African Development and the Globalization Imperative: New Directions, Familiar Crises

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Abstract

Globalisation has emerged as the defining conceptual and contextual socioeconomic framework of analysis for the early 21st century. Throughout Africa particularly, globalisation has become a political-economic buzzword for profound structural change, as well as the focus of vociferous and rigorous criticism by those sectors of society disadvantaged, damaged, or bypassed by the forces of global restructuring. Moreover, globalisation often is discussed from an absolutist perspective and framed almost exclusively within the context of the political state. As a result, regions, places, and people frequently are reduced to insignificant actors or are omitted from the analysis altogether. This paper examines the theoretical and practical implications of globalisation for development in Africa and argues for an analytical approach that encompasses key regional and local conditions. With Africa as the framework of reference, six critical elements of development under globalisation are examined: social polarisation, migration, democratisation, cultural identity, transportation, and environmental change. The paper concludes by discussing the concept of 'globalisation' and arguing for a policy approach that rethinks the extant framework and restructures the analytical construct in a more proactive manner.

Introduction

Throughout Africa, globalisation has emerged as the defining conceptual and empirical phenomenon of the early 21st century. From an evolving trendy perspective on socio-economic change two decades ago, globalisation has become the dominant contemporary

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political-economic framework for national development policy, as well as the focus of vociferous and rigorous criticism by those sectors of society disadvantaged, damaged, or bypassed by the forces of global change. African governments, almost exclusively, have adopted wholeheartedly globalisation policies such as privatisation, deregulation, neoliberalism, and free trade in an attempt to reverse decades of economic mismanagement and squandered development opportunities. The shift from an ideology of *dirigismo* (state-directed development) to one of *neoliberalismo* (state disengagement) has opened up the region to the global capitalist regime of finance, production, marketing, and consumption, which has altered irrevocably the way in which goods and services are provided, spatial relationships are structured, and cultural identities are defined and understood.

As globalisation evolves into a fully defined theoretical framework, its impacts and implications in Africa often are discussed from an absolutist perspective and framed almost exclusively within the context of the political state. This is occurring despite a conceptualisation of globalisation that implies a frictionless world without state-imposed barriers to economic interaction. Economic development policies throughout Africa, for example, continue to be framed by a conception of national territory as culturally and structurally homogenous, rather than by the reality of socioeconomic spatial heterogeneity that goes beyond artificial internal or international political boundaries. As a result, regions, peoples, and places frequently are reduced to insignificant actors or are omitted from the analysis altogether. Indeed, a central criticism of globalisation throughout Africa has been its role in accelerating social polarisation or the 'development gap'. This occurs when an increasing percentage of national income or wealth is concentrated in the hands of fewer people. Increasingly, globalisation analysis seems to be driven primarily by macroeconomic statistics that serve as positive indicators of long-term national development trends, while micro-economic data that measure quality of life for individuals and communities are downplayed or dismissed outright as insignificant short-term trends.

This paper examines the implications of globalisation for development in Africa by focussing first on six key long-term

forces of change, the 'subsurface' processes that are reshaping the national and regional environments within which globalisation operates. Next, it examines six key themes that encapsulate the short-term disruptions experienced by African societies today as a consequence of globalisation. Finally, the question is raised about how to mitigate the damage caused by short-term disruptions, while developing meaningful policies that recognise the long-term shifts in the restructuring of African countries and societies, shifts that are being driven by the forces of globalisation and neoliberalism. The paper argues ultimately for a policy approach based on the concept of 'globalization' that rethinks the analytical approach to globalisation's impacts in a more sensitive, proactive, and spatially relevant manner.

Setting the Stage: The Globalisation Thesis

Globalisation is fast becoming the shibboleth for the profound reordering of the world political economic system that has taken place over the past two decades. The term has emerged as the ultimate expression both of an increasingly interconnected global society and as a socio-economic Trojan Horse that will wreak deprivation and degradation on local communities. Some explanations and definitions of globalisation argue that it is a process of spatial integration, inclusion, and engagement, while others posit that it is a process of spatial segregation, separation, and exclusion (Bauman 1998; Sadowski 1998).

