

Review

The influence of nationalism on pan Africanism

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In his book "The World Is Flat," Thomas Friedman experiences the first signs of globalization while on a trip to India. Friedman realizes the implications of a world connected economically, and the political ramifications that may ensue. This convergence is due to the advent of computerized systems that make information and workflow easy to share anywhere in the world. With the potential to produce consumer goods where labor and supplies are cheaper, Friedman calls it "a flattening effect" for the world of international trade. He believes the world is flat in the sense competition is now equalized; first world countries, third world countries, small entrepreneurs and large global supply chains all have an equal chance of success in the global economy. A flat world creates a zeitgeist of metropolitanism, a world of global citizens where nationalism is blurred across borders. A flat world also creates transnational inter-dependence. Keohane and Nye stand behind it being a deterrent to nationalism: "For those who wish the United States to retain world leadership, interdependence has become part of the new rhetoric, to be used against both economic nationalism at home and assertive challenges abroad. In the height of globalization, how is it that nationalism is fostered, and how can it influence Pan-Africanism?"

Key words: Nationalism, Pan Africanism, globalization, individualism, development, international relations theory.

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Friedman's book "The World is Flat," reflects the author's experiences of the first signs of globalization while on a trip to India. Friedman realizes the implications of a world connected economically, and the political ramifications that may ensue. This convergence is due to the advent of computerized systems that make information and workflow easy to share anywhere in the world. With the potential to produce consumer goods where labor and supplies are cheaper, Friedman calls it "a flattening effect" (Friedman, 2005: 9) for the world of international trade. He believes the world is flat in the sense competition is now equalized; first world countries,

third world countries, small entrepreneurs and large global supply chains all have an equal chance of success in the global economy. A flat world creates a zeitgeist of metropolitanism, a world of global citizens where nationalism is blurred across borders. A flat world also creates transnational inter-dependence. Keohane and Nye (1977) stand behind it being a deterrent to nationalism:

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home and assertive challenges abroad.” (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 7). In the height of globalization, this paper aims to explore how is it that nationalism is fostered, and how can it influence Pan-Africanism?

GLOBAL CRISIS

In 2008 the US was jolted by the financial market crash, an event spurred by Wall Street’s overspending and under-collateralization of the US housing market. The banking system oversold sub-prime mortgages triggering a market collapse that plunged millions of Americans into financial ruin (Roubini and Mihm, 2010). Losing jobs, money market accounts, life-savings, homes, and all hope, some Americans took their own lives. Others were unable to recover until four years later at which time they became the new additions to the lower class living at or slightly above the poverty line. Let us refer to this socio-economic group as the New Poor.

Capitalism became unpopular as "Occupy Wall Street," became popular, spreading across the US. Global leaders watched closely but were not prepared for the strength of this financial wave nor the social change that was riding the crest (Reifer, 2013: 187). Occupy Wall Street made its way across the Atlantic Ocean in 2010. The US economic recession acted as a lamp onto inequalities globally, birthing protests on worldwide economic, racial, and class-based imbalances. The occupy movement served as the impetus for the Arab Spring in 2013 (Reifer, 2013: 189), as the youth in the Middle East took the opportunity of a crisis to press for more freedom and modern politics (Sawyer, 2006: 5). By 2014 when global markets were stabilizing, countries like Italy, Spain, and Greece accepted loans from Germany and the IMF to survive.

Financial matters were compounded in 2014 because of counter-activism to the Arab Spring by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The caliphate emerged using gruesome humanitarian atrocities to subdue citizens and create a large sharia law territory. The spread of capitalism was to blame:

“The rise of capitalism and the industrial revolution brought challenges to traditional values and a worldview that encouraged achieved rather than ascribed status, individualism rather than community, innovation instead of continuity with tradition, and increasingly secular rather than religion social beliefs.” (Inglehart and Norris, 2003: 16).

Global allies incurred new expenditures to combat ISIS, while trying to stabilize their economies from the financial crises. The coalition included 14 countries; U.S. Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Denmark,

Norway, Belgium, Turkey, Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Australia, and Canada. By 2016, the rising number of refugees fleeing war-torn Syria and Iraq added to the already stressed economies of neighboring European countries. The birth of Nationalism in the 21st century began here. The military work that brought countries together produced a bi-product that led to separation and national issues on refugee immigration.

21ST CENTURY NATIONALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

Kenneth Waltz purports structural realism to explain that politics is confined by the structure of the system (Waltz, 1979). What happens when the structure changes? Politics changes, particularly at the international level:

“Theories of Int’l politics that concentrate causes at the individual or national level are reductionist; theories that conceive of causes operating at the international level as well are systemic.” (Waltz, 1979: 18). The systemic global change caused by the 2008 recession open the space for a new style of global governance (Sawyer, 2006: XIX). “During periods of state crisis, subordinate groups’ demands for rights, power, and social or political advancement are most likely to be heard.” (Sawyer, 2006: 5).

In America, the voice of the proletariat was being heard through presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, who campaigned promoting socialist ideology through democratic reform. As the county rallied behind ideas of economic and social solidarity, candidate Trump campaigned on the opposite political spectrum; one of elitism, racism, and nationalism. When he won, the global community heard outright presidential threats to China on trade issues and directives regarding Mexico paying for an immigration wall. A new political paradigm had arrived (Khun, 2012: 1). This paradigm swept the globe; right-wing leaders won elections all around the world under the sentiment of nationalism.

