

## **Globalization, Post-modernity and Epistemological Imperialism**

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### **Abstract**

*Knowledge is crucial to the march of globalization but as globalization from national financial systems, this study identifies steps that Africa could adopt to confront epistemological imperialism.*

**Keywords:** *Globalization; Post-modernity; Political Economy.*

### **Introduction**

Advances developing countries are epistemologically disadvantaged. Using examples Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century approximates to living for globalization. All social institutions, infrastructures and super structural facilities are paddled on waves of globalization. The few discontents of globalization are cultural and religious but when the Iraq muezzin makes the call to prayer with a microphone made in Japan with funds from Germany by a firm licensed in Britain or when a Bantu masquerade in the heart of the Congo wears a mask from South Korea in fabrics imported from China and in fairly used socks originally made in Yugoslavia, it becomes obvious that globalization has traveled far and if left unhindered it would go farther. In this essay the attempt is a discourse of the interrelationship among globalization, national financial systems and education in Africa.

### **Thinking Globally**

An elementary lesson in the **Business School** is that managers must learn to address the paradoxical demand to think globally and act locally. Due to globalization and free trade agreements more foreign firms are likely to enter domestic markets so local operators must be strategically positioned to garner competitive advantages. Globalization, technology and intellectual capital are three significant driving forces of strategic realignments worldwide, in trade, the military, manufacturing, extractive explorations, etc. They bring change and uncertainty.

Tipoteh (2000) describes globalization as the flow of capital across national borders to take advantage of more profitable opportunities and said that most essential to globalization is knowledge and the discovery of better methods of achieving results. Nnoli (2000: 173) states “nevertheless, its core is inexorable expansion of capitalism world-wide including the spreads of its values”. Globalism creates anxiety while globalization is imperialism, Nnoli said further. To Odor (2001), globalism was enunciated before globalization was enunciated. Globalism is a political ideal with existential dimensions i.e economic, religious, educational, scientific, linguistic, ontological, philosophical, traditional or cultural dimensions. ‘Globalization is the deliberate and systematic effort by the USA government to actualize globalism and that globalism means the acquisition and possession by the United States of America (USA) government of the authority, power, prosperity right and freedom (liberty) to thwart the policies and actions of the other governments of the world which it perceives likely to affect the interests of the United States of America, especially the interest of the USA government to rule the world for eternity’ (Odor 2001: 53). Nnoli (2000:183) apparently laments the lopsidedness when he

writes that “the situation is worsened by the lack of intense ideological battles of the type that characterized the Cold War’. On a more balanced side, Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner (2005:22) maintain that the defining feature of the global economy is not the flow of goods – international trade has existed for centuries – but the flow of capital, people and information worldwide..

The rate of technological development has increased tremendously that ideas and information are in constant movement. Globalization connotes competition among individuals and outfits and the competitive edge is guaranteed only by a strong knowledge base. Thus ‘creating and applying knowledge to deliver differentiated products and services and the identification of talent, as well as the ability to develop and retain that talent has become very crucial’ (p.23). This is supported by the view that ‘a low-value product can be made by anyone anywhere. When you have knowledge no one else has access to – that’s dynamite. We guard our research even more carefully than our financial assets’ (Dr. Roy Vagelos, Merck Pharmaceutical Company’s CEO, as reported Weber J (1996: 137). Globalization is an old historical phenomenon wrapped in capitalism but which changes its color and character as it encounters events and runs into epochs. Dess, Lumpkin, and Eisner (2006), Tandon (2000) and Hanson, Honohan and Majnoni (2003) agree on this. ‘This is not a new trend but it has intensified with enormous opportunities opening up in Asia, central and eastern Europe, and Latin America’ (Dess *et al* 2006: 40). Hanson *et al* (2003:3) wrote than ‘The globalization of finance increased in the 1960s as increased trade, travel, migration, and current account convertibility made capital account controls less effective for those willing to evade them’. In the same vein, Tandon (2000: 56) wrote that, ‘Globalization in its most generic and broadest sense is part of the movement of history in general. Throughout history people have moved from food deficit to food – surplus region taking with them their families and flocks, sometimes conquering the areas to which they moved, sometimes getting absorbed in them and losing their separate identities.

