefits the local communities. African communities are heterogeneous and Uganda in particular, has over sixty two different tribes. It means that every community has different traditional development framework.

Globalisation and Community Development as Opposing Forces

Globalization is alleged to be a western instrument of control over developing states, Africa in particular, whose strategy is to deprive Africa of resources. If this is true, then it is more of political than a social approach to development, completely different from the community approach to social development. This assumption has also been observed by Lubega (2005) as regional governmental arrangements (processes) to deprive the country of her self-determination and territorial control. They also use 'regionalism' as a globalisation process/empire building against 'statism' (national sovereignty)---.This is a clear indication that globalization has its roots in the developed world which includes United States of America, Great Britain and the entire Europe. Lubega also pointed out that this process involves the use of violence by western dominance sanctioned by legal, administrative, and monetary policy measures to replace national sovereignty. As we are all aware, sovereignty is build out of traditional norms and values, so tampering with it, means disorganizing the communities which are the nucleus of national economic development. This further means that globalization does not support cultural values as a foundation for community development. It contravenes with the definition of community development itself whose foundation is laid upon collective effort to achieve wellbeing.

Little has been recognized from African culture. It is another indicator that the western model of development is biased. Other observation of this kind has been made by Handleman, H. (2009) that, critics of globalization, especially on the left, sees its impact completely differently. They see it as a force that has imposed greater Western

economic control and cultural dominance on the Third World. This also confirms the allegations made by Lubega (2005).

Global Dynamics and Cultural Traditional Norms and Values

Global dynamics are the instruments upon which globalisation revolves. The outcome of this investigation reveals that capitalism, urbanization, formal education, technology and government policies and programmes are global dynamics. Global dynamics are overwhelming socialism. Socialism is characteristic of African traditional culture—a collective and socializing way of networking of the community members. Global dynamics propagates individualism, while cultural norms and values encourage collectiveness/togetherness in handling community problems. The major dynamics from cultural norms and values is that, for example capitalism keeps individuals or households far apart from each other. While cultural norms and values keeps individuals or households attached together.

This paper exposes households attached together in form of carrying out their activities and understanding. Uncompromising factors between global dynamics and cultural values and norms to be affecting community development to-day.

There is in fact a mistaken perception that the role of global dynamics in transforming society is the modernisation that is being talked about today. This misconception is deep rooted into the serious criticisms against the African culture by the western scholars of social development. Some of these negative views on African culture are as follows; Moncriffe, (2004) discussed that African culture is static and discriminatory, and that African cultures have obstructed constructive engagement, characterized regressive and tribal and backward. Views from the modernization theorists particularly those carrying out the view that did not support modern economic development believed that traditional cultures and languages of the third world be allowed to die naturally (Ojameruaye, (2004).

This negative attitude and slamming of African is historical as it started as early as the sixteenth century or even before. Some stated that Africans were not able to think logically (Hegel, 1770). He came to this conclusion after he argued that culture was a manifestation of **human** mind, and basing on simply what European explorers had reported that there was relationship between the African culture and Europe. In his conclusion Hegel noted that Africans did not have a history and originality which would be the purpose and the point stand upon which they would develop. Contrary to these allegations on the African

culture, some of these views were rejected and it was assumed from different circles that there may be some aspects of indigenous cultures that were quite supportive of modern economic development.

Misconceived Perception on African Culture and Development

It must have been because of the pre-misconception and biasness on African traditional cultural norms and values as widely discussed and reported that any attempt to integrate Africa in international development became hesitant. But as reported by Africanus; Harton, 1868 in Makumba (2005), both the role of Africa in the shaping of world history and the unmistakable African roots of some of the respected minds in history. His research confirms that, "pilgrimages were made to Africa in search of knowledge by such eminent as Salon Platto, Pythagoras; and several came to listen to the instructions of African Eucide, who was the head of the most celebrated mathematical school in the world and flourished 300 years before the birth of Christ...Origen, Tertullian, Augustine, Clemens Alexadrinus and Cryll who were fathers and writers of the primitive church, were tawny African bishops of Apostolic renown". This observation serves to disprove further the allegations, and accusations made by the western development scholars against the African traditional culture.

This paper notes that there is nothing wrong with traditional culture, and there is no society that has ever existed without a culture. Even those who migrated to other lands developed their own traditional culture upon which they lived overtime. For example, the fore fathers of the Americans in the United States of America to-day, came from Europe. But the culture of the Americans is not exactly the same as the culture in Europe, or Britain in particular. Elsewhere in the world, Britain and Canada have remained with traditional culture but they have developed. In the Far East, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and South Korea have moved towards achieving a developed status, but they have not abandoned their traditional culture. Others Australia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, etc.

