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## **What Is Globalization & What Impact Has It Had On The African Continent?**

Africa and globalization evoke powerful images of historical irrelevance and inevitability, human destitution and development, economic privation and progress, one forever mired in the pathologies of its “backwardness” and the other marching forward to the limitless possibilities of the future; two states of being, two modes of social and spatial organization, splendidly isolated from each other.

—Paul Tiyambe Zeleza<sup>1</sup>

The idea of *globalization* has over the past thirty or so years grown to become one of the most recognized, misunderstood, and disputed phenomena’s in recent history.

Anyone and everyone from President Bush to your best friend has developed their own understanding of what globalization means to them. If someone were to ask every professor here in the Department of Political Science at Miami University to describe what globalization is, it would not be much of a stretch to suggest that each professor would give a different working definition of globalization based on their own perceptions and biases. Television analysts and political scientists alike have researched and argued various aspects of the meanings and affects of globalization for some time now, however, to the global community at large, the realities of globalization continues to remain shrouded in both mystery and deception.

Having just discussed the ambiguity relating to the global understanding of globalization, we next ask the question, what does globalization mean for Africa? At present time, two powerful metaphors dominate intellectual and ideological, policy and

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<sup>1</sup> Zeleza, Paul T., *Rethinking Africa’s Globalization—Volume 1: The Intellectual Challenges*, Africa World Press, Inc. First Edition, 2003, p. 3.

popular discourses about Africa. It is claimed, with various degrees of doom and gloom that Africa is marginal and in crisis both in epistemological and economic terms, thus, African politics, societies, and studies are irrelevant to globalization on the whole.

Clearly, Africa and globalization have had a long and unhappy history together. Africa's marginalization on account of globalization hardly means that the continent is not integrated into the world as such, but that it is integrated in a subordinate position. The degree to this subordination may have changed in recent decades, but its basic structure has not altered fundamentally since the emergence of the modern world system or the *new world order*.

To its advocates, globalization is seen as new phenomenon involving a fundamental restructuring of the global system that is both inevitable and irreversible. However, others such as Paul T. Zeleza have suggested that "we must resist the temptation to see globalization the way civilization or modernization used to be presented as inevitable and one-dimensional and immune to interruptive upheavals and reversals."<sup>2</sup> Zeleza tends to agree with those scholars who take the broader temporal and spatial view that the world has been globalizing for some time now, and that the extent to which international interactions across continents, countries, communities, and cultures has been growing amidst various setbacks and conflicts for centuries.<sup>3</sup>

As a student of African history and as an African, I do not share the view that globalization is either new, or that Africans *have* to be marginalized by it. I believe that Africa matters. Africa has always mattered. It certainly matters to the Africans themselves; over 850 million of them who live across the continent from Accra to Dakar,

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<sup>2</sup> See *id.*, at 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

from Addis Ababa to Johannesburg, globalization has affected many aspects of Africans day to day lives. It also matters to the African Diasporas, both the historic Diaspora created through the advent of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade, and the contemporary Diaspora dispersed by the depredations of colonial and postcolonial misrule. Its study will always matter to the Africans themselves as well as to all those invested in understanding and finding solutions to the continent's vast challenges.

The developments of new transportation and telecommunications technologies have over the past few decades enabled humankind to conquer the tyranny of time and space. Without these new advances in the sciences, today's complex global economic system simply could not exist. However, the vast majority of humans on Earth have been excluded from participating in the *tech revolution*. Only those countries and regions that are already well suited into the reconfiguration of the global economy and its integrated production system in terms of control over access to technology, markets, and capital have realized the vast benefits that globalization offers to the few. As Africa is concerned, its countries in general lack both the technology and technical knowledge needed for participation in the integrated global production system, thus, Africans by and large have been regulated to bystanders in the age of globalization. Africa's inability to fully integrate itself into the tech age has lead to its marginal status in the age of globalization.

While curtailing African participation in the global tech revolution, globalization has on the other hand contributed to the growing escalation of the "*African Brain Drain*". According to a BBC report, Africa lost an estimated 60,000 middle to high-level

managers between 1985 and 1990.<sup>4</sup> The BBC report also noted that around 23,000 qualified African professional's emigrate each year in search of better working conditions to nations all throughout Europe, North America, and the Caribbean.<sup>5</sup> But at what cost; Ndioro Ndiaye, the Deputy Director-General for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has stated that this phenomenon "is putting a huge strain on the African continent."<sup>6</sup> It has been estimated by some that in order to fill the gap created by the skills shortage; African countries spend an estimated \$4 billion annually to employ about 100,000 non-African expatriates. If the African flight of professionals/intellectuals continues to persist at present rates, the prospects of Africa turning into the land of the "never to have been developed" will increase exponentially.

As explained in the title, the function of this paper is two fold; define and explain the globalization phenomenon and second, asses its overall impact on the various peoples of the African continent. The current literature on globalization encompasses varying concepts and accretions, thus, resulting in a broad conceptualization of what globalization is and how it works. By reviewing various works from the literature, it is hoped that a more exclusive description of globalization will be attained; one that speaks to its purpose and direction in the international system. The paper will then examine several of the key areas in which globalization has negatively impacted development and growth on the African continent, in particular, the early history of African globalization, global capitalism, technology transfers, and the state of the African Brain Drain. By critically analyzing and understanding these facets of the African experience in the globalization era, the paper brings to light the multitude of factors that have lead to the increased

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<sup>4</sup> BBC World News, Brain drain costs Africa billions, 10/17/2001.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

<sup>6</sup> Zambia Daily Mail, *Reversing Africa's Brain Drain*, 7/23/2003.

marginalization of Africa during the age of globalization. The paper will then conclude with a brief summary and analysis of the main ideas presented.