In the same manner, there is a consensus that globalization is a mix of the good and the bad and brings both change and uncertainty. It spurs the production of goods but also brings ‘unfamiliar cultures and gut-wrenching social problems’ (Dess *et al* 2006: 22) Just as there are designer – cars, so there are designer – babies today and everyone is challenged to cope with diversity, complexity and ambiguity. ‘Wars, pestilence, slavery, bondage, occupation, exploitation, wanton destruction of cultures and nature, and forcible religious conversions are parts of the negative baggage of this movement. But there is also a positive side to globalization in the spread of cultural pluralism, the development of technology and productive forces, the global awareness of the underlying unity of humankind, and more..

To Lairson and Skidmore (1997:96) globalization of the world’s economy is a continuation and extension of trends present since the 1950s but at levels that require new concepts and understandings. If contemporary globalization is the intensification of universalization, internationalization or generalization of capital and production, a pertinent question is when did this intensification begin or to what historical event (and time) does the world owe it? The end of the cold war (1993) or the Uruguay Rounds (1994) or did the end of the cold war emboldened the Americans to influence the Uruguay Rounds.

### **Kaleidoscopic Structures**

Globalization is like an on-going high-rise building project the ground breaking ceremony for which was done during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, the basement completed with the rejection of the Kellogg-brand report, and the first floor completed at the Uruguay Rounds, the second floor marked by the September eleven 2001 disaster and the third floor by the awakening of the sleeping giant – China. The subsequent floors would be determined by the march of post-modernity. Contemporary or intensified globalization obtains in the atmosphere of post-

modernity, and this can be very paradoxical because whereas globalization can be linear and neat, post-modernity is vague and muddled, perhaps clumsy. In another picture, they could be seen as traveling in different directions from different origins. But currently intersecting at the turn of the millennium and by mid-century would leave the intersection, to meet no more or strangely enough travel together forever hereafter!

A picture of post-modernity is that '... at its clearest it lacks clarity and its provenance is uncertain. Is it a historical period (post-modernity) or an up-to-date style (postmodernism)? Is it a literary conceit, a philosophic concept or an architectural notion? Is it an aesthetic variation, a response to the globalizing tendency, an arts style or social phenomenon? Is it an exclusively European phenomenon or can it be applied plausibly elsewhere?' (Ahmed 1992:6)

Post-modernity attracts attention because of its historical coincidence with the intensified or new globalization. The two are simple, fellow –way farers, they are not co-terminus. Ahmed (1992:11-28) identified some features of post-modernity but more interesting and poignant are his description of the concept. The age is increasingly secular, cynical, irreverent, fragmented, materialistic and hostile. It however also promises hope, understanding and toleration. A responsibility arising from this contradiction is that one is challenged to restore the predicament of living as a good, caring and decent human being in the postmodernist world. He emphasized that it is a legitimate methodology in postmodernism when the sociologist deliberately uses personal experiences as 'sociological resource' to make sense of what goes on around him. Two, an author may be impressionistic and thematic rather than sequential, exhaustive and chronological.' Three, when an argument carries apparent contradictions and obvious circularity and there are seemingly deliberate provocation and people and places are strangely juxtaposed; this too reflects postmodernist method. Four, postmodernism is a concept in vagueness, 'essentially concerned with ambiguity, the term 'postmodernism is difficult to define unambiguously' (Ahmed 1992: 12)

Perhaps, the objective of postmodernism is to say, announce, indicate or point out that something has changed or that something new has arrived. Attentions would then shift away from the piling, jumbling and intermingling of ideas and images. Postmodernism would itself be saved from itself because postmodernism is currently presented like the tower of Babel; it is characterized by disorder and its essence is confusion. An additional concern should be with the nature and scope of the strength of residual discontents, tradition and authority. The surrender position here is that postmodernism is not voodoo epistemology: it is characterized by an inherent logic and ultra sensitivity to critical thinking. Its spirits of tolerance, optimism, the drive for self – knowledge cynicism and irony make it unique. In its epistemological ecumenism, postmodernism welcomes and offers expressions to all views and sentiments (victims, colonialists and imperialists – all included). Can't all theories be wrong or why should particular things be in particular ways, or what is the alternative to x. These questions which are the core of postmodernism are very simple, yet so challenging that they find ready acceptability and application in many disciplines and areas of life. Why political bipolarity, why the classless society and why 100% pass and 100% compliance. Are they expressions of a true and free humanity?