Such a seemingly unresolvable theoretical paradox points to the challenges presented by the globalisation thesis: to understand its theoretical and ideological context and to analyse empirically its impacts on people and places. From the vast and rapidly growing literature on globalisation, Lechner and Boli (2000) have identified six key questions: Is globalisation new? What does globalisation involve? Is globalisation driven by an expanding market? Does globalisation make the world more homogenous? Does globalisation determine local events? Is globalisation harmful? In order to set the stage for an analysis of globalisation's implications for development in Africa, these questions need to be explored briefly.

First, is globalisation new? To answer this question, a distinction

should be made between what is known generally as historical globalisation and what Lloyd (2000:260) calls "ultra-modernist" globalisation. Historical globalisation processes can be traced back to at least the 15th century, with the genesis of the capitalist world economy and the geographic expansion of division of labour, access to raw materials, industrial production, and the circulation of capital. Wallerstein (1974, 1979) conceptualised these developments as a single world system divided into three main economic zones: core, semiperiphery, and periphery.

In contrast, ultra-modernist globalisation refers to the intensification since the 1980s of the spatial reorganisation of production and distribution, the spread of financial markets, the interpenetration of advanced producer services, and the rise of key cities as command and control centres of global capital (Mittelman 1994; Lechner and Boli 2000; Lloyd 2000). Although the roots of ultra-modernist globalisation are planted firmly in the garden of historical globalisation, the contemporary system has matured by the adoption and spread of transport and communication technologies.

For the first time in human history, multinational corporations can produce anything anywhere on the planet and can sell anything anywhere on the planet. As Held et al. (1999:15) argue, time-space compression has 'stretched' capital and information activities across the traditional boundaries constructed by political and geographical structures. This theoretically borderless world now presents few impediments to the rapid and efficient movement of people, capital, goods, services, and information, thus facilitating the emergence of a truly global marketplace. Second, what does globalisation involve? Giddens (1990:64) has defined globalisation as "an intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa". In other words, globalisation involves changes in the spatial reach of capital, financial activities, advanced producer services, and information that transcend the political state system and where, arguably, multinational corporations replace states and communities as the dominant actors in the global system.

In theory, a globalised socio-economic system would be freer, more efficient, economically rational, and unfettered by state-

directed diversions of wealth into unproductive areas. As production is reorganised across time and space, industries interpenetrate across political borders, financial capital spreads across the globe, homogenised consumer goods diffuse to distant markets, and people flow to new areas of economic opportunity, the local and the global will become inextricably intertwined in a system of universal order (Loker 1999; Bauman 1998).

However, globalisation also involves reshaping the social structure of the world system in a way that reinforces social polarisation. At the top of the globalisation hierarchy are those individuals and communities integrated into the global economy who have command and control functions over global production, finance, and information. In the middle are those who serve the global economy in more precarious employment circumstances, and at the bottom sits the superfluous labour force that represents a potential destabilising threat to globalisation (Cox 1996).

Third, is globalisation driven by an expanding market? The global operation of multi-national corporations has played a major role in the expansion of international trade and the emergence of regional trading blocs since the 1980s. A significant number of treaties, institutions, and organizations aimed at facilitating global trade have come into being in order to 'open up' national markets and local communities to free trade. Thus there is a reciprocal relationship between an expanding market and the forces of globalisation. As capitalism continues to overcome spatial limitations to market expansion through time compression, an expanding market provides a more conducive environment within which globalisation processes can spread.

One of the arguments supporting the spread of democracy across the planet, for example, is that, theoretically, stable, participatory democracies encourage the expansion of a consuming middle class. In turn, an expanding middle class creates a growing demand for goods and services, thus facilitating an expanding national market. This allows the forces of globalisation to maximise capital returns, economies of scale, production systems, and distribution costs by engaging with specific expanding national and regional markets and integrating them into the global economy. The fourth question asks if globalisation makes the world more

homogenous and, if so, what are the consequences. Embedded in the ideology of global change is the homogenisation or Americanisation thesis, which argues that capitalist consumerism has orchestrated the spread of Americanised commercial and media products across the planet, with particular success in developing countries (Friedman 1999; Tomlinson 1999). Commodified culture in myriad forms, ranging from Cokes to Big Macs, from Nike to the NBA, and from CNN to Hollywood, has disseminated from the U.S. to the rest of the world, overwhelming local cultural traits and leaving local communities with few choices in the marketplace. Critics of the homogenisation thesis argue that globalisation is taking multiple paths in local places, giving rise to terms such as 'hybridization', and 'globalization'.