## **Globalization, What Is It?**

It is appropriate to understand globalization as an all encompassing concept that has political, economic, social and institutional dimensions. As a multidimensional construct, globalization means different things to different people.

—Felix Moses Edoho<sup>7</sup>

What explains globalization? What are its causes, mechanisms, and possibilities for transformation? Where can one focus an analysis? On the inner workings and logic of capital itself? On strategies and actors seeking to optimize their positions? On empirical indicators or trends said to constitute this process? On the complementary and contradictory interactions among localization, regionalization, and globalization? On the social and political consequences? These questions are central to the paragraphs that follow.

To open the conversation, I contend that the global community has entered a new era in the relationship between power, finance, development, and labor, an era which at its core is globalized. What has set the context for conflict and cooperation in the post-Cold War period is an integrating yet disintegrating process known as globalization. In developing this argument, I will first explore varied meanings of the globalization concept. I will then examine both the limited role of the nation-state in today's modern era, along with the new international division of labor. I will then conclude by highlighting several existing contradictions in the new globalized era.

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<sup>7</sup> Edoho, Felix Moses, *Globalization and the New World Order*, Praeger Publishing, 1997, p. 3.

Every decade and or time period has its assortment of buzzwords, words that are used to describe the occurrence of various phenomena during a specific time and place in history. The buzzword for the latter half of the twentieth-century was clearly globalization. Globalization has become the buzzword most associated with the compression of the world into new patterns of production, integrated financial markets, homogenization of cultures, etc. But as Adar and Ajulu point out in their book, *Globalization and Emerging Trends in African States' Foreign Policy-Making Process*, contemporary understandings of globalization are about growing structural differentiation.<sup>8</sup> In their view, globalization should be seen as a process which is propelled by contradictory tendencies.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, economic globalization has unleashed productive forces throughout the world leading to the expansion of markets, the insertion of technology into the processes of production, and hence the improvement of productive capacities and massive increase in profits for multinational corporations.<sup>10</sup> On the other, it has also manifested a tendency to fragment, differentiate, and marginalize social forces and countries incapable of catching up with its processes.<sup>11</sup> For both Adar and Ajulu, uneven development, having long been associated with capitalist expansion, is probably the most visible trade mark of globalization in its contemporary form.<sup>12</sup>

Like Adar and Ajulu, both Atasoy and Carroll in their work, *Global Shaping and its Alternatives*, suggest that although many agree that globalization refers to profound transformations world-wide, some scholars have argued that the term globalization is

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<sup>8</sup> Adar, Korwa Gombe, Ajulu, Rok, *Globalization and Emerging Trends in African States' Foreign Policy-Making Proces*, Ashgate Publishing, 2002, p.3

<sup>9</sup> Id.

<sup>10</sup> Id.

<sup>11</sup> See id, at 4.

<sup>12</sup> Id.

itself fundamentally misleading and amorphous and what the word refers to is not new.<sup>13</sup> Scholars have defined globalization as including everything from the reorganization of production and international trade to the integration of financial markets. What Atasoy and Carroll argue is that is that common in most definitions of globalization is the notion of “time-space compression” in which the unprecedented speed of transactions affects global political economy in unprecedented ways.<sup>14</sup>

Many scholars in their efforts to analyze the affects of contemporary globalization have come to the conclusion that “it” has rendered the classical notion of the nation-state all but meaningless. Traditional understandings of the nation-state were most often associated with both realist and neo-realist theories which are based on the assumption that the traditional nation-state had comprehensive control over its territory and population, and a capacity to operate as a unitary/autonomous actor in an anarchic international system. But as Adar and Ajulu highlight, at present time, these notions of the traditional nation-state can no longer hold true for the majority of nations in the South.<sup>15</sup> Believers in this notion of the fall of traditional nation-states also believe that through globalization, nations in selected regions of the South have been collectively subordinated to a world-wide “market totalitarianism” to which no exception is tolerated.<sup>16</sup> To put it simply, contemporary globalization has without question imposed the unprecedented power of a few overwhelmingly wealthy and powerful countries upon the many weaker states of the international system.

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<sup>13</sup> Atasoy, Yildiz, and Carroll, William K., *Global Shaping and its Alternatives*, Kumarian Press, Inc., 2003, p.3.

<sup>14</sup> Id.

<sup>15</sup> See Adar and Gombe, *supra* note 8, at 4.

<sup>16</sup> Id.

Although first studied by early political economists and their followers for implications of comparative advantages in trade, at present, the global division of labor differs radically from the allocation of work and its rewards in Western Classical times. James Mittelman has defined the international division of labor as a set of relationships associated with the exchange of goods produced by individual units, namely, nation-states.<sup>17</sup> Mittelman suggests that as the old international division of labor evolved, a small number of industrial countries provided capital goods and consumer goods to exchange for the Third World's primary products.<sup>18</sup> However, this all changed in the 1960's when restructuring began involving the formation and expansion of a world market for both labor and industrial sites.<sup>19</sup> Economic growth was gained by exporting manufactured/finished goods, not raw materials—the trade patterns of developing world would never be the same again.

