Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.3 No.2 June, 2020; p.g. 334 – 341; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

LINUS OLUCHUKWU AKUDOLU, PhD
Department of Philosophy/Religious Studies
Alex Ekwueme Federal University
Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.
PHONE: +2348030782249, EMAIL: oluchukwu1900@gmail.com

&

STEPHEN O. AIGBONOGA, PhD
Department of Philosophy/Religious Studies
Alex Ekwueme Federal University
Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Abstract
Idea rules the world. Every action is traceable to a philosophy. Every social movement must anchor on one philosophical paradigm or the other. The understanding of the philosophical or metaphysical foundation enables one to know how to play his game and emerge victoriously among others. Globalization as we know is the current world order and has some metaphysical theories as its foundations. This paper therefore studies the meaning and nature of globalization and identifies the metaphysical theories that serve as its philosophical foundations, using phenomenological and hermeneutic methods.

Keywords: Philosophical Investigation, Metaphysical Foundations, Globalization, Social Movements, Universal Homogenization.

Introduction

Globalization is a burning issue in all social sciences today and equally a reigning concept in virtually every discipline. In the concept and practice of globalization, contraction of space-time is planted and deeply rooted. Little wonder Hakim Ben Hammouda (2001:21) writes: "Globalization corresponds to unprecedented contraction of space and time through the development of new means of communication and information technologies across the planet". Anthony Giddens (2007:1) qualifies it as "intensification of worldwide social relations which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa". This unprecedented contraction of space and time and intensification of world-wide social relations had been a long aged phenomenon but not in the degree of its recent manifestation.

In 1960's, Mcluhan envisaged that the world would become a village and this was accomplished more than he thought: the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and people become aware that they are receding (Ogugua and Oduah

2007). The receding of geography, the shrinking of space-time for contacts etc weaves a delicate web-like nature of interdependence and shared vulnerability, although the global seems localized and the local globalized. This scenario x-rays the present picture of our current world order. Nonetheless, this current social order is not without any philosophical foundation. Every social movement must be traceable to one philosophical paradigm or the other. It is therefore our intention to identify the philosophical foundations of globalization using phenomenological and hermeneutic methods. We have to study the nature of the social movement in order to be able identify its metaphysical foundations. As this is a qualitative and philosophical research, our data are mostly secondary sources as we consult many available literatures on globalization.

Nature of Globalization

First, globalization is associated with de-territorialization. According to this, a growing variety of social activities takes place irrespective of the geographical location of participants. As Jan Scholte (1996:46) observes, "global events can -- via telecommunication, digital computers, audio-visual media, rocketry and the like -- occur almost simultaneously anywhere and everywhere in the world". Globalization refers to increased possibilities for action between and among people in situations where latitudinal and longitudinal location seems immaterial to the social activity at hand. Even though geographical location remains crucial for many undertakings (for example, farming to satisfy the needs of a local market), deterritorialization manifests itself in many social spheres. Business people on different continents now engage in electronic commerce, television allows people situated anywhere to observe the impact of terrible wars being waged far from the comfort of their living rooms, academics make use of the latest video conferencing equipment to organize seminars in which participants are located at disparate geographical locations, the internet allows people to communicate instantaneously with each other notwithstanding vast geographical distances separating them. Territory in the sense of a traditional sense of a geographically identifiable location no longer constitutes the whole of "social space" in which human activity takes place. In this sense, globalization refers to the spread of new forms of non-territorial social activity. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2012) therefore describes it as reduction and removal of barriers between national borders in order to facilitate the flow of goods, capital, and services. Similarly, Palmer (2012) defines globalization as the diminution or elimination of state-enforced restrictions on exchanges across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a result. This implies elimination of technical barriers to facilitate interstate exchange.