In many parts of the world, local entrepreneurs and consumers are using imported cultural products to shape and assert their own unique identities, so much so that globalisation's success in promoting capitalist consumerism has spawned multiple local variations of so-called globalised culture (Robertson 1995; Howes 1996; Watson 1997; Kim 2000).

Fifth, does globalisation determine local events? There is little doubt that in Latin America and other regions of the world, governments have responded to the rhetoric of globalisation by adopting neoliberal strategies to restructure economies and societies. As a consequence of these policies, local businesses and communities are exposed to competition from global corporations who often have better financing, technology, advertising, and market reach.

Finally, is globalisation harmful? This is perhaps the most complex question of all to address because there are multiple contradictions embedded in the globalisation thesis. For example, the socioeconomic elite of most developing countries, who comprise a tiny fraction of a country's population, have integrated into the world system and have become completely globalised. In contrast, many highly developed countries are creating developing world conditions among the bottom tier of their labour hierarchy (Cox 1996; Sassen 1998). Throughout the emerging regions of the world, vast segments of society are becoming further impoverished, isolated, and excluded from the socioeconomic opportunities offered by globalisation.

Other contradictions are the loss of regulatory power by states

and the widespread resurgence of attempts to reinforce local religious, ethnic, linguistic, political, and gender identities in the face of wider global forces. Brecher and Costello (1994) have synthesised effectively in a single statement the issue of whether or not globalisation is harmful: global village or global pillage? The challenge for researchers is to examine both macro-socioeconomic and micro-socioeconomic indicators of development under conditions of globalisation to understand the impacts for all segments of society across all possible scales of analysis. This requires a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to development analysis.

Without a doubt, globalisation, both as ideology and as process, has transformed the world system in profound and fundamental ways over the past two decades. This is especially true in Africa, where neoliberal policies have dismantled state regulation of the economy, opened up the region to globalising processes, and created a new framework for development, growth, and change. As Korzeniewicz (1997:20) observed, the region's institutional structures are being disassembled at a 'precipitous pace, to be replaced by a deepening differentiation in the arenas of operation of enterprises, states, and households'. How these changes unfold in different places at different times will determine the long-term contribution of globalization to improving the quality of life for all Africans in the 21st century.

African Development under Globalisation

A fundamental difference exists between the economic ideologies or policies of globalisation, which are essentially structural and conceptual in nature, and the processes of globalisation, which are outcome driven and can be empirically measured. However, there is much confusion throughout the region about the distinction between the two definitions.

Over the past two decades, African governments and socioeconomic elites have embraced the ideologies of globalisation uncritically and enthusiastically, but have done very little to convert these ideologies into measurable development improvements for the majority of the population. This is indicative of Africa's general economic failures throughout the 20th century in that the region frequently has embraced changing economic philosophies and ideologies and incorporated

them into national policy. Yet these policies ultimately always have failed because of insufficient attention paid to the processes that translate policy into measurable development. For example, let us accept the premise that transport and communication technologies are the engine driving contemporary globalisation.

African governments, with few exceptions, have recognised explicitly in publications, conferences, policy statements, and electoral rhetoric that transport and communication are crucial to development success. They have promoted a variety of high-profile projects to address national and regional integration. Yet by conservative estimates, Africa suffers from an infra-structural deficit in excess of US$1 trillion in the transport and communication arena just to bring the region up to a minimum level of support for globalisation policies to have any reasonable chance of long-term development success.

This deficit suggests that a significant problem exists between policy formation and policy implementation in the region. How, then, has Africa development fared under globalisation, whatare the fundamental forces of change shaping the region today, and why do so many of the familiar development crises that afflict the region remain un-addressed?

Contemporary or ultra-modernist globalisation has emerged from the long-term historical processes that have shaped Africa's people and places. A useful metaphor for explaining African development in a broader context is provided by plate tectonic theory. Drawn from the physical world, plate tectonic theory is the idea that subsurface convection currents cause continental and oceanic tectonic plates to move, thus causing changes both in the position and surface relief of the oceans and continents.

Applying this theory to the cultural world, contemporary globalisation can be viewed as part of the long-term or tectonic shifts in the socioeconomic forces shaping the world around us. The short-term surface manifestations of these long-term shifts are earthquakes and volcanoes, which can reshape local and regional conditions profoundly and rapidly. Cultural 'earthquakes and volcanoes' generally are short-term events such as rapid inflation or deflation, war, revolution, coups d'etat, increased social polarization, paradigm shifts, boom and bust cycles, and currency devaluations

that have a dramatic and often negative impact on economies and societies (Thurow 1996).

