Globalisation (2005)

Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the interface between globalisation and democratisation in Nigeria. While there are divergent views between the two, the paper argues that global interconnectedness has engendered the global upsurge and spread of democracy in several ways. The experience in Nigeria has been ambivalent. Thus the impact of globalisation on democratisation in the country is examined within the dialectical frameworks of opposite poles. While in several instances, globalisation has led to the adoption of many neo-liberal economic and political policies; its impact on the country’s democratisation processes has been dismal. Worse still the country has joined the global network without adequate preparations. Thus, globalisation has generated so much discontent. The paper argues that Nigeria has much to gain in the global network but concerted effort must be made to transform all its civic and democratic institutions as it would help in sustaining the current democratisation as well as contain the discontents of hyper globalisation.

Introduction

Discussions among theorists of globalisation and democracy have converged on a number of key issues: democratic decision-making process within political institutions; people are becoming generally affected by economic, cultural, environmental factors that are beyond their borders and shores; and people are losing the ability to participate in decision-making (Cunningham 2003). Despite this seemingly perceived theoretical unity, it is abundantly clear that
Globalisation presents mix results on the democratisation process in both developing and developed countries. For instance Ake (1997:285) observes that globalisation is ‘rendering democracy irrelevant and in this it poses the most serious threat yet in the history of democracy.’ Conversely, Beck (2000:11) opines that globalisation ‘creates trans-national solid links and spaces, revalues local cultures and promotes third cultures’ that are good for the rapid spread of democratic values and orientations. These two opposing views have dominated the debate over the relationships between globalisation and democratisation. This is especially true when globalisation is treated as independent variable and democracy as dependent variable.

This paper examines the impact of globalisation on democratisation processes in Nigeria. To achieve this, the paper first reviews theoretical arguments concerning the convergence between globalisation and democratisation. This is necessary in order to provide a theoretical foundation to students of democracy and globalisation towards understanding the impacts of globalisation on democratisation in Nigeria. The two sides of the arguments are briefly examined. The opposing arguments are simultaneously followed and where possible examples were provided in how globalisation has continued to engender or hamper democratisation in Nigeria. The paper finally offers some recommendations in how Nigeria could further benefit from her membership in the global networks.

**Understanding the Links Between Globalisation and Democratisation**

Globalisation is a highly contested term. It is a very complex process that can be understood in different perspectives: economic, political and cultural. Globalisation is a deeply differentiated phenomenon that embeds continuous processes and pattern of interaction in diverse areas of human activities – economic, social, political, cultural, military, environmental and citizenship, and through these web of activities, nation-states, societies, international institutions, NGOs, multinational corporations are linked and networking together towards achieving their objectives. As a result Held *et al* (1999:27) perceives globalisation, as ‘akin to a process of “structuration” in so far as it is a product of both the individual actions of, and the cumulative interactions between, countless agencies and institutions across the globe.’ Indeed, the impact of globalisation differs in degree and scope from one society to another. Originally, the idea of globalisation stems from the historically rapid integration of the world through the development of communication technologies and the ascendancy of international capitalism. For instance, Cunningham (2003) maintains that globalisation has three overlapping dimensions: ethical, politico-economic, and cultural. The ethical dimension is concerned with the question of citizenship in the international laws. The politico-economic deals with trans-nationalisation of capitalist market forces in which there is a global interconnectedness in trade and commerce. These dimensions mean that globalisation as with democracy has never been given any fixed and globally acknowledged conceptualisation.
Globalisation has simply become a buzzword denoting many things to many people. Moreover, since the beginning of the much stated waves of democracy across the world – from southern Europe to Eastern Europe, from south Asia to Latin America and down to Africa, students of democratisation began to establish the links between globalisation and democratisation. It is important to note that *democratisation in itself is globalisation*. It is globalisation because it accentuated the transformation of a global political economy in which hitherto closed economies dictated by authoritarian regimes were brought into a mutual interdependence through economic and political interconnectedness. In similar perspective, McGrew *et al* (1992:23) refer to globalisation as the ‘multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between the states and societies which make up the modern world system. It describes the process by which events, decisions and activities in one part of the world can come to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe.’

Held (2000:2) observes that globalisation entails two phenomenal issues: first it entails networks of political, economic and social activities that are becoming interregional and intercontinental in scope. Second it entails a more intensification of degree of interaction between states and societies. The intensification and interconnectedness of states and societies especially from late 1990s have been conditioned by the rapid development of communication technologies and the sophistication of the international capitalism. The globalisation of capitalist forces through the activities of multinational corporations, the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organisation, UN, other international organisations (bilateral and multilateral) and even relations between developed economies and underdeveloped ones have invariably made it relatively easier for the spread of democracy. Democracy is the system of governance through which smooth, effective, efficient and harmonious global interaction is possible. In this context Held (2000:2) defines globalisation as a spatial phenomenon, lying on a continuum with ‘the local’ at one end and “the global” at the other. It denotes a shift in the spatial form of human organisation and activity to transcontinental or interregional patterns of activity, interaction and the exercise of power. It involves a stretching and deepening of social relations and institutions across space and time such that, on the one hand, day-to-day activities are increasingly influenced by events happening on the other side of the globe and, on the other, the practices and decisions of local groups or communities can have significant global reverberations.

Indeed globalisation could be conceived as integration of societies along various human endeavours in which hitherto sharp differences are now being bridged. The phenomenal global integration has made some scholars to express scepticism about global upsurge of democracy and to warn of a serious paradox. For example Held (1997:251) believes that:

There is a striking paradox to note regarding the contemporary
Indeed, one would concur that globalisation is rendering the efficacy of state sovereignty rather irrelevant but absolutely one must be cautious in over-stretching the idea of loosening efficacy of democracy. This is perhaps because of the fact that global interactions in economic and political spheres have predated the modern system and pattern of globalisation. And as long as states continue to participate in such interactions, they certainly would continue to lose substantial degree of their autonomy. The traditional rule of international politics is that international conventions, treaties and resolutions bind states. Although one may argue that economic and military powers are important determinants of states interaction. But irrespective of these power potentials, the degree of sovereignty would continue to be questioned through the traditional interactions.

