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GLOBALISATION AND THE QUESTION OF LOYALTY IN AFRICA:A PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is on the influence of globalisation on the *patriotic loyalty* of Africans to Africa. Existing discourse is quite thin regarding the relationship between globalisation and loyalty in Africa. Yet, examining such relationship is important to understand the dearth of desirable development in many African states. Taking a philosophical approach, the contention in this study is that patriotic loyalty, which is significant for development in Africa, has been distorted by the influx of globalisation into Africa. The study historically highlights how globalisation influences diversion of loyalty from the immediate community to the global community. While the purpose of the study is not to encourage disloyalty to the global community, the emphasis, however, is that loyalty to the global community should not be to the detriment of local ties. Among other things, it is argued that such could result in detachment from core norms and values and the weakening of local ties which are necessary for sustainable development at the local levels. The study acknowledges the impossibility of reverting Africa to a pre-globalised period and concludes with some suggestions for developing, encouraging and sustaining loyalty in the continent.

KEYWORDS: Africa, Development, Globalisation, Loyalty, Philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

Conceptualising Globalisation and Loyalty

Globalisation, as a fact of life, touches, affects and often *controls* our choices, decisions and their outcomes. As a process and phenomenon it "remains an issue whose discussion is embroiled in its own complexity and in the controversy generated by the widely polarized positions held in regard to it" (Aina 2004: 1). Nevertheless, theorists tend to agree that globalisation is responsible for the high degree of integration and interdependence taking place among different continents, countries, regions, and cultures in the world particularly in areas of trade, finances and communication. Globalisation has, thus, been linked with the emergence of new world society (Aukot (2005); Nesbitt (2005); Zeleza (2005). What is, however, lacking in the new world society for most African scholars is a world community founded on equal partnership (Smith (1999); Bangura (2001); Ngugi (2005); Shivji (2007); Okolo (2015)) especially as the dominant position defining the understanding of globalisation in the world today is from an 'Eurocentric' perspective. What is more troubling is the fact that African continent is now reconceived and redefined within this perspective. As we would discuss

784

below, the new perspective (deliberately or coincidentally) affects the *loyalty* of Africans to Africa and, in turn, affects Africa's development.

By loyalty, as mentioned above, we do not mean loyalty in the business sense of customers' loyalty to certain products or certain marketers with strategic influence on capitalist impulse and/or consumerism. The loyalty here is more about self-chosen holistic commitment to something and the unwavering sustenance of that commitment. It is this loyalty that Royce (1995) defines as "[t]he willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause". Three elements are central to the definition of loyalty by Royce: The first element is that loyalty is *practical*. It involves actions that show the willing and thoroughgoing commitment of the loyal person. This means that loyalty is not passive. Loyalty is an abstract concept that can only be made obvious through actions. Secondly, "loyalty" is *not enforced* rather voluntary. In other words, the loyal person is not loyal to her cause by compulsion but out of volition. According to Royce (1908:17-18), "[l]oyalty without self-control is impossible." A loyal person chooses to be loyal, providing her reasons or she may approve of existing reasons for her loyalty. The third element is that the loyal person's actions and her willingness to act are because of something which Royce identifies as a *cause*. The *cause* is more or less the object or recipient of the person's devotion and it often defines the nature of the loyalty. For example, according to Royce where the cause to which a person is loyal is his country it is *patriotic loyalty*, where the cause is a religion then it is *religious loyalty*, and when the cause is to the requirements of one's office then it is *professional loyalty* (Royce 1908:17).

Our focus in this paper, as suggested by the title, is entirely on *patriotic loyalty*, especially in the case where Africa is the *cause*. Further to recognising patriotic loyalty as one of the types of loyalty, it is specifically "the species of loyalty that requires devotion to one's country and a willingness to sacrifice one's own interests to some degree for one's fellow countrymen or countrywomen" (Jones 1999: 127). To contextualise this definition, patriotic loyalty could mean a devotion of Africans to Africa and a willingness for Africans to sacrifice their own interests to some degrees for fellow Africans that are characterised by core norms, values, experiences and various local ties. The contention in this paper is based on the point that patriotic loyalty in Africa has been affected by the influx of globalisation in the continent.

