

## **GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: WHITHER AFRICA?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The fact that globalization of Africa or the integration of Africa into the global system from the days of slavery to the contemporary period of capital-led integration has on balance of costs and benefits been a disaster for Africa both in human terms and in terms of the damage to the African environment, as noted by Yash Tandon, is not in doubt. Why? Globalization in its present form has been exaggerating the gap between Africa and the so- called developed world as there is a disparity between the rich and poor countries of the world in the global opportunities offered in trade, investment and technology.

The hypocrisy of the West with regard to globalization and Africa's poverty seems glaring when juxtaposed with the roles the World Bank and IMF officials played in the failures of policies of many African governments. This is because; they used their very fingers to write the various documents on which these policies from import substitution to now export orientation were based. That they choose to ignore the connection between globalization and Africa's poverty smacks of intellectual dishonesty or ideological brainwashing.

The central thesis of this paper is therefore, that the asymmetry of power and interests of the member states of the global village, as well as the lopsidedness in the rules of the game there-in, cannot benefit Africa and her people. This is so and would continue to be so because globalization is a new order of marginalization and recolonization in a "neo-neo-colonial fashion", of the African continent.

The paper also aims at exploring how Africa has fared in the face of globalization. It employs the services of the *dependencia theory* to demonstrate both the validity of the disadvantaged position of Africa and the urgency of the call to respond effectively with keen analysis, strong ethical evaluation and viable alternatives for Africa to benefit from globalization.

## **Introduction**

Today as never before, the term globalization has assumed a center stage in political discourses as if it were a new phenomenon just as Khor, (2000:1), notes, that globalization has become the defining term and the defining process of the present age. But the truth of the matter is that there is nothing really new about globalization for as Hirst, (1997:47), argues, "We have been global for long". The term globalization has evoked so much controversy in international relations that there have emerged a plethora of debates and arguments as to whether it even exists (Unger, 1997), whether it is more important now than at some earlier date (Bordo, Eichengreen and Irwin, 1997), whether it is displacing the nation states (Strange 1996; Wade 1996), and whether it is more important than regionalism (Fishlow and Haggard 1992) or localism (Roseanau, 1997a). There are equally very serious analysis as well as polemics about whether the results are good or bad for the Third world nations, particularly, African nations.

However, globalization is a multidimensional term conceptualized from diverse perspectives. As such, it defies a straight jacket definition. But no matter from whichever prism a definition is ventured, it connotes the much celebrated revolutionary unification of the diverse but, discrete and distinct villages of the world into a single global village, economically,

politically, culturally and otherwise. The unification is occasioned by the revolution that has taken place in information and communication technology. At any rate, it is worthy to note that the concept of globalization according to Madunagu (1999), is global and dominant in the world today. But it was not handed down from heaven, it was not decreed by the Pope, it did not emerge spontaneously. It was created by the dominant social forces in the World today to serve their specific interests. Simultaneously, these social forces gave themselves a new ideological name –the “international community” to go with the idea of globalization.

Ideally, “he who pays the piper dictates the tune”. The dominant social forces in the world created and designed globalization in such a way as to suit their interests. America, Europe and in short, the developed countries of the world are the dominant social forces in the world. As we know, historically, the world has undergone a lot of metamorphosis. It has in short, gone through many stages and for the African continent in particular, it has gone through the stages of slavery, colonialism, independence and neocolonialism. Today it is undergoing a period of recolonization which is baptized globalization.

As the world undergoes metamorphosis, so many things change, new ways of doing things emerge, social relations equally change and man adapts by redesigning his strategies of dealing with developments in his

daily life. Nations equally change and adapt, by redesigning strategies for surviving in the new environments. With the dawn of globalization in today's world, Massey (1992) observes that there has occurred " a truly major reshaping of the spatial organization of social relations at every level from local to global. Each geographical place in the world is being realigned in relation to the new global realities, their roles within the wider whole are being reassigned, their boundaries dissolve as they are increasingly crossed by everything from investment flows to cultural influences, to satellite TV networks".

No doubt, globalization has impacted on the African continent in many ways. Samir Amin (1997:23) could say that "intervention of the developed West in the affairs of the Third world, (particularly Africa) whatever the motives involved, are always negative" and as Wilfred (1997:42-43) argues, present day globalization is but a continuation of a long tradition of imperialism. Globalization is only the latest phase and expression of the uninterrupted history of subjugation of peoples, nations and cultures, through the conquistadors and colonizers. It is a tradition of political, economic and cultural domination of some nations over others.

If the foregoing is the case, as it is then, how does Africa or rather, how should Africa relate with other nations of the world in an era of globalization. This forms the thrust of this paper.