First, the system of state-directed economies that dominated the region for nearly 50 years has ended and neo-liberalism is emerging as the dominant economic model. Second, the basic structure of African economies is undergoing a transition from a system based on natural resources to one based on human capital and brainpower. Third, African societies have become predominantly urban in composition, and demographic aging, coupled with economic welfare, is looming as a significant social issue. Fourth, the effects of social polarisation in the region are becoming more evident as societies undergo cultural and economic restructuring based on the ability to engage with globalisation activities. Fifth, as neo-liberal policies and noninterventionist strategies are applied to primary sector export activities, to industrialisation, and to urbanisation throughout Africa, increased stress is placed on the physical environment. Finally, as globalisation spreads geographically, it exerts change in accessibility and mobility demands through its dependence on the technologies of time-space compression.

The Fundamental Forces of Long-Term Change

Neo-liberal policies adopted throughout Africa since the 1980s have moved the region's countries and societies in a new economic direction, away from the influences of import-substitution and socialist ideologies and towards the integrative embrace of globalisation. This policy paradigm shift involves the replacement of state control over resources, production, and services with privatization strategies, the regulation of financial markets with deregulation and fiscal reform, inflexible labour markets with flexible ones, closed domestic markets with open and free trade, and restrictive institutions with more innovative management approaches. Moreover, the transition to a more globalised structure for African economies has coincided with a transformation of the political environment from primarily authoritarian to mostly democratic (Haggard and Kaufman 1995).

Reductions in the power of the state through privatisation and deregulation are seen as critical to reducing government inefficiencies and management ineptitude in the economic arena

and to providing a more technical, disciplined, and flexible approach to running the national economy (Edwards 1995; Gwynne and Kay 1999). Neo-liberal reforms have not been uniform throughout the region, however. Considerable and important variations exist both in the pace of neo-liberal restructuring.

In addition, the spatial and structural impacts of globalisation are displaying significant local, regional, national, and supranational variations, which suggest that this fundamental force of change is facilitating development divergence rather than convergence.

Countries in the developed world such as the United States, Germany, Britain, and Japan have seen the structure of their economies shift over the past fifty years from a natural resource base to a human brainpower base. Information processing, financial management, marketing, research, biotechnology, and other 'brainpower' activities have replaced smoke-stack industrialisation, manufacturing, and similar traditional 'blue-collar' production as the dominant employment sectors of the economy.

Social polarisation is being experienced across the globe, including Sub-Saharan Africa where over one-quarter of a billion people live in poverty. The complex mosaic of globalisation's development impact is characterised by the emergence of marginalised enclaves where people and communities are unable to gain access to the global economy's productive processes (Mittelman 1996). How can these local communities and regions demarginalise when state policy options are extremely constrained by the forces of globalisation?

Although social polarisation as a development condition has long been evident in African societies, the current trend is being exacerbated because those social groups with specific skills or capital benefit from links to the global economy, while those lacking the necessary skills or capital become increasingly detached. Neo-liberal reforms do not address such social concerns directly because the policy priorities are macroeconomic in nature and are not geared toward addressing poverty, inequality, or the redistribution of access to skills, capital, and global opportunities. As Sheahan (1997:9) puts it, neo-liberal policies "do not in principle rule out redistributing assets for the sake of equalization, but their spirit certainly goes against it". The theory behind neo-liberalism is that macroeconomic stability and greater efficiency will favour economic growth, which

in the long term should reduce poverty and inequality and improve access to capital, skills, and opportunities.

Africa's fifth fundamental force of change is intimately related to the first four. Neo-liberal reforms and the drive towards free-market economies within the context of globalisation have placed renewed pressure on the physical environment and on natural resource inventories. The globalisation of the region's economies is expanding trade and investment relationships, but primarily in non-manufacturing exports such as agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry, and ranching. In the mid-1990s, primary products continued to dominate the mix of total merchandise exports in the majority of African countries.