Modernism is the most recent phase (to some the continuing phase) of world history. It is characterized by the desire for symmetry and order, balance and authority but it is marked by belief in science, planning, secularism and progress. ' Ahmed(1992) further explained that the period is noted for its confidence in the future, a conviction that Utopia is attainable, that there is a natural world order which is possible' (Ahmed 1992:7).

The features of postmodernism enunciated by Ahmed are: one to approach an understanding of the postmodernist age is to presuppose a questioning of, a loss of faith, in the project of modernity, a spirit of pluralism; a heightened skepticism of traditional orthodoxies; and finally a rejection of a view of the world as a universal totality, of the expectation of final solutions and complete answers; two: postmodernism co-exists with the age of the media; in many profound ways the media are the central dynamic, the *Zeitgeist*, the defining features, of postmodernism, three: the connection between postmodernism and ethno-religious revivalism – or fundamentalism – needs to be explored by social and political scientists (is ethno-religious revivalism not both the cause and effect of postmodernism?); four: the continuity with the past, however apocalyptic the claims, remains a strong feature of postmodernism; five: because large parts of the educated population live in urban areas and a larger part still are influenced by ideas originating from these areas, the metropolis becomes central to postmodernism; six: there is a class element in postmodernism and democracy is a pre-condition for it to flourish; seven: postmodernism allows, indeed encourages, the juxtaposition of discourses, an exuberant eclecticism, the mixing of diverse images; and eight: the idea of plain and simple language sometimes appears to elude the postmodernist masters in spite of their claims to accessibility.

The attraction to postmodernism in education is to be found in the belief that it helps ventilate the concerns of the oppressed and those interested in helping them. The circumstances of the oppressed in a Marxian vein can only be improved in the exercise of power and this is the kernel of the sociology of education.

To Haralambos and Holborn (2004:731) postmodernists in education are afraid of their own shadows: because they are opposed to metanarratives, ‘... they try to avoid claiming that their approach is a coherent theory at all’ They claimed further that postmodernists are vague and lacking in self assurance: they are not always specific as ‘... there is often ambiguity over whether they are describing changes in the education system or advocating change in particular sections or both’ (ibid). Postmodernists do not have a comprehensive, all-encompassing approach in terms of methodology, techniques and focus. For example, they advance little empirical evidence and ‘if their theories are more about how they would like to see the education system change, then they ignore powerful economic and political forces which may work to prevent the sort of changes they would like to see’ (ibid) A crucial blow to postmodernism in education and its agenda is that

*If education is increasingly dominated by business, then it is unlikely that the curriculum will be increasingly influenced by the interest of local, oppressed groups (Haralambos and Holborn 2004: 731).*

### **National Financial Systems**

No where is the impact of globalization greatly felt than in the financial systems of developing and least developed countries. To them, globalization literally amounts to the mopping up of their little financial resources by global capital. Much as postmodernist dialectics would suggest the mixed blessing theory for the relationships between globalization and national financial systems, they are more of the negative than of the positive, (which are even in the main anticipatory). The flow of capital adversely affects countries with weak national financial systems with the implication that analysts, managers and policy makers have to focus on the global scene rather than the local picture. To ignore the global impact while concentrating on the domestic financial market is to plan for a crisis and scheme all reactions to become ineffective and belated.

The bigger a nation’s financial system the greater its potentials to benefit from global capital. Hanson (2003: 92) observes that small countries are under-banked with reference to participation and efficiency. Whereas to Bossone and Jong-kun Lee (2003:69) ‘all else being equal, banks operating in larger financial systems have relatively lower costs of production, risk absorption, and reputation signaling than banks operating in

smaller systems'. The implication is that when the drivers (individual and governments) of an economy are properly and strategically aligned to global operations, operators and tendencies, the better for the economy. Invariably, globalization takes character off national financial systems and strips nations of policy making independence.

