
Globalization, Culture and Development: Perspectives on Africa

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Abstract: *The idea as well as the extensive practices linked to globalization, have had important impacts on the lives of people over the past few decades. The constructiveness or otherwise of this impact seems to have been determined by one's geographical and, by extension, cultural, educational and developmental locations. In the case of Africa, the majority of the people should be characterized as pragmatically discontented with the phenomenon. Because it contains so much of Western ideological exportations into Africa and elsewhere, it may be intelligent to argue that in most life contexts, especially at the cultural level which defines and sustains so much about people's lived realities, and which also determines the quality of social development achieved in given time-space intersections, globalization has not been 'nice' to Africa. It is in response to globalization's de-culturing and under developing effects therefore, that this article locates globalization as potentially representing the continuities of Western hegemonic and colonial practices in the continent, and discusses the possible re-routing of the current trajectories of globalization so as to achieve more inclusive cultural, educational and developmental spaces.*

1. Introduction

The relatively new phenomenon of highly organized globalization has now been with us for about thirty years. Yet the realities of generic globalization would be as old as the first collective systems of humanity itself. In different places and at diverse epochal intersections of people's lives, select practices of globalization in commercial, educational, religious or technological innovations were always present, and as was the case always, those who thought they had better material and/or knowledge possibilities often globalized their products and ideas to the rest. In the new realities of the current globalization, though, the novel

phenomenon where the multi-trajectory practices of the case are reaching almost all corners of the world is interesting and worthy of all the intellectual and analytical curiosities it spawns.

In the case of Africa especially, the expansive processes of globalization that have become dominant from the mid-19th century to about the mid-20th century, ushered in new and unprecedented forms of globalizations that were driven, *sans exception*, by Europe's political, economic, educational and cultural interests and intentions. It was here where African cultures, epistemologies, worldviews and indigenous learning systems were either destroyed or relegated to the status of non-viability (Monga, 1996; wa Thiongo, 1986). And from the long-term effects of these unevenly eschewed encounters, the colonial and postcolonial forms of 'social development' (if one could characterize them that way) were so fundamentally de-cultured, they were just creating more underdevelopment and institutional weaknesses.

With that in place and with basic philosophies and operationalizations of African development mainly based on continually colonizing platforms, the political and economic fall of the Eastern Bloc in the late 1980s instigated a new form of globalization for Africa. This time, it was the full sanctioning of overnight established, nominal democracies that the public neither understood nor had the chance to examine and appreciate either on their merits or demerits (Ihonvbere, 1996). Here the imposition of Western liberalism as a system of government, and as an important component of globalization--or as Francis Fukuyama (1993) put it, as a testimony to the absolute triumph of the ideas of the West vis-à-vis the rest--on countries that have had different histories and life management systems, and above all, different cultures of governance, was to have, and had a negative impact and outcome. Today, after almost twenty years of African democracy, most countries are worse off than they were when they became 'democratic' from 1990.

It is in response to these expansive and globalization-induced de-culturing and under developing processes of the overall *vita Africana* that this paper examines the ongoing *problematiques* of the situation, complemented by select analysis of the initially disturbing conceptualizations and practically deforming forces of globalization. It should be

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meaningful to say that the totalizing nature of globalization has created and seems to sustain a discernible de-linking of Africa, in both developmental and psycho-social terms, from the rest of the world. The de-linking problem, is not, we need to repeat as often as needed, the result of something endemic to people's capacities, whether they be in Africa, Asia or the Americas, to make duly comprehended decisions to manage and, where needed, change their lives. It is, I categorically submit, the direct outcome of a world system that is historico-ethnocentrically interlinked or delinked, and with selectively located multiplicities of interconnectedness (Wallerstein, 2004), heavily favours and advances the interests of Northern countries whose powers are usually sustained by the *longue durée* inertia of the de-culturing processes. The chapter will suggest ways of overcoming these issues including the re-culturing of African systems of life, which is essential for people's capacities to relate to and constructively respond to the exigencies of the social and physical phenomena that surround them. In the new active space that should be established with respect to the problems of de-culturation and the possibilities of re-culturation, I am mainly aspiring for socially inclusive and practically located points of divergence and convergence where the design as well as the implementation of Africa's educational, economic and political projects are undertaken with expansive attention to the continent's historical, cultural and actual needs, which should not be devoid of the communally interdependent ways of existing that still characterize African life. In engaging the overall counter points vis-à-vis the top-down hegemonies of globalization, therefore, the analyses undertaken in these pages concur with the point that globalization is now so interwoven with our lives that rescinding its realities and its impact is almost impossible. As Bessis (2003) notes, in poor Southern countries, people understand they may not be able to directly confront and effectively neutralize the onslaught of globalization at this point and as such are more interested in new ways that can modify its dominant realities, which could minimally benefit them in their actual contexts. It is on that basis that we should also talk about possible ways of humanizing globalization. While I am using the generic term in this work, Africa, my focus is on Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Conceptualizing and Theorizing Globalization: Select Pointers