## **Globalization: Meaning and Nature**

Globalization means different things to different people depending on the angle from where one approaches the concept. However, globalization is the process by which more emphases are laid on the economic, political and cultural relations among the diverse and different peoples of the world whereby trade barriers are broken down and market integration encouraged among different nations of the world. For Oluabunwa (1999:20) globalization can be seen as an evolution which is systematically restructuring interactive phases among nations by breaking down barriers in the areas of culture, commerce, communication and several other fields of endeavour. To achieve this, there is a push for free-market economics, liberal democracy, good governance, gender equality and environmental sustainability among other holistic values for all members of the human society wherever they may be located in the globe. Globalization is further seen by Ohiorhenuan (1998:6) as the broadening and deepening linkages of national economics into a worldwide market for goods and services, especially capital. To do this, Tandon (1998:2) opines that globalization seeks to remove all national barriers to the free movement of international capital and this process is accelerated and facilitated by the supersonic transformation in information technology. It is principally aimed at the homogenization of ideas, culture, values and even life styles (Ohiorhenuan,

1998:6) as well as, at the deterritorialisation and villagization of the world. To expatiate this fact further, Gordimer (1998) argues that globalization is principally concerned with the expansion of trade over oceans and airspace, beyond territorial alliances which were restricted by old political spheres of influence. It is for this reason that Diagre and Ossebi (1996) argue that it presupposes the "making or remaking of the world by creating a basic change in the way in which major actors think and operate across the globe," (Biersterker, 1998).

Akindele S.T (2002) alludes that the popularity of globalization is not unconnected with the facts that world developments have been increasingly characterized not by the growth dynamics but by their links to the process of globalization. Hence the overwhelming character of globalization has made it compelling for some scholars to use various aspects of the global economy as units of analysis (Wood, 1989, Tussie, 1994, Cerry, 1994, Krugman and Venables 1995, Tebin and Estabrooke, 1995, Biersteker, 1998, Devet,1993, Kahler 1993, Dunning, 1998, Obadina, 1998, Madunagu 1999, Cole, 2000, Ohuabunwa,1999 Otokhine, 2000).

Discussing what has given impetus to the globalization phenomenon, Akindele et al (2002), opine that the process of globalization is impelled by the series of cumulative and conjectural crises in the

international division of labour and global finance, in the functioning of national states and in the decline of the Keynesian welfare state and the established social contract between labour and government. In fact, its hallmark of free market capitalism has been aided among other factors by the sudden though expended changes within the physiology of global political community in recent times.

However, it is the collapse of the Eastern block in the later 80s and early 90s more than anything else that made the process of globalization more manifest in the economic and political dynamics of the world. Suffice it to say that the ideological confusion occasioned by the vagaries of the cold war blurred the shining effects of globalization but immediately this confusion was cleared in favour of capitalism, a global economy primarily structured and governed by the interests of Western behemoth countries became prominent. The next thing that followed naturally was the streamlining of the global economy toward capitalism. Today, more than any other time in world history, capitalism is the economic system that now dominates the global world. Thus to Friedman (1999:9) "globalization means the free spread of free market capitalism to virtually every corner in the world" Ake (1997:285) echoes the same when he notes that the core phenomenon and defining element of globalization is the irresistible expansion of capitalism, its conquest and subsumption of other modes of

production and circulation and the homogenization of its values across the globe. To buttress this point, the United Nations (1995:6), notes that even China, by far the largest non-capitalist economy, has undergone dramatic changes in its international economic policy orientation, and is today the recipient of almost one-half of all foreign direct investments that go into developing nations-this is a country that essentially blocked all foreign investments until the 1980s.

Globalization is an irresistible phenomenon that has affected every member of the world in more ways than one. That informs Robertson (1991:1), to see globalization as a highly dynamic process of growing interdependence among nation states with the implication that issues are becoming global rather than national and they demand global rather than national attention. For Walters (1995:3), globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding. McLuhan (1964:93) caps it by saying that the process of globalization is sweeping across the world turning it into a "global village" Maduagwu (2003:4a), notes that the impact of globalization especially in the areas of culture and communication is no longer in doubt. Through the modern information technology, globalization is fastly bringing the vast diverse countries into a truly global village. It is no longer news that any



occurrence in the remotest part of the world could simultaneously and potentially be shared in virtually throughout the world. Whether it is the US-led bombing of Iraq in 1990, the senseless genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the judicial killing of the Nigerian writer and environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995, the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, or the sex scandal of the American President, the Western Media, if they so wish, can elevate them to "global issues". Thus, with globalization the world is becoming a small place where nobody can hide and where anybody can get any piece of information he needs in a question of seconds.