Since the basic change in the international division of labor some forty years ago, the newly industrializing countries (NICs) sought to transform their structures of production from an emphasis on labor intensive to capital and technology-intensive goods centering on high value added products. As Mittelman notes, an emerging world market of labor and production has entailed a massive industrial relocation, the subdivision of manufacturing processes into multiple partial operations, major technological innovations, large-scale migratory flows and the feminization of labor.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the dichotomy that once existed between a select number of industrial countries

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<sup>17</sup> Mittelman, James, *Globalization –Critical Reflections: International Political Economy Yearbook, Volume 9*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1996, p.4.

<sup>18</sup> Id.

<sup>19</sup> Id.

<sup>20</sup> Id.



and the developing world, which provides primary resources, is no longer the dominant paradigm in the international system of trade.

Mittelman also speaks to various contradictions that exist from within the international global system. His first contradiction of globalization has to do with the social polarization that exists both among and within nations.<sup>21</sup> Mittelman's social structure of the world shaped by globalization takes the form of a three-part hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy are people who are integrated into the global economy, including everyone from the global economy managers down to the relatively privileged workers who serve global production and finance in reasonably stable jobs.<sup>22</sup> The second tier of the hierarchy includes those whose employment in the global economy is more precarious—an expanding category segmented by race, religion, and sex.<sup>23</sup> Rounding out the bottom are those workers who are excluded from the global economy all together—they are the objects of global poverty relief.<sup>24</sup>

By analyzing the first contradiction, it becomes apparent that whole regions of Africa and many of the former Soviet satellite nations belong to the bottom level of this hierarchy. Mittelman argues that polarization is increasing within the so-called rich nations of the North with high levels of unemployment, a decrease in high paying jobs compelled with an increase in low paying jobs.<sup>25</sup> In his opinion, tiny segments from the poorer nations are successfully integrating into the world economy network; while on the

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<sup>21</sup> See *id.*, at 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

other hand, the developed nations are starting to generate Third Worlds of their own from within.<sup>26</sup>

The second contradiction concerns the loss of autonomous regulatory powers of the nation-state.<sup>27</sup> In practice, States and intergovernmental organizations have for some time played the primary role of enforcing the rules of the global economy and in enhancing national competitiveness, however, their powers of shielding domestic economies from the negative effects of globalization has steadily diminished over the past few years.<sup>28</sup> Up to now, the proscribed cure for these negative effects has generally called for more globalization.<sup>29</sup>

Mittelman suggests in his third contradiction of globalization that there exists a widespread but uneven tendency toward decomposition of civil society.<sup>30</sup> The decomposition of the civil society occurs through the fragmentation of social forces and of a growing gap between the base of society and political leadership.<sup>31</sup> From within the third contradiction, politicians are thought of as a distinct category of beings, serving their own interest—usually regarded as either being corrupt or incompetent.<sup>32</sup> Here, people have lost confidence in their politicians due to wide spread corruption and or strongly held convictions that politicians do not understand and cannot resolve the major problems confronting their societies.<sup>33</sup> In sum, communities from within the poorest

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<sup>26</sup> Id.

<sup>27</sup> Id.

<sup>28</sup> Id.

<sup>29</sup> See id, at 27.

<sup>30</sup> Id.

<sup>31</sup> Id.

<sup>32</sup> Id.

<sup>33</sup> Id.

nations are beginning to turn their backs on state and international organizations due in part that they are seen as enemies of the people rather than as communal trustees.<sup>34</sup>

After all that has been said, have we come any closer in our attempt to answer the question, what is globalization? I would say yes. Understanding that the scope of globalization can come to mean any and everything, I feel that what is represented here provides an adequate outline for the explanation of various aspects of the globalization phenomenon.

Globalization means different things, to different peoples, at different levels. For example, when politics and economics are use as the level of analysis, globalization then could be understood as the process of the denationalization of markets, politics and legal systems, i.e., the rise of the so-called global economy. The consequences of this political and economic restructuring of local economies, human welfare and environment are the subject of an open debate among international organizations, governmental institutions and the academic world. When referenced to business, globalization applies to those companies who decide to take part in the emerging global economy and establish themselves as players in foreign markets. First they will adapt their products or services to the final user's linguistic and cultural requirements then, they might take advantage of the I.T. revolution and establish a virtual presence on the international marketplace with a multilingual corporate web site or even as an e-business.

Though not mentioned here for procedural reasons, the role of globalization in the West's attempts to develop "global culture or McWorld" is none the less very significant. The effect globalization has had on all cultures throughout the world is both immense and

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<sup>34</sup> Id.

diverse. It has affected people's cultural behaviors in different ways. It has forced people to change their living ways and thus their respected cultures in order to accommodate to the ever approaching new world order.

Globalization in Africa and as well as for the rest of the world involves one fundamental project: that of opening and liberalizing the economies of all nations to the global market and its forces. Seen in this way, I define globalization as a conscious program, developed by the Western powers for the reconstructing of international commerce and political relations in line with a particular set of interests that are in accordance with the profit motivations of large scale businesses and transnational corporations of the advanced industrial countries; this definition also includes the acknowledgement of the spread of the new world order dogma that lends to private enterprise and the free market as the center for all human development here on Earth.

## **Origins of African Globalization**

In order to understand the significance of globalization in the African context, there are two premises that I believe focus the debate more realistically; the first is that today's "globalization" is actually the fourth stage of outside penetration of Africa by forces which have negative social consequences for African people's integral development, and second, globalization is not working for the benefit of the majority of Africans today.