African countries on the attainment of independence usually set up central banks adopt their own currencies, (in place of metropolitan currencies and currency boards) and an adjustable peg exchange rate regime and join the International Monetary Fund (IMF). 'They usually also imposed foreign exchange controls. Exchange controls made supporting a currency peg easier, allowed the government to allocate foreign exchange, and eased concerns about the scarcity of foreign exchange and the potential outflow of investible resources that were prevalent at the time' (Hanson, Honohan and Majnoni 2003: 3). Though some interests claimed that these economies were afflicted by excessive monetary creation by governments resulting in high inflation and expanding directed credit programs, followed by capital flight, exchange rate pressures, and stabilization programs, (Caprio, Hanson and Honohan 2001). In actual fact, what basically destabilized these economies is globalization of finance. In the first place where did their capitals fly to? Into the global purse or pouch, of course.

'Globalization has disrupted the national approach to the financial system. The globalization of finance increased in the 1960s as increased trade, travel, migration, and current account convertibility made capital account controls less effective for those willing to evade them' (Hanson, Honohan and Majnoni:4) Expanded offshore borrowing opportunities and capital markets helped individuals and government to reduce their financing costs. The creation of opportunities for individuals to hold foreign currency denominated assets, on and offshore 'combined with international pressures to reduce the barriers to capital flows and trade in financial services, especially in the 1990s as reflected in TRIMS and MDI efforts by the WTO, thus opening the tide for intensified globalization.

The globalization of finance touches particularly at banking securities markets, contractual savings, legal and regulatory structures. With globalization foreign bank particularly increases in low income countries and could improve risk management practices and imported supervision help strengthen banking systems and improve financial stability.

The pervasiveness of globalization, particularly the drive to recapitalize the colonial banking systems in the third world derives from the empirical fact that 'banks production efficiency increases with the size of the system where the banks operate'. Using a large cross-country and time series banking data panel, Bosson and Lee (2003:84) discovered that 'banks operating in systems with large markets and infrastructures have lower production costs and lower costs of risk absorption and reputation signaling than banks operating in small systems'. Their findings suggest the non-desirability of small economies for banking to have an economy of scale. 'small banks in large systems are more cost-efficient than small banks in small systems' while 'the cost-efficiency effects of technological changes spread more rapidly across banks operating in larger systems' (op. cit). The larger the merrier thus becomes one of the points of convergence of globalization and banking.

There are three main effects of globalization on developing countries' capital markets: these markets may be attractive to foreigners for the purpose of risk diversification; equity issues and trading by the larger companies are shifted offshore once they are permitted to raise capital offshore; and the potential gain from international diversification of equity portfolios by investors located in developing countries. Contractual savings e.g. pension funds have the problems of high costs, lack of competition and lack of diversification in banking and

capital markets in developing countries. An alternative is 'to unbundled the various services and use global providers, with the side effect that the country will also import elements of the regulatory framework of the country of the provider for service. Globalization of finance helps strengthen financial regulation and supervision; it encourages domestic depositors and investors and foreign investors. Weak financial regulations contributed to the East Asian crisis. Because self – regulatory structures and national official regulation may be either lacking or inadequate, some international 'soft laws' are emerging from international associates of regulators for various segments of financial system and international financial institutions.

No matter how patriotic or nationalistic third world leftist scholars may be the globalization of finance is a reality. What need be put in place are only measures to ameliorate its adverse effects. Given Ahmed's methodology of treating experience as sociological resource to make sense of what is going around one, one could treat the sources above as voices of globalization. They are advisors and specialists at the World Bank. The truth in their positions is inevitable. It must be noted that experience with foreign banks has not been successful in Africa, 'in terms either of loans or of deposit taking', and that racial ethnic sentiments in the globalization of finance blew the large scale fraud in the Pakistani and Arab bank, Bank of Credit and Commerce International out of proportions (Ahmed 1992: 2). Globalization may increase macroeconomic volatility (already larger in developing countries than in industrial countries. Also globalization of finance complicates monetary and fiscal policy. Offshore government borrowing is in the third world a source of worry, while strengthened financial systems and the coming of reputable foreign banks are desirable. Thus McDonald C, Treiche I.V and Weisfeld, H (2006) as reported in Charles Ike- Okoh (2007:B4) counseled strengthened macro economic policies, enhanced mechanisms for monitoring capital inflows and tracking of repayment schedules and reinforced supervision of the financial sector so that it can withstand swings in exchange and interest rates.