In another development, globalization has engendered the emergence of giant multinational corporations with branches in many countries of the world. Such corporations are involved in, and often dominate the production of oil and gas, food, computers, cell phones, pharmaceuticals, armaments etc. The annual budgets of many of these corporations are larger than those of governments of many developing nations. This has made them to be powerful players in the economic and political life of many countries - a factor which has greatly removed the control of local economies from national governments. National governments can therefore no longer make policy and run their countries in isolation from the rest of the world. International organizations like the United Nations,

the Commonwealth, the European Union, the International Labour Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and a host of others today have hands in the running of national governments all over the world. They influence the policies and choices that national governments can make.

Globalization has also engendered what is called new international division of labour whereby the production processes of goods and services have become globalised. Giant multinational corporations are deeply involved in this production process. The production of an item is no longer done by a single corporation but by a combination of corporations who specialize in the production of one component of the item. For instance, prior to globalization, one motor plant produced cars from start to finish at one site. Today different component parts of the motor car are manufactured in different parts of the world and assembled yet in another country. Sources of cheap labour where wages and conditions of employment are low are usually explored in order to make the cost of production cheap.

Summarily, Wolfenshon (2001) notes that globalization is about:

- An increasingly, interconnected and interdependent world
- International trade and finance that have been growing faster than national income.
- Technologies that have transformed people's abilities to communicate in ways that would have been unimaginable a few years ago.

- Global environment, communicable diseases, crime, violence and terrorism.
- New opportunities for workers in all countries to develop their potentials and to support their families through jobs created by greater economic integration.
- International financial crises.
- Workers in developed countries that fear losing their jobs to lower cost countries with limited labour rights.
- Workers in developing countries who worry about decisions affecting their lives that are made in faraway head office of international corporations.
- Risks and opportunities.

Finally, it is worthy to note as Stager (2002:43) opines, there are five central claims discernable in the ideology of the twenty-first century globalization. First and foremost, globalization is about the liberalization and integration of global financial markets. The second premises is that globalization is both inevitable and irreversible. The third fact pertaining to globalization is the absence of any coherent leadership. The fourth point, and its major selling point to the million of doubters, is that globalization benefits everyone ...The final argument used to characterize globalization is to propose that it uniformly furthers the spread of democracy across the world, though empirical evidence actually suggest otherwise.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This work is anchored on the *dependecia* theory which can be described as a neo-Marxist theory as well as an economic radical theory. The *dependecia* theory portrays the world as divided between wealthy and poor countries and operating in such a way that the less developed

countries are kept impoverished and thus compelled to be economically and politically dependent on the economically developed countries. The exploitation of the less developed countries is engendered by colonialism and by their disadvantaged position in the global economic equation which places them as producers of cheap primary products such as agricultural products and raw materials. The developed countries on the other hand, produce high-priced, high-profit manufactured goods which are sometimes sold to the less developed world at exorbitant prices.

The structuralists are of the view that neocolonialism which is continued colonialism after independence has created a hierarchical structure in which the rich states in the centre of the world economic system dominate the less developed countries on the periphery of the system. The dependency of the less developed countries is maintained in a number of ways, such as structuring the rules and practices of international economics to benefit the economically developed nations. The structuralists also maintain that the facilitators of the dependency of the less developed countries corrupt and co-opt the local elites in the less developed countries by allowing them personal wealth in return for the governing of their countries in ways that benefit the economically developed countries.

Proponents of the dependencia theory include: Prebisch (1950), Baran (1967), Frank (1969), Santos (1970), Amin (1973), Offiong (1980), Emmanuel (1992) etc.

On the whole, the relevance of the theory lies in the strength of its empiricism. For example, the theory defines the relationship between the center and the periphery and has the propensity for hypothesis testing and empirical generalizations. Okereke and Ekpe (2002) eulogize the theory and agree that the theory marks a sharp departure from other existing theories of imperialism thereby giving an insight on how to unravel various ramifications by which states in the periphery are exploited by those in the center through dependency.

### **Africa's international Relations in an era of Globalization.**

International relations is a term that properly embraces the totality of the relations among peoples and groups in the whole world. It concerns the relationship between and among governments of nations of the world and other actors such as international organizations, multinational corporations, individuals and other social structures and processes including economic, cultural and domestic politics together with geographical and historical influences. International relations is conducted by a small group of people such as Presidents, generals and diplomats. Suffice it to say that leaders of different countries play major roles in

international relations even when many other people participate. According to Goldstein and Pevehouse (2011:4), "International relations revolves around one key problem: How can a group such as two or more nations serve its collective interests when doing so requires its members to forgo their individual interests". The answer to this fundamental question lies in what political scientists refer to as "collective good problem", that is, the problem of how to provide something that benefits all members of a group regardless of what each member contributes to it. (Sandler:2004; Olson: 1971).