Moreover, contemporary waves of democratisation are one of the several consequences of globalisation. Explaining globalisation and democratisation as a cause-effect relationship makes the argument of economic pre-condition thesis of democracy very important. Today there seems to be a common understanding that there is an extensive trade, finance and production relations amongst societies. These global politico-economic networks have made economic and political liberalisation relatively easier. Thus the global politico-economic liberalisation has according to Grugel (2002:117-119) links with democratisation in some pertinent ways: first, it establishes the ascendancy and authority of western capitalism over the developing world, thereby reducing their politico-economic options. Through repeated interactions developing societies and former communist societies are continuously subjected to political aid conditionality. These societies are webbed into a particular development strategy in which only ‘liberal democracy’ and economic openness are the way forward. No wonder therefore that the world witnessed the growth of democracy in such an unpredictable number. Democratisation has consequently become a process of continual hegemony of developed countries over the developing ones. Secondly, globalisation encourages democratisation because economic liberalisation in form of trade creates a free global market that facilitates new form of citizenship, middle class and civil society, which classical democracy theorists contend to be engines of democratisation. Liberalisation led to political changes and reforms in several states and it also usually affects the capacity and capability of autocratic regime through formal and informal reduction of its financial base and empowering the dissenting groups. Liberalisation in this way leads to democratisation.

Conversely, the politico-economic global networks have influenced in disgust the rapid development of democracy in several countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The effects of liberalisation have continuously weakened the political spirit of states, weakened the economic potentialities of people, as well
as exclude the poor from political and economic participation, making them impotent in the democratisation process. Globalisation has contributed to the global polarisation of states. It widens the North-South divide. Developed states have continued to be rich and the developing countries have continued to be poor as well.\textsuperscript{1} Similarly, students of the dependency school such as Frank (1969) maintains that globalisation in the form of the activities of international capitalism is responsible for non-democratisation of developing countries. They argue that through the international connectiveness and interactions, developing countries have been robbed up of their economic resources and development potentials by the developed states, thereby rendering them absolutely paralysed for any meaningful democratisation.\textsuperscript{2} The dependency school has grossly underestimated the domestic/internal variables, which are very important in explaining democratisation. The internal dynamics of these states have certainly preceded the contemporary global interactions, which are seemingly affecting their democratic transformation.

The global wave of democratisation, which has been affected by international forces, according to Schwartzman (1998:160-161) heralded a paradigm shift in the contemporary scholarship of democracy. The wave was quite staggering in that it includes countries with more than half a century of non-democratic rule and some that had substantial democratic interludes; it includes countries that suddenly obstruct their traditional authoritarian regimes, populist dictatorship and bureaucratic ones, and also comprises those that took radical measures, like assassination, dismantling of symbols of authoritarianism, and radical uprising against military and in some instances military relinquishing power honourably. In view of this staggeringly wide spread of democracy Schwartzman among others, linked the democratisation phenomenon with contemporary globalisation. Accordingly, he examined several ways in which globalisation impacted on democracy. He maintained that the volume of analysis of global linkages have presented a \textit{prima facie} evidence that connotes that contemporary democratisations are not isolated, coincidental nor randomly distributed in time and space. Thus, the global factors of democratisation could be classified into six, \textit{inter alia}:

1. Favourable international climate: this means that democratisation in one country leads to democratisation in another. Huntington (1991:33-36) calls this snowballing effect, where a favourable global atmosphere led to a diffusion of democratic ideas, through the expansion of global communication and transportation (e.g. satellites, computers, faxes, etc.). The spread of democracy in eastern and southern Europe following the collapse of socialist command political economy is good example. Unfortunately this factor neglects the role of other equally important factors, such as economic, social and political factors, which are global and local in perspectives. However, this affected Nigeria’s drive toward democratisation. The military has been subjected to internal and external condemnation. The situation continued to impact on the already eroding legitimacy of the military regimes.

2. Global industrialisation and development: this perspective stresses the significance of global economic development as promoting global
Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

democratisation. The triumph of international capitalism has eliminated the growth of pre-capitalist niches and led to capital-intensive technological production. Schwartzman (1998) calls this a ‘convergence’, because the pre-existing differences between industrialised and non-industrialised societies are disappearing. Put differently, global industrialisation led to the growth of professional, middle and working classes, which are agents of democratisation. Although, all these global factors carry weight in the analysis of globalisation and democratisation, it is vital to note that these plethoras of factors actually have widened the gap between the rich and the poor in developing countries. The current degree of poverty is an empirical illustration that undermines the positivists’ claim of globalisation bringing in convergence for democratisation. In most of these societies, the percentage of poor people has continued to rise; social services are degenerating by the day and consequently democratic credentials are losing moral support. Also one can argue that the perceived gains of international capitalism are yet to bring democracy to Middle East, which further questioned the viability of the argument of global capital. Although, it could still be argued that the Middle Eastern countries are heavily dependent on economic resource (oil) and not particularly well integrated into the global economy.

3. Global shock: Schwartzman (1998) argues that global shocks have contributed to democratisation by creating legitimacy crises in authoritarian regimes. Global shocks include the 1929 world depression, which triggered the fall of oligarchic regimes in Latin America and the 1973 and 1979 oil crises. The former heralded democratisation in the Philippines, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Brazil and Uruguay, while the latter according to Huntington (1991:51) fuelled the Third Wave and in some countries such as United States, France, Canada, West Germany, ruling parties lost elections.

