



Research Article

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Contemporary globalization, the social sciences and the challenge of scholarship in the emerging world regions

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Abstract

This contribution interrogates contemporary globalization, the social sciences and the challenge of scholarship in the emerging world regions. It identifies contemporary globalization as a synonym for the third wave of globalization, commencing post World War II, with a large American

globalism measure. It is accepted in the paper that "any discipline or branch of science that deals with human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects" is classifiable as a social science. In this work, a reference to social science scholarship is specifically to Africa, Asia, Latin American, and the Middle Eastern nations in the emerging world regions. The paper's thesis is on the global need for new interdependencies and sensitivities in social science scholarship under contemporary globalization.

Keywords – Contemporary globalization, Emerging world regions, Social science scholarship, Social sciences

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization is comparable to the parable of the blind men and an elephant. The group of blind men (some diffusions of the original story say they were six men), who never came across an elephant previously, learned and conceptualized what the mammal was like by touching it. Each blind man felt a different but only one part of the animal's body, such as the side or the tusk. They accordingly described the elephant based on their own experiences, and their descriptions were different from each other. In some accounts of the proverbial narrative, the blind men suspected each other of dishonesty, and they came to blows (Marber, 2009; Johnson, 2018). But this paper is not about skirmishes and scuffles. The parable of the blind men and an elephant only alludes to globalization's character as a multifaceted phenomenon (Bertucci & Alberti, 2003; Guttal, 2007; Jotia & Ntheetsang, 2011; Mir, Hassan & Qadri, 2014). Globalization is accordingly multifaceted and complex (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006). This contribution's choice of a facet is contemporary globalization, a selection framed on the supposition that contemporary globalization's net effect on social sciences in the emerging world regions is currently negative.

The embedded issues are perceived as the challenge of social science scholarship in such nascent regions. Are the surrounding issues culturally relative or questions that demand universal scholarly attention? The thesis of the



work is eventually derived from this research question. In executing this paper's research tasks, the key variables (contemporary globalization, social sciences, and emerging world regions) are isolated for conceptual elucidations. The central arguments are invariably presented in the contribution section, which squarely deals with the challenge of scholarship in the emerging regions. The methodology of the work is logical argumentation. The paper therefore, actually relies on secondary sources of data to draw inferences and conclusions.

2. CONCEPTUALIZING GLOBALIZATION: WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY GLOBALIZATION

Defining globalization has over the years elicited monumental scholarly and lay contributions. All scholars are invariably in agreement that it is difficult to conceptualize globalization. The concept of contemporary globalization immediately invokes the idea of old, ancient globalization or simply globalization from the past. Globalization therefore, must have a history, to which this paper resorts. Thus, Robertson (2003) suggests that globalization is traceable to the interconnections that marked human evolution since the earliest of times. There were obvious changes, as humanity's interconnections assumed global dimensions. This led to three consecutive waves of globalization, which have radically transformed human societies and their economies. The first wave, which eventually led to war and revolution in Europe, also engendered an industrial revolution, which shaped the second wave in the 19th century. But the second wave also failed and ended in depression and war. In the occasioning rush to monopolize the riches and power promised by globalization, as classes, nations, and empires intensified their rivalries. Robertson squarely identifies the third wave as commencing with American globalism (referring to post World War II developments) in the areas of decolonization, modernization, democracy, economic, environmental, and multicultural challenges.

Globalization, Mir, Hassan and Qadri (2014, p.607) highlight, is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses economic, social, political, technological, and cultural dimensions. Scholte (2002) saw globalization as the spread of transplanetary and super territorial connections between people. Globalization is accordingly a series of actions and natural occurrences that cover the course, consequences, and causes of international, multinational, transcontinental, and transcultural assimilation of human and physical activities (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006). Robertson (1992) submits that globalization simultaneously refers to the miniaturization of the globe and the strengthening of awareness of the world in its entirety.

Pieterse (2012) traces the roots of globalization's terminology to business studies, from where it emerged in the 1970s and then rapidly spread in the 1990s. Its growth, Pieterse argues, trailed the post-war emergence of multinational concerns and the later increases in international finance focus, worldwide reach in advertising, the apparent revolution in information and communication technology (ICT) sphere, accelerated jet travels, and the ascendance of global value chains. Another issue that scholars are likely to agree upon is that the concept of globalization (particularly its contemporary nuances) has economic roots. In Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006) significant contribution, many conceptual tendencies refer to economic issues. But globalization largely remains an amorphous concept with a fluidity that accommodates the classification of contemporary globalization.