Globalization does not solve all the economic problems of developing economies. Actually it creates additional problems for them. In several African countries the imperatives battling the economies are reduction of poverty, wealth generation and job creation. Any ideology – globalization, Marxism, fascism, democracy or whatever would not be acceptable to the teaming masses until these imperatives are satisfied. Appropriate administrative and psychological de-linking (adjustment) ought to be done. Also, in order to promote performance and competitiveness in the global sector, states of Africa must reduce the cost of business by improving infrastructures. It is a common refrain in Western literature that African leadership should make efficient use of borrowed funds, should use the proceeds of foreign investment in priority, social and productive sectors and through increased liberalization encourage foreign direct investment.

### **A Blame Game**

The political economy of globalization rests on wealth and power, which are in turn derived from knowledge and technology. Globalization is immobilized by the absence of information and intellectual power. The wealth of nation's is the wealth of intellectual power; hence the race to monopolize and protect intellectual property rights. 'Productive power and the military power linked to it generate an enormous prize to be won by sovereign states. Domestic political power frequently rests on economic growth and dynamism' (Lairson and Skidmore 1997: 165).

Since after World War11, knowledge and technology have become progressively important as determinants of wealth and power, the pace of technological change has increased greatly, and those who originate them must jealously protect them if they want advantage to accrue profitably to them.

U.S efforts at protecting intellectual property rights are best examined with reference to four (4) international copyright conventions. In 1986, the Berne Convention concluded to define copyright protections. The United States did not sign this because her interests could not be protected, preferring instead to sign the Paris Convention in 1887 because it ‘ostensibly provides protection for patents, trademarks, and industrial designs’. (p. 227).

In 1967, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) was created by the U.N to monitor compliance with Berne and Paris Conventions. The U.S did not sign and firms in U.S and developed countries criticized WIPO on the ground that ‘its defined minimum standards of protection are inadequate and dispute resolution mechanisms’ (ibid) Tandon (2001: 65) also records this sentiment. It was not until 1996 that the WIPO Copyright Treaty was signed (Cornish 2004: 177) but by then the U. S and its pharmaceutical companies had licensed the WTO to protect their interests.

In 1986, the U.S International Trade Commission estimated that the overall loss to U.S business from foreign infringement of IPRS was between \$43 billion and \$61 billion. In 1988 the Omnibus Trade and Competition Act of the U.S (USTR) to retaliate against countries that ‘deny fair and equitable market access to United States persons that rely upon intellectual property protection’ or ‘deny adequate and effective protection of intellectual property rights’ The USTR was also to create a list annually, of countries failing to protect IPRS. The Omnibus Trade Act 1988, amended section 337 of (an earlier) Tariff Act of 1930 under the amended section 337 the complainant must merely demonstrate that an infringement of an IPR occurred rather than substantial injury, as the original law required (Singleton, 2005) Also, the International Trade Commission of the U.S can issue an exclusion order or cease and desist order in response to complaints. ‘The “Special 301” under the Trade Act was later passed to enable the American government take similar unilateral action in relation to violation of intellectual property’. (Tandon 2000:64-65).

In 1993, the Uruguay Rounds of trade talks took place as the 8<sup>th</sup> in the series of GATT negotiations. ‘Pushed by the pharmaceutical industry, the United States was able to get intellectual property on to the agenda of Uruguay, and with the “trade – related” prefix, the matter was appropriated by the WYO”. This is supported by Singleton as follows’. In 1986, the 12 U.S firms that constitute the Intellectual Property Committee urged U.S trade negotiators to place the protection of IPRS on the agenda for the Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations’ (p.227) The multitated approach, mentioned above having failed to provide adequate protection according to these firms.

At the end of the Uruguay Rounds and ‘at the insistence of the United States and other developed countries nations’ intellectual property rights were included in the 1993 GATT agreements, while GATT itself was replaced by the World Trade Organization ‘... to cover the adjustments and reactions of the rest of the governments and nations of the world concerning the evils of the IMF, WB and the GATT’ (Odor 2002: 119).