Similarly, Frieden (1991:63) argues that the 1980s debt crisis was one of these shocks that caused legitimacy crises and the subsequent collapse of autocratic regimes in several developing countries, especially in the Latin America. Against this background, if global shocks in economic recession (oil price crisis and depression), could fuel re-democratisation in other countries, certainly one should equally anticipate that oil price windfall during the 1970s should boost democratisation process in oil producing states. In Nigeria and other oil producing states, especially the Middle East, the situation only accelerated dominance and consolidation of autocratic and dictatorial regimes. Although, the oil boom period coincided with civil war in Nigeria, the proceeds were used to fund the war. The military also used oil proceeds to silence dissenting voices and continue the political prosecution. The 1980s economic problems, which could not be addressed by the democratic regime at the time, led to a military coup in December 1983, which was highly welcomed by the people. The military controlled power until May 1999. Global shocks seemed relevant to only to countries where democracy was duly entrenched.

4. Foreign intervention: direct and indirect foreign interventions have contributed for democratisation in several countries. Currently, the political conditionality attached to the provision of aid is an example of direct foreign
intervention. The U.S., Japan, and other European democracies are quite prominent in the provision of 'conditional aid'. Schwartzman (1998:170) stresses that 'in 1991 and 1992, the US and the Paris club declared a moratorium on aid to Kenya and Malawi pending the implementation of political reforms such as multiparty democracy, cessation of politically motivated torture and imprisonment and the like.' Similarly, Roquie (1996:126) observes that 'the hemispheric policy of successive US administrations – the alternation after 1914 between anti-communist vigilance and democratizing preoccupations – imparts a rhythm to the phases of autocracy and the waves of demilitarisation.‘ Today, many international organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, London club and Paris club, OECD, DfID, have joined the bandwagon of conditional aid provision to institutionalise political reforms in developing countries. However, more often than not countries that receive aid do not adhere strictly to the conditions and there is no way to determine the extent to which recipient nations are actually implementing the aid conditions. Another line of argument is that aid is usually siphoned into the private accounts of leaders and used to corrupt regimes.

5. Shifting global hegemony: this factor is nevertheless related to the above. It emphasises the global impact on democratisation in terms of a shift of economic and political hegemony from one international power to another. The process of the shifts is expected to trigger democratisation in some countries. Perhaps due to global interconnection that bound countries together. For instance, Wallerstein (1991) argues that the collapse of communist bloc was never a result of triumph of western democracy, but a consequence of the decline of United States' hegemony, thereby allowing the USSR to maintain monopoly over communist bloc. On the other hand, the US economy was challenged by economic developments in Japan and Germany, which resulted in the collapse of its economic and political hegemony. This ultimately led to the spread of democracy to other angles of the world. One would agree that the world has witnessed the emergence of more capitalist societies with the growth of Japan and German economies though there has not been any power shift in the world economic order. United States is still a power to be reckoned with in international political and economic matters. Perhaps, Japan and recently the formation of regional blocs such as European Union could be a check on the perceived US excesses in international issues. One can thus contend that the universal trend toward regional organisations help in contemporary democratisation. For example, any member of such organisation would face penalties for undemocratic attitudes, as democratisation is a pre-condition for membership.

Viewing the shifting global hegemony differently, Schwartzman (1998:173-174) contends that it gave rise to new capitalist class and led to urban migration and proletarianisation of a section of the peasantry. As a result, it increases the level of class conflict. These transformations bred new pro-democracy coalition, which mark the beginning of democratisation in many societies, such as Portugal.

6. World-system cycles: this model argues on the systemic and cyclical nature
Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

of the international system that has affected global democratisation. The world-system according to Arrighi (1985 cited in Schwartzman), develops through cycles: accumulation (capital accumulation and consolidation) – disintegration. This factor is concerned with the intensification of inter-capitalist competition, which is associated with reorganisation of production and perhaps a shift in hegemonic dominance. For instance, there was a hegemonic shift from Britain to US in 19th century. The Third Wave democratisation has been affected by these changes. Similarly, Bergesen (1992:133-151) argues that economic stagnation and its associated socio-political repercussions forced developing countries to reconstitute their internal political and economic policies in the hope of overcoming the problems of slow growth, inflation, poverty, unemployment and international debt. Through this restructuring, democratisation spread to developing countries.

Finally, based on these six global factors, which have formidably explained the relationships between globalisation and democratisation, Schwartzman (1998:177) notes `class conflict as the social mechanism linking world-system processes to national political dynamics. In this framework, domestic political structures become part of the evolving transnational fabric of economic relations’, which have profound impact on democratisation in developing countries. The factorisation of international impact on democratisation by Schwartzman offers a deterministic approach to understanding globalisation and democratisation. However, the relationship between these two global phenomena is beyond this simple deterministic and yet lineal approach. The factors have not told us the impact, if any, of democratisation on globalisation. Premised on this, Plattner (2002:154) perceives globalisation and democratisation as mutually reinforcing agents with a symbiotic relationship. He therefore notes that `[a]lthough both globalisation and democratisation have long and complex histories, each was greatly accelerated by the collapse of soviet communism in the revolutions of 1989-91. These two trends have been interrelated and, for the most part, mutually reinforcing. That is to say, globalisation has fostered democratisation and democratisation has fostered globalisation.’ To clarify the ambiguity, Plattner (2002:58-61) emphasises that the domination of the world by the international capitalist ideology is more favourable to globalisation than the reverse.

