

## **Globalization and Marginalisation : Implication on African Politics**

Dr. Ahmed K . Sengendo

### **Introduction**

Inspite of the fact that human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve, human history has been characterized by rivalries, fierce competition, wars, and many other forms of conflicts. The death toll from racial conflicts across time and space has been, and continues to be, high. Genocide and racial as well as religious cleansings are as alive as today as they were during the pre-civilization eras. Wasn't it true that in this struggle to survive, man has actually invented, tested and amassed weapons of mass-destruction that have the capacity to destroy the entire life system on earth many folds? Isn't it also true that man is his own worst enemy?

### **Human Imperatives:**

The basic and over-riding imperative to all human beings is survival. What disturbs me most, is the inherent and mistaken belief that in order for one to survive, the others must not! It is this obnoxious notion that is the mother of all inter and intra human conflicts. The basic physiological needs of man – i.e food and water, have been causes of numerous wars since time immemorial. Concerns about safety, both group and individual, have also always led to conflicts. Egoism has of late claimed a higher profile in initiating and / or catalyzing conflicts. Amidst all this, millions of people, especially in Africa, continue to go without enough food and other basic human needs. Mass starvation and malnutrition are twin brothers born from the wombs of Africa, and whose father is political mismanagement, the grand father being colonization.

### **The New World Order?**

The 1980s and 90s have seen an attempt to reconfigure the world –

especially by the dominant forces i.e the political west and to a limited degree the mutated Soviet Union (Russia). The world is now sandwiched between two major political movements – Globalization and Democratization. Advances in science and technology (S& T), especially the Information Technologies (IT) has, indeed the potential to make the world a ,Global Village’. But for what, whom and why?

The disparities in the levels of acquisition and use of S & T between the North and the South are so great that in reality we cannot talk to genuine globalisation of S & T. Therefore one wants to ask : Is the so called New World Order a global trend or simply a reincarnation of the old world disorder? Is human life globally better off in this era of the New World Order? If not in whose interest is this Monster called New World Order? In my view, the only thing in this whole matter is that what we have now is an **orderly disorder as compared to a hitherto disorderly disorder.**

### **Globalisation**

It has become fashionable, especially in International Relations and Politics, to use the term globalisation. But what does it mean? In Trade Akin Aina’s (1997) view, the term globalisation.

- a) ‘ ... depicts among others, the transformation of the relations between states, institutions, groups and individuals; the Universalization of certain practices, identities and structures; and Perhaps more significantly, the expression of the global restructuring that has occurred in recent decades in the structure of modern capitalist relations.’
- b) ‘... It is an ‘order’ and a constructionist notion. It presupposes the making or remaking of the world ... and the existence of a system or structure, whether it is integrated capitalist market, a world information or communication order, or a world political order ... within

Many scholars and analysts have noted that most definitions of globalisation have a , resounding silence with regard to the importance of notions such as coercion, conflict, polarization, domination, equality, exploitation and injustice' Trade (1997).

### **Marginalisation**

This refers to a situation where one is left on the peripherals – or tail end of the main event.

#### **Cause – Effect Relationship of Globalisation and Marginalisation**

- a) Does globalisation lead to marginalisation?
- b) Must one marginalise in order to globalise?

Or

Can we have globalisation without marginalisation?

### **Implications of G & M on African Politics**

#### **Basic Indicators of Africa**

Population (1996)	=	729.5 million
GNP per capita (1995)	=	US\$ 639
Life expectancy at birth (1995)	=	55 years
Infant mortality (1995)	=	86/1000
Mortality of children under 5 years (1995)	=	145/1000
Adult HIV – 1 seroprevalence (1994) (14.5/1000 Uganda)	=	3.6/1000 adults.
Illiteracy rate (1995)	=	44% (33% males 54% females, 15 years)

(Source African Development Indicators, 1997, world Bank)

### Africa's Problems

- i) Poverty
- ii) Wars and Civil Strife (Inter and Intra territorial)
- iii) Technological and scientific backwardness
- iv) Refugees
- v) Cultural Westernisation without economic modernization (Mazrui)
- vi) Re-colonization
- vii) Poor leadership

### Marginalisation

Globalisation is creating new inequalities and challenges – especially in consumption

- . 20% of the world's people in highest income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditure
- . Poorest 20% = 1.3% of consumption expenditure

#### Richest 20%

#### Poorest 20%

1. Meat and fish consumption	45%	5%
2. Total energy consumption	58%	4%
3. Telephone lines (connectivity)	74%	1.5%
4. Power consumption	84%	1.1%
5. World's vehicle fleet	87%	1%
6. Total consumption expenditure	86%	1.3%

(Human Development Report 1998)

The World's Priorities  
(Annual expenditure)

1. Basic education for all	US\$ 6 billion
2. Cosmetics in the USA	US\$ 8 billion
3. Water and Sanitation for all	US\$ 9 billion
4. Ice cream in Europe	US\$11 billion
5. Reproductive Health for all women	US\$12 billion
6. Perfumes in Europe and USA	US\$12 billion
7. Basic health and nutrition	US\$13 billion
8. Pet foods in Europe and USA	US\$17 billion
9. Business entertainment in Japan	US\$35 billion
10. Cigarettes in Europe	US\$50 billion
11. Alcoholic drinks in Europe	US\$105 billion
12. Narcotic drugs in the world	US\$400 billion
13. Military spending in the world	US\$780 billion

(Euromonitor 1997; UN 1997g etc)

#### The Ultra – rich 225 people 1997

<u>Origin</u> Average	Distribution of <u>Rich people</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>wealth</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>wealth</u>
(US\$ billions)	(US billions)		
1. OECD	143	637	4.5
2. Asia	43	233	5.4
3. Latin America and the Caribbean	22	55	2.5
4. Arab States	11	78	7.1
5. Eastern Europe & CIS	4	8	2.0
6. Sub-Saharan Africa	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2.0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>4.5</b>