Following the conceptual clarifications, the study is structured into three sections. The first section considers the nexus between globalisation and loyalty in Africa and the connection is further divided into two major periods: the traditional period and the modern period. This is to majorly show the increase in the influence of globalisation on patriotic loyalty in Africa along with the effects from the onset of globalisation in the continent. In the second section, we explore the dearth of desirable developments in Africa as a consequence of the influence of globalisation on patriotic loyalty in Africa both at the individual level and the states' level. It is argued that in the absence of patriotic loyalty, there is no sense of belonging, among many Africans, that could help facilitate a unified and committed effort for the development of the continent. The third section acknowledges the impossibility of reverting to a pre-globalised Africa and concludes with suggested approaches to develop, encourage and sustain patriotic loyalty in Africa despite the seemingly overriding presence of globalisation.

785

The Nexus between Globalisation and Loyalty in Africa

The bond between globalisation and loyalty is, perhaps, best reflected in the word of Immanuel Kant "universal citizen" (Kant 2006/1784) or "cosmopolitan" in the trendy term by Martha Nussbaum (2002). A 'cosmopolitan', according to Nussbaum, is the person who has a special affection for the global community at large. S/he fully associates with the "moral community made up by the humanity of human beings" rather than the local or national societies to which she belongs by natural association (e.g., by birth or kinship) (Nussbaum 2002: 7). In this way, globalisation influences the individual to be loyal to the global community more than her immediate community. She becomes a cosmopolitan with a mental outlook "that she is first, foremost, a human being and only by accident of birth a member of this or that nation or province" (Orosco 2003: 205). By opening up new opportunities for Africa, globalisation tends to weaken local 'ties'. For instance, the fact that African intellectuals 'operate within European memory' (Ngugi 2005: 65) complicates and compromises their loyalty to the continent which in turn impedes on their contribution to the continent. As we shall explain below, the nexus between globalisation and loyalty can be divided into two major periods: one is the traditional period, which is about the earliest period of globalisation in Africa, and the other is the modern period, detailing the advanced, technological and capitalist period of globalisation in Africa.

During the traditional period, as soon as foreigners (in virtue of slave merchants and colonialists) began to gain a presence in Africa, as the early instance of globalisation, the nature of loyalty in Africa gradually began to change. It was during this period of change that kings were willing to 'give' some of their subjects or kidnapped persons from neighbouring communities to the foreign slave merchants in exchange for mirrors or some intoxicating foreign gins. In other words, the kings and rulers became loyal to the 'friendly' foreigners and began to give some complicity in the slave trade. History has it that many African societies with kings or rulers already have the tradition of keeping slaves. The enslaved were usually people taken from conquests of another society and were to indicate strength or affluence and not for trade purposes. But when the foreign slave merchants came into Africa the African kings acquired a new understanding of the ownership of slaves. Some (like the kings of Dahomey) were more involved in the slave trade. They waged bitter wars on their neighbours and captured them in their thousands for commercial ends (BBC 2018). The kings were so committed to the trade that some of them (e.g., King Tegbesu) made about two hundred and fifty thousand Pounds (£250,000) a year from selling their fellow Africans (BBC 2018). With the large profit that some of the African kings derive from the slave trade the willing and thoroughgoing devotion of the rulers to the course of their people gradually wanes. We could say that such is the earliest influence of the capitalist elements of globalisation on (patriotic) loyalty in Africa.

The modern period involved full participation of Africans and Africa in the global trends. This period marked the end of slavery and colonialism almost throughout the continent but it was the start of neo-colonialism and capitalism. It is, therefore, the beginning of a new phase of globalisation in the continent. The situation in the fully globalised Africa is well captured thus: "In place of the old wants, satisfied by productions of the [continent] we find

786

new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes…[a]nd as in material, so also is intellectual production." (K. Marx, F. Engels 1888). In other words, globalisation created the desire for exotic goods in the Africans that made them look outside of the continent for their satisfaction. Thus in terms of dressing, language plus economic and political attitudes, patriotic loyalty to Africa by Africans becomes far-fetched.