As one of the most debated issues in recent academic scholarship, globalization may be defined in many ways, with selectively inherent empowering or disempowering interests and as many divergent intentions. With such simple characterizations as open borders and the movement of everything, to more complex and inclusive observations, definitional assumptions about globalization abound. In my classroom teachings, I have presented 'true' globalization as the unhindered movements of peoples, goods and services across regional, national and continental boundaries. In speaking about goods and services, one can include commodities and related economic transactions as well as social, political, cultural, educational, technological and pre-conceivable futuristic possibilities that can enhance the desired exchanges and their mechanisms. More impersonally, I tend to tentatively borrow one useful definition of globalization provided by Held et al. (2004: 68), which sees the issue "as a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions--assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact--generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and the exercise of power." Indeed, it is these unique extensities, intensities and velocity of current globalizations that would distinguish it from previous ones. So if we assume that these new globalizations have started with global economic re-structuring that included the few financial blueprints that were devised for the developing world by the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund), then we could say, as I have noted elsewhere (Abdi, 2006), that the new situation may have started from late 1970s into early 1980s. And that should raise the question, what happened to people's lives and what happened to Africans in particular since the early 1980s? Concisely, the overall picture is not very appealing, in fact it is extensively problematic and we shall see more of this discussion in the latter sections of the chapter.

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In terms of the global viability and applicability of Held et al.'s definition (above), one might say that despite all its linguistic and descriptive dexterity, it cannot not speak for the world of the African, or for the new hundreds of millions of peasants, the urban poor or women and children who are being disenfranchised by rapid and global multinationals-driven globalization all over the world. These peoples have no access to the mechanisms that could enable the long reach of their actions. So at the end of the day, such definitions, as important and research-wise and useful as they are, and to be fair, as conceptual distillers of globalization as they may represent, should always raise one important question: whose world does this speak for? As should be clear by now, one important trouble with globalization is that it seems to speak mainly for the globalizers, that is, those who due to the endowed nature of their societies and their powerful multinationals are either directly or indirectly globalizing the less endowed majority of the world. We will deal more with this in the following pages. Suffice it to say that as Teodoro (2003) noted, in the current configuration of events, there may be a number of globalizations affecting people, not only with respect to their immediate impact, but also via their developmentally problematic outcomes. And that should persuade us, I think, to at least provisionally claim the right to define globalization from the perspective of its many victims. As such, I could locate globalization as a mostly profit-driven, historically de-conscientizing, selectively enriching, culturally alienating, politically dominating and economically attempting to create an amalgam of world economies and related life systems, all for the purpose of maintaining, mainly by design but occasionally by default, the ideological and institutional supremacy of the West over the rest.

However one conceptualizes or theorizes it, though, the factuality of the complexity of globalization makes it difficult to prospectively quarantine. As McMichael (2004: 285) said, globalization, in all its dimensions, "is a formative and contradictory process with no clear structural imperative." In adding to his observations, McMichael immediately points out what most of us should already know: despite these irregularities in structure and outcomes, globalization must, at least theoretically, obey the common

rules of the market. That, *ipso facto*, assures us how the monetary dimension and its architects from the corporate elite are by and large, the dominant constructors of the processes of globalization. Perhaps the dominance of the corporate elite is also a reflection of their insider status as part of the international agencies, the so-called International Financial Institutions (IFIs) that are the originators and current enforcers (in terms of policy and programs) of globalization. So before we even worry about the outcomes of globalization, we already see thick asymmetries in how different groups understand and can, by extension, operationalize it for their well-being. And the concerned socio-cultural complexities are, as Rouse (cited in Behdad 2006: 65) notes, not easy to navigate, especially for less developed societies:

We live in a confusing world, a world of crisscrossed economies, intersected systems of meaning and fragmented identities. Suddenly, the comforting modern imagery of the nation-states and national languages, of coherent communities and consistent subjectivities, of dominant centres and distant margins no longer seems adequate.

