

GLOBALISATION AND INTERDEPENDENCE

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INTRODUCTION

I would like to begin this sharing by borrowing a leaf from Paul Samson's 1995 article on *the concept of sustainable development* (1). Paul talks of four different ways of describing nature. In fact, he calls them myths. There are those who believe that nature is extremely robust so it can sustain all our needs via a laissez-faire economic approach. Others say that nature is extremely fragile, and as such an earth ethic with strict moral principles to enable the creation of harmony between human beings and the environment may be put in place. Yet many think that nature is robust within limits. These advocate for a specific body to monitor and to manage resources. Again some contend that nature is extremely random, hence one should do anything possible to survive as best as one can.

While many people believe that myths are baseless, I affirm that myths are real, people believe them and believe in them. They do guide and guard world affairs.

One of the myths which has always been a reality is globalization. I can even say that it is a process which precedes and survives each individual person (think of the moment you were thrown in the world, when your father globalized to meet your mother and the interplay of localization, to say nothing of the interdependence manifested. For the believers the whole process points still to the communion of saints---) each culture, state and nation. So as an event it is not new.

What seems to be new however is its accelerated and instant use of Information Technology, which tends to reduce almost to zero the reality of space and time, turning the whole world into a home.

This phenomenon has attracted different reactions. Some as you have already experienced in the course of your discussion take it to be disastrous for it unilaterally realises reality. Others have suggested that it is beneficial because it enables different peoples to share experiences. For many they powerlessly see it as an inevitable fate assigned. Yet for others, *'you either cling to the bandwagon of globalization or you perish.'*

I will all along argue like Paul Samson concluded that it is not each one of these, but it is all of these put together; that globalization has a combination of complex factors which at times maybe disastrous, beneficial or neutral, but if at all Africa is to survive, she has to grudgingly cling to and grapple with the bandwagon of globalisation for better or worse. Failure to do this would mean automatic self-annihilation. I will then try to illustrate how 'super gluing' can be effected, the presumption being that 'one sees the sun from where one is located', technically put it is to think global by acting local.

THE CHALLENGE

For Dianne Dumanoski (2) the challenge is:

to manage our pervasive global presence, coming to terms with inescapable planetary limits of understanding ourselves not as individuals, tribes, nations but as single global species.

Dann Naseemullah (3) sees the challenge to consist in how the under privileged could modify themselves to make it fit in this new global economic order on the terms of the rich and the powerful.

In my opinion the two views are not only discriminatory in the sense that they are not balanced but also in the sense of forgetting that reality is not senso unico but is tension-like. Hence, before we understand ourselves as a single global species, the condition sine qua non is each one of us to first understand one's self as an individual in one's particularities. And more pressing still is the rich and the powerful to ask themselves how they can fit in the world on the terms of the poor and the powerless. The major challenge therefore, according to me is to be able to deal with the dialecticized interdependencies which have always been true, but which seem always to escape our eyes.

Where does Africa fall?

HOW TO FIT IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD

The issue of globalization and interdependence pushes us back to soul search ourselves. Who are the players that are involved in this process? I must straight forwardly say that there are at least four categories. One, the stage setters who consciously plan and guide the process, those include world policy Makers like IMF, WTO, WORLD BANK, the G8. Two, the faceless controllers who dictate the technology, to include the multinationals. Three, the powerless but privileged users, the elites. Four, the marginalized who are excluded both in rural areas and in slums.

I think that we in Africa before we become world citizens of which we automatically are, must first understand ourselves as Africans. It will be this self-understanding that will give us a way forward to deal with our position towards the phenomenon of globalization. I surmise that to come to know the position of something, one does so by examining some of its most salient features. In the case of Africa, it is her politics, culture, history and the economy.

The nature of African Politics – It is a clientele – like (4) type of political governance where the incumbent ideologically concentrates on tactics and strategies of staying in power. The issue of developing the people is a by the way. That is why military spending, internal and external security organs seem to take a lion's share of the national budget. There is a lot of suffocation of those having different political views. I must say

that it is an Africa which has presidents but no statesmen; it has rulers but no governors, it has preachers but no pastors, it has learned leaders but no wise men.

The Nature of African History – Africa has a true past that has been tormented and disrupted by outside invasion in form of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism.... (5)

The nature of African culture. This is well described by Mahmood Mamdani (6), and what he says of South Africa in my view is validly applicable to the whole continent. Africa is a 'bifurcated' reality. "This divided world is inhabited by subjects on one side and citizens on the other, their life is regulated by customary law on one side and modern law on the other; their belief are dismissed as pagan on this side but bear the status of religion on the other; the stylized moments in their day-today lives are considered ritual on this side and culture on the other; their creative activity is considered crafts on this side and glorified as the arts on the other; their verbal communication is demeaned as vernacular chatter on this side but elevated as linguistic discourse on the other; in sum, the world of the 'savages' barricaded, in deed as in world, from the world of the 'civilised.'"