Secondly, globalization is associated with intercultural homogenization as result of growth in social interconnectedness across existing geographical and political boundaries. Information technology like internet facilities have promoted cross breading and exchange of ideas and values among nations. The more decisive facet of globalization concerns the manner in which distant events and forces impact on local and regional endeavours. Internet might be seen as a major motivation to this interconnectedness as it allows for the exchange of ideas in cyberspace. Globalization, in this sense, refers "to processes of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents" (Held,1999:15). Akindele *et al* (2017) therefore

defines it as the process of the intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across international boundaries. It is principally aimed at the transcendental homogenization of political and socio-economic theory across the globe. It is equally aimed at making global being present worldwide at the world stage or global arena.

Thirdly, globalization must also include reference to the speed or velocity of social activities. Deterritorialization and interconnectedness initially seem chiefly spatial in nature. Yet it is easy to see how these spatial shifts are directly tied to the acceleration of crucial forms of social activity. The proliferation of high-speed transportation, communication, and information technologies constitute the most immediate source for these velocities in social activities. In the words of Gray (2017:n.p), "Globalization has speeded up enormously over the last century, thanks to great leaps in technology". The compression of space presupposes rapid-fire forms of technology; shifts in our experiences of territory depend on concomitant changes in the temporality of human action. High-speed technology only represents the tip of the iceberg. However, the linking together and expanding of social activities across borders is predicated on the possibility of relatively fast flows and movements of people, information, capital, and goods. Without these fast flows, it is difficult to see how distant events could possibly possess the influence they now enjoy. High-speed technology plays a pivotal role in the velocity of human affairs. But many other factors contribute to the overall pace and speed of social activity. The organizational structure of the modern capitalist factory offers one example. Certain contemporary habits and inclinations, including the "mania for motion and speed" represent another.

Fourthly, globalization should be conceived as a relatively long-term process. The triad of deterritorialization, interconnectedness, and social acceleration hardly represents a sudden or recent event in contemporary social life. Nonetheless, globalization has taken a particularly intense form in recent decades, as innovations in communication, transportation, and information technologies (for example, computerization) have generated stunning new possibilities for simultaneity and instantaneousness. In this view, present-day intellectual interest in the problem of globalization can be linked directly to the emergence of new high-speed technologies that tend to minimize the significance of distance and heighten possibilities for deterritorialization and social interconnectedness. Although the intense sense of territorial compression experienced by so many of our contemporaries is surely reminiscent of the experiences of earlier generations, some contemporary writers nonetheless argue that it would be mistaken to obscure the countless ways in which ongoing transformations of the spatial and temporal contours of human experience are especially far-reaching. While our nineteenth-century predecessors understandably marvelled at the railroad or the telegraph, a comparatively vast array of social activities is now being transformed by innovations that accelerate social activity and considerably deepen longstanding trends towards deterritorialization and social interconnectedness.

Fifthly, globalization promotes the culture of the dominant and as such can be seen as a form of Westernization. Odia (2006) explains that globalization is prominently determined by Western values and interests. While it seems to hold no future for developing countries like Africa, Odia insists that Africa have no choice but to participate in it. But one cannot argue successfully against the positive impact of globalization but the inherent advantage is un-

equilateral. This is because globalization is a kind of global capitalist movement and as such portrays the Biblical proverb which says that he who has will have more while he who does not have even the one he has will be taken away from him; the poor become poorer and the rich become richer. Khor (2003) further explains the reasons behind such unequal benefits. The first one is that the decision making processes in globalization have been dominated by government of the developed countries and their international institutions. In such a situation, they consider their special interest in formulation of these policies as against the developing countries. Secondly, the use of high tariffs measure by the developed countries put developing ones at disadvantage. The developed countries produce more goods and services, while the developing ones are the purchasers. Due to high tariffs on these goods and services, the purchasers suffer to the benefit of the developed countries. Thirdly, Uruguay Round's Table Agreement on Textile and Clothing requires that investors use a minimum level of local materials in their production. This could affect the viability of some local firms and sectors. Fourthly, the developed countries gain more through their expertise knowledge and skills which are employed and paid by the third world countries. Finally, the prices of medicines and other essential products which are produced by the developed countries rise to the detriment of the developing ones who are mostly the purchasers.