It is this complexity that calls for something new: a return to the possibilities of recasting the conceptual and theoretical locations of globalization. Thus far, the new globalizations were not only designed and imposed on the rest of humanity by Western agencies, they have also been defined, re-defined, remodelled and purposefully augmented or repainted at will by the same agencies, their analysts and some supposedly less bureaucratized Western academics who have been trying their best to tell us what globalization means. But the continuing colonization of the meanings of globalization incessantly confirms the marginalizing practices of the case. And to create enduring social or institutional meanings, the issue of representations becomes paramount. That is, before we continue focusing on what globalization has done to, or could do for Africa, Africans and others in comparable corners of development should have one important *a priori* right. They must ask for and be told what they have never been told, i.e., what are the meanings

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and intentions of globalization, why it is so important, and why everyone should jump on its bandwagon. Undoubtedly, this proposition would sound preposterous to some. The counter-argument could be that the forces of globalization are on, every country and every group in the world is partaking in its platforms, no one can disengage from it, and let us just be reasonable and focus on the immediate *post-facto* events. We may also be told that everybody knows and understands globalization.

Indeed, as Williamson (1993), partially speaking for his former employer, the World Bank, advised us some years ago, we should have been at the point of no return, and with the world practically heeding the siren call for universal mono-economics, all was and should be fine. If Williamson's world was realized, then we should already be in the era of hyper-globalization where states, let alone borders, are no longer viable and where the social, cultural and educational are all subservient to the monetary interests of neoliberal economics. In the case of the political, we should already be in the long ago-predicted promised land of liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 1993). Of course, none of this has happened for Africa; if anything, the opposite would be true. In economic terms, for example, most African countries were doing worse in the early 21st century than was the case in early 1990s (UNDP, 2003), and the promise of imported liberal democracy did materialize in one unexpected but important way. It precipitated more economic woes and institutional failure for most of the poor countries that embraced it after the fall of the Eastern Bloc (Abdi, 2008; Ake, 2003; Ihonvbere, 1996).

To see why more representation is needed in the boardrooms and academic circles where new ideas and their pending practices are conceptualized, selectively theorized, and for lack of better words, snobbishly implemented, one can read Ihonvbere's (1996) important essay, "On the threshold of another false start," where, for example, the imposition of a Eurocentric and unworkable processes of democratization were imposed on post-Cold War Africa. Clearly, the intentions here were not removed from sustaining a clear politico-economic line from colonialism, to pre-'democracy' problematic spaces and into post-Cold War ill-advised incidences of counter-indigenous, so-named

democracies. It was also in 1996 that Claude Ake's book *Democracy and Development in Africa*, and Celestin Monga's *Anthropology of Anger*, were published. As in Ihonvbere's essay, both books questioned, among other things, the socio-political development decisions that are made on behalf of Africa without the direct involvement of Africans. As Ake (1996) noted, whether it is the false promises of globalization, the general threads of economic and political development, or the shallow rhetoric of democracy, no historically or culturally inclusive practices of any of these were ever implemented in the old continent. What has happened instead, was that ideas, concepts, policies and programs were conceived and constructed elsewhere, and exported almost in pre-packaged fashion to Africa.

For Monga (1996), the problems lie not only in producing and distributing the wrong items, but basically misunderstanding the overall African context. And to his dismay, technically *ditto* for the rest of us, Western governments and institutions were more than willing to construct new meanings about African life that are for Africa, but not about Africa. The point should be clear: things, ideas and programs were conceptualized and manufactured about Africa, but in real terms, they have nothing to do with Africa. In a more direct language, they were false fabrications about the continent, which by driving globalization and development policies, would do, as they have extensively done, more harm than healing. Indeed, as Ihonvbere (1996) pointed out, in terms of the processes of democratization, which for the West were some of the most important components of globalization, the line that was followed did not seem to be different from the misguided, European-based policies of social development that almost all post-independence African countries chose to apply. So with the failure of that impractical first phase of African development, Western donors and their rentier states did not seem to have learned anything from those experiences. Thus, with so much of Africa heeding the unidirectional call to democratize the 'threshold' of another false start on, the presumptions of democratization were at play, and the consequences, as pointed above, were anything but conducive to the well being of people.