Liberal democracy on the other hand favours the economic arrangements in the form of contemporary free market organisations that engender globalisation. Interestingly, democracy’s central attributes of freedom, liberty and rights to information help in promoting the ‘free’ flow of information and communications that further empowered the development of globalisation. Similarly, globalisation contributes in undermining the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes by exposing their citizens to interactions with other peoples’ ways of lives in the world through information and communication. In this way, it is favourable to democratisation. Despite this interwoven relationship, democracy and globalisation could be at odds with each other. As globalisation tends to eradicate national barriers between societies and dislodge effective decision-making from national level, it simultaneously threatens both authoritarian and democratic regimes. In this sense globalisation becomes inimical and hostile to democratic self-government. For example, the mass demonstration against
Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

WTO, the IMF, UN and the World Bank is a sign of this hostility. In this vein, Barber (2001:275) argues that globalisation is simply a threat to democracy as the success of globalisation in markets, labour, currency and information systems does not extend to civic and democratic institutions. While I do not ascribe to this dogma, I subscribe to Held (1998: 26)’s opinion that in international perspective globalisation has provided a golden opportunity for the creation of cosmopolitan democracy and certainly this led to the spread of democracy to many totalitarian and autocratic regimes. He argues that:

The theory of cosmopolitan democracy is one of the few political theories, which examines systematically the democratic implications of the fact that nation-states are enmeshed today in complex interconnected relations. Our world is a world of overlapping communities of fate, where the fate of one country and that of another are more entwined than the borders of countries and challenge the relevance of those borders in key respects.

Theoretically, the literature on the relationship between globalisation and democratisation could be categorised into competing positions: (a) globalisation promotes democracy (b) globalisation hampers the spread of democracy, and (c) globalisation has no impact on democracy.

The theoretical assumption that globalisation promotes democracy is based on the fact that the former engenders economic development promotes democracy. Free market economy, which is the backbone of globalisation, usually leads to economic growth and development increases the size of the middle class, promotes education, and consequently reduces income inequality, thereby leading to democratisation (Platner, 1993, Weitzman 1993, Bhagwati 1994, Lipset 1994, and Baeg Im 1996). Globalisation also makes necessary demand for international business activities, which need peaceful trading environment. This might have been part of the reasons why foreign investors are keen about security in Third World for their continued investment. This perspective, The International Financial Institutions (IFIs), donor agencies and states always impose political and economic conditionalities for aid to the developing world. Through this process, democracy would ultimately spread to these states because of internal need for aid and international demand for adjustment and political reforms (Kura 2005, Santiso 2001, Waldron 1998).

The effect of this led to another factor: that because of this, the autocratic regimes in developing countries easily lose support and their power steadily erode. They no longer enjoy support from the international system in which their respective countries are unavoidably members. Thus, democratisation simply becomes irresistible (Evans et al 1985). This factor affects the nature of contact of countries in the global system. For example, in view of the magnitude of globalisation, autocratic regimes would no longer have formidable power over the activities of international private and public organisations, as well as the international media. With increasing global networks, the global information agencies such the radio, television, Internet, newspapers and satellites are making information easily accessible to ordinary citizen thereby
inducing democratic ideas that make democratisation reforms absolutely necessary in these countries. In Nigeria today significant number of people in the north prepares to listen to the BBC, and VOA Hausa service than even the local media. This is a fortunate situation, which the autocratic regimes cannot control. On the effect of communication and information, see (Vanhanen 1990, Brunn et al 1991). In similar perspective, globalisation indeed, strengthens the activities of the domestic NGOs and civil society advocating for democratisation, and it leads to appropriate diffusion of democratic ideas and aspirations especially following the Third Wave of democratisation.

The theoretical assumption that globalisation hampers democracy notes that it obstructs the autonomy and sovereignty of states especially in terms of public policies that would positively affect its citizens and strengthen the democratisation processes. This is done by the state’s concern in satisfying foreign investors. The activities of MNCs and other IFIs in developing world further threaten the economic growth and development of these societies, because capital is daily repatriated to the developed world. This has the effect of disjointing the internal developmental activities of these states and thus negatively affects their democratisation process. Specifically, globalisation weakened the economic power of the local bourgeoisies. These reasons could lead to serious economic crises that might hinder the development of democracy. In the current situation Third World societies are facing poverty-related problem, which certainly is threatening the sustainability of their democratisation process. Quan and Reuveny (2000:13) contend that globalisation induces labour migration across societies, irrespective of how the residents typically would attempt to restrict or eliminate immigrants in the political system to reduce political competitiveness. This factor reminds one of how at the eve of general elections, May 5, 2005, the issue of immigration has become a strong factor in the British Parties’ campaign processes. For example, the Conservative Party has included the issue in their campaign manifesto. Nick de Bois (Conservative candidate for Enfield North) contends that ‘[a]sylum and immigration – Enough is enough. Britain is stretched to breaking point and our local hospitals, schools and housing are suffering’ Davoudi 2005:4). Norris (2005:4) has after a presenting a graphical data showing how the race and immigration question grew rapidly over the years form 1974-2005 from 10-28% respectively to become a political issue, captured the scenario well, when he writes that the ‘conservatives’ [party] strategy is similar to that used by many other European centre-right parties when confronted by a popular threat from their xenophobic rivals.’ This is the effect of globalisation. This in a way affects the British democracy per se. But importantly it tells much on its image as an advocate and champion of democracy the world over. Globalisation continues to widen the gap between the North and the South and this invariably obstructs the democratisation process in the South who might view the democratisation agenda as not only solving their basic problems but also as a way of further subjecting them to satisfy the need of the international division of labour.