Finally, globalization should be understood as a multi-pronged process as it manifests itself in many different aspect of our society, thus: Economic, Political, Information, Religious and Cultural globalization. Economic globalization refers to increasing economic interdependence of national economies across the world through a rapid increase in cross-border movement of goods, service, technology and capital. Majidi (2017) explains that globalization manifests itself more in economic sector, in such a way that one of the most significant developments in recent years is convergence and integration of national economies in the global economics. Political globalization therefore consists of the institutionalization of international political structures. The functioning of international system and international institutions and organizations influence the decisions of the individual countries. Information globalization is the fact that with facilities like the satellite, radio and television, the internet and telecommunication, the traditional concepts and notions of space, time and distance have been drastically affected, reduced and redefined. Emphasizing the role of internet facilities on information globalization, Gray (2017) says, "The internet has revolutionized connectivity and communication, and helped people share their ideas very more widely, just as the invention of the printing press did in the 15th century. The advent of email made communication faster than ever". The religious and cultural aspects of society are not spared as traditional religions are displaced by the so-called international religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Christianity while the traditional ways of doing things replaced with the Western.

The Metaphysical Foundations of Globalization

From the above study, we can identify monism, Darwinism and materialism as the philosophical/metaphysical foundations of globalization. We shall now study the meaning of these philosophical theories and explain why they are the foundations of globalization with references to the afore-studied features and other literatures.

1. Monism

The term monism etymologically comes from the Greek: *μόνος* (*mono) meaning* "one" (Ogugua and Oduah 2007).This is therefore a philosophical view that sees all reality as ultimately

reduce to one single whole or unity. In other word, it is any philosophical view which holds that there is unity in a given field of inquiry. Accordingly, some philosophers may hold that the universe is one rather than dualistic or pluralistic. Monism may be theologically syncretic by proposing that there is one God who has many manifestations in the diverse religious traditions.

Monism as a philosophy is traceable to the ancient time. Numerous pre-Socratic philosophers described reality as monistic, in that they believed all things sprang from a single, primordial source. Some philosophers thought this substance was a natural principle, such as Thales (ca. 624 B.C.E.–ca. 546 B.C.E.) who believed it to be water and Anaximenes who claimed it was air. For Heraclitus, the principle was fire, which he saw as representative of the general principle that everything is in constant flux. For Pythagoras, the monistic principle was based in the numerical relationship between mathematics and geometrical structure of the universe. Others hinted at even more abstract principles of oneness. For Leucippus of Miletus and his disciple, Democritus of Abdera, all of reality was based on atomic structure or lack thereof. Anaximander labeled his conception of the monistic principle as *Apeiron* (meaning "the unknown"), referring to the singular essence from which all reality is derived. This one thing, Anaximander contended, could never be known. Perhaps the most influential of these conceptions was that of Parmenides, who identified the idea of the "One." This "One" characterized the totality of reality: a perfect, unmoving sphere, which is unchanging, and wholly undivided. Parmenides was perhaps closer to substantive monism, while other pre-Socratics were attributive monists, leaning towards materialism. These abstract conceptualizations of oneness would reemerge in the metaphysical structures of Plato and his contemporaries, although they were hardly monists. The Stoics, however, proclaimed that the universe proceeds from the evolution of an essential element in all things which they referred to as a "germ of reason" (Held, 1999). The germ of reason represented spirit and matter in absolute union, and all worldly particulars were derived from this entity and would return to it upon their destruction. Neo-Platonists, particularly Plotinus, expounded upon this idea of oneness in a crypto-mystical context. Like Parmenides, Plotinus taught that there was a single, absolute unity that underlies all earthly forms and polarities, which he referred to as "The One." According to Plotinus, all realities such as the Divine Mind *(Nous),* the Cosmic Soul *(Psyche),* and the World *(Cosmos)* were merely various degrees of emanations from this One. Plotinus claimed that, while this One cannot be described, it can be experienced; thus, encountering the One became the ultimate goal of mystical endeavor, a trend that can be seen in numerous religio-mystical systems (New World Encyclopedia 2018). The quest for oneness has been an important, universal drive and impulse throughout human history, culture, religious and philosophical thought. Here lies the attractiveness of monism, which subsumes all diversity and heterogeneity into one larger holistic category without internal divisions. This is exactly what globalization does. This is because it is principally aimed at the universal homogenization of ideas, values and culture through proliferation of high speed transportation and communication/information technologies which constitute the most immediate sources for blurring of geographical and territorial boundaries, leading to linking of the whole world into one global village. But being led from the west, globalization bears the imprint of American political and economic power and is uneven in its consequences. No doubt, western culture is mostly globalized. It therefore shows globalization as a western hegemony and as such displaces other cultures, replacing them with the Western. No wonder the Western individualism is taken over the world.