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3. Colonialism and the Problematic Globalizing and De-culturing of Africa

In Africa, as in other parts of the world, the processes of globalization have been happening with different intentions, intensities and outcomes. What we can say, though, is that European colonialism from early-mid 19th century into late 20th century was, before the current trends of globalization, the most expansive, externally imposed form of globalization the continent has experienced. Important in analyzing the two trends of globalization is how the former has actually directly affected the way Africans have been able to respond to, or more appropriately survive the current one, which we may term latter-day globalization. For me at least, this is extremely important, for I subscribe to the conclusions about the effects of colonialism on Africans and their subsequent realities of underdevelopment that have been extensively discussed in the writings of such brilliant historians and cultural sociologists of colonialism as Frantz Fanon (1967, 1968), Julius Nyerere (1968), Aimé Césaire (1972), Ivan van Sertima (1981), Walter Rodney (1982), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, 1993), and Albert Memmi (1991). Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), extensively and quite effectively talks about how the biggest outcomes of colonial relationships have been not necessarily the direct political and economic exploitations, although these were very important, but the cultural domination of Europeans over the rest.

Fanon's points are corroborated by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o who in *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) critically dissected how, by de-linguicizing people (i.e., taking their language out of their education and imposing a foreign language) and by extension, de-culturing them, colonialism has expansively colonized the minds of Africans, and to achieve viable livelihoods and development, mental decolonization is of paramount importance. Before Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Fanon (1967, 1968) also saw the complexity as well as the importance of psycho-cultural platforms along with physical domination. Fanon clearly understood that subjecting citizens, especially when they are either psychologically or physically (or both) subjugated, leads to whole new projects where people are objectified, and to de-objectify them, we

have to do so much to reconstitute some of the psychosomatic possibilities that have been lost. In analyzing and relating the colonial globalization of Africa, therefore, my focus should be less on economic relationships and more on the schemes of de-ontologizing and de-culturing this complex Southern continent. This is important in the sense that culture is the way people live in given tempo-spatial contexts and with respect to their stable or changing social and physical environments. When cultural platforms are deformed or destroyed, therefore, as we shall see below, people's lives may cease to exist in ways that benefit them and may only function to advantage those who caused the problems in the first place.

My above point on the important relationship between earlier colonial globalizations of Africa and the current neoliberal driven one is also culturally and psychologically located. As I have related elsewhere (Abdi, 2002a), colonialism was first and foremost psychological, then cultural, from there selectively educational, then political and culminated in the economic. It was initially psychological in the sense that through the writings of European thinkers and philosophers (see Hegel, 1965; Kant cited in Eze, 1997; Montesquieu, 1975; Voltaire, 1826), the continent and its peoples were portrayed as irresponsible, socially infantile and needing, actually deserving the domination of Europeans. And with the encounter of the two peoples favouring, not only the technologically superior group, but also disfavoured the inclusive ontologies of Africans for whom humanity was inter-subjectively located, and dehumanizing others was equal to dehumanizing yourself, the air and the incremental practice of superiority were slowly established. From there, the cultural patchwork was set in motion, and with the socio-cultural methodologies of Europeans successfully portraying their worldview and their life systems as universally superior and to be emulated (Bessis, 2003), the colonized were taught how to do those life systems, which in a twisted turn of events, would de-culture them, thus affirming Fanon's pointers that once this is achieved, the rest, in the simple parlance of everyday life, should be easy.