Globalization is the big story of our era (Wolf, 2014, p.22). The era allusion here is certainly to contemporary globalization. Negash (2015, p.86) thus suggests that contemporary globalization means globalization since the end of the Second World War. Gerle (2000, p.158) further underscores the point that the contemporary phase of globalization is multifaceted, possessing the economic, political, cultural, technological, and religious dimensions. Contemporary globalization accordingly cuts across institutions and societies and permeates processes and sundry systems. Following the demarcations of Robertson (2003) in the three waves of globalization, contemporary globalization is synonymous with the third wave of the process, commencing post World War II, with a large American globalism dose.



3. CONSTITUENTS OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The disciplines classified as social sciences are essentially known because they concentrate on the study of contemporary human societies, their cultures, economies, organizations and generic development. These disciplines thrive on attempting to locate the logic of social development, seeking patterns of relationships and their causative factors, that are not only theoretically explainable but can also be appraised through painstaking and practical examination (Bastow, Dunleavy & Tinkler, 2014).

Science Daily (2019) posits that social science is an academic field that deals with society's study and the associations among groups and individuals, often relying fundamentally on practical styles. Its subjects' specificities include sociology, political science, anthropology, psychology, and economics. And in broader perspectives, it encompasses some areas in the humanities, such as history, archaeology, linguistics, and law. According to Science Daily, positivist social scientists and natural scientists utilize similar methods and tools to understand society, so they see science in its firmer modern nuance. On the other hand, the scholars of Interpretivist social science may use symbolic interpretation or social critique, as opposed to the construction of empirically verifiable and falsifiable premises. They accordingly see science in its broader trajectories. Under modern academic tendencies, however, there is eclecticism in the researchers' hues, whereby multiple methodologies are adopted. This could be done by combining the qualitative and quantitative methodologies of scientific investigation.

Social science, argues Nisbet (2019) refers to "any discipline or branch of science that deals with human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects". In summarizing the explications in this section of the paper, Nisbet (2019) position is underscored and adopted.

4. CONCEPT OF EMERGING WORLD REGIONS

There are already in the existing literature, comparable concepts to the notion of emerging world regions. These include the concepts of emerging markets, emerging economies, emerging democracies, and others. The scenario, therefore, necessitates further conceptual clarifications on emerging world regions in this presentation. The usage herein still follows the contours of contemporary globalization and American globalism in the third wave of globalization (Robertson, 2003). Two notable demarcations knew post-war Europe (post World War II). These were the Western and Eastern Blocs, actually influenced by the United States, and the defunct Soviet Union, respectively. The Western Bloc thus refers to capitalist countries under the apparent influence of the United States. There is no commonly accepted definition of the countries that currently make up the Western Bloc / World. However, they are all highly industrialized countries, propagating and representing "Western" pluralism and capitalism. But why the American influence in all of this? It is essential because the United States perceives the US as heir to Western civilization, and the country thus had a duty to protect the West against its adversaries, of which the then Soviet Union-led communist bloc, sometimes termed "the East" ranked among the most prominent (Loth & Knight, 1994; Steiner, 2014; Kurth, 2017).

Within the parameters of social science scholarship, when the West and the United States are excluded, what remains, come under the emerging world classification (in social science scholarship). This position lexically includes Eastern Europe but not practically. The disputations and complexities on the current composition of Eastern Europe (Ramet, 1998) may take the paper outside its original designs. Furthermore, it is underscored that this emerging world classification in this paper is not about world powers and regional political giants. The focus of the article is a social science scholarship. In this work, a reference to emerging world regions is Africa, Asia, Latin American, and the Middle Eastern nations. Even at that, differences within and between countries in the emerging regions, as well as to similarities between some of these and the Western ones is still recognized in this classification as locations such as Singapore, Japan, and South Korea have become developed (Cohen & Cohen, 2015; Chen & Chang, 2015).



5. THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP IN THE EMERGING WORLD REGIONS UNDER CONTEMPORARY GLOBALIZATION

Under contemporary globalization, therefore, scholars in the emerging world regions are expected to introduce cogent issues to the global table of research in the social sciences. The specific challenge in this regard is that these issues should meet with global standards and conform simultaneously to local relevance demands. The subjects of the research are accordingly expected to solve sub-regional and local problems under global standards. Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006) underscores the multidimensionality of globalization, spanning a multiplicity of disciplines, geopolitical milieus, and the existence of some diversity of communities and cultures under common global contexts. This contribution thus concentrates on social science disciplines wherein the context of globalization, the surrounding issues in the challenge of scholarship within the emerging world regions are not truly culturally relative. They are questions that demand universal scholarly attention. For example, issues of hunger and inequality in the emerging world regions can still attract the attention of scholars from the West in the age of globalization. Moreover, in the age of globalization, scholars of the two divides are expected under these scenarios to cooperate and inaugurate new journals domiciled in the emerging regions. Global scholars are published under excellent standards of peer review. Hence, the central challenge of social science scholarship in the emerging world regions under contemporary globalization is to avoid being assimilated by the more advanced regions.

Bentley (2004) admonishes that in globalizing history and historicizing globalization: attempts need to be made in locating the paths which lead beyond the thoughts of the world being segregated into national spaces, the notion of the modernity standards of Europe being perceived as the suitable measure for all the world's societies, beyond the different cultural, political and economic tendencies and interests, which have besmeared the attempts to engender understanding about the world at large, and beyond the persuasions to resort to individual histories and domestic experiences as the only coherent historical subjects. History is interchangeable with social science in adopting Bentley's positions for the purposes of this contribution. The world under contemporary globalization cannot, therefore, validly be limited to the viewpoints of national locations or the suppositions that modernity by European standards remains the fitting criterion for the assessment of all the world's peoples. It is the challenge of social science in this era to continue to highlight this reality. It is agreed in this submission that globalization is different things to different people (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006). In the social sciences, however, globalization needs to recognize that knowledge production is not region-dependent. It is pertinent to underscore the view that globalization needs to be distinguished from an amorously conceived modernity and its direct trajectories. Scholarship in the era of globalization implies that scholars can stay in the emerging world regions and think positively influence knowledge production from their emerging world regional locations.

The operative word in the social sciences is "social," not science. It is the word "social," which distinguishes social science from the other "sciences." Then in whatever way this word is conceptualized, the people-factor would be found at its center. The social sciences are accordingly centrally about people and their societies, welfare, well-being, hopes, aspirations, conflicts, resolutions, and reconciliations of such conflicts. Under contemporary globalization, these are issues that should continuously prick the world's conscience as they require attention in both the emerging and advanced systems. Scholarship in these regards, therefore, calls for joint enterprises. From the emerging region of Africa, social sciences can globally derive interregional focus and value by conducting studies on "Ubuntu," which Chukwuere (2020) describes as an African word, translating to "humanity". Invariably, this paper's thesis is not about the absolute dearth of interregional sensitivity in social science interventions under contemporary globalization.

For example, focusing on the tension between the goals of fairness in the developed nations and improved living conditions in the poor countries, Dani Rodrik of Harvard University recently opined that the developed nations' increased trade relations with low-income economies have rather contributed to domestic wage inequality. Rodrik further opined that perhaps, the single best way to globally increase incomes would be to encourage a huge



inflow of labor from the needy regions into rich economies' labor markets (Rodrik, 2019). This paper sees Rodrik's submission as bordering on interregional sensitivity and calls for more of such interregional considerations in social science scholarship under contemporary globalization.

6. CONCLUSION

Globalization and its contemporary variant are positive issues in this presentation. Generic human conducts which social sciences interrogate are matters of contemporary global concern. But contemporary globalization in social science scholarship needs to transcend its current suspicions of hegemony and react constructively to interregional sensitivities and cooperation demands. Inclusive attacks are required in delivering the goods of sustainable development and universal concord, expected of contemporary globalization in social science scholarship. The embedded challenge is a global challenge. It is not culturally relative. This paper has therefore called for new interdependencies in social science scholarship (under contemporary globalization). It has been highlighted in the context of globalization, that knowledge production in the social sciences is not region-dependent. The paper's thesis is on the global need for new interdependencies and sensitivities in social science scholarship under contemporary globalization.

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