It is a truism that no nation can stand on its own. Hence, nations enter into relationships with other nations with a view to benefiting from each other. Palmer and Perkins (1985:x1) maintain that "international relations today have become truly international and are characterized by a high degree of interaction and interdependence. Clearly, the international system is changing in innumerable ways. Old actors are playing new and often reduced roles and new actors of uncertain quality and prospects are appearing constantly. We may be witnessing not only major changes within the system, but a systemic change that in time may produce a new pattern of international relations altogether". This may be true for the West but not for Africa. Globalization has failed to provide a level playing

ground for all the actors in the global arena, which in itself has supported the old system where some actors favoured than others.

The world is dynamic and changes on daily basis and as the world changes so do relationships among nations change as a result. The African continent has come a long way in international relations but has not changed substantially. Africa was a weeping child before; the only thing that has change dynamically is her position of weeping to wailing. As Casseem Uteem (1998) notes, "The world situation today does not make things easy for Africa and the African people. The acute competition among countries which stems from the globalization process hardly takes care of the fact that the global economy has divided the world into two camps of conflicting interests. On the contrary, it undermines the ability of many nations to maintain social cohesion, with potential threats to the welfare state and social protection that is required to improve the lot of people not adequately prepared to face the harsh realities of market forces".

### **Classification of the World**

It is instructive to note that the world is classified in into two different ways and to understand Africa's international relations in an era of globalization, it is germane to understand where African belongs in this classification. The world is made up of nation states and these nations

according to international law are equal and sovereign. However a wide margin of differences exists among sovereign states in terms of populations, size, resources, culture, economics, military power etc.

Suffice it to say that certain powerful historical, economic, political and cultural forces have combined to divide the world into developed and developing nations. Developing nations are sometimes, referred to as "Third World nations". This was a term introduced by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952 to distinguish countries that had achieved colonial independence after World War II and were no longer aligned with either, US and its allies (first world) or the Soviet Union and its allies (second world). The world was also classified into developed versus developing nations by dividing it along geographical lines. The countries of the Northern hemisphere or "North" tend to be richer, while those in the southern hemisphere, or "South" tend to be poorer. Some sociologists and economists objected to this mode of classification on the ground that it is not geography that makes some nations rich and others poor. The world was further classified into industrialized and non industrialized nations based on the type of economic activities citizens of the nation engage in.

However, the conventional way of classifying the globe today is to distinguish between developing versus developed nations. This



classification is meant to express a concern about the well being of developing nations which are poverty stricken. The essence is to hope that severe poverty in many of them can be overcome through the process of economic and social development.

Africa is a developing nation and they all share common characteristics. Michael Torado, author of development economics argues that developing nations are "mainly characterized by low level of living, high rates of population growth, low income per capital, and general economic and technological dependence on first world economies". For the United Nations (UN), except the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the countries of Europe, all other nations are "less developed countries". The UN also designates a subset of 4 countries (the majority in Africa as "Least-developed countries" which are countries that all have extremely low levels of income, low levels of life expectancy at birth, low levels of calorie intake, low literacy and school enrolment and low level of economic diversification. The major characteristics of developing nations is that many people living in them cannot afford the level of food, shelter, clothing and medical care that are enjoyed by people in developed nations. The standard of living of people in developing nations is fundamentally different from those in America and Europe.

With this kind of classification, the interaction between the two kinds of nations, are practically different. The later is dependent on the former and continues to relate as such. According to Paolini (1997:33) "globalization in the Third World, it seems, is condemned to invisibility, particularly at the centre. In international relations, both as a practice and as a theory, it resides at the edge. In emergent discourses about "global culture" and globalization, it becomes mostly incorporated, repressed, homogenized". As Ahmad (1992:302) notes, critics even find the Third World of decreasing utility as theoretical and descriptive application in the contemporary world.

The advent of globalization has even compounded the problem of the nonentity status of the Third World countries especially Africa in the global system. According to Brittan, (1998:2), globalization is viewed as whirlwind of relentless and disruptive change which leaves governments (especially government of African countries) helpless and leaves a trail of economic, social, cultural and environmental problems in its wake".

### **International Relations and Globalization: Whither Africa?**

In relating with other countries of the world, amidst globalization, African leaders should be wary of the "hidden agenda" of globalization. The concept of globalization as it is generally propagated in the west, namely as invisible forces operating beyond human control that are

transforming the world, is deceitful. Western Scholars have always tried to justify the spread of western culture and of capitalist society. Waters, (1995:3) admits that globalization is the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet through settlement and colonization as it is also bound up intrinsically with the pattern of capitalist development as has ramified through political and cultural arenas. He also argues that the goal of globalization is not that all the world would become westernized and capitalist but, "every set of social arrangements must establish its position in relation to the capitalist West". The implication of this statement is not hidden. Westerners believe that Western culture has become the standard by which all other cultures must be measured. It is unfortunate that after the influence of colonialism and now globalization, Africa identity has been tampered with seriously and to a large extent, African has lost its originality.