Indeed, the processes of colonial globalization we are talking about are mainly facilitated by the cultural

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hegemonies and their educational platforms that affirm the rising status of those natives who are good at adopting the new prescriptions and who become the ground level militia for the ensuing and more measurable political and economic platforms of the colonizing process. Interestingly, the deculturing and overall processes of conquest and exploitation were portrayed as a *mission civilisatrice* (Said, 1993), which from there strengthens the claims of the racist philosophers, thus effectively locating the continuities of the quasi-concretizable cultural and learning relationships that are established. It is therefore, through this shedding of one's worldview, language, culture and later, communal ways of living that the program of globalization takes place. As Ivan van Sertima (1981) so cogently noted about the real life of colonialism in Africa, though, the story was anything but Europeans overtaking the continent, exploiting it in multiple ways and leaving when the people rebelled. What we need to critically understand is how the people who were in Africa before colonialism were entirely different from those the socio-culturally explosive practice left behind.

Here a note of note: people act, react and interact with respect to mental processes that govern their decisions and behaviour. People, therefore, are, at the end of the season, more psychological and cultural than anything else. What colonial globalization did to Africa, was the de-patterning of mental dispositions, thus changing them from confident, socially located communities into what Aimé Césaire, in his powerful *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972: 19) has described as millions of men and women "who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair and abasement." And to just go back to the claim of the *mission civilisatrice*, Gerald Caplan (2008; see also Hochschild, 1999) talks about the barbarism of the civilizing mission in the context of Belgium's King Leopold who successfully killed 10 million of 20 million Congolese in twenty-five years during his personal rule; and the extermination of the Herero people of Namibia by the Germans, which together should represent some of the most horrible acts of genocide in history. As noted by both Hochschild and Caplan, it was actually King Leopold who introduced the severing of limbs to Africa, a tactic replicated by Africans in Sierra Leone's civil war about a century later.

And the massive genocidal practices of the European civilizing missions (the oxymoronic nature of the description need not detain us here) were not at all limited to Africa. Many centuries earlier, in the fifty years between 1531 and 1581, Indigenous populations were so decimated by mainly Spanish and Portuguese colonizers in the post-Columbus Americas, their numbers were reduced from 80 million to 10 million (de Botton, 2002). Eventually, the project of colonialism was so effective in all its dimensions that the voluntary participation of the colonized in its projects was not difficulty (Memmi, 1991).

Several centuries before Memmi, the Tunisian historian Ibn Khaldun described, in his important circa 1380 *Prolegomena* or *Muqaddimah* (Introduction) to his *Universal History* (see Issawi, 1969) how people who are conquered by others eventually begin to imitate their conquerors in almost everything they do. The reason should not be too complicated to see. Conquest and colonialism involve extensively interactive regimes and heavy contexts of identity deformation, misrecognition, loss of self-esteem, and individual and social doubt in self-efficacy. All of these could, in the long run at least, mentally and culturally reward the victors, and through the psychology of need, people could equate perfection, achievement and success with those who have had the right means to trump their ontologies and existentialities. As Ibn Khaldun pointed out, when these relationships continue for too long, the acceptance of defeat and the admiration of the conqueror become convictions that might persuade the vanquished to actually identify (as the inferior adopted self) with the colonizer. Looking at the world today, it is not really difficult to see the result of the important analyses presented here.

Even in the current discussions on the declining economic status of many Western countries, the fate of the lower selves of the world (in development terms), whose financial liquidities have been devastated by the forces of globalization, seems to have become so habitualized that their suffering is, without any desire for better words, 'normal'. Indeed, this reality has so invaded the global public space that one can clearly see how it is a direct descendant of the processes of colonization where the natives (global natives now) were to be controlled and fed before the point of

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starvation. As Chinua Achebe (2000) wrote, the notion, actually the maxim, "I know my natives"--that is they do not need development, and hardly any sustenance, and they will still like me--was popular with colonial officers. Undoubtedly, therefore, the now descriptively celebrated less than US\$2 per day story was invented long ago by those officers who critically understood that income, food and other essentials were to be used to control people's choices and by extension, their loyalty. In a semi-reversed practice of events, it is the combined forces of the African elite and agencies of globalization that are now playing with that earlier devised golden rule to oppress and rule. Indeed, globalization has wrought havoc on the economic lives of Africans (Abdi 2006, 2008) and I do not see any viable debate, although that can change in the future, in addressing the negative impact of this project on the situations of the least endowed in this continent and elsewhere.