—Peter J. Henriot<sup>35</sup>

Understood as a historical process, the world has been globalizing for a long time, although the process accelerated rapidly during the course of the twentieth century.

Africa has been an integral part of these processes, central to the construction of the modern world in all its ramifications—economic, political, cultural, and discursive—over the last half millennium. This is however not to argue that Africa's engagements and

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<sup>35</sup> Henriot, Peter, *Globalization: Implications for Africa*, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, 1/12/1998.

contributions to globalization have necessarily been beneficial to its peoples. On the contrary, Africans have paid a high price over the last 500 hundred years in the construction of a more integrated world. Samir Amin makes this point forcefully. Amin states that “the notion of Africa’s marginalization which implies, on the one hand, that the continent, or much of it, is out of the global system or integrated into it only superficially, and on the other, that the poverty of African peoples is precisely the result of their not being sufficiently integrated into the global system, is not borne out by the facts.”<sup>36</sup>

If Africa has been integrated into the global system for over half a millennium, then why do its nations continue to rank amongst the lowest in the world in terms of global trade and quality of life standards? Paul Zeleza answers this question by suggesting that Africa’s integration should not be measured by degrees, for Africa is highly integrated.<sup>37</sup> Rather the question ought to be about the manner of Africa’s integration, why its integration over the last five hundred years has produced little auto centered development, i.e., economies that are simultaneously inward looking and open, are integrated in the global system in a active not passive way, shaping but not always adjusting to it.<sup>38</sup> Thus, in order to understand Africa’s subordinated global integrated status, one would have to understand how the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and European colonialism initially pre-determined Africa’s role within the world capitalist system.

According to Henriot, the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade was the beginning of Africa’s modern integration into the global economy.<sup>39</sup> During this period, the

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<sup>36</sup> Amin, Samir, *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, Zed Books, London, England, 2001.

<sup>37</sup> See Zeleza, *supra* note 1, at 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*

<sup>39</sup> See Henriot, *supra* note 34.

continent's most precious resources, African women and men, were stolen away by global traders and slavers working for the benefit of Arab, European and North American countries.<sup>40</sup> Nowhere in the annals of history have a people experienced as long and traumatic ordeal such as that of the African during the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade. Over the nearly four centuries of the slave trade, which continued until the end of the U.S. Civil War, millions of African men, women, and children were savagely torn from their homeland, herded onto ships, and dispersed all over the so called New World. Although there is no way to compute exactly how many people perished, it has been estimated that between thirty and sixty million Africans were subjected to this horrendous triangular system of trade, and that only one third of them were lucky/un-lucky enough, depending on how you look at it, to survive through the gruesome ordeal. Nearly 150 years later, African peoples and nations the world over still suffer from the lasting economic, social, and psychological effects of this horrific era in history.

The age of African colonialism, when British, French, Belgium, Portuguese, Italian and German interests dictated the way that map boundaries were drawn, transportation and communication lines established, agricultural and mineral resources exploited, religious and cultural patterns were introduced to various localities in Africa, in Henriot's model, represents the second phase of Africa's global integration.<sup>41</sup> Whatever minimal benefits might have come to Africans because of colonialism were far outweighed by the many negative consequences of economic exploitation, environmental degradation, and social dependencies. Indeed, many of the ethnic, economic, and political

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<sup>40</sup> Id.

<sup>41</sup> Id.

crisis's that afflict the continent and attract attention from the international community today are soundly rooted in the legacy of colonialism.<sup>42</sup>

The third stage has been described as neo-colonialism; in essence, the state that is subject to is in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. However, its economic apparatus and thus its political policy are directed from the outside. Foreign capital is often used for exploitation rather than development; these investments often times increase the gap between the rich and poor. Aid given to states under the neo-colonialism system will more than likely return the imperialist country in one way or another. The Former Ghanaian President, Kwame Nkrumah once described neo- colonialism as the worst form of imperialism and capitalist exploitation. Neo-colonialism adopted new methods of exploitation and plunder, most commonly associated with foreign direct investment. Today Africa owes around \$227 billion to Western creditors (most of whom are former African colonizers)—this debt burden has virtually halted any chances of sustained economic growth and development on the continent.<sup>43</sup> Largely because of the world capitalist system and the so-called international division of labor, which sees Africa only as producers of primary commodities , most African nations have no viable integrated industries which can diversify their economies and supply the rest of the world with finished goods.

The fourth and current phase of African global integration as understood by Henriot, the period of globalization, is characterized by an integration of the economies of the world through trade and financial flows, technology and information exchanges,

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<sup>42</sup> Id.

<sup>43</sup> The Spark, *Neo-colonialism shackles Africa's starving millions*, <http://home.clear.net.nz/pages/wpnz/ap17africa.htm>, 4/17/2000.

and movement of peoples.<sup>44</sup> Henriot describes the dominant actor in this stage as the “free market.”<sup>45</sup> The globe is viewed as encompassing one vast market that is directed by the profit motivations of private enterprises that know neither national boundaries nor local allegiances (i.e. multinational corporations).<sup>46</sup> In this stage, Africa has experienced both minimal influence and maximum consequence.