An emphasis on the export of natural resources has encouraged the incorporation of ever-increasing hectares of land into the resource-extraction economy, with significant impacts on the environment. Moreover, growing social polarisation, rural-urban migration, industrialised and mechanised farming, rapid urban expansion, and the ideologies of capitalist consumption have stretched the limits of environmental sustainability to crisis point, particularly in large urban areas. Globalisation has accelerated the pace of environmental degradation, raised new challenges for sustainable development policymakers, and questioned the traditional relationships between economic growth, social justice, and environmental quality.

The final fundamental force of change involves a profound restructuring of time-space relationships in the global system. Innovative technological advances in transport and communication since the 1970s have altered radically the cost, speed, security, and flexibility of interaction across the planet. Long-range jumbo jets, giant container ships, supertankers, satellites, high-speed trains, and computers, among other advances, enable complex global organisations of production, distribution, and consumption to function in an efficient and integrated manner. People, goods, information, capital, and ideas flow relatively unimpeded across time and space and have the potential to reshape local conditions in profound and often unintended ways. No corner of Africa is immune to the influences of restructured transport and communication systems and networks, especially in terms of the impact of radio, television, and video on the attitudes, aspirations, and cultural values

of millions of rural and urban people (Sagasti 1995; Loker 1999).

Within the context of globalisation, Sagasti (1995:600) argues that computerisation particularly has created a great divide between those with the capacity to "generate, acquire, disseminate, and utilize knowledge, both traditional and scientific", and those without. Thus, full participation in globalisation can be defined in terms of knowledge producers versus knowledge consumers and in terms of those who have accessibility and mobility within the global system and those who do not. As transport, communication, and information technologies link African intellectuals and the elite more closely to the global community, arguably they draw "farther away from the concerns of their own society, reproducing the global divide" at both the national and local levels (Loker 1999:26).

In the broader context of this paradigmatic shift towards globalisation and all that it entails, as suggested by the preceding six fundamental forces of change, Africa is undergoing a political, social, economic, and cultural metamorphosis. Yet change does not occur without disruption or conflict. There is little debate that globalisation is transforming Africa in myriad ways, both positively and negatively. As the region embarks on a development path that will take people and communities in a completely new direction over the next several decades, many familiar development crises remain unresolved. As the region moves toward the future, it faces not only the long-term challenges presented by neo-liberal and globalisation strategies but also the short-term 'earthquakes and volcanoes' that are occurring as a consequence of adopting these strategies.

Although the impacts of globalisation are myriad and diverse, six specific issues are identified as the most critical 'earthquakes and volcanoes' reshaping the African socioeconomic landscape in the first years of the 21st century: social polarisation; migration and labour flow; cultural identity; democratisation, accessibility and mobility; and environmental stress. An exploration of these six short-term impacts of globalisation serves to crystallise the meeting of the global and the local (GLOCAL) and to help place in context the contradictions embedded in globalism.

Growing Polarisation of Society: Globalisation's fundamental ideology is that a rising tide lifts all boats. Neo-liberal reforms are viewed throughout the region as imperative for long-term

development, and the negative social impacts being experienced by millions are explained away as simply short-term adjustments to the new economic conditions that soon will be overcome. There can be no doubt, however, that serious fraying of the social fabric is occurring throughout Africa today. Over 40 percent of the region's population is considered poor, and the absolute numbers in poverty have grown from 120 million in 1970 to over 220 million at the beginning of the new millennium.

Analysts of social polarisation in the region argue that globalisation has vested the board-rooms of multinational corporations with immense power over the daily lives of rural and urban dwellers alike. Globalisation is seen as "econocentric, technocentric [and] commodocentric", abstracted from the social cultural context in which economies, technologies, and commodities operate (Cernea 1996:15).

Indeed, African governments are turning increasingly towards market-driven forms of social support in an attempt to reduce the state's long-term financial commitment to the welfare of society. The upper middle and elite sectors of society who are able to engage with globalisation can afford the high cost of private healthcare, retirement programmes, education, and skill development, whereas the poorer majority must fend for itself within an increasingly inadequately funded and declining public welfare system (Bulmer-Thomas 1996; Lloyd-Sherlock 1997; Gwynne and Kay 1999). Throughout the past 20 years of neo-liberal reforms in Africa, the upper 20 percent of society has benefited substantially in terms of income distribution, the middle 40 percent has remained static or declined slightly, while the lower 40 percent has seen its share of national income decline consistently (World Bank 2000).