If anything, the pervert normalization of the suffering of Africans continues unabated, and like old times, the only time that any action is actualized seems to be the point when the images of starving children and other victims of natural disasters are flashed on television screens so as to revive what Western analysts call the moral imperative to help hapless Africans, and occasionally some Asians (in North Korea, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India and other places) who are having these problems because of a) their corrupt rulers, or b) their own laziness or inaction before the calamities hit them. From inclusive global perspectives or even sober historical analysis, no one seems to have time to investigate the role of globalization, indeed, directly the role of globalization in instigating the repetitive nature of these and similar calamities. As Amartya Sen (1993, 2000) noted, open societies (selectively democracies) do not experience starvation and development happens and sustains itself more effectively when basic freedoms for all segments of society are accorded. And if anything, the latest colonization by globalization of the African public space has been the imposition of false labels of democratization that are now beyond the threshold Ihonvbere (1996) spoke about, which have derailed, at least for the time being, any viable

governance structures that are open, accountable or minimally transparent.

4. Globalization as Counter-Culture/Development

I will be brief on the culture point. Most of the preceding analysis should have been about culture, and even if my pointers were historically eschewed, the applicability, as I have made quasi-abundantly clear, to current events and life systems are practical, tangible and impactful in people's daily experiences. I will just say that based on my readings of history and society, when people's psychological patterns and connections are pulverized by global forces that they cannot deal with (in our discussion, either colonial globalizations or current postcolonial, imperial globalizations, see partially Hardt and Negri, 2001), the threads of their cultural platforms start to slowly disentangle, their ontologies become de-centred, they begin to lose social (communal) agency, and could, in the process, lack the capacity for social development. As I have done in some of my earlier writings and presentations, I am using the construct 'social development' as inclusively talking about all types of development including economic, political, educational, cultural, technological and emotional well-being. It is also the case that lately, I have been occasionally using development and well being interchangeably.

A propos the inclusive nature of the idea, for me, development is always interwoven with power. From ancient times and into our here and now, those who were developed, that is, those with more economic, political, educational, cultural, technological and psychological well-beings vis-à-vis others, had more power, not only to manage their lives as they wished, but as well, to influence the lives of others. As Walter Rodney noted, power relations, or the prerogative to have your way in the contexts you reside, is the most important variable in human relations. Indeed, as Rodney himself so effectively discussed in his outstanding work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1982), the most important outcome from the globalization of European colonialism of Africa, was the extensive underdevelopment of Africa, and undoubtedly, the rapid development of Europe. If we were to measure the value of the primary resources and

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the free or almost free labour Europe has extracted and is still extracting from Africa, one should be able to quickly see how the former would not be where it is today without those arrangements. But it was not only the massive hauling of resources that has assured the problems of underdevelopment; the case also involved, as Nyerere (1968) pointed out, the destruction of African platforms of development and African indigenous educational systems that were, as Mandela (1994) among others noted, the backbone of the continent's schemes of social progress over millennia.

Here the divergent and purposefully location-specific meanings of development are important. Some would say, for example, that to analyze international development, we should start with former US President Harry Truman's great deal program (see Black, 2002). That of course, will represent the usual American-centric perspectives of current life. The more realistic case should talk about development, as globalization, being part of human life forever, and as globalization, different groups have shared their ideas and practices of development over time and space. Indeed, as Archer (2000: 17) said, "human interaction with the world constitutes the transcendental conditions of human development, which otherwise remain an unrealized *potentia* of our species." And in that ongoing human interaction, colonialism was undoubtedly, and contrary to the falsehoods of its proponents, a fruitful program of international development for Europe and a very tangible project of international underdevelopment for Africa. In describing the issues, therefore, let us be tolerant with a historical continuum of development that does not start with the time-constrained, ethnocentric understandings of somewhere it becomes a global faith that should be religiously followed (see Rist, 2003). As Nederveen Pieterse (1998) pointed out, development, when it is not criticalized with multi-focal lenses, would be mainly about different intersections of Western hegemony, which immediately nullifies the validity of the myriad of other advancements that have been achieved all over the world at least in the past four thousand years.