**Notes:**

- 1). The 225 richest people's wealth of over US\$ 1trillion is greater than the combined **annual income** of the poorest 47% of the world's people (2.5 million).
- 2). The three richest people have assets that exceed the combined GDP of the 48 least Developed countries.
- 3). The 15 richest have assets that exceed the total GDP of Sub-Saharan African.
- 4). The wealth of 32 richest people exceeds the total GDP of South Asia.
- 5). The assets of 84 richest exceed the GDP of China (with 1.2 billion people).
- 6). 4% of the combined wealth of the 225 richest people would enable the world to have:
  - a) Basic education for all
  - b) Basic Health care for all
  - c) Reproduction health care for all women
  - d) Adequate food for all
  - e) Safe water and sanitation for all

USA	=	60	(US\$ 311 billion)
Germany	=	21	(US\$ 111 billion)
Japan	=	14	(US\$ 41 billion)
Industrial Nations	=	147	(US\$ 645 billion)
Developing Nations	=	78	(US\$ 370 billion)
Africa	=	2	(3.7 billion) from South Africa.

Question : 1) Can Africa be a serious contender and competitor in world Globalisation?

Question:

2) Isn't it obvious that Africa is in for another round of exploitation and recolonisation?

### The New Breed of Leaders (Allies or Foes?)

- The irony of the wind of change blowing across Africa
- Missing the cold war and the East – West competition? Perestroika and Glasnost
- Aligning the Non- Aligned Movement (NAM)

‘When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers (Mazrui 1990) and when two elephants make love, it is still the grass that suffers’

- \* African colonialists : The enemy within.
- \* A new breed of problems
- \* Globalisation conflicts
- \* The invisible hand (Remote control)
- \* Egoism vs Pan-Africanism
- \* Democracy : Between words and deeds

New breed with new breeding methods.

### **Globalisation : The Islamic Paradigm**

- Stems from Tawhid
- Reinforced by Ummah Concept

- The Islamic World view of accountability Here and There
- Principles of Brotherhood and social Equality
- Zakat – Economic Empowerment of the poor
- Salah – Self –discipline, brotherhood, equality, One direction (Qiblah)
- Fasting – Unitary response to a call
- Haji-Universal /global conference of the Ummah.

### **Islam in the Dock**

- \* The myth of terrorism (who is terrorising who?)
- \* Fundamentalism (are one's fundamentals /principles of life vicious?)
- \* Pax Americana vs pax Islamia: A dialogue of the deaf
- \* Autolysis: the inevitable route for pax Americana
- \* Islam: The most ecumenical system of life.

### **Islam in Africa: Globalised or Marginalised'**

- \* Africa is the only Muslim continent (population wise)
- \* Africa has influenced and been influenced by Islam (Africa was the first Dar-es-salaam for Islam)
- \* Islamic contribution to African culture and civilisation is indisputable
- \* Islam in Africa is targeted e.g Libya, - UNO Embargo,

Somalia – Mass airlifting of Muslim children to non-Muslim countries

Algeria- The miscarriage of democracy

Sudan-the myth of Arabisation and Islamisation

Morocco-The Western Sahara question.

Tanzania – The irony of a Muslim majority



- Question: a) Is the global trend of fighting Islam likely to marginalise African Muslims? Very unlikely.
- b) What effect has the globalisation of the fight against Islam have on African politics?

- Alliances against Sudan
- Miscarriage of Democracy in Algeria
- OAU breaking the embargo on Libya
- Somalia – where USA was humiliated
- FBI arresting the innocent in Uganda
- Bomb blasts in Kenya and Tanzania – closure of Muslim NGOs (A pre-planned Action)
- (victims of stigmatisation)

- c) Is the globalisation of the fight against Islam likely to marginalise Islam in African Politics.

- Political Islam
- Power sharing Islam
- Elasticity of Islam

It is not possible to marginalise Islam permanently even if the attempt is globalised. Africa has benefited, and will continue to benefit, from the rich, perennial and all enduring ethos of Islam.

### **Conclusion**

Inspite of Africa's endowment in terms of resources, it remains not only poor but also dangerously susceptible to recolonisation from both within and without its boundaries. Africa lacks not only the state of the art, science and technologies but also the basic skills and knowledge to acquire them. Poverty, disease, hunger, malnutrition, wars, tribalism, illiteracy and many other ills still terrorize Africa in proportions far greater than its potential to nurse herself. Africa

continues to only react, and in most cases just passively observe, world events taking place.

Given the global trends in economics, politics and S&T, if Africa manages to remain only marginalised in the next Century it will be a great achievement. If the current trend of the new breed of African colonialists are allowed to continue causing the killing of Africans by Africans, there is a real danger that this continent could drown in the blood of its own people. Africa is marginalising itself-courtesy of its incapable leaders. The ordinary Africans, **wananchis**, are not to blame –they have done a lot to survive given the terror forced unto them by their leaders-as the late Samuel Karugire put it.

“We the willing led by the unknowing, are doing the impossible for the ungrateful. We have done much with so little and for so long, that we are now qualified to do anything with nothing”.

African people rise up and save your selves from incapable and dictatorial leaders. It is un-African to surrender to oppression. To be able to survive the onslaught of the negative effects of globalisation, Africans must stop centralizing the trivial issues and trivializing the central issues. For Africa to survive the future must mark a definite departure from both the past and the present. In this new century and new millenium, Africa has an uphill task to rediscover itself. There must be no bystanders in this struggle- It must therefore start with you and me and everybody and it must start now and not tomorrow.

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