In the area of dressing, both the literate and the illiterate are more desirous of foreign dresses rather than the local ones. Even surviving local and traditional dresses are now tailored into foreign styles in order to satisfy the exotic tastes (Dosekun 2015). Artisans skilled in making traditional dresses are marginalised; they find it difficult to earn a living from their skills. The crave for exotic satisfaction also reflects in the aspect of language. Many young Africans especially of the twentieth century are totally or partially incapable of communicating in their mother tongue. Even writers and artists that promote the indigenous languages are rarely recognised in contrast to their counterparts that focus on foreign languages. Common news about illegal immigration and shameful deportation of Africans from other continents are public evidence. At times, it is acceptable to argue that the lack of patriotic loyalty from the citizenry is due to the influence of the actions or omissions of the rulers. For example, many African leaders have been successful to turn democratic tenures to continuous monarchical reigns which have yielded no significant value to the African nations or the citizenry at large. The grandiose lifestyles of the rulers and their political or biological kinsmen reflect the immense abundance in the continent but the average African wallows in abject poverty and sufferings. The activated mentality of many Africans in such circumstance is to survive by all means – even if to the detriment of the continent. While this may be true as a proximate cause, but the remote cause of the damage to their patriotic loyalty is still globalisation. Of course, it is through globalisation, particularly in terms of access to foreign lands which serves as safe havens for the deposit of illegally acquired wealth from the moribund treasuries across the continent.

Globalisation, Patriotic Loyalty and Development in Africa

There has been a noticeable dearth of development in Africa which is, among other things, because of the lack of patriotic loyalty from the citizenry to the continent. And this lack of patriotic loyalty, as we have discussed, is caused [majorly] by globalisation. There are several features of counter-development or what Victoria Gómez (2020: 43) calls the *paradoxical effects of globalisation* facing the African continent today that are traceable to globalisation. We shall consider a few below.

One such feature of counter-development is the absence of self-sacrifice among Africans. Due to slavery and colonialism Africa has suffered various degrees of rape by foreign forces who filched both her human and capital resources. After independence, there ought to have been sincere plans by early nationalists to painstakingly nurture the continent back into sufficient fruitfulness for its inhabitants. To the contrary, there were hasty and excessive demands on the continent by Africans to secure a portion of the continent's resources for themselves. This is evidenced by the recurrent embezzlement of government funds by the rulers and the desperateness of the citizens to make huge gains with little or no investment.

787

Availability of the safe havens outside the continent where the ill-gotten riches can be stacked was no small encouragement for the further rape of Africa (but this time) by Africans. Thus, Globalisation, through capitalism, erased the willingness to sacrifice for the continent among the citizens. Kluver and Weber (2003: 385) noted this unwillingness to sacrifice especially among the younger generation. In as much as globalisation has provided access to the other parts of the world, there are opportunities for the rulers to deposit their loots outside the continent, and for the citizens, especially people that are ready to highjack some resources and prodigally manage them outside the continent.

In the absence of patriotic loyalty, there has been no sense of belonging that could help facilitate the development of the continent, especially through citizen's investment and reinvestment of their time, manpower and resources. If the citizens of Africa could see themselves as the real 'Africa', they would know that the exploitation of Africa (by Africans) is tantamount to self-exploitation and self-destruction. It simply translates to the mistreatment of oneself. Moreover, if the citizens were having an appropriate sense of belonging to the continent, everyone would be dutiful in his or her capacity to contribute towards the development of the continent. With the influences of globalisation on the loyalty of Africans, the people no longer have a strong attachment to the continent and are increasingly becoming unconcerned about the plight of the continent. In the words of Giddens (2006: 54), without a sense of loyalty, people are "looking to sources other than the nation-state in formulating their own sense of identity." Most Africans now seek what to derive from the continent rather than what to give to the continent. It is noteworthy that the citizens (or followers) are often provoked to withdraw their loyalties by the actions and/or omissions of the leaders. Edwin P. Hollander (1995: 64) aptly notes that

> [w]here the leader is seen to be power-oriented, exploitative, and self-serving, especially in the face of failures, the goal of mutual identification is hardly attainable. Instead, followers may feel alienated and ultimately take their allegiance elsewhere.