Despite all the impositions of development, though, most of Africa still remains highly underdeveloped, and some

of it is actually de-developing and all the remedies hitherto imposed are not working. But again, both the descriptive and analytical hegemonies are important. They justified colonialism, persuaded Samuel Huntington (1971) to prescribe modernity for the non-Western world where 'primitive, backward' (his own words, of course) societies could only move forward if they follow the trajectories of development the West has adopted. For Huntington, the proof was not far-fetched. "If you are not doing well, why not just do as I did, and you will be like me" could have been, verbatim, attributed to the late American commentator. Succinctly, Huntington and others like him never seriously analyzed how the West developed: by robbing the resources and the labor of others. Was Africa accorded the opportunity to do the same to Europe, that is, not to rob anybody, but at least to get back some of the material stolen from her? Or perhaps a more pragmatic point: Was Africa ever allowed to analyze its development needs in a global context where she is disempowered vis-à-vis the West? No, because, as Edward Said (2002: xiv) explained, "to this day, the demeaning of non-Western ideas, scholarship and general cultural possibilities continues," despite the exponential increase in the number of important works produced about the lives of non-Westerners by those who know them best, non-Western scholars.

The exclusionary ideas also spawned the misguided travels of legions of development experts who visit Africa and other non-developed places and impose their ideologies and de-contextualized practices of good life. Here again, these schemes of non-viable development were important components of globalization that were advanced, among others, by the World Bank and the IMF. The most important of these prescriptions in the past decades came in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which were the main blueprint for African development. The focus of SAPs was mainly on reducing government expenditures, privatizing public institutions, and reducing public expenditure on social development programs such education and health care (World Bank, 1994). The failure of SAPs is a well-known story and we need not detail the tragic outcomes here. Briefly, they were counter everything the African public space was made of, including the role of government in

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national development, people's incapacity to pay for private services including privatized schools and health clinics, and the communal culture of sharing that is still common in the majority of African life situations. As Schatz (2002) noted, the World Bank was actually aware of the program's weaknesses as early as 1996 and internally promised to make some changes, but as I write this chapter, the world is still waiting for any ideas and practices from this important but globally misnamed American institution. To some careful observers of the situation such as the late Nigerian political economist Claude Ake (1996), the failure of hegemonic development was not to surprise anyone. Development, if it has to succeed must not be unloaded from the wagon of globalization and from the misinformed platforms of the World Bank or the IMF, it must not be historically de-contextualized, and above all else, it will do no good if it is expansively de-cultured and socially alienating. Ake (1996: 13) wrote:

Because the development paradigm largely ignored the specificity and historicity of African countries, it put them in a position in which everything was relevant to them, and nothing was uniquely significant for understanding them. Hence the mounting anarchy of development studies in Africa. Bits and pieces borrowed from theories and paradigms constructed for other purposes and for other kinds of experiences, meaningless for being incomplete and out of context, were applied in ways and for purposes that are not always clear, and to realities that defy comparability.

As it has been imposed on Africa by the forces of globalization, therefore, development was devoid of an authentic kernel of what Raymond Aaron might have intended when he spoke about a possible "germ of universal consciousness" (see Hoffman, 2004), and was actually de-conscientizing, to use an antithesis of Paulo Freire's (2000 [1970]) popular characterization about the role of education in human well-being or lack thereof. In speaking about the role of education in social development, it was the case and continues to be case that one of the worst things that has happened to Africa's advancement has been the destruction

of African learning systems and languages by colonialism, and with no change in the philosophical and policy foundation of African education from colonial times, the failure of the continent's schooling systems as platforms for social development, continued into the era of new globalizations. So if education is to be an important engine of national development (Mandela, 1994), then recasting Africa's learning programs so they reflect the histories, cultures and the languages of the people, should be prioritized. In speaking about these possibilities, my intention is not to do away with current systems of schooling structures, but to introduce into their midst, African epistemic notations and epistemologies, which, if gradually and carefully intermixed with what we have now, could improve the situation for hundreds of millions of learners. While there have been some recommendations in this regard, most of them talking about the Africanization of knowledge, I would subscribe, as I have done before (Abdi, 2002b) to a more inclusive approach that talks about the *relative* Africanization of schooling and avoids the *a priori* and *posteriori* notions and intentions of knowledge construction and validation. It is the case that Africans, wherever they may be, cannot and should not disengage from the global context, and knowledge should be seen as a collective human heritage that should belong to, and benefit all.