Trade liberalisation, labour-market adjustments, and fiscal reform, the backbone of globalisation strategies in Africa, are exacerbating social polarisation in several major areas (Bulmer-Thomas 1996). First, unemployment rates have grown dramatically as public sector employment is cut and domestic companies are forced to 'downsize' their workforce in the face of increased international competition in local economies. Those with the skills, capital, and training needed to take advantage of the opportunities presented by globalisation find employment, while those without the necessary attributes drift into the informal economy (underemployment) or become unemployed.

Second, downward pressure on wage-labour rates as a consequence of globalisation has reduced the real minimum wage and thus the level of household income for the majority.

This, in turn, widens the gap between average household income and the cost of a basic 'basket of food' needed to support that household. Third, the urban formal economy has shrunk and the informal economy has expanded as structural adjustment programmes bring greater production flexibility to the marketplace. Small-scale enterprises lack access to the capital, skills, and distribution systems necessary to compete in a globalised local and national economy. Fourth, agricultural policies that are export-oriented and geared toward production rationalisation are exacerbating the marginalisation of the rural poor. Many rural communities have been dispossessed from subsistence land, the average farm size has declined, and many rural workers are being forced to seek wage-labour employment, primarily in urban areas (Loker 1999).

Finally, the time-space compression technologies that drive globalisation are accessible generally to the elite segment of society and not to the poorer majority. Lack of accessibility and mobility for the majority widens the development gap between the haves and the have nots and leads to declining opportunities in the social, economic, and political spheres.

Oppressive Democratisation: Although globalisation has exacerbated social polarisation and fostered greater levels of social inequality in Africa, neo-liberal restructuring seems to be linked to an emerging political equality that has come from the expansion of democratisation. Herein lies the paradox of what can be termed 'oppressive democratisation'.

Improvements in the social and material welfare of society are deemed central to the development of greater political equality and thus democracy. Yet throughout Africa, welfare systems have been undermined and social justice appears to have fallen by the wayside as a policy objective. At the same time, globalisation appears to have weakened the power of the state to influence the direction of neo-liberal policies.

Neo-liberalism has created a 'hollowed out' state, where most economic decisions now are made by the market, by corporations, and by newly emerging global or regional institutions (WTO, GATT,

etc.). This leaves little policy room for governments to develop social programmes aimed at reducing unemployment, poverty, and the erosion of basic public services. Indeed, the current neo-liberal economic conception of globalisation allows for much greater tolerance of social inequality than in recent history, which in turn leads to the erosion of political responsibility and political equality. Global capitalism is not held accountable to elected state or local officials, which is a further contradiction with the emerging preference for electoral democracy.

Globalisation in Africa has become the most efficient way for governments and consumers to express their economic preferences, and it has relegated citizenship and political participation mostly to elections and voting. Tax breaks and relentless competition are used as tools to attract new investment, with most important political and socioeconomic decisions now made by the global elite, beyond the influence and reach of the vast majority of Africa's citizens.

As O'Donnell (1996:45) observed, "...for large sections of the population, basic *liberal* freedoms are denied or recurrently trampled [and].... individuals are citizens in relation to the only institution that functions close to what its formal rules prescribe, elections. In the rest, only the members of a privileged minority are full citizens". Privatisation and other neo-liberal policies also have accelerated political-economic corruption, which has weakened the 'prestige' of democracy, strengthened the general level of political apathy, and encouraged the depoliticisation of society. As a result, the most serious immediate threats to democratic development in Africa are poor management of national affairs, conspicuous political corruption, the abandonment of social justice as a legitimate development objective, and the political disenfranchisement of vast segments of the region's citizenry.

Conflicting Socio-Cultural Identities: Sociocultural identities have always been influenced to some degree by external forces, either directly through colonisation and imperialism or indirectly by trade and other interactions (Gwynne and Kay 1999). The difference today is that ultra-modernist globalisation is facilitating the rapid diffusion of cultural images, products, artifacts, and ideas around the world, which in many ways seems to be overwhelming indigenous technical and social knowledge.

Globalisation is defining new standards for what is considered a desirable lifestyle. It is creating new contexts for choices about 'wants' versus 'needs', and it is establishing new definitions of success. Thus, argues Véliz (1994), in order to participate fully and successfully in globalisation, Africa must abandon its historical identity and embrace neo-liberalism.