I have quoted Mamdani at length to show how the developed world considers Africa, how the Africans consider themselves, and how by implication town dwellers rate the village inhabitants.

The nature of African economy. This is mostly geared towards consumption and the production of raw materials direct to the export market often times with disastrous environmental effects.

GLOBALISATION AS A QUESTION OF RECOGNITION

One of the fundamental laws of nature is the law of the interconnectedness and interrelatedness and hence interdependence of all living and non living forms. This is very apparent among peoples activities other creatures both organic and inorganic. In all these, we experience what I may term as intra and intergenerational dependence, the continuity which leads us yet to another given reality, that of tradition.

The issue at stake in this process of globalisation and interdependence is the awareness that though different in many aspects and respects, we as creatures of the world share the same destiny. We are positively or negatively connected to each other, so that the smallest thing that one does minutely influences all in a way we cannot see but we could imagine. The same destiny is also reflected as a condition for the quest for the survival of the self. And the condition for the survival of the self is ultimately to recognize and to be recognized.

The moment the four categories of the players in globalisation will come to fully realize that reality, that will be then the apex for developed self-consciousness and the condition would have been to have employed reason at best. To do this, is to negate isolation and to affirm that no human being or country is an island and that each moment is of equal

necessity as the other. This is further corroborated by the Hegelian idea that the true is the whole, which whole is the different in unity and unity in diversity.

Unfortunately the interactions among the players in the process of globalisation cannot be said to be sane. In the globalised world, divisions, prejudices, unhealthy and fatal relations still dominate. In a sentence they are characterized by Master-servant relationship.

The developed countries certainly think that they are the Masters and the reasons are not difficult to see; have they not gone beyond working for the basics of life? Are not most of their children properly nourished and go to school up to the required age? Is the average life expectancy not beyond sixty years? Can't the majority afford a holiday every year? Are they not technologically advanced? Doesn't the average person earn and live on beyond a dollar per day? And above all do they not enjoy long traditions of state democracy?

On their side the less developed, most African countries included consider themselves, and are considered by the developed ones, as servant, simply because they lack almost all those features listed above. They are described as having almost everything below-average-world standards.

Apart from sharing the need to recognize and to be recognized, both the developed and less developed countries partake of another important characteristic of which they are not aware, and this is IGNORANCE- not knowing what one is supposed to know.

It is not true that Master is free without the servant, as what he/she enjoys is got by meditation via the servant who through his labour transforms the soil and procures the benefit. At this juncture, it is not difficult to see how Europe and America underdeveloped Africa and continues to do so. Can you imagine the effects of the Triangular slave trade? Can you recall the scramble for Africa and the Berlin Conference of 1888? These events have had everlasting effects, the results being the creation of colonies and the colonial state with the methods of assimilation and indirect rule. These events mark the beginning of looting in form of production and trade which was geared towards the satisfaction of home industries which manufactured essential goods that were later returned and sold at exorbitant prices to the colonies. Today the tactic seems to have changed though the strategy and the principle remains the same.

The servant does not know that actually, he is the master because all that the master enjoys originates from his sweat. He sees himself in the master. Both, however, give wrong reasons to justify their positions of superiority and inferiority.

My concern here is to uncover the true reasons for the respective sides. What is true and that which is ignored by both, is the fact that both cannot comfortably survive without mutual recognition. There is a situation of tilted interdependence which cannot be salutary, simply because, as I have earlier on mentioned, the master recognizes self-hood only in himself and not in the servant. This one recognizes self-hood in the master and not in himself. On a sad note, the dialectic continues as a true projection of the colonial

mind even among the least developed countries. This is most reflected in the many 'isms'; tribalism, regionalism, nepotism, clientelism, classmatism, villagism, movementism, one-partyism, religionism which are most rampant in Africa. These pose a threat to the unity of the continent and hence to their development.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAILED DIALECTIC

One would expect that a globalised world which has become a home like a family affair, that it would become more friendlier in all forms. Yet, the realist approach that Keohane Robert and Nye Joseph (7) seem to put in second order where security is the dominant concern and force is used as the major instrument, remained the propelling assumption in many parts of the developing world; former Yugoslavia, the Greatlakes Region, Sierra Leone, the Horn of Africa, UNITA rebellion in Angola, East Timor, Madagascar, Western Sahara, SPLA and Kony wars in Uganda and the Sudan, the Kashmir problem, Israel-Palestine conflict, the Afghanistan war, to mention but a few.

Again one would expect openness at its best to reign in the new idealised world, yet we are experiencing all sorts of protectionisms as seen in the intensification of the insistence of property right, tightening of Visa travel permits, intellectual property and patent ownership, usage restrictions by the side of the developed countries and too much openness within the less-developed countries in the name of attracting investors.