Citizens straddled the line between nationalism and Individualism, with meanings behind causes that were pluralistic (Taylor, 1985: 2). In the US, Americans protested for Black Lives Matter, the Women’s March, LGBTQ movements, MeToo movement, Pro-life, climate change, white supremacy, respect for immigrants, gun laws, anti-semitism, and racial inequalities. Citizens interpreted their own meaning into the protest creating islands of nationalism within individualism. Taylor (1985) helps to explain:

“Meaning is for a subject; it is not the meaning of the situation in vacuo, but its meaning for a subject, a specific subject, a group of subjects, or perhaps what its meaning is for the human subject as such (even though particular

humans might be reproached with not admitting or realizing this)" (Taylor, 1985: 22).

In the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia and Africa, individual freedoms and women's issues are the current zeitgeist (USAID, 2017). Sitting leaders in countries around the world face the challenges of new thought by their constituents. Liberal and Conservative nationalism prevail as the global community is plugged in and influenced by readily available global news and social media. Nationalism runs two ways; (1) excluding those who are not from the country, and (2) joining those within the country who share the same ideology. This is indicative of having nationalistic views on borders and trade yet feel strongly about equitable distribution of wealth. Individualism runs singularly for self-benefit, though it crosses the line with nationalism when those who are "like us" are considered. Nationalism combined with individualism fosters shared social and political ideology as well as self-expression.

"..the public has given increasingly high priority to quality-of-life issues, individual autonomy and self-expression, the need for environmental protection, and direct participation in political decision making through petitions, protests, and demonstrations." (Inglehart and Norris, 2003:17).

FROM NATIONALISM TO PAN-AFRICANISM

From the global financial and social crisis of arose a latent, humanistic movement among the super wealthy. In America, the top income earners equivalent of 1% of the country, enjoyed more wealth than 99% of the US population (Reifer, 2013: 2). The 99% made such a noise, that the 1% heard the cries which was one of the goals of the Occupy Movement. Economic reform was put in place in the form of the Dodd Frank Act (Roubini and Mihm, 2010), but more important, it became fashionable for the supra-wealthy to become anti-consumerists and living simply (Stanger, 2015). A new onslaught of trendy terminology was created for what I call the "neo-capitalist movement." Terms like conscious capitalism, inclusive capitalism, creative capitalism, and compassionate capitalism are the norm for liberal elites in 2019. Neo-capitalists such as Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Tom Stein, Warren Buffet, Richard Branson and a myriad of others from 22 countries have pledged to give away the majority of their wealth while they are living to support global causes (Stanger, 2015: 11).

The financial sector embraced new structures called development impact bonds and social impact investing (GIIN, 2019). This structure of investing yields profits to investors while solving salient humanitarian and

enterprise issues in developing countries. For the wealthy conservative elites who failed to evolve with this trend, they may be left holding the bag of money that no longer grows for them. A significant portion of Impact funds are being directed to Africa. From healthcare on a national scale to small and medium-sized enterprises, Africa is gaining the infrastructure and entrepreneurial boost it needs to raise the standard of living. As thing progress for Africa, the diaspora will see opportunities to return to a country filled with hope and economic promise. Trained in economics, communication, politics, science, health, engineering, and environmental studies, the diaspora are poised to contribute to better governance in Africa's 54 countries (MPI, Migration Policy Institute (2015).

Some of the most highly educated leaders in Africa are; John Magufuli – Tanzania elected in 2015, Peter Mutharika - Malawi elected in 2014 with background in international justice, and Ellen Johnson Searleaf - Liberia elected in 2006 as the first female African head of state. They are the pioneers of change. African elections are pushing out leaders who have ruled 10-20 years. No longer are the sons of rulers able to automatically take up leadership where their fathers left off. Several countries have found fresh political voices in women (Akwei, 2017) creating an open invitation for women in the diaspora to return and run for office (BBC News, 2018).

Investments in Africa made by China through its Belt and Road Initiative have backfired. A sense of nationalism has come over the African countries, as they begin to align more with investments from the US. The US is not a part of the African continent, yet African leaders see the Chinese as an un-welcome foreigner (Greer, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Pan Africanism may be the most significant movement in the new frontier of neo-capitalism. Kenya has found favor with America in prior years, though what makes things different is today's neo-capitalistic zeitgeist. Today's investments are geared for slow growth with the explicit purpose of creating industry for Africa and African entrepreneurs.

Jean (1991) writes about the Eurocentric veil or universalism, the prescription of European principles to every facet of being. His writing is about the lack of diversity in thought within American governance:

"For America to become in principle and practice a pluralistic, democratic society, and for our nation to again become economically productive, it is necessary to acknowledge that a group of people numbering in the tens of millions has to be included as an equal partner in

the current and future unfolding of America's society and political economy" (Jean 1991: X). This statement is akin to what African states have been trying to explain to US foreign aid and policymakers. If the millions of laborers in Africa are not included as equal partners in industry, the country will not become productive. Asante (1987) similarly notes:

"The point is that a euro-linear view seeks to predict and to control. An afro-circular view seeks to interpret and understand" (Aante, 1987: 18). These afro-centric views are currently being taken to heart regarding investments in Africa. Today's neo-capitalists have educated themselves on place-based or human-centered development, models based on community input. The evolution of nationalism has provided the zeitgeist and the economic conditions for the growth of Pan Africanism.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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