Africa's development failures can be traced to an embedded aversion to risk and change, to distrust of new ideas and technologies, to political and economic preferences for stability and central control, and to an unquestioned respect for social status, hierarchies, and old loyalties. Socio-cultural characteristics such as clientelism, ideological traditionalism, authoritarianism, and racism are seen as anti-modern and barriers to the full incorporation of Africans into the globalised world.

Globalisation is creating a new kind of African socio-cultural identity, one that is constructed by individual success, innovative entrepreneurialism, the conspicuous consumption of global products, secularisation, privatised social welfare, and international accessibility and mobility. Political-economic values such as state-sponsored welfare, justice, industrial development, full employment, national planning, and centralism no longer are deemed viable in the race to become a 'winner' in the globalisation competition (Larrain 1999). The changing identities encouraged by neo-liberalism are particularly evident in Africa's cities, in part because at the beginning of the twenty-first century the majority (80 percent) of Africans are urbanites.

Twentieth century industrial and urban biases to socio-cultural development in the region have been exacerbated by globalisation, as the dynamism of economic change rests on cities as the command and control centres of the global system. As urban wage labour becomes increasingly important, and as globalisation draws people into more varied spheres of socio-cultural interaction, either vicariously through mass communication or experientially through migration, urban social, political, and economic identities become further fragmented.

Across the region, socio-cultural urban space is being partitioned ever more rigidly, both perceptually and physically, between protected areas for the globalised elite and insecure areas for the non-globalised majority. Such fragmentation may well foster increased

urban delinquency, intra-class violence, a weakening of grassroots social movements, political apathy, and the general disarticulation and demobilisation of civil society.

Adverse Accessibility and Mobility: Transport and communication form the foundation of ultra-modernist globalisation because they not only facilitate the rapid transfer of capital, goods, people, ideas, and information across the planet but they also shape the accessibility and mobility patterns of individuals and communities. New technologies in the transport and communication arena have revolutionised socioeconomic interaction across space and time and they are driving the dissemination of the knowledge that fosters further technological innovation.

Yet despite the significant advances in transport and communication technologies in recent decades, Africa faces two serious crises in accessibility and mobility. The first is the region's tremendous infrastructural deficit, which is severely limiting the ability of countries, communities, and individuals to participate more successfully in the processes of globalisation. Inadequate telecommunications, roads, railroads, port facilities, and public transport systems across the region are stifling the ability of communities to engage with the opportunities presented by globalisation.

Lower Environmental Quality: Of all the 'earthquakes and volcanoes' that currently are reshaping the socio-cultural landscape in Africa, the ongoing and worsening degradation of the physical environment perhaps is the most serious immediate threat to development in the region. Moreover, deteriorating environmental conditions do not discriminate by social strata, location, or economic system – poor-quality air is breathed by both rich and poor, while air pollution recognises no political boundary. Although international attention has focussed primarily on broad issues such as the destruction of the rainforest, local concerns are directed primarily towards the daily hazards to human health and well-being such as non-potable water, air pollution, soil degradation, inadequate sewage treatment, and solid waste removal.

Governments, business leaders, and the globalisation strategists assure critics that the solution to environmental problems "lies in pursuing even more single-mindedly the liberalization policies that produced these problems" (Power 1997:77). Free-trade

advocates, for example, argue that neo-liberal policies will replace aging, inefficient, and polluting factories with more efficient and environmentally friendly production systems, leading to cleaner air and rising incomes. Critics argue that globalisation is not conducive to protection of the environment because competition forces countries to neglect long-term environmental safeguards for short-term economic benefits (Roberts 1996).

Africa's continued focus on resource exploitation, a condition reinforced by the comparative-advantage logic of globalisation, is placing ever-greater stress on ecosystems and local environments. Many new 'nontraditional' agricultural products are financed, developed, and exported before any accurate ecological evidence has been generated that assesses the sustainability or negative consequences of new production systems.

Exploiting water aquifers with new technologies for expanded vegetable production or increasing the use of fertilizer and pesticides often is unsustainable over the long term. Export-oriented development policies also encourage households to colonise environmentally sensitive 'frontier' zones, leading to social conflict and ecological degradation (Durham 1995). Other immediate threats to the rural population include the unsustainable intensification of agricultural practices from increased population, land and capital shortage, and excessive chemical inputs.