The failed rather, the incomplete dialectic seems to be further reflected in the strengthening of the already powerful and almost effective regional trading blocks like the European community, the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, The G8 and the revival of some of the failed ones, like the East African community, the Organisation for African Unity for African Union and New partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD). These do not seem to augur well and to portray a picture of a truly free global economy.

Worse still, despite the mushrooming, NGOS which come to act as brakefluids in these blocks, the level and the cycle of dependence and the intra and intergap between the poor and the rich, (servant and master) people and countries continues to widen.

THE IDEA OF COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCE

The failure of the dialectic of recognition necessarily ends up in conflict which in its extreme forms characterises countries' relations by the use of military force as a policy tool. In order to get out of this dilemma in a world where Information Technology makes borders porous and state sovereignty seem insignificant, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (8) proposed the complex interdependence theory which refers to the many intricate transnational connections between states and societies. It is these new interactions which have to be understood as a system of complex interdependence. That should attract the players' expectations if at all the world is to become a true home for every creature.

Such a system, according to Keohane and Nye employs the concept of regimes, understood as a set of implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules and procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a particular issue-area, which may be human rights, good governance, poverty, environment, justice and charity (9). From the proceeding paragraph, I can conclude by saying that the approach to reality of understanding ourselves and to the reality of inter and intra relationship in our globalised interdependent world can no longer be purely confrontational, but it must be issue-based. This points to the fact that our concern be concentrated on transnational cross-border problems which have to be addressed in a particular situation. This is a conviction which is an automatic result of the recognition of the fact that however small a thing is done, it necessarily affects the other and as such it has to be addressed in its particularity so as to be able to fit in globality. This way of looking at issues certainly stands higher chances of abating global confusion and facilitating solidarity and cooperation among creatures.

REACTIONS

Of the four categories of the players who are involved in the process of globalisation, Africa certainly falls in the third and fourth categories, though the majority of Africans find themselves as marginalised and thus excluded from the process. For the excluded, globalisation is like any of the proceeding disastrous events of colonialism, imperialism and trade in human beings. It is comparable to a cancerous cell where the patient may be consciously or unconsciously devoured but remains powerless to stop the process of emaciation. On my part I will continue to argue, that however much the intensity of powerlessness, may be still one can do something and if it is not done no one else will ever do it. This is like a worm which knows that the bird is going to eat it but it continues to turn as if...

Thus from the philosophical point of view, while Paulin Hotintoudji is reported as appealing to members of African cultures to rise in protest against the globalisation process, Rorty takes the whole question of globalisation simply as a fashionable sham problem which by implication should be neglected. Win van Binsbergen (10) seems to be more moderate when he suggests creative responses in the form of penetration of cultural forms into the developed world via issue-areas like identity, pluralism, post-modernity...

Connected to Win van Binsbergen's view of creative responses, is Ankie Hoogvelt's (11) idea of hybridity as adopted from A. Escobar's Encountering Development, the making and unmaking of the third world, 1995. This is to be seen as a type of superior cultural intelligence due to its capacity of 'in-betweenness and ability to negotiate the difference'. (In my view this hybridity has the opposite pole which I call Mulatority, and when it is dominant the entity lacks the capacity of in-betweenness and the ability to negotiate the difference). In fact Hoogvelt and Escobar agree that hybridity is a 'reconceptualisation' of established views, in such a way that traditional cultures instead of being eliminated by modernity (in this case globalisation) survive via their transformative engagement of modernity. (the local engaging the global).

Hybridity for the marginalised can be realised through the process of the decolonisation of the mind or through what Paulo Freire calls conscientisation, or what I term as deglobalisation of the mind, which in all respects has:

the goal to undo all partitioning strategies between centre and periphery as well as all other 'binarisms' that are the legacy of colonial way of thinking and to reveal society globally in their complex heterogeneity and contingency. (12)

From the economic point of view many scholars like Akindele S.T, Gidado T.O and Oloapo O.R (13) who take globalisation to be the final conquest of capital over the rest of the world, see it as not being beneficial to the people of Africa. It is because they say that globalisation is a new order of marginalisation a recolonisation in a "neo-neo-colonial fashion" of the African continent, the conquest of which is put on the level of 'absolute truth'. The above scholars advise that the only way forward for Africa is by genuinely and committedly to restructure and to realign, politically, culturally, sociologically and economically via the blockage of the path of the train (globalisation) by forming regional economic intergration. These seem however to forget the failure of the many initiatives in this regard.

However, such re-initiatives do not lack. Of recent there has been the creation of NEPAD (New partnership for Africa's Development), the metamorphoses of the OAU (Organisation of Africa Unity) and the reactivation of the EAC (East African Community) as ways of fitting Africa in a globalised world. When one talks of the New and when name change one understands that probably three was the Old. Hence, if at all the new which pre-supposes the old is to stand, what went wrong in the Old must be seriously addressed. And I must say that that which persists between the two is the idea, which idea must be propelled by Africans and fully radicated in African's realities.