Many African youths, in this modern period, have indeed taken their allegiance elsewhere. They prefer to risk everything to secure foreign passports or even cross-border into Europe rather than invest their time, energy, and intellect on the African continent. Usual news about illegal immigration and shameful deportation of Africans from other continents are significant pieces of evidence of the disinterest, distrust and lack of loyalty and hope among many Africans in the continent.

The lack of social cohesion is another feature of counter-development. This is evident at both states and individual levels (especially between Africans). At the states level, African states are more in tune with competing against one another to be impressive to the modern institutions of globalisation i.e., the World trade organisation (WTO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) among others. There is a lack of a united front or regional integration to promote "development amongst African nations and… [to reduce] indebtedness and dependence on Western nations" (Abegunrin and Manyeruke 2020: 155). It is often mentioned that most African problems are indigenous challenges that are only resolvable through indigenous solutions. However, in the absence of patriotic loyalty, the option of indigenous solutions will remain elusive.

788

At the individual levels, there are Africans who find it difficult to freely associate with one another, let alone to pull resources together for collective development. The continuous xenophobic conflict between (black) South Africans and Nigeria immigrants in South Africa (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019) and modern slavery where many Africans are enslaved to Libya by their fellow Africans are critical examples of lack of social cohesion (Elbagir, Razek, Platt, and Jones 2017). Despite the common heritage in terms of sufferings from slave owners and colonial masters, many Africans do not have sympathy or empathy for their fellow Africans; because they do not see any *homophily* between themselves and their fellows in the continent.

It is often evident that patriotic loyalty has much significance for social cohesion or harmony. Meanwhile, without patriotic loyalty, instead of social cohesion, globalised Africa is overwhelmed with tribal conflicts, ethnic and linguistic rancour and disharmony in the societies right from the individual families to the states within the continent. There are egoistic competitions among many Africans and hostile struggles for available resources while almost everyone considers their fellow Africans as a threat or a rival. Despite the abundance of natural and human resources in almost every part of the continent, the development of Africa will continue to be either a miracle or a mirage because "social bonds, which prove critical for patriotism" is missing (Kluver and Weber, 2003: 380).

Another feature of counter-development as a consequence of globalisation affecting loyalty in Africa is the change in the citizens' adherence to the laws in the continent. Laws have proved effectively important for the stability of States and to set them on a good pedestal for progress. Shaw (2008: 1), in his conception of law, considers law as a 'framework of principles" within which societies develop. This means that societal development depends ultimately on when the people adhere to the laws and responsibly pursue commonly accepted goals. This further shows that non-adherence to the laws is more or less sabotage on the societal quest for development. It is no wonder that despite the various inventions and technological development that accompany globalisation, Africa remains poorly developed - if not the poorest continent in the world. One reason for the lack of adherence to the laws is that there is no patriotic loyalty among the citizenry. When there is no sense of belonging to a place, people tend to seek freedom from the rules and regulations that govern their commitment to that place. Fletcher (1993: 62) rightly identifies that loyalty and law have conceptual and etymological connections. To him, loyal citizens often act lawfully. If Fletcher is correct, then the increasing crime rate in Africa is probably a reliable indication that many Africans are not loyal citizens. This is what Riser (2013: 32) suggests when he claims that, "obligation posits compliance, but loyalty posits adherence." Since the loyalty of Africans has been distorted or diverted by globalisation there is little or no adherence to the laws and, in turn, the development of the continent continues to prove difficult.

Way Forward

It is impossible to revert to pre-globalised Africa. Globalisation has come to stay, but how can it be tailored to aid Africa's development? How can loyalty be developed, encouraged and sustained in the African continent despite globalisation?