It was also through the WTO that more rules were added to the GATT rules by the government of the USA, in order to anticipate future reactions and adjustments by the other governments and nations of the world, aimed at perpetuating trade advantages and the domination, determination and regulation of the economies, markets, and trades of the other governments and nations in the world. The 1993 GATT agreements were signed in 1994. ‘TRIP negotiations centered on effective enforcement of IPRS, on the definition of multilateral dispute resolution mechanisms, and on acceptable minimum standards of national protections’ these provisions are now part of the fundamental structure of the WTO, ‘which succeeded GATT as the forum for multilateral trade negotiation’ (P. 228). Unilateral actions by the USA have not abated even with the creation of the

WTO. This continuity is evident in oppositions to the USA's efforts (genuine or otherwise) at promoting trade, in Third World perceptions of international agencies as instruments of USA's hegemony and in the structure and operations of the WTO itself. Much as 'reverse engineering' used by Taiwan and South Korea to copy western technology without approval is bad, us campaigns against it are seen as attempts at discouraging the transfer of technology. The coming of TRIPs and TRIMs (Trade Related Investment Measures) under a US creation the WTO is interpreted as one giant step in the march of imperialism. Patenting of agricultural and biogenetical resources has turned the whole world into a laboratory for Euro-American researchers and exploitation. What the TRIPs provision of the WTO has done is to undermine the Bio-Diversity conventions of the Rio Earth Summit (1992).

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held June 3-14, 1992 included 118 heads of state, over 150 nations and discussed the connections between threats to the global environment and economic development. It produced five major documents: the **-Rio Declaration** which established 27 basic principles of sustainable development; **the climate Convention** which addressed the problem of global warming caused by green house gases; **the forest principles**, a document specifying 17 non binding principles of sustainable forest management; **Agenda 21** an 800-page document providing a work plan of action on major areas of sustainable southern development; and the **Convention on Biodiversity** which seeks

- 1 to commit governments to the preservations of endangered plant and animals species and habitats,
- 2 to encourage the sustainable use of biological resources, and
- 3 to establish the right of Southern nations to compensation from Northern commercial exploitation of products based upon southern gene stocks. (Lairson and Skidmore 1997:376). The Rio Earth Summit is perhaps the most ambitious effort by man to chart a road map towards sustainable development.

Under Article 27 Annex K of the Uruguayan Agreement on TRIPs, indigenous people's right to their bio-resources is dwarfed, TNCS have enhanced legality to system of plant protection (food and pharmaceutical TNCS can challenge these systems) and they have an open sky in matters of cloning. The 4-year review period for the TRIPs agreement has lapsed while 'Most African countries have not even began to understand, let alone analyze the implications of all these new rules for their economies and for the protection of their bio-resources' (Tandon 200:66).

Before the Uruguay rounds, intellectual property investments, procurement and labour standards were a preserve of the tripartite negotiating forum of the International labour Organization. WIPO managed intellectual property while, procurement was regarded as a part of capital movements, not trade and therefore subject to 'the supervisory eyes' of the World Bank, IMF, and the bourses of the world; Thus what happened at Uruguay was an American-styled tactical partial reorganization of spheres of influence of these bodies to suit us needs and interests. Though a member driven organization, the WTO is driven by the USA, followed by the other Quad countries - EU, Japan, and Canada .As obtains in the UN Security Council, the USA exercises a kind of veto power. 'As amongst themselves, the USA is the most powerful. If the USA indicates strong objection to a proposal, it will not even be tabled for discussion in any organs of the WTO (p.62).

The US is also accused of intimidating her trade and intellectual rivals under the guise of protecting trade marks and copyrights. For example in 1993 the USTR under super 301 provisions listed Thailand as a priority foreign country, and before the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> April 1993 the Thai officer responsible for enforcement of intellectual property was fired and many pirated materials publicly burnt. In February 1995, the US did the



same to China. Chinas' supposed unwillingness to be copyright enforcing and IPR protection compliant repeatedly made the US to threatened 100% tariffs on about 1 billion worth Chinese imports 'if a satisfactory bilateral enforcement agreement would not be reached by February 26, 1995'. (Singleton 2005:229). By 2005, China was designated for 'Section 306 monitoring' by the USTR to observe her commitment to IPR enforcement commitment it made to the USA.