In sum, the assumption that globalisation doesn’t affect democracy, depicts that globalisation is a buzzword, whose effect has been over exaggerated. The world economy is never integrated, MNCs have their home base and FDI
Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) concentrates only in few countries, the DCs are already developed and thus globalisation won’t affect their democracy (Quan et al 2000:15). I disagree with these views. Contemporarily, to say that globalisation doesn’t affect any country’s democracy, weather developed or developing, is simply a mere naivety, unnecessary narrow mindedness and theoretical misunderstanding of the idea of globalisation. Interestingly, Quan and Reuveny (2000:38), in an empirical study on the interface between economic globalisation and democracy of 127 countries from 1970-1996, summarily discovered that:

trade openness and portfolio investment inflows exert negative affect on democracy. The negative effect of trade is constant over time whereas the effect of portfolio investments strengthens. FDI inflows affect democracy positively, but the effect weakens over time. The spread of democratic ideas promotes democracy persistently over time. These patterns hold for all countries and the LDCs alone. In sum, the economic aspects of integration into the world economy are beginning to cause a decline in national democratic governance.

From the above brief survey of the linkages between globalisation and democratisation, treating the former as an independent variable, one can adduce divergent views on the role of globalisation on democratisation. Thus, treating the issue in this way only curtails our supposed comprehensive understanding of globalisation and democratisation. It is on this premise I argue that to theoretically understand the twin issues, we must dialectically treat the effect of globalisation on democratisation. Dialectical investigation is important in that it enables one to measure the extent to which states embrace the fruits of global-democratisation and strategies put in place to contain the hurdles of globalisation. The next section focuses on the dialectics of globalisation on democratisation in Nigeria. In so doing I attempt to answer the following questions: what is the nature of democratisation in Nigeria; how has globalisation contributed to current democratisation in the country; and in what ways does the Nigerian state try to counteract pressures exacted by waves of globalisation? Answers to these questions would help towards constructing a dialectic theory of globalisation and democratisation relevant not only to Nigeria but other developing countries.

**Globalisation and Democratisation in Nigeria**

In historical analogies, globalisation is not new. The period of European colonialism was the beginning of global interconnectedness and interactions. What is new is in the last three decades the way global interconnectedness has been ‘reinforced by the conditionality programmes of the IMF and World Bank for developing countries’ (Thorup et al 2004). The era of colonial onslaughts of naked exploitation and appropriation marked the beginning of interdependent (interconnected) interactions between Africa and other regions of the world. After more than 100 years of these crude and primitive engagements, Africa in political terms benefited only in getting dictatorial and autocratic regimes,
which grew stronger during the cold war. Indeed, the hot manifestations of the cold war had conscripted the rapid spread of democratisation in Africa.

The abrupt collapse of the command political economies of the Eastern Europe and Soviet Union in 1989, which led to the end of cold war, had the consequence of eroding the political manoeuvres of dictatorial regimes in Africa and their relationships with major powers, such as United States, Western countries and international financial institutions. In contrast, the cold war period, because of the fear of alignment with Eastern bloc (communist) gave African governments certain degree of leverage to exploit the ideological frictions between Western and Communist blocs. African governments no longer capitalise on the ideological frictions to fuel dictatorial regimes. Conditionality of loans, grants and aid to African regimes increasingly became linked to internal economic and, later to political reforms. These circumstances consequently spread democratisation in the continent as the wind of modern globalisation spread democracy to Africa through donor-recipient relationships of the 1980s.

However, in Nigeria, the global-democratisation began in the mid 1980s, when the then military rule under General Babangida, introduced and implemented Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as pre-condition for lending. It is worthy to mention here that prior to the introduction of SAP, Nigeria had been pursuing dependent capitalist economic policies, from the first four development plans to the rolling plans. The circumstance under which the military junta was conditioned to embrace SAP economic restructuring, apart from the desire to please the international financial institutions and thereby winning global support, was also because

Nigeria came to be afflicted by a devastating economic crisis, manifested in declining revenues... a heavy debt burden of about 20 billion dollars, and a generalised crisis of production and the rapidly declining purchasing power of the incomes of the Nigerian workers due to inflation and a general decline in the production of goods and services in the Nigerian economy... In this situation, the Nigerian state also came to be confronted by an intense crisis of [internal] legitimation (Jega: 2000:29).

Moreover, Onyeonoru (2003:38) stresses that from the viewpoint of IMF, the economic crises in Nigeria, which influenced the imposition of SAP, were just a product of structural economic distortions, primarily as a result of overvalued exchange rates, import regulation, huge public sector expenditure, poor investment management and low returns on capital, high wage structure and low productive labour, import substitution industrialisation and bad environmental policies, over extended, inefficient and unproductive public enterprises, and apparent nepotistic and discriminatory credit policies against the private sector. The argument here is that continually degenerating economic imbalances between the forces of aggregate demand and aggregate supply led to serious deficits in the balance of payments, high rates of inflation...
Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

and huge growth of foreign and domestic debts. This was the situation Nigeria found herself in the late 1970s and reaching its peak in the mid 1980s. The problems were internal but solutions sourced from the self appointed messiahs: IMF and World Bank, which are at the forefront of the globalisation agenda.

In preparation to join the globalisation train, economic stabilisation programmes were introduced in the late 1970s and early 1980s during Shagari civilian administration under the Economic Stabilisation Act of 1982. The economic instruments of the economic stabilisation policies included among others, ‘sharp restriction of domestic demand through monetary and fiscal measures, and longer term adjustment instruments entailing the application of supply side policies to promote the production of exports and import substitutes…’(Onyeonoru: 2003:39). Not only were these programmes characteristic of neo-liberal economic policies, but also generally intertwined with global integration, interactions and interdependence. So, economic restructuring, structural economic reforms, economic adjustment policies, economic reform programmes or simply Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), are semantically denoting economic openness for international market forces of aggregate demand and aggregate supply to determine the direction of states’ economies. These projects are part of the pillars of contemporary globalisation, which Nigeria has already embraced.