Simply put, present day Africa with all of its economic, political, socio/economic, and cultural deficiencies cannot be understood without first understanding the haunting legacy of European colonialism. Arguably the most important legacy of colonialism in Africa relates to the integration of the African economy into the world economic system. Over a Seventy year period the colonial powers of Europe slowly integrated Africa into the global economy. From its very beginning, Africa was targeted to hold a peripheral status within the world economy and thus is the main reason why Africa today remains underdeveloped and deprecated on the whole.

## **Africa and the Global Market**

The African state for all its record of abuse, remains a potential line of defense for Africans against the depredations of the world economic and political system: part of the solution, if there is one, not necessarily part of the problem, as the drive by the IMF and the World Bank to weaken the African state in the name of market efficiency implicitly acknowledges.

—Colin Leys<sup>47</sup>

Having just briefly discussed Africa’s historical relationship with global integration, it is now important to further analyze the present day status of Africa in this, the “golden age” of globalization. Africa south of the Sahara exists in a capitalist world,

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<sup>44</sup> See Henriot, *supra* note 34.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

<sup>47</sup> Saul, John, S., *Millennial Africa*, Africa World Press, Inc., Asmara, Eritrea, 2001, p.50.



which marks and constrains the lives of all of its inhabitants at every turn, but is not of it. As John Saul notes, sub-Saharan Africa, with some 850 million people, and over 10% of the world's population, has only 35% of its trade and only 1% of its GDP; and why income per head, averaging \$460 in 1994, has steadily fallen, relative to the industrialized world, and is now less than a fiftieth of what it is in OECD countries.<sup>48</sup>

In his book, *Millennial Africa*, John Saul suggests that there are two ways of picturing Africa in the context of global capitalism.<sup>49</sup> One is from the point of view of the people living and hoping to improve their lot in sub-Saharan Africa's 48 nation-states, and the other, refers to the point of view of capital, for which Africa is not so much a system of states, instead, as simply a geographic—or geological—terrain, offering this or that the opportunity to make money.<sup>50</sup>

The 48 nations that make up sub-Saharan Africa are just as diverse as they are similar. Eight countries account for 61% of all Africans living south of the Sahara, (and Nigeria, with an estimated 118 million inhabitants in 1997, contains almost one in five of them); the other forty are small, including twelve mini-states with populations of less than two million.<sup>51</sup>

However, as Saul notes, most of the citizens of these countries are far too often no better off than their lesser populated neighbors.<sup>52</sup> Hence, in terms of income per head, size and wealth apparently do not go hand in hand. Nigeria for example, the most

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<sup>48</sup> See *id.*, at 17.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

<sup>51</sup> See *id.*, at 18-19. The eight sub-Saharan African countries with populations of 20 or more million: South Africa, Congo DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Nigeria.

<sup>52</sup> See *id.*, at 19.

populace nation in sub-Saharan Africa, is also one of its poorest, in spite of its vast quantities of oil reserves; per capita income of Nigerians was only \$240 in 1996.<sup>53</sup> As the Economic Commission for Africa puts it, “according to current estimates, close to 50% of the sub-Saharan African population live in absolute poverty—this percentage is expected to continually increase for some time to come.”<sup>54</sup>

Saul next analyzes the importance of capital in his understanding of Africa in the context of global capitalism.<sup>55</sup> When the attainment of capital is thrown into the equation, it becomes clear that the goal of multinational corporations is not to help develop those particular countries in which they operate; instead, they look to exploit any and every profitable opportunity that may present itself.<sup>56</sup> An economic profile of Africa drawn from this perspective would thus pay relatively little attention to countries or states, except as it regards the physical security of fixed investments and the availability of communications and transport facilities. Instead it would look to highlight a group of large transnational corporations (i.e. mining companies-DeBers).

In his book, Saul concludes by suggesting that that these two perspectives explicitly express the fact that Africa today continues to remain a victim of both global exploitation and marginalization.<sup>57</sup> In his words, “every packet of cheap Kenyan tea sold in New York, every overpriced tractor exported to Nigeria, every dollar of interest on ill-conceived and negligently supervised loans to African governments that accrues to western banks—not to mention every diamond illegally purchased from warlords in

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<sup>53</sup> Id.

<sup>54</sup> Economic Commission for Africa, *Africa Economic Report 2000*, p.23.

<sup>55</sup> See id, at 20.

<sup>56</sup> Id.

<sup>57</sup> See id, at 21.

Sierra Leone or Angola—benefits people in the West at the expense of Africa’s impoverished populations.”<sup>58</sup>

In sum, the destiny of Africa under the existing global capitalism network is anything but promising. Without a significant change in IMF and World Bank policies on debt relief, and without an end to the dogmatic philosophy of market liberalism, Africa and its peoples seem destined to stay marginalized for some time well into the foreseeable future.

As Saul notes, African marginalization within the global system will ultimately produce negative repercussions for the rest world. If the situation continues to remain static, Africa will most likely continue to be the leading exporter of the HIV Virus and AIDS, trained mercenaries, and untested blood.<sup>59</sup> Also, Africa, not the Middle East will likely become home to a vast majority of the world’s terrorist networks, including Al Qaeda. Africans need to become participants in debates about debt relief, the more they know, the better prepared they will be counter many of the racist policies of the WTO and the IMF.

## **Africa and the Rise of Global Information Technology**

The world is divided into two parts: countries that enjoy the benefits of science and technology and those that do not, developed and underdeveloped, rich and poor, North and South—separate and unequal.

—Felix M. Edoho<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Id.

<sup>59</sup> See Saul, *supra* note 46, at 30.