Threats to Africa's urban population are no less immediate and serious than those experienced in the rural areas, and are perhaps even more localised. Unsafe water, poor-quality shelter, unsafe housing locations, inadequate waste and sanitation services, and a lack of access to health services are just a few of the daily environmental challenges faced by Africa's poorer urbanites.

In summary, the long-term fundamental forces of change emerging under conditions of globalisation are giving rise to a regionalised and localised restructuring of socioeconomic landscapes.

Rethinking the Framework, Restructuring the Analysis

Since the late-1970s, African governments and the business elite have adopted the ideologies and policies of globalisation in an attempt to

alter the long-term direction of socio-economic development in the region. Macroeconomic statistics and indices that measure inflation, employment restructuring, trade flows, capital investment rates, currency stability, and export linkages point to some level of success in changing the course of development in Africa for the better. Globalisation advocates rely on these statistics as evidence that the policies of neo-liberal restructuring are working and that the short-term development pain experienced by millions across the region will give way ultimately to long-term development gain. Globalisation critics argue that the macroeconomic or global indices of success mask the serious local upheaval suffered by the region's majority and that the short-term socioeconomic pain afflicting the majority of Africans will give way to long-term entrenched development pain.

Globalisation policies have accentuated the socioeconomic importance of the primary city or city-region in each African country, with the consequence that most gains in labour productivity, economic growth, technology improvements, and employment restructuring have occurred in the core area. Beyond the core region, development prosperity under the conditions of globalisation has been linked to the ability of a region or community to attract capital, to produce goods for the export market, and to offer a comparative advantage in the cost of labour. Those regions without this ability have suffered economic stagnation, labour losses, capital shrinkage, and further national and regional isolation.

Yet as Gwynne and Kay (1999:21) point out, it is most often "at the regional and local scales of analysis that the impacts of globalization can best be seen in terms of changing social relations" and in terms of sustainable development. Regional economies and societies are an aggregation of the competitive advantages and economic destinies of individual localities and, as such, are critical collectives of interdependent socio-economic activities (Scott 1998).

Therefore, the immediate policy task for African countries ought to be a clearer democratic articulation of the social, political, and economic development goals that need to be achieved at the regional and local level within the broader context of globalisation policies. This requires a set of institutional structures that can co-ordinate, integrate and cooperate on the type of strategic planning needed to articulate the global with the local and to allow all of Africa's disparate

regions and countries to benefit fully from globalisation. Failure to establish this type of framework for regional and local development likely will result in further damage to the socio-economic landscape as a consequence of globalisation's 'earthquakes and volcanoes'. Moreover, it will further deepen the problem of underdevelopment that today restricts millions of Africans from achieving their full life potential.

A key theme that emerges from this discussion of Africa's engagement with globalisation is that the 'global' has overwhelmed the 'local' completely as a framework or context for socioeconomic policymaking. As the ideologies and technologies of globalisation link governments, planners, and the elite more closely to the global community, they tend to disarticulate these same groups from the local concerns of people and communities.

Thus, in order to rethink the broader development implications of globalisation and to restructure the ways in which globalisation forces affect the socioeconomic landscape, governments, planners, and the elite must move towards a conceptualisation of sustainable development that merges the global and the local in the policy-making process. Merging the two frames of reference into one can be termed a global-local approach to policymaking, and the broader analytical context for this approach should be regional in nature.

In other words, policymakers must move away from a conceptualisation of national development that sees the socioeconomic landscape as homogenous within the global system to a conceptualisation of national development that treats the socioeconomic landscape as regionally based, heterogeneous, and imbued with local conditions and contradictions.

Finally, we need to rethink the metal theoretical framework of globalisation in policy formation because the use of the term has become problematic and value-laden, and it carries powerful ideologies that tend to refocus societies and economies outward toward a broader context. Globalisation, in contrast, recognises the wider spatial forces of development and change, but also focuses on the local implications and adaptations.

This concept of linking the global and the local conceptually and empirically – thinking globally and acting locally – has been in the lexicon of academics and others for many years, yet it seems

to have diverted attention away from actually acting locally because the global has become so overwhelming. The issues presented in this paper suggest that the concept be rephrased to 'thinking and acting locally within a global framework, while acting and thinking globally within a local framework'. Such an approach may well help Africans to structure the forces of globalisation in a more positive and proactive manner for people, communities, and places.

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