As mentioned earlier, with the introduction of SAP, Nigeria has officially joined the contemporary globalisation drama. This is not to undermine the fact that forces of globalisation have been in operation in the country prior to SAP. The introduction of SAP with its attendant conditionalities of currency devaluation and exchange rates deregulation; cuts in public expenditure and privatisation and commercialisation of public utilities and services, marked a profound watershed in the country’s journey of becoming a member of global networks, albeit playing a peripheral role. SAP was not destined to succeed in Nigeria. The economic and political indices necessary did not exist in the country. It is significant to note that the conditions that could make a country benefit from devaluation of currency or broadly from liberalisation of economy as factors of SAP were lacking in Nigeria. Both demand and supply curves of Nigeria’s exports were elastic.

Although, the introduction of SAP did not led to the return to civilian rule in the country, it had devastating consequences on the political economy of Nigeria vis-à-vis her role in the global political and economic markets. Virtually, all sectors of the economy were severely affected by SAP. Inflation and unemployment increased, the conditions of the working class deteriorated due to the rapid decline in the purchasing power of the naira, the manufacturing industries nearly collapsed, GDP stagnated and foreign debt skyrocketed. This further led to the degeneration of the Nigerian economy, heightened the country’s dependent and peripheral nature. The consequences of globalisation have started rearing their ugly tentacles.

In a seminal excellent work of the impact of globalisation on industrialisation in Nigeria, Onyeonoru (2003:58) discovers that globalisation projects in the form
of SAP could not address Nigeria’s industrial crises. For instance, the structure of Food, Beverage and Tobacco industries were unimaginably affected. Structurally, these industries experienced serious contraction. Their numbers in operation reduced from 80 companies in 1986 to 69 in 1992, just six years after the introduction of SAP. Worse, out of the 69 surviving industries only 26 were thriving on the basis of their after-tax profits. The FBT sub-sector industry worst hit by the effect of globalisation was the beverage industry, which massively contracted from 40 companies in 1986 to just 25 in 1992. Based on these findings, Onyeononu (2003:58-60) concludes that globalisation programmes have summarily led to a long-term process of de-industrialisation in the country. The failure of the globalisation inspired economic reforms woefully failed because of the inherent contradictions in the project’s policy formulation and execution. The programmes were introduced as a ‘debt settling projects rather than development programmes.’

Despite the near total dismissal of SAP as achieving zero development in Nigeria’s economic development and engendering democratisation in the country Ihonvbere (1994:123-124), seems palatably to share an opposite understanding as he stressed that SAP

has made some modest achievements. In the first place, it has brought to light the depth of the economic and social crisis and exploded the myth of the oil boom. Nigerians now know that though their country is an oil producing nation, it is vulnerable to the vagaries of the international system and subject to pressures from the internal mismanagement of resources. Second, the programme has encouraged the rational utilisation of resources while at the same time has promoted local creativity. In the public and private sectors, there is some realisation that the boom days are over and that there is an urgent need to be prudent in the use of resources and materials. Third, local industries now rely on imports for their production processes. Fourth, unlike in the 1970s and early 1980s, there is now a better appreciation of the need for resource management, savings, and investment in productive activities. Finally, the ruthless implementation of the programme, the grossly unequal distribution of the pains of adjustment, the growing inequalities in the society, the increased arrogance of power displayed by the military and the rich, the further impoverishment of disadvantaged groups, and the widespread violation of socioeconomic and political rights at an unprecedented level have contributed to the emergence of political opposition groups and several civil liberties organisations. As well, the implementation of adjustment under World Bank supervision has influenced the political consciousness of the masses and encouraged a new drive toward genuine democratisation and empowerment of popular groups.

Unfortunately, as we have learnt from political history of the country, these minimal gains of SAP have steadily been eroded due, particularly, to policy
inconsistency, graft and corruption, economic mismanagement and lack of commitments to democracy and democratic values.

Ironically, the enforcement of economic restructuring policies by the Breton Wood institutions in Africa and particularly in Nigeria has not changed the political terrain of governance in the country. During this period dictatorial and autocratic regimes exploited the global rupture of the world and continue unabated. In Nigeria, the military regime of Babangida, despite dissent from within, had no pressure from global partners to return the country to democratic rule. In terms of democratisation, except Shagari’s democratic rule from 1979-1983, Nigeria was simply engulfed in crises of governance for almost two consecutive decades.

Instructively, the hyper-integration of Nigeria into global political economy with unbalanced division of labour has never changed the political situation. The international economic institutions and multinational corporations continue to ‘trade’ with the country not minding of course the hardship being experienced by the common man. This is globalisation!

The abnegation of the role by globalisation in the democratisation in Nigeria in the 1980s and 1990s (a period of third waves of democratisation) was a failure on the world financial institutions. However, the Breton Woods institutions could not mount any pressure on military institutions in Nigeria, perhaps because the regime ‘succeeded’ in launching the country into the global networks. But most importantly, was because for instance, in respect of the World Bank (1989), its Article 10, section 10, prohibits the bank from political intervention in the domestic affairs of the state. The article declares that ‘[t]he Bank and its officers shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions.’ This condition only applies to the Bank and IMF. Marquette (2001:398) maintains that poor countries, who are more often the beneficiaries of the Bank’s lending facilities and as members were to be allowed to retain at least a relative degree of sovereignty as defined by the UN’s General Charter. Nevertheless, do other financial institutions and forces of globalisation obstructed by their articles of establishment not intervene in the domestic affairs of member states? Certainly not! This left one to wonder why the world looks disinterested and unconcerned about military regime spending such long time destroying the political psyche of Nigerians.