<sup>60</sup> See Edoho, *supra* note 7, at 100.

Globalization, and as some argue, the new world order have transformed the environment of international technology transfers (ITT) and global information technology (GIT). The rapid advancement and deployment of information technologies is a distinct revolution that surpasses the agricultural and industrial revolutions, thus its impact can only be measured on a global scale. The rise of GIT and ITT has revolutionized the way in which raw materials are acquired, how products are made and marketed, the speed with which customer's needs are met, and the rate of economic growth in almost every country in the world.

As suggested above, advances in technology are transforming national political and business institutions as well as alerting national foreign policy objectives and the method of achieving them. Technology has asserted itself as the major determinant of wealth and power here in the twenty-first century. As a potent instrument of civilization, science and technology has aided us in our collective struggle against diseases, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and ignorance. However, as Felix Edoho suggests, not all countries have enjoyed the comfort brought about by science and technology—these benefits have been confined to a few countries in the North.<sup>61</sup> Edoho describes how hegemonic control in the North of S&T has resulted in over half the world's population lacking the benefits and fruits of even the most basic developments that science has to offer the global community.<sup>62</sup> At present time, an estimated 1.2 billion people, nearly one-fourth of the total world population live in a dehumanizing state of destitution and dire poverty.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See Edoho, *supra* note, 7, at 101.

<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

<sup>63</sup> *Id.*

However, what implications does globalization and the emerging global order for ITT and GIT present to the African continent? Understanding that globalization, above anything else is technology-driven; the prognosis generally speaking is that Africa faces monumental obstacles in the future on account of the lack of accessibility and applicability of global information infrastructures. This is to say that development in the era of globalization increasingly hinges upon technology. For any country or region to participate meaningfully in the new global economy, it must first control, or at least have access to, technology.

At present time, Africa has a marginal status in the global technology system (GTS). As Edoho notes, the gap between the level of scientific and technological development within the African region as compared with that of other Third World regions is ever widening.<sup>64</sup> Many feel that due to the lack of indigenous technological capabilities (ITC's) in African nations, that they do not have the capacities to assess their resources, analyze their needs, or formulate a programmatic response to socioeconomic crises.<sup>65</sup> As if this was not enough, Edoho also laments that Africa lacks the capability to conceptualize and analyze the politico-economic, socio-cultural, and environmental implications of ITT for its economic development.<sup>66</sup>

A 1993 UN Development Program study indicates that sub-Saharan Africa is the most heavily aided region in the world and a survey of the International Labor Organization (ILO) revealed that it deploys about 50% of its global technical cooperation

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<sup>64</sup> See *id.*, at 108.

<sup>65</sup> *Id.*

<sup>66</sup> *Id.*

to the region.<sup>67</sup> The regional economic vulnerability of African nations as a result of their dependency on foreign technical support has lead Walter Morehouse, a noted scholar in the field of ITT to suggest that those “countries with have limited problem-solving capacities of their own and that are largely dependent on others for providing the knowledge and skills needed to solve their problems are always going to be vulnerable, in the long run if not the short run.”<sup>68</sup> Needless to say, Africa remains the most vulnerable region in the world on account of its lack of ITC.

Most developing countries lack the management capabilities necessary to stimulate and sustain economic development; this is especially true in sub-Saharan Africa. The need to develop management technology in the region is quite urgent. As it stands, transnational corporations (TNC’s) operate as the main channels through which African nations as well as other developing nations use to acquire proprietary technology from the industrialized nations of the world—some nations are almost entirely dependent on TNC’s for the acquisition of technology.<sup>69</sup>

Having already mentioned the negative lasting effects of slavery and the colonial era on the African psyche, its vicious roots can also be felt in the realm of technical development. Edoho notes how colonialism deprived Africans of the opportunities for learning-by-doing as well as doing-by-imitation.<sup>70</sup> Apparently, African colonializers were in no way interested in building local management capabilities in their respected territorial administrations. Consequently, at the time of independence, Africa on the

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<sup>67</sup> See id, at 108-109.

<sup>68</sup> See id, at 109.

<sup>69</sup> Edoho, Felix M., *Management Challenges for Africa in the Twenty-First Century*, Praeger Publishing, Westport, Connecticut, 2001, p.128.

<sup>70</sup> See id, at 137.

whole was grossly lacking professionals, technicians, and managers needed in order to sustain, develop, and manage technical growth.

It is ridiculous that after decades of operating in the era of international technology transfers, that sub-Saharan Africa continues to rely so heavily on foreign consultants, engineers, and management experts to facilitate their meager development in terms of technology. The way that technology is packaged and sold to the continent on the whole does not lend to learning and advancement. The nations of sub-Saharan Africa must place themselves in a situation where they can eventually begin to facilitate the development of ITC's as well as the management skills necessary to oversee more favorable terms in the overall technology transfer environment.

## **African Brain Drain**

Every year Africa's best and brightest leave their cities and villages for Harvard or McGill University or the London School of Economics. Some are children of privilege. Some are hand-picked by private foundations or donor nations, casting their nets for the next generation of African leaders. Others are sent by parents who have sacrificed for years to send their offspring abroad. Yet on the planet's poorest and most war-torn continent, there remains a leadership deficit. Why?