Here are some envisaged approaches:

1. There is need to recognise that there is a continuum between colonialism, and globalisation in Africa. The unequal relationship that characterised colonialism has continued to define the makeup of globalisation. Since Africa occupies the peripheral space in the global arena, its social, political, economic and, even, sovereign power can be significantly reduced (and, at times, eroded) through global processes. This will definitely undermine loyalty to the continent. Understanding the extent to which colonialism has transmuted into globalisation would be a key factor in addressing the question of loyalty in Africa and its effect on Africa's development.

2. African leaders should through policies and actions encourage the spirit of loyalty. Often Africans are forced to migrate due to poverty, war, drought and hostile working environment brought about by government actions. For instance, Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea killed or exiled nearly all the intellectuals in his country during his tenure and declared himself the 'Grand Master of Science, Education, and Culture'. Ngugi was imprisoned by the Kenyan regime in 1977 and again in 1982, and was banned from teaching at the University of Nairobi and eventually driven into exile because of his attempt to 'decolonise' the mind of his people through his plays. Aukot (2005) notes that economic deprivation encourages people to look for means of surviving by going elsewhere and also when the organisational structure of the state is disturbed, people flee in search of security. This kind of situation will surely lead to split loyalty. Such split loyalty will invariably affect one's contribution to the development of one's country. The greater danger, however, is the fact that, at times, global loyalty outweighs the more basic and immediate loyalty which should be to one's country/continent. When this happens Africa's development is adversely affected. There is, therefore, need for African leaders to eschew policies and actions that help to distance Africans from pooling their resources for the development of the continent.

3. African leaders should seriously evaluate their personal conduct and its total effect on loyalty and Africa's development. For instance, in a situation where an African leader shuns the services of medical practitioners in his/her country and seeks medical intervention in the west, there would be a significant diversion of the meagre resources of his/her country to the west. This will, in turn, affect development as money that could have gone into catering for needs of the citizens is frittered away. A case in point is the medical bill plus sundry extraneous expenditure (parking fees for presidential aircraft, maintenance of the jet with its full complement of presidential crew including Air

<center>790</center>

force personnel, visits by different categories of public officials and politicians and so on) Nigeria had to foot as a result of medical services President Muhammadu Buhari received in a London hospital for an undisclosed ailment between May 7–August 18, 2017. Nwakanma (2017:34) accused President Buhari of abandoning his office for close to 90 days at a time Nigerians were suffering economic hardships and deprivations, loss of social status and cohesion, and insecurity. Obinna (2017) observes that the increasing number of Nigerians attempting suicide in recent times may be linked to the harsh economic conditions in the country. Besides, the action of the President embarking on medical tourism has a far-reaching implication for the country. It sends a powerful message that the sovereignty of the nation is meaningless to those entrusted with safeguarding it. Nwakanma (2017:34) insists that 'President Buhari no longer owes absolute loyalty to Nigeria' because he 'is already potentially compromised: a man owes loyalty to those in whose hands lies his life'.

CONCLUSION

This paper contends that there is need to interrogate the complex and complicated nature of globalisation and loyalty in Africa and how this relationship impedes Africa's development. Beyond the many meanings and misgivings attached to globalisation, the fact of its effect on the opportunities, choices, decisions, inputs and outputs of Africans remains undeniable and, often, comes with a price. On the one hand, globalisation has made it possible for Africans to be members of the new world society and to 'participate in' the common knowledge. On the other hand, it has consigned them to a marginal space making it possible for their outputs to be easily subsumed (and, at times, completely co-opted) into a new set of global productions. This situation can result in their detachment from their core norms and values and weakening of local ties. It is, therefore, required that African leaders both recognise and address this issue in order to encourage loyalty from the citizens. This will, in turn, lead to sustainable development in the continent. In all, then, evaluating the relationship between globalisation and loyalty in Africa in this paper has clearly demonstrated the significant role Africans can play in the development of the continent by aligning their loyalty with the continent.

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