One major argument always bandied by the protagonists of globalization is that it is a self propelling social dynamic and as such, nobody is trying to maintain a lead over the other or consciously trying to outsmart the other. But in the economic front, globalization is propelled by the World Bank and the IMF. It is also directed by the World Trade organization, WTO, whose ultimate goal is economic liberalization. In the political and cultural spheres, globalization is propelled, through means of

information and communication technology. Its dictates are majorly owned by and controlled by the West.

“The apparent truth about globalization” says Madunagu (2003:56) “is that it is the latest under current principle of economic exploitation of the Third World by the technologically advanced countries, particularly of the West. It is no wonder that Third World scholars have concentrated their reaction to globalization on its economic dimension (South Centre 1996). For the Third World, the conclusions of the Uruguay Round negotiations and establishment of the WTO have given rise to a new world order extending far beyond traditional international trade relations. Globalization from its economic perspective is being presented to the Third World in the form of economic liberation which is said to hold the panacea for its rapid development. It is argued that Third World countries should not only liberalize through imports and exports, they should also allow foreign direct investment (FDI) and capital flows into their economy with globalization, it is argued that the problem of North-South has been overtaken. The consensus appears to be that the way forward for developing countries is to enhance the role of the market while diminishing that of the state. At the international level, the role of multilateral institutions should be merely creating global frameworks that facilitate the unhindered functioning of the markets.

Against this view, South centre (1996:12), speaking on behalf of the Third World interests, argue as follows:

1. The development debate is far from over: a diminished role for the state and an unfettered role for the market do not constitute a universal recipe for achieving faster economic growth, resolving social problems or dealing with contemporary challenges such as for instance, environmental problem.
2. There are long standing unresolved issues on the international development agenda which cannot be resolved by purely market approach and which require international development co-operation.
3. In addition, there are significant new issues generated by the working of the world economy which require North-South dialogue and strengthened international cooperation.
4. Although there are divergent interests among developing countries, the concept of the south, if anything, is more important today in the post-cold War era than it was previously.

Today as never before, the West is pumping money to African nations and other parts of the world, ostensibly in their quest to promote liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is adjudged the best form of government, the world over. However, in their bid to encourage all countries of the world to embrace democracy as part of the globalization movements, the West consciously, sells their culture to all countries of the world. Walters (1995:118-122), illustrates this idea of the whole world tending towards a homogenous culture, with particular reference to political culture, occasioned by the practices of liberal democracy. Scholars such as

Fukuyama (1992) and Huntington (1991) explored this issue very elaborately. They argue that national countries of the world are advancing towards one political culture of liberal democracy whose essential contents are encapsulated in the Western concept of human rights which emphasizes political and social rights as against the economic and cultural rights. Behind the idea of liberal democracy is a commitment to market capitalism as it is argued that market capitalism guarantees individual rights in the economic realm. For the West, it is the culture that is important and not the practice of liberal democracy.

In accepting globalization and all that it portends, African nations should thread cautiously because all that glitters is not gold. The West has hidden agenda in the propagation of the idea of globalization and most of what it stands for. Take for instance, the issue of human rights which is an essential characteristics of liberal democracy. It is doubtful whether the West is ready to uphold the rights of others as they are wont to propagate in globalization. Maduegwu (2003:58) contends that taking the specific issue of human rights, the question could be raised as to *which* human and *whose* rights? Are the people of industrially more advanced countries, particularly the West, actually ready to extend the human rights concept to peoples of other culture? What happened to the idea of rights to development of the Third World countries? What happened to the idea of

human rights during the Rwanda genocide in 1994? Did the United Nations, the United State and the European Union not stand aloof during the senseless and preventable massacre of Rwandans? The only reason is that Rwandans are blacks and degraded to lesser beings whose lives are not worth saving or preserving. Any African who seriously reflects on the Rwandan episode, to name just one obvious recent case, (see e.g. Gourevitch, 1998), cannot accept that globalization mean anything positive for the black race.

In another development, it is worth noting that nations and countries of the world are ranked according to their importance in the global economy. Robertson, (1991:228), explores what he calls the "societal and individual location in a broader context of humankind". With the collapse of the Soviet Union, "a new world order" of *Pax Americana* seems to have emerged. What is the place of Africa in this ranking? According to Maduagwu, (2003:58), The third world, but particularly, Africa is uncertain of its place in this American global hegemony. Is the qualification for participation in the American kingdom not determined by the economic strengths of the various regions of the world? The order of admission seems to be this: After Europe come the Asian Tigers, then the former Communist block countries of Eastern Europe, followed by Australia and Latin America. Africa seems to have no place in the globalizing "new world

order". Africa is located outside the centre of international capitalism, and is therefore not reckoned with globally.

