

Globalization and Housing Development in Nigeria: The Impacts, Gains and Challenges

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Abstract

This paper is an investigation into the impacts, gains and challenges of globalization on the processes of housing development in Nigeria. It provides an insight into the nature of globalization as an ideological revolution of the new millennium.

It then proceeds to a definition of terms, specifically, the definition of globalization as a trend towards the dissolution of boundaries affecting many of the relationships in our everyday lives. People of various nations are directly experiencing how boundaries are losing their significance as physical, legal and cultural barriers – but also as frameworks – for the exchange of goods, people, knowledge and ideas. This could result in a gain in terms of prosperity, freedom, plurality and life chances.

The paper then provides an elucidation of the economic and cultural dimensions of globalization and their impacts and gains on the socio-economic and the socio-cultural environment of housing development in Nigeria. It then outlines the specific areas of challenges posed by the phenomenon of globalization in housing delivery, namely, housing need and housing demand and policy frameworks for housing delivery. The impacts and gains of globalization on holistic approaches, teamwork and logistic arrangements for housing development are also highlighted.

This paper then reaches the conclusion of the positive impacts, gains and the benefits of the multi-sectoral challenges of globalization in the context of modalities for housing development in Nigeria.

GLOBALIZATION AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE IMPACTS, GAINS AND CHALLENGES

INTRODUCTION

As a major ideological revolution, the threshold of the new millennium has witnessed the continued rise of globalization and its multi-sectoral impacts. The term globalization has come to have strong ideological associations. Unfortunately, globalization's critics and enthusiasts both have their gaze fixed entirely on the economic aspect of this phenomenon. For one side, globalization contains the source of "unlimited opportunities", for the other, it represents the danger of a new form of colonization by industrialized nations. Where one side extols the benefits of the "global village", the other refers to "global pillage".

In many places, citizens – also in the developed countries – experience globalization as interference in their personal lives. They are concerned about their jobs and their social security and they see the democratic welfare state under threat – and with it democracy and national sovereignty. Even a cursory examination finds city economies caught up in the surging waves of globalization (with its emphasis on competition, on-time delivery and seamless standards), a nearly overwhelming force that obliges national governments to open their economies, liberalize their rules and regulations, and pass down much of their political and fiscal power to cities.

THE DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION:

Globalization has economic, political and cultural dimensions. The world economy has been fundamentally changed by the technological revolution and dynamic integration processes in international trade and international finance. The United Nations plays a central role here. It is the only organization that offers a framework for overcoming the inequity between rich and poor, for realizing a settlement between nations and regions, for achieving world peace and sustainable development. This is evident in the United Nations' initiative to create a 'global impact' with transnational corporations on the voluntary observance of human rights and basic environmental and social standards. Mastering these enormous challenges cannot be accomplished by co-operation within the international community of nations alone. The non-governmental sector, civil society organizations, such as NGOs, foundations, trade unions, churches and businesses, are themselves increasingly becoming 'global players' and participating in the policy-making processes.

A process of political globalization, parallel to economic globalization, requires a co-operative judicial and security policy. The advocacy here is for a system of global co-operative society based on a comprehensive security concept, particularly against the background of the worldwide fight against terrorism. Indeed, the true challenge of globalization is political in nature: when more and more decisions are taken out of the traditional framework of authority and responsibility based upon our democratic institutions, which continue to be organized around the nation state, then we must develop new forms of political control and transnational democratic scrutiny of decisions.

Globalization also has an impact on our cultural identity. The important thing here – with all due respect for different traditions – is to reveal the common values shared by all world cultures. This includes unambiguous support for human rights, especially for the right to equality of the sexes. Discrimination or even abuse of women cannot be justified by reference to cultural traditions. Human rights are inviolable. Ethnological research into the cultural dimension of globalization points to opportunities and risks different from the discussion that is taking place in the media. This has given rise to some assertions on this aspect. In this connection, a new diversity is emerging. Many traditions and practices are disappearing in the course of the exchange processes. At the same time, new cultural forms and new ways of life are constantly developing. The global culture is marked by an unequal balance of power. Hegemony in the global culture is seldom exerted directly by establishing supposedly universal standards. If people want to be heard, they have to articulate their differences within these categories. Certain kinds of differences are emphasized, while others are ignored or suppressed. Another assertion points to the fact that globalization and localization are mutually dependent. Local phenomena are increasingly manifested as a fact of global phenomena and actually emerge within them. The global triumph of McDonalds has triggered a renaissance of local snacks in some countries. People often do not become aware of typical elements in their own culture until they make contact with a broader public. However, emphasizing cultural peculiarities involves the risk of ethnocentrism and making cultural differences absolute. Local housing styles and typologies of houseform are also reflecting the current global phenomena in housing development.

THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT: HOUSING NEED, HOUSING DEMAND AND SUPPLY.

The Demand for Housing in Nigeria:

While rapid industrialization and the consequent urbanization has contributed remarkably to enhancing employment opportunities in the country, it has also imposed severe pressures on the civic authorities to increase the residential accommodation and the existing infrastructural facilities.

However, the demographic scene in Nigeria has witnessed a continuous increase in the population over the years.

Housing Need, Housing Demand and Supply:

Rapid population increase, economic buoyancy and improved standard of living are factors that intensify housing demand. In order to cope with the rising population nationwide, the current housing supply of 2.3 standard dwelling/1000 must be increased to 8-10 dwellings to yield a cumulative total of 13 million.

Conceptually, housing need and housing demand are separate. Housing need shows the total requirement for shelter without considering the ability of the families to pay for it. Generally, housing needs are determined by comparing existing housing conditions with those conditions that are regarded as socially desirable in terms of structural quality, rates of occupancy, sanitary facilities and other amenities and which fulfill certain desired standards of health, privacy and so on. The future housing needs will also be estimated on projections based on data derived from such a comparison and related to demographic and other socio-economic changes. In contrast housing demand, however, reflects the desire for housing supported by the economic ability to satisfy the desire. It represents the market aspect of housing and covers all kinds of housing units ranging from low-cost housing units to the luxury type. In other words, it reflects the actual output of housing at current income levels. Housing demand is only a part of the socially felt need for housing.

To explain it further, the effective demand for housing is obtained from each household's desire to pay for housing. The income level of the household, income distribution and the prices of available housing and other goods and services, provide a significant influence on the decision of how much to spend on housing. The demographic patterns and particular constitution of the household determine the growth of demand over time. In fact each family should assign a priority to housing the amount it is willing to offer vis-à-vis other items in the household budget.

The aforementioned issues of housing demand and supply, therefore, have a correlation with housing affordability for the low-income and middle-income households in Nigeria, especially, in an era of globalization.

THE GAINS OF GLOBALIZATION:

The industrialized countries can certainly be counted among the winners of globalization. Where then do the opportunities lie in this process for the countries of the South? One cannot really classify entire countries as 'winners' or 'losers' of globalization – especially as the term also brushes over genuine inequalities. Today, economic exchange and communication are by no means 'global' in the sense of a network that equally involves all countries and regions. The profits and costs of globalization are currently distributed in an extremely unequal way.

The greatest beneficiaries of globalization, however, are those societies in which an effective government is able to guarantee on a lasting basis the 'goods' required for economic development – a free economic and social order, democracy, independent judicial institutions, access to education and knowledge and social security. The

same also applies for the developing countries. If it is possible there – to strengthen open, pluralistic societies, women’s equality, education and the protection of human rights. These countries will have greater chances of participating in and profiting from global exchange as equal partners.

A major gain of globalization in relation to housing is in the area of building information. The retrieval of building information required for medium and large scale housing development is facilitated by the Internet. The availability of building and construction information through the International Construction Database is, today, enhanced by the ease of Internet browsing and indeed, the information technologies at our disposal.

CONCLUSIONS:

Accordingly, globalization is only something that will concern and threaten us in the future, but something that is taking place in the present and to which we must first open our eyes. We must become accustomed to the idea that the reality we are dealing with is a transnational or a cosmopolitan reality, in which cultures are recombining and in which the boundaries we still assume to exist have already been at least partially swept away.

Globality means that everyday life, including housing development, is permeated by the perception of global problems. In their daily lives, people can see they are affected by questions that do not only relate to one location, but affect civilization as a whole. We do not have the solutions to these questions, but the awareness that we live in an endangered world is present in more and more life situations.

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