2. Darwinism

Darwinism is a set of movements and concepts related to ideas of transmutation of species or of evolution, including some ideas with no connection to the work of Charles Darwin. The meaning of "Darwinism" has changed over time, and varies depending on who is using the term. In the United States, the term "Darwinism" is often used by creationists as a pejorative term in reference to beliefs such as atheistic naturalism, but in the United Kingdom the term has no negative connotations, being freely used as a short hand for the body of theory dealing with evolution, and in particular, evolution by natural selection (Branch 2009). Ogugua and Oduah (2007:9) explain the term, thus:

> The term "Darwinism" has both a narrow and a broad meaning. In the narrow sense, it refers to a theory of organic evolution presented by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and by other scientists who developed various aspects of his views, in the broad sense, it refers to a complex scientific, social, theological and philosophical thought that was historically stimulated and supported by Darwin theory of eevolution.

Darwin postulated the principle of survival of the fittest as an outcome of his study of organic substances. It is a reflection of the second principle of natural, moral law theory -the principle of self-preservation. It posits that every organism (being) struggles to remain alive in its ambience. It suggests the natural propensity to perfect its skills to do so. Describing the struggle, Mattick (1956:n.p) writes:

> In the animal world we have seen that the vast majority of species live in societies, and that they find in association the best arms for the struggle for life: understood, of course, in its wide Darwinian sense – not as a struggle for the sheer means of existence, but as a struggle against all natural conditions unfavorable to the species. The animal species, in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits, and the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development, are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress. The mutual protection which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay.

The competitions among nations and norm for success in the 18th, 19th through the 21st century show that the logic of survival remains survival of the fittest. Everything about globalization seems to be that; hence globalization revolves around Darwinism and neo-Darwinism. The rich country becomes richer while the poor suffers; the developed countries lead while others follow, the culture of the developed prevails over the developing one. This is because the economic foundation of globalization is capitalism and the philosophical root of capitalism is Darwinism.

3. Materialism

Materialism (or physicalism) asserts that everything, including mental activity, can be reduced to physical substrates. Thomas Hobbes was the first modern spokesperson for this theory, developing it in direct counterpoint to Descartes' popular dualism. Hobbes held that all entities, both living and non-living, consist of only one type of substance: physical matter. Hobbes considered the Cartesian notion of an incorporeal substance that exists separate from the physical to be incoherent, at best. In Hobbes' estimation, persons are not an admixture of spirit and corporeality, but rather corporeal beings alone (Mattick 1956). Thought and sensation, he claimed, are not activities of the spirit but rather the effect of external stimuli upon the sense organs. Materialism could be said to be a philosophy; an ideology or even a creed at the theoretical and practical levels of life. Materialism holds that matter is the ultimate reality, hence is primary to spirit or mind. Materialism indeed reduces man a biological and sentient animal, hence denies the reality of the spiritual realm.

Globalization anchored on materialism is preoccupied with the physical development and not morality. These are the features of the modern globalization, laying emphasis on science and technology and not on religion and spirituality, making human needs to be the determinant of values and not value the determinant of the human actions; in other word, the end justifies the mean and not the mean justifying the end. In globalization, anything that works out the expected result is accepted no matter its ethical implications. It is not surprising that Randall (1966:309) writes, "The age of science is necessary an age of materialism; ours is a scientific age; and it may be said with truth that we are materialists now" In other word, science is rooted on materialism which is the phenomenon of the present age; the age of globalization.