—Danna Harman, Staff writer for The Christian Science Monitor<sup>71</sup>

First, I want to state that there is nothing wrong with Africans wanting to study abroad. Every man and woman living and breathing on this planet ought to have the freedom to ultimately decide where either he/she will live out the rest of their days. However, that being said, one can not overlook the fact that most African students who study abroad (Europe and the U.S.) often times choose not to return.<sup>72</sup> Since one in out of every three African professionals will like to emigrate outside of Africa, in essence

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<sup>71</sup> The Christian Science Monitor, *Africa's new class of power players*, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0930/p01s03-woaf.html>, 9/30/2003.

<sup>72</sup> Emeagwali, Philip, *Brain Drain*, <http://emeagwali.info/interviews/brain-drain/education-in-africa-brain-drain-problem-worldnet-africa-journal.html>, 11/24/2003.

then, African universities are at present time training one third of their graduates for export to the West.<sup>73</sup>

The rise of globalization has accelerated the mass human capital flight from Africa with no end yet in sight. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, an estimated 1,800 Africans a year left the continent from 1960 to 1975—the pace quickened to 4,444 a year from 1975 to 1984.<sup>74</sup> A separate study conducted in 1994 reported that there were approximately 134,500 Africans living in the UK, of which 14,500 have first degrees and 4,600 have advanced degrees.<sup>75</sup> According to the ACP-EU-Courier, Africa lost 60,000 professionals (doctors, university lecturers, engineers, etc.) between 1985 and 1990 and has been losing on an average 20,000 annually ever since—these numbers do not include students who leave the continent for reasons other than to further their education but do not return.<sup>76</sup> In total, around ten million skilled Africans have emigrated out of Africa during the past thirty years.<sup>77</sup>

As John Sarpong has suggested, many Africans have been dissuaded from returning home by the economic and political crises that have bedeviled the continent over the last few decades; failing economies, high unemployment rates, human rights

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<sup>73</sup> Id.

<sup>74</sup> allAfrica.com, *Brain Drain in Africa can be Harnessed*, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200310270656.html>, 10/27/2003.

<sup>75</sup> Africasbraingain.org, *The Origin and Destination of Africa's Brain Drain: A Pilot Stud*, <http://www.africasbraingain.org/pages/Origin%20and%20Destination%20of%20Africa%27s%20Brain%20Drain.htm>, 11/24/2003.

<sup>76</sup> Id.

<sup>77</sup> Emeagwali, Philip, *How Do We Reverse The Brain Drain*, <http://emeagwali.com/speeches/brain-drain/to-brain-gain/reverse-brain-drain-from-africa.html>, Keynote speech delivered at The Pan African Conference on Brain Drain, Elsah, Illinois, 10/24/2003.



abuses, armed conflict and lack of adequate social services are some of these factors.<sup>78</sup> Mr. Brett Stewart, an Amero-Liberian emigrant to the U.S. stated that, “Africa has not and will never foster an environment for talented people to reach their full potential.”<sup>79</sup> “It is not a case of blatant self-interest that makes people leave; it’s simply an acknowledgement that life in Africa today is corrupt, unsafe, and limited in possibilities and opportunities.”<sup>80</sup> The fact is that there exists several factors that have over the years contributed to the mass exodus of Africans from their motherland.

One of the primary causes of the external brain drain is without question linked to the unreasonably low paying wages of African professionals. African professionals working in Africa are paid considerably less than similarly qualified expatriates. With the introduction of structural adjustment programs (SAP’s) which were pushed by the Bretton Woods institutions, sub-Saharan African academics have found themselves among the worst paid in the entire world. Thus, African professionals leave in the thousands for the West as they are tempted by significantly higher wages and brighter prospects. The socio-economic conditions that currently exist make it difficult for educated peoples to achieve their full potential in most African nations.

Another link to the Brain Drain relates to the opinions of many who feel that the African leadership for the most part is not interested in keeping their intellectuals or professionals. The unfortunate scenario is that none of these African countries is willing to have such challengers and hence, this provides the impetus for Brain Drain to the West. Some feel that there is no guarantee African intellectuals to live peacefully and or

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<sup>78</sup> See Zambia Daily Mail, *supra* note 6.

<sup>79</sup> BBC News, *Should Africa tolerate the brain drain?*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking\\_point/debates/african\\_debates/564479.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/debates/african_debates/564479.stm), 12/21/1999.

<sup>80</sup> *Id.*

utter their opinions on societal issues freely. These intellectuals are now for the most part located at U.S. Universities, and or either teaching and researching in other foreign countries. In other words, the value attached to the contribution of the people who are well trained is not appreciated in some African Countries and as such, they usually leave because they are persecuted in their own country. Commenting on the situation, Tesfa Wube, my Uncle and former Ethiopian citizen has commentated that, “I don't think African leaders are serious about getting their professionals back to their home countries—they treat the expatriate better than their own citizens.”<sup>81</sup>

African dictators and politicians who cling on to power by the bullet are yet another factor that contributes to the Brain Drain phenomenon. African military dictators have either vanished or killed thousands of intellectuals since the post independence era. When military coups and ethnic clashes are also taken into account, it is no wonder why this manmade misfortune has resulted in the discontinuity of economically beneficial activities, which in turn makes professionals opt to leave their countries in search of a living elsewhere; where they are sure to enjoy peace and stability among other gains.