In relating with other peoples of the world, an African need to probe himself thus: "who am I in relation to the rest of the world? Is globalization hastening that day, when, to paraphrase Martin Luther King Jnr., I will not be judged merely on the basis of color of my skin but on more objective criteria such as character, aptitude and capabilities, or is it merely postponing it?" (Odozor, 1997:13).

The hypocrisy of the West with regard to globalization is a serious issue. They are preaching interdependence and issues of comparative advantage but they do not mean what they preach. Many of them reject Africans outright. The matter is not only restricted to the secular sphere of the society. It has even extended to the religious sphere, hence, a Nigerian Christian cleric observed how "even religious communities that once sent missionaries in droves to Africa from Europe and elsewhere are now alarmed at the prospect of African missionaries coming to Europe and North America to evangelize their peoples". (Odozor 1997:13).

From the economic dimensions, after a review of the *modus operandi* of the WTO and the different trade agreements entered into by countries of the world, Yash Tandon (2000) concludes: "Thus, it can be seen how the globalization of economic relations is bound to intensify these



exploitative relations that Africa is facing. Globalization, as the UNDP's Human Development Report of 1996 testifies, has created a vast chasm between the North and the South. The gap in per capita income between the industrial and developing world tripled from \$US 5,700 in 1960 to US \$15,400 in 1993 (UNDP, 1996:3). According to the Report, Africa has been the hardest hit by the decline. Twenty countries in Africa have a per capital income lower today than 20 years ago. Furthermore, two-third of the least developed countries (LDEs) are in Africa. A food surplus continent 20 years ago, Africa has become a food deficient continent".

Tandon (2000:72) further, alludes that Africa does not stand to benefit substantially from globalization because of its lack of foundation for the movement. According to him, "within the process of globalization whose primary motive force is to suck resources out of Africa is provided a "solution" to Africa's hunger problems, namely a more productive use of land based on the application of modern science and technology. Indeed the argument is made in such beguiling terms that only the most beguiling, avid "backward" and obscurantist Africans, who would want to return to the "Past" fail to see the "obvious" advantages of science and technology. Such Africans are accused of being opposed to "progress" itself and therefore, "a bit soft in the head". The point about science and technology is that there is , of course, nothing wrong in applying science

to production. What is so dangerous about the contemporary epoch is that science and technology have become the means to extract profits for a few thousand multinationals at exorbitant cost to those who have to buy or borrow such technology. If there was transfer of technology, no country in the world today would be poor. For those countries like South East Asia, who were able to "reverse engineer" Western technology without paying for its proprietary royalties, there was some possibility of industrialization, which they are now desperately trying to protect. Africa did not have these special circumstances in the cold war".

African nations are marginalized. This marginalization is occasioned by the fact that Africa is not in the mainstream of decision-making in the world bodies that matter-such as the IMF, World Bank, the security council of the UN, or in the World Trade Organization WTO that propels globalization. It is a fact of reality that he who plays the piper dictates the tune" and that whoever is not around where and when a decision is taken is always forgotten as his interest will not be adequately taken into consideration. Nobody takes the interest of Africa into consideration as far as globalization is concerned.

### **Consequences of Globalization for Africa.**

Many dependency scholars have stressed the fact that globalization is not favourable to African nations. They have maintained that

globalization is a force against genuine African development. Udoette and Ekanem et. al, differently in Bissong (2004), Obianyo in Okolie (2009) are examples. According to Udoette, globalization as a world economic agenda is meant to create a common market and then, open the whole world, especially poor countries to the possibilities of industrialization and economic development. To him, globalization is indeed, an unstoppable process of global economic integration which has come to stay and as a reality, it seems to be catching fire and its fire is already burning deep with attendant positive and negative consequences for developing countries of the world.

In the same vein, Ohuabunwa, (1999), notes that globalization has turned the world into the big village.... This, in turn, has led to intense electronic corporate commercial war to get the attention and nod of the customer globally.... This war for survival can only get more intense in the new millennium. He asks: "Are we prepared to face the realities of this global phenomenon, which has the potential of wiping out industrial enterprise in Nigeria in particular, and Africa in general?" This question is relevant when we consider the fact that colonialism provided a legal tool as well as the foundation for the dependence of African economies on Western economies.

Globalization entails breaking down of all barriers to free market capitalism of the world including Africa. As a result, Africa has become a dumping ground for all kinds of Western products, even those that are detrimental to the lives and sustenance of African people such as literature, cinema or music. The consequence is that African culture is fastly becoming obliterated as Africans are now inclined to Eurocentric vision of reality.