In 1989 the USTR no priority countries was identified but a watch list of 25 countries was created while eight countries were classified as progressing in bilateral and unilateral agreements on the protection of IPRS (Brazil, India, Korea Republic, Mexico, China, Saudi Arabia and Thailand). In 2003, Argentina, Brazil, EU, Indonesia Lebanon, Philippines, Poland and Russia and Taiwan were on the priority watch list, 36 additional partners were on the watch list while Ukraine continued on the list as the only priority foreign country, as announced by Robert Zoellick the USTR on May 1 2003.

Opposition to USA's efforts also comes from the lack of transparent objectivity/honesty in these endeavors. For example in the '**first to file**'\_ and '**first to invent**'\_ case involving a US firm Merck and a Japanese firm Sankyo over a new anti-cholesterol drug. The US used first to invent while Japan used first to file. Sankyo filed first in both countries but verdict favored Merck because 'it was able to verify prior invention'.

The efforts also strengthen monopoly privileges and works against quick and widespread diffusion of new technology. For example Japan was once made by the USA to adopt 50-year copyright protection for software and 10- year protection for original chip design.

Contrary to local Third World expectations firms granted patents do not work them locally and prefer to bring in goods produced from the patent or its processed. This seeming exclusive import right is not wanted by developing countries because these foreign firms are vicariously allowed to monopolize the local markets, eliminate their rivals, and disadvantage local firms. However, against the protests of many developing nations the United States and other developed nations prevailed. The WTO rules expressly permits imports to constitute the workings of a patent.

Some developed countries sympathize with the plight of developing Third World countries by advising that request of compliance with western IP protection standards from them could be a misapplication or a weak prayer because they rely on knowledge generated elsewhere to meet their basic needs, and that 'Developed countries should pay more attention to reconciling their commercial self-interest with the need to reduce poverty in developing countries, which is in everyone's interest' (Clare Short Commission report September 2002.- British secretary of state of International Development's Investigation of the effects of TRIPs provision on poor nations' development process). The Short Commission (2002:21) in its executive summary, advised an extended period of transition for implementation of TRIPs requirement 'until at least 2016 to Third World countries with possible extension granted, based on progress in economic and technological development in the various countries.

The United States cannot be said to have folded her arms because what is regarded as unilateralism could be a control measure in a moral crusade. Given that the US did not sign the Berne copyright Agreement until 1989, it would be safe to claim that in IPR matters the US is meek when it is weak and it is selfish when it is strong. Between 1998 (when it was discovered that  $\frac{1}{5}$  of South African adults had HIV/AIDS and 2003, the USA and its pharmaceutical companies blocked the import of generic versions of patented medicines (HIV/AIDS drugs inclusive) from countries like India and Brazil without violating trade laws. It was not until

August 30th 2003 that a truce was reached but somewhere along the line 39 USA led pharmaceutical companies sued South Africa for voting to permit “parallel imports” and ‘compulsory licensing’ of these antiretroviral drugs which cost \$15,000 in the US and only \$200 in India.

Can the USA be completely and openly blamed?. South Africa has for long had very strong patent laws which it sought to circumvent in an emergency. African governments need to be seriously counseled on the implications of the laws, treaties and agreements they sign with the west or under foreign influence. Several African governments may do worse than the USA if they are as enabled as the US. Moreover, in matters concerning countries, cultures and competition, there is always a complex pattern of sometimes contradictory forces bearing on a given issue rather than a unitary, coherent set. Or as Trowler (1998:147) puts it, in such matters, ‘..... the discursive repertoires available are multiple rather than unitary in nature and this in itself lends power to actors over structure, as postmodernist theory (with all its weaknesses) suggests’ implication for Africa.