Another line of argument is that the Nigerian military benefited from the rift in the cold war between the East and the West. There have been substantial reasons to buttress the fact that forces of globalisation unwittingly continue to support dictatorial regimes in developing countries. More so, during this period, the military in Nigeria politically and cleverly enshrined the non-alignment as one the guiding principles in her dealings with the other members of the international system. In sum, during the period of 1984-1998, though there were series of civil rule programmes, none, except the Abubakar’s short period was able to successfully surrender power to elected democratic administration
in 1999.

As part of impacts of globalisation, Ijeoma (2002:137) opines that Nigeria is currently caught in sharing her decision-making powers with international forces of production and finance. New foreign investors were being considered for potential investment in the country, especially in the field of communication and computer technologies. Traditionally, the state’s activities are assuming more or less a global character and orientation; henceforth, national decision-makings of the government are contracting and shrinking. For instance, Nigeria’s budget formulation and implementation are designed to conform to provisions and directives from the IMF, a policy, which has direct negative consequences on employment creation and poverty reduction strategies. Given pressure from IFIs, Nigeria’s democratic government is rapidly jettisoning her role in service delivery. This is particularly attributable to problems of balance of payments, where the focus is shifting from satisfying public demands to simply removing market barriers, thereby loosing the necessary powers of distributive capabilities. This failure therefore, of the state to fulfil her electoral promises, state-civil society relations in the country have been ‘highly confrontational, thus clouding the future of democracy in Nigeria’ (Ijeoma 2002:138). The so-called confrontational nature of relations between the state and civil society in the country does not represent doomed political future for the country. The fact is that the state, civil society and other democratic stakeholders are struggling to define their individual existence and role in the new political order of globalisation.

The foregoing discussion reaffirms one’s claim that any discourse on democratisation in Nigeria must in view of the magnitude of globalisation take into account the imminent endless pressure from IFIs, the West, U.S. and international non-governmental organisations, which exercise reasonable degree of leverage over domestic political and economic policy choices, implementation and policy outcomes.

On a different perspective, taking civil society to be one the prerequisites for the promotion of market capitalism and democracy, some literati on democratisation have pointed out that globalisation has worked assiduously in energizing the Nigerian civil society. For instance, the IFIs, the US, the OECD, the UN and so on have been at centre stage in, according NADECO, MOSOP, G34, etc, greater support in liquidating the military regime of late Abacha, which was the most dictatorial military regime in the history of Nigeria.

Secondly, Diamond et al reveal that since the introduction of SAP and implementation of IMF credit facility in 1985 by the IBB government, aid donors have been relentlessly mounting pressure on the country to introduce political reform programmes. These they do by channelling enormous aid through non-governmental organisations. As a result the international forces of globalisation are actively involved in accelerating the process of democratisation in the country (cited in Ijeoma 2002:143). However, what Diamond and his apologists fail to understand is that substantial percentage of the aid is wasted through graft and excessive corruption, which Nigeria is infamously known for.
Taking another important issue of democracy, Uroh (2005) contends that women were mostly affected by globalisation in Nigeria. He pointed out that the already deplorable conditions of women in Nigerian political theatre worsened. For instance, women represented the largest workforce retrenched following the introduction of SAP. With the withdrawal of subsidy from kerosene, which is the main ‘cooking gas’ in the cities many of them were forced to the use of ordinary firewood, which is quite dangerous and hazardous. Indeed, through this several women and children lost their lives. Equally devastating was how comparatively the number of women enrolled in educational institutions dropped after the introduction of SAP. Globalisation has even affected Nigerian women more than how Uroh merely perceived it. Famous Nigerian women were involved in human trafficking to Europe especially Italy for international prostitutions. Annually large percentage of these ladies is being deported back to Nigeria from continental Europe and some part of Africa.

On a general note, Nigeria’s share of the world trade remained low, accounting for only about 1% from 1970 to 1998 (Obaseki, 2000:17-33). An effort to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) shows very minimal encouragement. The flow of FDI to developing countries during the last decade has increased to about 80%; African share relatively remains small and declining. According to African Development Bank report ‘African share of FDI is both small and declining. In 1985 Africa received about 3.1% of the total global FDI flow, but by 1997 its share had fallen to only 1.9% (Adamu 2003:12), with Nigeria’s share falling abysmally low. This generated the conclusion that Nigeria was relatively late in joining the global financial train (Obaseki 2000). Thus, the domestic financial market is still deficient to participate in the international competition with other financial institutions that are technologically driven.

In a research examining the variation of the effect of globalisation in Nigeria, Fatima Adamu (2003:14) discovers that there is a great difference in economic development between the two regions of Nigeria. For instance, out of the total industries in the country only 18.9% are found in the North and the industries of all the Northern states put together represents only 1/3 of industries in Lagos state alone. The implication of this is that northern part of the country is most heated by the hot waves of globalisation. She noted that when Nigerian market was integrated with the global markets, the markets of the former were flooded with foreign goods thereby incapacitating the local industries in the Northern part. As a result 48% of the industries in the region summarily closed down by November 2001, and the average percentage of employment drastically dropped from 56% in 1990 to a dismal 0% in 1995 and only to 9% in 2000. This picture generally has shown the extent of how globalisation affected de-industrialisation in Nigeria and most importantly, how ill prepared the Nigerian government is to tap the benefits of globalisation. Lack of preparedness and measure of controlling the excessiveness of globalisation are responsible for countless political, economic and socio-cultural upheavals across the country since 1999, with resultant worrisome effect of loss of volumes of properties worth billions of naira and loss of uncountable number of people. The areas worse affected by these civil unrests are: Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Plateau, Banue, Adamawa, Taraba, Lagos, Oyo, Kebbi, to mention only a few. This
scenario is not reflective of the nascent democracy in Nigeria.