Globalization is increasing world poverty and lowering living standard of workers especially in Third World countries, including Africa. Available report indicates that while global wealth has undoubtedly increased, it has become concentrated in fewer hands and fewer countries. (Awake, 2002).The net worth of the 200 richest people on earth now exceeds the combined income of 41 percent of the people who live on the planet – some 2.4 billion people. While wages continue to rise in wealthy countries, 80 impoverished countries have actually seen a decline in average income over the past ten years, (Anyakoha, 2003:5). Furthermore, Edukugho (2002) quoting Daisa, asserts that for the developing world, globalization is tantamount to neocolonialism if not reinvented slavery. It is the worst setback that could happen to their industrialization aspirations, in so far as the world economy is structured on specialization, comparative advantage, competition and narrow national interest. It ensures that the producers of

raw materials would remain as such for all times, deprived of the liberty to determine prices of their products and the direction of their trades.

Privatization which is one of the features of globalization has intensified the integration of African countries in production and finance global system thereby encouraging the flow of capital investment and attracting the ownership of African indigenous public parastatals by foreign capital. This has deprived the impoverished people of Africa of the goods and services rendered by government owned companies, thereby exacerbating their hardship and the masses are revolting through mass action, etc.

Globalization has eroded the sovereignty of nation states and has thus subverted the autonomy and self determination of African peoples. It has made many African states to become indebted to the World Bank and the IMF, thereby causing mass poverty to the citizens deprived of meaningful existence. As a result of the erosion of the power of the state by globalization, it has not been easy for governments of many African states to ensure social protection which is one of the core functions of government and which has helped many developing nations to maintain social cohesion and domestic political support.

The role of multinational corporations in the devastation of the African environment cannot be overemphasized. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria readily comes to mind here. This region is the goose that lays the golden

eggs in Nigeria and thus accounts for 95 percent of Nigeria's foreign earning, but unfortunately, the people of the area cannot eat the eggs which their land bakes. Udoette (2004), gives practical examples of how devastating, globalization has been to Third World nations, especially, Africa, using the role of multinational oil companies like Agip, Mobil, ELF, Shell, etc in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. He notes that while 95% of Nigeria's national budget can be traced to oil and gas revenues from the Niger Delta, the area still remains in economic darkness, leaving the people to wallow in poverty, hunger and deplorable health conditions. While the people of the area are in this condition, the oil companies exploit the people and their resources the more, and even repatriate their own generated revenue to their home countries. Udoette therefore concludes that globalization instead of creating a village where every country has a chance to develop, has appeared to be a gigantic programme of global politics. For him, behind the politics of globalization is a grand scheme of neocolonialism which is geared towards perpetuating economic dependency and serfdom in the Third World.

### **Why the gap between the Rich and Poor Nations continues to widen in spite of Globalization**

Given the over bloated promises of globalization to developing nations especially Africa as preached by pro-globalization scholars, one is at a loss as to why the gap between the rich and the poor nations of the

world has not been bridged in spite of globalization. Rourke (1997: 425) offers an answer thus: "From their real politik perspective, economic nationalists argue that the trade, investment and aid policies of the EDCs are not especially concerned with LDC development unless the growth of one or more of these countries is in the political interest of the EDCS. Furthermore, economic nationalists suspect that the South's calls for a greater equity are, in essence, attempts to change the rules so that the LDCs can acquire political power for themselves. In essence, economic nationalists see international economics as inevitably a zero-sum game, they believe that each country should look out for itself".

Rourke (ibid) further explains that the economic nationalists' view of the political economy as a zero-sum game in which not everyone can win also leads them to worry that extensive aid to LDCs may be counter productive for both the donor and the recipient. This reasoning often uses a lifeboat analogy. This image depicts the world as a lifeboat that can support only so many passengers. The people of the EDCs are in the boat. The billions of the poor are in the sea, in peril of drowning and clamoring to get abroad. The dilemma is that the lifeboat is incapable of supporting everyone because there are not enough resources. Therefore, if everyone gets in, the lifeboat will sink and all will perish. The answer, then, is to sail off with a sad but resolute sigh, saving the few at the expense of the many

in the interest of common sense. As far as the supposed danger to those in the water of being taken into the lifeboat, economic nationalists suggest that providing food and medicine to the already over populated LDCs only encourages more childbearing, decreases infant mortality, and increases longevity, thereby worsening the situation. What an explanation!

This explanation goes to show that Africans can only be deluding themselves if they get so enmeshed in the globalization propaganda; this is because, globalization has been devised to serve the interest of the originators and sponsors, and Africans are not part of this scheme as such. They should only make use of their brain to sift what is good in globalization and also discover what is inimical to their progress and development and discard those ones.

### **Way out of the globalization quagmire**

Africa has become enmeshed in the globalization quagmire willy-nilly. She cannot run away or extricate herself from globalization because globalization has become a burning fire blazing throughout the whole world like a hurricane affecting all members of the world community in one way or the other. There is no way Africa can resist the effects of globalization and refuse to participate in the globalised world. She cannot choose whether or not to participate in the new world order. The world



has become so interdependent and interrelated that no nation or continent can go it alone.