Conclusion

We can now say that globalization is a long process of a world-wide web-like interconnectedness and interrelationships deeply rooted in contraction of space and time by elimination of technical barriers in such a way that distant events and forces impact on various local happenings and the local on the distant. It is a movement of the whole world into one global village. Its metaphysical foundations as we have discovered include monism, Darwinism and materialism. The understanding of these foundations will enable the players to posit themselves well in order to tap from its vast benefits. It is a social trend with many advantages but at this modern era, is been accused of being yet another name for Westernization. "The fact remains that it is different from Westernization, nonetheless it is led from the West, bears the strong imprint of American political and economic power and is highly uneven in its consequences" (Akudolu 2014: 161). The underdeveloped world should therefore rise to the challenge of globalization by technical education, industrialization and by shifting from analogue to digital ways of doing things in other to succeed and contribute their quota in the current world order. If they do not make much efforts, they shall be swallowed up as monism inspired the movement of globalization towards making all nations to embrace uniform culture, most especially Western culture. The trend is also anchored on Darwinism characterized by a scenario of survival of the fittest and as such more efforts are needed from African nations. They should embrace the system soul and body and transport their values with its rich spiritual contents to others through the reigning information

technologies to be able to bit the scourge of materialism (Akudolu, 2018). Globalization has come to stay. All must embrace it with vigor, contribute to it or lose out.

References

Akindele, S. T., Olaopa, O. R. and Gidado, T .O. 2017. "Globalization, its Implication and Consequence for Africa". *Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (4): 221-230. DOI:1080/09718923.2001.11892309

Akudolu, L.O. 2014. Globalization and the Decline of Communalism in Igbo Society. PhD thesis, NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka.

Akudolu, L. O. 2018. "Educational Reform and Value Re-orientation for Preservation of African Communalistic Principle". *International Journal of Social, Politics and Humanities* 1 (2): 1-5 https://zambrut.com/communalistic-principles/

Branch, G. 2009. "Don't call it Darwinism". *Evolution: Education and Outreach*. New York: Springer.

Gray, A. 2017."What is globalization anyway?"*World Economic Forum2017*. http://www.weforum.org

Hamouda, B. H 2000. "Perspectives on Globalization and its Structures". *Codestria Bulletin*, p.21.

Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D., Perraton, .1999. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Khor, M. 2003.. *Globalization and the South: Some Critical Issues*. Nigeria, Ibadan: Spectrum Book.

Majidi, A. F. 2017. "Globalization and Economic Growth: The Case Study of Developing Countries". *Asian Economic Review* 17(6): 589-599.

Mattick, P. 1956. "Kropotkin on Mutual Aid". https://www.marxists.org. Acessed on 7/1/2020

New World Encyclopedia 2018. "Monism"mhttps://newworldencyclopedia.org. Acessedon 7/1/2020

Odia , S.I. 2006. "Globalization and African Philosophy". In Asiegbu, M.F and Agbakoba, J. (eds), *Philosophy and Praxis in Africa*. Nigeria, Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Ogugua, I. N. and Oduah, I. C. 2007. "Globalization and Development: A Philosophical view point". *Essence Interdisciplinary-International Journal of Philosophy* 4: 1-24.

Palmer, T. G. 2002. "Globalization is great". *Cato's Letter: A quarterly Message on Liberty* 1(2) https://www.cato.org. Acessesed on 7/1/2020

Randall, J. H. 1966. *Readings in Philosophy*. New York: Barnes and Noble Inc.

Scholte, J. A. 1996. "Beyond the Buzzword: Towards a Critical Theory of Globalization".

In: Kofman E and Gillian Y (eds) *Globalization: Theory and Practice*. London: Pinter.

United Nations 1994."The outcome of Uruguay Roundtable: An initial Assessment". *Supporting Papers to the Trade and Development Report*. Geneva: NCTAD.