While I have deliberately engaged what might be perceived as a scathing criticism of colonialism, globalization and conventional development, I pragmatically know that we are in a *post-facto* context, and a systematic withdrawal should not be recommended by many, and least by me who is relatively cosmopolitanized, and is in fact exercising this right to analyze and critique mainly due to opportunities accorded to me by my attachments to the global labour space. Still the criticisms, whether heavy or benignly soft, should be legitimate, for what I have described here, in simple and straightforward terms, has actually taken place. However, our current desires to speak about ways of constructively living and achieving more than what has been prescribed, as the philosopher Alain Badiou would suggest, in these extensively interactive world moments, are also legitimate. For me this calls for possible ways to humanize the dominant paradigms of the day, and that requires,

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without any analytical alibi, select de-verticalizations and not necessarily de-globalizations, as Bello (2002) suggested, of the processes of globalization so they benefit, not only the multinationals and citizens of the West, complemented by those in the developing world who are in the right global circle with the former (see Hoogvelt, 2001), but also the other billions who deserve enfranchising life platforms that are no longer psycho-physically demeaning and marginalizing. And because we live in globally open, competitive environments (even within the confines of one's country), relevant systems of education for historical consciousness and social development should be designed for and accorded to all. No, this is not a rhetorical manifestation, it is the basic right of every African and others in all parts of the world, the same way it was my right and the right of my readers. And there are some new stretches of hope that are emerging in many parts of Africa. Beyond the general educational systems, which are still of top-down nature, there is a high number of civil society groups that are using informal learning programs, community theatre and neighbourhood gatherings to teach locally marginalized groups such as women, the unemployed and youth about their political and economic rights.

Most of these volunteer associations are responding to the problems, not the promise, of economic globalization and democratization where people are realizing that despite the nominal elections that take place every four or five years, it is basically the same elite who have re-constitutionalized themselves as the new legitimate rulers, mostly with the tacit support of Western donors and governments. It is actually well-known to the African public how the bar has been lowered when it comes to African democracy, where for Western sponsors, as long as the electioneering processes are visible, then supposedly, Africans are democratic. As Ake (2003) so rightly noted, though, democracy will thrive in Africa only if it reflects the traditional notions of Africa's communal participatory culture. While the difficult contexts of globalization and democracy are still real, the important reconstructive point here is that people are responding, and groups such as *Women for Change* in Zambia who I visited when I was doing citizenship education-related fieldwork in that country few years ago, are achieving so much, not only

in the social arena, but also in the political space. Such viable actions and many others like them (the organized voice of trade unions in South Africa, and environmental groups in Kenya are two other examples) are gaining momentum throughout the continent, and despite the current problems of globalization and democracy, there are few attainable glimmers of hope on the horizon.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to put together a number of ideas and analyses about the meanings, select historical locations and the outcomes of globalization with respect to the African context. In so doing, I was intent on being as descriptively inclusive as possible, but with the limited space I had and the expansiveness of the topic assigned, that was not a simple task. As such, I decided to put more emphasis on certain areas that I believe have not been treated as effectively as they deserve. For me, one of these areas is the reality of colonialism as one of the most important forms of globalization Africa has seen. And although, I have done it in a limited fashion, I have decided to re-introduce the need to discuss more extensively the meanings of globalization. As the case is now, at least academic definitions of globalization seem to be the preserve of those who have not been pained by the opening of borders and the free movement of commodities, peoples and capital. While speaking about the African experiences of the case, most of my points seem to have expounded into a multi-pronged criticism of what these have done to the *persona Africana* and how more than anything else, they have shaped the current configurations of cultural alienation, social underdevelopment and highly uneven power relations that permeate the lives of people.

Indeed, I have agreed with those who see the current spectres of globalization as a new imperial order that favours former colonial powers and their regions. Actually, I have put forward those propositions as much as anybody else, and I believe that despite the rhetoric of independent countries and peoples transacting with one another, contemporary globalizations are actually sustaining the remnants of the

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mental and cultural, and by extension, politico-economic dominations that have been established by colonialism, with these directly limiting the capacity of Africans to redefine their world, recapture lost agency, reconstitute their existentialities and achieve effective social development schemes that can recast current contexts in this ancient continent. Finally, I am aware that Africans are not and should not be perpetual victims of their histories, and as such the extensive emergence of anti-colonial and anti-globalization civil society associations and other progressive collectivities should have a positive impact on the lives of the public.

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