Yash Tandon (2000:75) has noted that even though globalization in its post cold war expression is an attempt to roll back whatever gains the Third World countries has been able to make at the economic level during the cold war years, and Africa is now vulnerably exposed to the profit-maximizing greed of Western corporations, much as Africa would like to step outside the global economy and for once in 300 years, begin to run things without being dictated from outside, this is hardly a realistic scenario. Opting out of the system is not a realistic option.

Delinking was a favourite subject of discourse among Third World radical political economists during the 1970s and 1980s, connected more than most, to the Egyptian economist Samir Amin,(1990). Tandon says: "delinking in the hard sense of the term implies a break with the global system, much as the Soviet Union and China did after their revolutions in 1917 and 1949 respectively". But in the word of Samir Amin (1990: xii) delinking consists in refusing to subject to the demands of the globalized law of value, that is to the "alleged" rationality of the system of world prices that gives concrete form to the requirements of the reproduction of globalized capital. It thus assumes that society has the capacity to define for itself a different range of criteria of rationality of internal economic

choices, in short, a “law of value that is national in scope”. Amin went on to explain that delinking is not synonymous with autarky, but rather with the subordination of external relations to the logic of internal development. Adjustment consists precisely in grafting internal development on to the possibilities offered by the world system.

Delinking is therefore one way out of the globalization quagmire for Africa, and by this we mean, “subordinating external relations to the logic of internal development” as against autarky which implies “complete break with the global system”, for no nation can go it alone in today’s world. The brand of globalization often recommended by the World Bank and IMF, in the form of structural adjustment programme, which demand “grafting internal development on the possibilities offered by the world system” is not acceptable. There is no way Africa can graft its internal development on the possibilities offered by the world system and they will not be cheated and marginalized. She cannot use the standard set by others as her own yardstick. She must deal with others on her own terms considering what is possible and what can favour her. The self is the measure of love. One cannot please another person to displease oneself.

For Yash Tandon (2000:50), the way forward approach for Africa is that African revolutionary and activist classes and forces should add their own strength to the constellation of the forces that are congealing against

capital both at the national and global levels. In the process, they must not just destroy the basis of capital. They must also actively engage in building new structures of power, and new structure of organizing production based on new value of humanity and care for nature. This is an excellent recommendation and must be supported by all who have anything to do with African development.

The challenge rather for Africa is how to respond creatively and meaningfully to the challenges posed by globalization in an environment in which she is not an equal player but rather a pawn in the globalization chessboard. There are a number of ways: Africa has to reject all textbook frameworks for development as are handed down by Western powers and their agents, the World Bank and the IMF, which are antithetical and inimical to her growth, in favour of home grown development strategies that focus on Africa's specific realities.

Africa and African's can close ranks among themselves to protect themselves from the ravaging effect of globalization by forming a blockade on the way to negative aspects of globalization. In words of Tandon (2003), "the African continent, and indeed, other developing countries could conceivably create Regional Economic and Political blocks equal in magnitude and potency with that of the European Union (EU), to effectively challenge, and influence the trajectory of the globalization train.

To argue otherwise is to lead Africa and Africans along the path of extinction. Nevermore can there be a Berlin conference of 1884 to 1885 and its consequent genocidal partitioning of Africa and Africans by the colonialists”.

## **CONCLUSION**

In concluding this paper, it is worthy to note that, “the history and current state of world politics are not a peaceful scene. The interplay of international relations stems primarily from the world’s political, economic and social fragmentations. The political drama is a cast of national actors that are often at odds with one another and although there are many examples of cooperation and humanity that can be found in them, they are also full of ambition, self-serving righteousness and greed; it is a rare day when some of the actors, states (countries) are not in open conflict. And even when they are not threatening one another, they are forever calculating what is good for themselves and then rationalizing those self-serving national interests as serving universal justice and the common good of all humankind.” (Rourke, 1997:2).

It is true that the gospel of peaceful coexistence is preached by all actors in the global scene, yet, every player is more interested in the national interest of its own country, and each nation devises strategies

through which it can outwit the others to attain its own national interests. Globalization is therefore a strategy devised by the developed nations of the world to achieve their collective interest. In the process, many nations in the periphery of international capitalism lose while those at the centre, gain. African nations are among the losers because they do not have the requisite disposition to compete favourably in the global market place.

Globalization is an unbeatable phenomenon which no nation can afford to wish away in today's world. The challenge for Africa is to respond creatively and meaningfully to the challenges posed by globalization in a world environment in which she is a pawn in the globalization chessboard by subjecting its external relations to the logic of its internal development.

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