The African Brain Drain makes it very difficult for the region to create a middle class consisting of doctors, engineers and other professionals. In Africa, there currently exists two classes of people: a massive underclass that is largely unemployed and extremely poor and a minute class of the very rich, consisting mostly of those individuals who are either corrupt or have some affiliation with military and government officials. The Brain Drain gives rise to poor leadership and the corruption of African officials at all levels of government. A large

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<sup>81</sup> Wube, Tesfa, *Interview with Keith E. Noble*, 11/20/2003.

educated middle class will ensure that political power is transferred by ballots instead of by bullets. Also, it should be noted that when the vast majority of Africa's medical doctors emigrate to the United States; they leave behind their countrymen/women who are forced to seek medical treatment from traditional healers as opposed to the elite, who either fly to London or Paris for the most routine of medical checkups and appointments.

The situation is such that in 2001 South Africa's Education Minister, Mr. Kadar Asmal accused Great Britain of unfairly raiding South Africa for teachers; President Mbeki himself has called for a reversal of the outflow of scientists and engineers from South Africa to the West.<sup>82</sup> Last year, it has been estimated that over 2,000 Nigerian pharmacists left the country, in their place, street hawkers have begun to fill the void by dispensing expired drugs to the people there.<sup>83</sup> And Dr. Jacob Plange-Rhule, President of the Ghana Medical Association, has recently stated that in Ghana's Upper West Region, there is no more than 10 Ghanaian doctors' in total.<sup>84</sup> In the Upper West and East Regions of Ghana, Dr. Plange-Rhule commented that they are now looking at a doctor-patient ratio of 1:66,000.<sup>85</sup> He also referred to the fact that in a number of districts, there were absolutely no doctors at all—nurses provide minimal health care.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> BBC World, *African Brain Drain -- Cause or Effect?*, <http://www.overpopulation.com/articles/2002/000010.html>, 01/23/2002.

<sup>83</sup> See Emeagwali, *supra* note 76.

<sup>84</sup> The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, *The Brain Drain in Healthcare in Ghana: An Interview*, <http://www.cbcfhealth.org/content/contentID/2264>, 10/6/2003.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.*

<sup>86</sup> *Id.*

So what can be done to curb the effects of the modern exodus of most African professionals and skilled persons? First, African Governments (Nigeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Congo DR to name a few) need to eliminate military spending and increase their spending on education, women's empowerment and youth development, which will in turn bequeath good quality basic education for the masses of African peoples. As Emeagwali has suggested, Nigeria claims that it can only afford to pay its professors 50 dollars a month although it is spending one million dollars a day to fight in Sierra Leone.<sup>87</sup> Apparently, the money spent on warfare by the Nigerian Government would be sufficient to pay the salary of around 600,000 Nigerian professors—priorities need to change from warfare to educational and technological advancement.<sup>88</sup>

Second, it should be realized that at the core root of the Brain Drain, lays the need for African professionals to be respected, protected and reasonably compensated for the work they provide to their selected societies. If African leaders can come to understand this and provide the necessary environment, Africans will either come back home or never leave in the first place—they will look to develop Africa from within Africa. Realistically, who can conscientiously blame a professional in an unstable country to go away to where he/she can at least feel safe and be free to carry out their own duties?

Finally, African leaders are faced with tough choices to make. For instance a poor country getting aid usually has a tough time trying to decide whether or not to stick to donor suggestions on local policies or decide to meet the needs of their nations' various ethnic groups. Thus, African countries need leaders with visions for their

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<sup>87</sup> See Emeagwali, *supra* note 76.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.*

respective countries, not corrupt businessmen and or inept politicians/military generals. African professionals are not going to want to return home if they perceive the political/economical environment to consist of business as usual arrangements. What I argue is for the return of *Africa's Hero's*, men that weren't afraid to step out on faith and would not accept the scraps that elites in the West decided to throw their way whenever it was convenient for their interests (men like Nkrumah, Mandela, Toure, and Selassie). They understood that Africa's greatest resource was not its gold, natural resources, or wildlife; it lies within the creative genesis of her peoples.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the North must revise its conception of development, and thus globalization. Economic growth without social and cultural justice cannot be the norm the international community follows. It is imperative that development under globalization is measured in terms of the improvement of quality of standards of living for the vast majority of humans here on Earth. This should be reflected in for example, better education, health-care and life expectancy for every single member of society. This is only possible if men and women are equally empowered, in theory and in practice. Anything that falls short of restoring peoples' dignity, sense of identity, continuity and security should be looked down upon as a failure in the human experience of interconnectedness.

Africa, with its own variation of Silla and Caribdis, rogue heads of state and the exploitative tendencies of TNCs, is at present time caught between the preverbal rock and a hard place. As the history of conflicts in Africa shows, the expanded extraction of mineral resources creates and reinforces government corruption, which easily begets

repressive regimes and societies. As would be expected, poverty, unemployment, and insecurity spread, while the vast majority of social services decay. This leaves the citizens more prone to take up arms and fight in oil, diamond, and copper wars, as the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, Liberia, and the Great Lakes region all attest.

Ultimately, the answers to a vast majority of the problems that Africa faces today on account of globalization are within their own control, **Afrikan Power**. The options Africans have for ending their modern circle of violence and economic exploitation are recognizably few but practicable. As already mentioned, Africa needs a new generation of leaders to define and pursue a new dynamic political and economic agenda for the continent. The African states must renegotiate their terms of trade in the international marketplace. Diverse groups must achieve a sense of national pride and internal cohesiveness in order to create an atmosphere conducive to implementing much needed development programs. As long as the resources have not yet been depleted, there still exists the hope of a rising again for the continent—a land that has suffered far too long in the matrix of the globalized system.

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