Globalisation actually has made the ill educated population of Nigeria to know their rights through the international prints and electronic media which government can not control (especially the BBC, CNN, VOA, RFI, etc) and to demand same from the elected government. However, the inability of this government as we have noted above to provide these rights to Nigerians has resulted in calamitous circumstances, which are spelling doom for democratic consolidation in the country.

One of the greatest changes visibly the country recorded, as a result of globalisation is in the area of information and communication technology. Anao (2002) reported that Nigeria is experiencing a remarkable progress in the use of wireless phones. Statistically from 2001 when the GSM companies started operation to 2002 about 1.11 million people has acquired mobile phones. More than 30,000 lines were added bringing of course the total to 60,000 including landlines. Though, this was a remarkable progress given the nature of the information before 1999, yet the country need more than this figure. And as democracy is being consolidated more benefits would be recorded in the information technology.

At this juncture, it is important to note that Nigeria has joined or in a plain language, incorporated into globalisation at very odd stage (when the country was dominated by military dictatorship lacking vision and foresight and when dissenting democratic voices were muscled down) in the political and economic history of the country. Also, at a period when there were fluctuations in the oil prices and the chicken oil wealth was being consumed through primitive accumulation. The environmental degradation in the oil region of the country is one of the instances of how ill prepared the country was in joining the train of globalisation.

Nigeria is located in a geopolitical and economic location where she would adequately reap the benefits and contain the negativities of globalisation. But perhaps because of how ill prepared the country was since 1986 plus its traumatic political histories, to date there is no concrete strategy (despite the abundant potentialities) put in place to enjoy the fruits or to contain the agonies imposed by globalisation. Globalisation is not an option. It is inevitable. And it cannot be controlled. What is important for nation-states irrespective of where it is located and the nature of its political economy is to provide adequate strategies in order to get the reward of membership and to put in place concrete policies in order to minimise its hurdles. Nigeria is simply being consumed by globalisation. And this is rapidly affecting its democritisation processes.

**Concluding Remarks**

Given the divergence of opinions among scholars and students concerning the relationships between globalisation and democratisation, and in view of the
brief review examines here, this paper concludes that globalisation has immensely contributed to the spread of democracy in the contemporary international system. This unarguably explains magnificent spread of democracy during the last decade of 20th century and early 21st century. However, the impacts of globalisation on individual state’s democratisation processes differ (in both degree and scope). In Nigeria it has been dismal. Nigeria has formally joined the global network in 1986 with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the implementation of similar neo-liberal economic policies, which seemingly had adverse effect on the political economy of the country. Global actors and institutions seemed to have conspired either out of commission or omission to engender a longer period of military dictatorship (perhaps because the military junta especially under Yakubu Gowon and Babangida regimes has served their interests) in the country. The critical issue/fact, which Nigerian political leaders of yesterday and today continue to hide under the carpet or considered classified information is that the failure of reforms and structural adjustments is explain scientifically in terms of the general nature of the political and economic institutions under which such reforms were implemented and executed. The private sector reforms that have been pursued by successive Nigerian government have failed to uplift the living standard of the poor. The proceeds generated from the sales of public utilities have been wasted through gross mismanagements and corruption.

Indeed, globalisation is never an option, but a mere natural necessity, which all countries of the world irrespective of their individual degree of economic and political development and nature and character of their individual political regimes and institutions must join. Against this fact Nigeria must critically adopt adequate policy strategies within the context of its domestic potentialities and external relations, to embrace the promises of globalisation for sustainable democracy. The experiences of India, South Korea, Brazil, Malaysia, and Singapore are prime examples. The political leaders must be politically willing and committed. Corruption, which remains a cog in the wheel of progress, must be checked. Poverty reduction programmes must be made to work. Nigerians must learn to adhere strictly to the rules of democracy. Elections should relatively be free and fair. The international community must on the other hand appreciate the effort and resources being committed by the country towards such endeavours and extend good gesture by providing adequate technical and managerial aid, should accept to redeem the country’s huge foreign debt in order to reduce poverty, unemployment and generally improve the economic well being of all Nigerians. Specifically, the Nigerian state has great potentials in achieving huge benefits in the global world. To do this in addition to the above the state must be ready:

1. to attract investment through the implementation of structural reforms that will ensure accountable and transparent investment environment;
2. to ensure access and equity for the small and medium enterprises to compete in the local as well as global economy. This should be done through improvement in the information technology, especially computer
Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria

3. to build an understanding about change and opportunities brought about by globalisation, as well as development of social programmes especially to reduce poverty and malnutrition in order to compensate those to be dislocated through restructuring;

4. to strengthen the activities of the civil society and make them partners in progress;

5. to decentralised governance and give local communities a sense of belonging and;

6. to embrace the attributes of democratic good governance agenda. That is Nigerian democracy should be built on accountability, transparency, rule of law, freedom and respect for human rights, separation of powers should strictly be followed in the conduct of governmental affairs.

Notes and Acknowledgements

Sulaiman Yusuf Balarabe Kura is of Political Science Department, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria and currently a Commonwealth Scholar on a PhD programme at the International Development Department, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for providing this scholarship and the opportunity to undertake this study. I would also like to thank Heather A. Marqutte who read the first draft of the manuscript and offer useful suggestions. I’m particularly grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of the article whose wonderful comments have further enriched the arguments in the paper. I would like to acknowledge the effort of my colleagues Namawu A. Alhassan and Molefe Phirinyane for helping with typographical checks.

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Globalisation and Democracy: A Dialectical Framework for Understanding Democratisation in Nigeria


Endnotes


4. By non-alignment Nigeria would not relate or relate with any power bloc of the cold war as matter of routines. The country would only do so on its own terms. Thus, the country maintained a positive neutralism of foreign policy relations. In this instance, Nigeria exploited the rift by importing military hardwires and economic goods from Eastern and Western bloc, respectively. With this the army continue to rule without many huddles.

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