It could be safe to conclude that the principal instrument of intensified globalization is the World Trade Organization which was established at Marrakesh at the signing of the Uruguay Round on trade agreement in 1994. Secondly, the driving force of globalization is knowledge (of technology and capital operations) or precisely intellectual properties. Thirdly, the route USA - G8- OECD – WTO – Un is the channel for managing globalization, proceeds of post modernity, intellectual property rights and knowledge first to the advantage of the USA and ultimately for the benefit of mankind; no matter how late the dispersal may be in getting to remote Africa! In post modernity and under intensified globalization, capital has become more speculative and less productive - dematerialized and it has become more knowledge- intensive than ever before. They merge into a new ‘knowledge-intensive production system’ (Tandon 2000:59). In the global context, whoever captures the knowledge terrain has a decided advantage over others.

The emergent epistemological question is that beyond the political economy of intellectual property rights struggles, the challenges for Africa are:

1. African countries must sustain the fights against TRIMs and MAI and must act in concert with global movements against intellectual exploitation. They must openly support pro-people movements like those which demonstrated against the WTO and World Economic Forum (WEF) in Devos, Seattle USA in 1999 and in Melbourne Australia on September 11 2000.
2. In the rush to partake in knowledge-intensive activities Africans have to discriminate and be strategic. All African countries cannot become specialists or hegemonies in information technology but must each choose an aspect of global information application for the domination of their educational institutions, private sectors and governments in addition to their perennial labour-intensive activities.
3. Africans must abandon thoughts about the possibilities of technology transfer because the atmosphere for it died with end of the cold war in 1990 ‘Reverse engineering’ was made possible by a compensation tactics for which there is no longer an hegemonic need. Until there is an identified, cultivated and well-protected area of national knowledge dominance, autonomous globally competitive and dominated competence-area may be difficult to come by.
4. The reorganization of school curriculum also becomes imperative given post modernity and globalization. Africans have since colonial times participated massively in western learning such that schooling is about western epistemology on the continent. Majority of African scholars write, speak and preach the west. Must African schools offer a kaleidoscopic curriculum as dictated by post modernity, should they continue with the banking notion as prescribed by colonialism, or sit back and continue with the bicycle theory that once there is social motion there will always be curriculum stability, forgetting that this

motion could really be further down into the valley of imperialism. Once a country identified particular areas of dominance school learning could always be programmed from primary school to university level to foster specialization and excellence in these.

5. To achieve higher level competitiveness, education in Africa has to be taken to unsettling dimensions. Many assumptions have to be shaken and deconstructed. Is the notion of alternative science not worthy of renewed investigation? Will western science make African societies excel meaningfully and globally or for how long will empiricism or the existing canons of research protocol be significant in policy and practice?. How can the world of enterprise research be re-conceptualized so that it can act more powerfully and productively impact on indigenous living and societies? Or how can research in all fields by Africans and Africanists be connected to larger social, cultural and political needs, movements and realities?. What Africa needs are emancipative research and curriculum activities, not only western-oriented and ‘western-benefiting’ research efforts that are quickly lost through patents to Euro-American concerns and ‘pharmaceutical outfits. In other words the assumptions that shape the meaning of research must be rigorously scrutinized. The powers and extents of imperialism and research are inexorably linked.
6. Africa must put its system of education in the box and ask that a decision be taken as to which to propagate: knowledge as science and knowledge as culture and challenge its intellectuals to massively change from being reproducers to being transformers of society’s cognitive structures. What used to be called expert knowledge is today pedestrian knowledge. The culture of expertise has entered into a crisis and there is a growing public call for science and technology to be accountable. Are the universities to continue teaching everything and not conquering the world in any? Are the primary and secondary schools to teach science and technology while the home teaches culture, religion, dance, history etc and parents get reimbursed somewhat for doing this, not in formalized western modes but in traditional contexts and settings?.
7. A demand of post-modernity is that education must be free of ideology. Can’t all theories be wrong, post modernists ask or is meta-narrative alive granted contemporary eclecticism? Activities must be geared towards that which works and not that which has been prescribed.
8. All countries are not equally served by the same intellectual agenda. What the current epistemological order serves is anti-Africa as the continent is constrained into a cut-and-paste intellectual (epistemic) status and culture. African countries must adopt different intellectual globalization ideologies and strategies and from this diversity pragmatic system and bodies of knowledge could emerge.

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