As a result of the misconceived perception on African traditional culture, colonialism came to Africa with already pre-arranged strategy to give Africa another form of culture. This colonial transformation ranged right from religion, art crafts/artefacts to cultural practices and many others. At the time of the decolonization process, the palamboras in the United States accepted that indeed third world could be allowed to get their sovereignty. But they were to be shown a direction to follow, whether to go East or West. In other words, toe embrace

capitalism or socialism, of course, embracing capitalism meant following and paying allegiance to United States of America and Britain or the entire Europe that perpetrators of this ideology follow and socialism likewise. These are some of the colonial factors that dehumanized African traditional culture and deviated the path of development. Kwame Nkrumah associates this scenario with our history when he observed that, “we have acquired cultural differences, which affect our outlay condition over political development. All this is inevitable, due to our historical background.”

Features of African Culture that Support Community Development

Africans are known to have been social as from the beginning of their existence. This social solidarity and nature of living have made them interact and live together; challenging situations that tend to befall them in their effort to achieve wellbeing. According to (Mawa, 2010:32), solidarity as a value and principle of inter-human relationship is known to all societies whether traditional or modern. Solidarity in Africa is as old as the African societies are known to have existed. In this elementary level, it is an experience of unity in people’s interaction with the whole of nature. This experience is social, religious, ethical, and organizational or institutional. All aspects of nature of this unity are linked to each other and to their ontological basis as if it were one single whole.

Tempels (1945) referred to this natural strength of bondage as the “vital force”. According to Tempels, this vital force can be increased or diminished; that one’s force or life can be reinforced, made strong or powerful, or can be affected.

African social solidarity is the basis for social capital. It characterizes itself in many forms and activities that if properly harnessed, can contribute for wellbeing and community development. If it is neglected or abandoned, a state of poverty and fiasco can engulf the society. For example, among the Japadhola in Eastern Uganda, this paper notes that there existed traditional forms of social solidarity such as community work, group work, community meetings, financial remittance, and food security. These traditional forms of social solidarity enhanced wellbeing and community development within the Japadhola society. Since African culture cuts across most of all African ethnic groups, this element of social solidarity is characteristic of all African people. African solidarity enabled the people to recognize the importance of community living. In community living everybody is a worker as described by Nyerere (1968). Solidarity is also a form of socialism that catered for the

ill-being and wellbeing of every member of the community. It nurtures a society free of nepotism, selfishness, individualism and sectarianism. These ills destroy the structure of the traditional society making it a capitalist society.

Effects of Global Dynamics on Traditional Forms of Social Solidarity

Traditional forms of social solidarity have been a vital force that brought people together in carrying out community activities whose outcome was for the good of all members of the society. Through the assessment made by this paper it notes that global dynamics have tampered with the traditional framework of community development. In other words, traditional forms of social solidarity are no longer strong as they used to be. The social bondage, networks and social relations that existed before are no longer applicable to-day. The traditional structure of socialism is vanishing away. People have become selfish and individualistic. For example, although it was common for households to work separately on their plot, it was not rare for a collection of different households...to work together by rotating turns to work collectively on the respective household plots (Masolo, 1995).

In our estimation, these social organisations guarantee not only “a system of mutual or inter-dependent social security” (Masolo, 1995); they also serve as vehicles for individual participation and community service for less advantaged persons. But this kind of community spirit of uniting to build and rebuild society and to ensure the wellbeing of its members has completely stopped. Instead people have embraced the individualistic, self-styled way of living. This has undermined community development.

Conclusion

The paper recognizes the role of global dimensions, and globalization in general for the purposes for which it was formed. The paper also decries the short falls it has caused in the development of communities of the developing world, Uganda in particular. There is no direct connection of global dynamics with the local communities. They are supportive to development at international level. But their negative effects impact badly on the local communities. Poverty and ill-being in local communities has increased capitalism and killed the traditional framework of community development which united people to work together for the good of all.

Without reservations, some recommendations have been made to this effect, and they are as follows;

1. Since globalization addresses international businesses only, there is need for government to make analysis between national and community development in order to address the impacts of globalization on community development.
2. Since globalization is a new phenomenon especially to the developing world, abandoning traditional community development framework in development also affects the national economic development. So, marrying it with traditional community development framework would help steer forward both the national and community development.
3. Translation of global dimensions, transforming them into community development strategies would be much more understandable. This would relieve it from world-wide criticism of its origin from the developed world.

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