Nkurumah's Jream of Africa's unity is still far from becoming a reality. It is true as John Agyekurn Kufucir told the forty heads of African States in the 37th ordinary session of the OAU (14), that 'Unity is Africa's greatest weapon in her struggle for social and economic Justice'. However, the question that persistently comes back to me is who after all is interested in a stronger Unified Africa? Certainly, it is the marginalized who have been completely excluded from the process of these re-initiatives. If then Nkurumah's dream is to become a palpable reality, the African Leaders must be ready to embrace a new kind of ~~metanoia~~ based on the ethics of seriousness and commitment and solidarity in the sense of each giving oneself to the cause.

THE SHADOW

The accelerated pace of globalisation and interdependence is inevitable. It is like myself and my shadow. Often it is not possible to distinguish myself from it. On many occasions I seem to forget it, but several times it reminds me of our inseparability and our dialectic relationship. So is globalisation and localisation.

Localisation refuses to be devoured by globalisation and *it* insists to 'think global' and 'to act local' as the best way to fit in a world that is governed by what Hinkeimmert called the 'racionalidad della irracionalidad dominante'.

In my view to act local entails to go beyond any concluding and non concluding dialectics as represented by Hegel and the Frankfurt school respectively and to celebrate what I term as the dialectic of non concluding negative questioning. This is the motor behind the process of deglobalisation. It asks what can I not do and not what can I do. And the silent answer you get comes nearest to localising while at the same time globalising.

Personally this method has helped me to cling on and to grudgingly grapple at the Bandwagon of globalisation, in my educational, economic and public relations activities.

Hence, I have been able to convince students who think that they are poor and therefore that they cannot afford school fees to attend school. I ask: "Why do you not go to school?" The answer is always: "I do not have school fees." I ask again: "Why do you not come with what you have not?" And many certainly come with what they do not have and only later do they find out how much they have. I have been able to integrate curricula of secondary school and vocational and technical education by dialectically and unconcludingly questioning negatively the status of white collar jobs. On many occasions I have used the same dialectic to induce schools children to plant trees on Christmas day after they have cut a Christmas tree for decoration. As far as the degradation of the soils are concerned I ask those who lament, "What don't you not have?" The answer is always: "money to buy urea." The next day I find them collecting urine. When it comes to religion I continue to challenge those who call themselves religious for example by asking: "Doesn't the fifth commandment tell you not to steal?" Next morning you find them not allowing to be stolen from. As far as relations are concerned you hear people warning you that such and such is bad, you should not go there. And I ask why should I not go there? Later on you find out that he/she is friendly. I think this is enough to illustrate that by dialectically and unconcludingly questioning negatively, we can act locally and this however little it may be affects the whole world in a way we may not see but we can imagine.

END NOTES

1. Cfr www.gci.ch/DigitalForum/digiforum/discussionpapers/concept.html-23k. I argue that globalisation like nature described by Paul Samson has several meanings.
2. Cfr <http://www.ourstolenfuture.org/commentary1DD/1> 999-2000- From the land ethic to the uncharted territory of global humanity. Harvard Seminar on Environmental values, Dec 19, 1999.
3. Cfr. <http://www.sccs.swathmore.edu/org/phoenix/2000/2000-03-30/opinions/dann.html>
4. Cfr. Ayittey B.N. George, *Africa Betrayed*, N.Y., St. Martin Press, 1992
5. For more detail confer. IEUAN Li. GRIFFITHS, *The Atlas of African Affairs*, Routledge, London & N.York, 1994 and AL! A. MAZRUI, *The African- A triple Heritage*, Little Brown & Company, Boston & Toronto, 1986
6. *Citizen and Subject., Contemporary Africa and the legacy of tale colonialism.* Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 1996, p. 61
7. Cfr. IR Paradigms, Approaches & Theories: 15 Feb 2002; <http://www.irtheory.com/know.html>
8. Cfr *Power and Interdependence; World Politis in Transition* Boston, Mass., Little Brown & Co, 1977
9. Cfr. IR Paradigms, Approaches & Theories; 15 Feb 2002: <http://ww.irtheorv.com/know.htm>
10. Cfr. <http://www.geocities.com/vantjerkwerd>
11. Cfr. *Globalisation and Post Colonial World- The New Political Economy of Development*, McMillan Pressworld, London, 1997, p. 159
12. Cfr. Ankie Hoogvelt, *op.cit.*, p. 158
13. Cfr. *Globalisation, its Emplications and Consequences for Africa:* <http://www.icaap.org/iuciode?> 193.2.1.1
14. Cfr. <http://goot.Ghana.gov.gh/story.asp?> Africa Union must change in outlook.