

GLOBALISATION : Its nature, consequences and implications for Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that globalization is an economic phenomenon derived from social causes with cultural and political ramifications for developed and developing countries. The paper begins with a brief examination of the conceptual and methodological issues involved in globalisation. The main focus of the paper is to analyze the nature, challenges and implications of globalisation for developing countries such as Cameroon.

Trans-national Enterprises (TNEs) are portrayed as the drivers of the engine of globalization. Their involvement is driven by two key forces : The struggle for economic power and control of access to technology.

One of the processes by which globalization takes place is company mergers and take-overs, resulting in a pervasive rate of capitalization in key sectors of human and economic life. Empirical evidence is provided in the paper to show how a few TNEs accumulate resources that allow them to control the world economic and social space through global trade, sociological manipulation and cultural deprivation.

International research and patenting are shown to be part of a porous system of social controls and a giant economic scheme by the rich to control power and access to technology by the poor. The State is shown as a passive partner, in the process of globalisation that is taking place in the world. The final result is an outrageous deprivation of Indigenous Peoples of their knowledge and a willful destruction of their institutions for the benefit of the rich. This tendency is shown to eventually culminate in a Paradise Lost.

Although the paper concludes that globalization is an irreversible phenomenon, the author argues that globalisation, like technology, can be guided to accommodate social values and vice versa. The jeopardy of subjecting social values to the forces of the free market principle and practice hereby epitomized by globalisation are amply demonstrated in the analysis. Cameroon is used as the backdrop for analyzing the process of globalisation while the model of Economic Man is challenged by a reflection of the social costs and benefit of globalisation.

A model for Cameroon's preparedness to face the challenges of globalisation is presented and recommendations made for Research, Institutional Capacity Building and Policy.

Key words : globalisation, free market, transnational enterprises (TNEs), indigenous technological capability, indigenous knowledge systems, power, paradise lost, technology, poverty, liberalization, capitalization, privatization, mergers, take-overs, paradigm, developing countries, The State.

Introduction

It is now generally recognized that a wild wind accompanied by waves called globalisation is sweeping across Nations. Business executives, politicians, popular press, labour leaders and a great deal of social science literature is accumulating on the consequences of globalisation for developed and developing countries alike. But the direction of the consequences is not the same for poor and rich Nations.

What human societies are now experiencing is an unparalleled economic revolution that is bringing in its wake unprecedented social and cultural change. We are not quite sure yet what the overall impact will be, because the impacts will depend on the part that humans play to guide the course of the change. However, evidence has accumulated over the last decade that points in the likely direction of the change. The indication is that there will be a massive restructuring of social, economic, cultural and political relations in the world's societies, big and small, rich and poor alike. As *globalisation catches on*, Wade (1996) advises cautious exposure and acceptance, if at all that is possible, because of what he sees as the errors and negative consequences of "the previous waves of expansion in global trade and capital flows".

The global view of scientific research that ushered in the Green Revolution of the 1970s left unexpected and unwanted legacies. The developed countries reaped all the benefits of global research and agricultural development, while the resource-poor countries either stagnated or barely managed to cope with the technology.

Yet, technological change continues to advance even at a faster pace. Revolutions in transport and communications now make it possible to travel around the world faster and cheaper, and the internet has revolutionized human communications beyond limits unthought of five years ago. The research for this paper has largely been accomplished, thanks to the exciting and challenging technology of the internet.

Like all revolutions, there are the pros and cons. These revolutions in communications have brought about collapses in time and space. It takes 6.5 hours from Douala to Paris by plane. Ironically, the guest one sees off at Douala airport will arrive Paris, 6,000 km away before you get to Bamenda, 400 km Douala by bus! Therefore, this 'collapse of space and time' (Brumm and Leinbach, 1991) is possible only in societies that recognize, study, understand and make good use of two key elements : Science and Technology.

The power of science and technology is a double-edged sword. But those who embrace it must do so courageously but cautiously. Globalisation is one of the phenomena of scientific and technological revolutions of our time. A society will "grow" or "crumble" depending on how it embraces the challenges and opportunities offered by globalisation. As I see it, countries that will grow are those that establish and demonstrate a genuine partnership be-

tween the political leadership and civil society.

" Liberalization ", or what is generally referred to in Cameroon as " privatization " is sometimes considered to be panacea for the problems of underdevelopment. But liberalization is NOT a given. In its best formulation by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*, it is rather, the conscious process of political minds united within a State for the common good, the good to give all the actors on the economic playground a fair chance to compete, and to conquer with independence of mind.

Liberalization is viewed to be beneficial when the key actors, the State, Transnational Enterprises (TNEs) and the citizens participate in a healthy partnership and debate over economic choices and make collective political decisions. The decisions may be economic or political, the solutions partly technological, but the bases of all of them is sociological.

The notion of participation here suggests that current trends in globalization, like technology, (Nji, 1992) can be curbed, slowed or altered if the social costs of the process exceed, or are seen to exceed, the benefits. Unfortunately, insufficient empirical evidence exists at this time to enable scientists make reliable predictions of the ultimate consequences of globalization. This weakness is due, principally, to the fact that the geographical and social space across which globalization takes place is extremely varied and complex. It will take time to garner the experience of researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds, geographic locations and with divergent methodological approaches to grapple with the nature, challenges and implications of globalization. But some attempts at the analyses, based on what we now know or can predict about the phenomenon of globalisation, will be in order.

Theme of this Paper

This paper confronts the process of globalization, its nature and consequences from a sociological analytical stance, aided by an economic critique of the forces that shape the process. The thesis of the paper is that globalization is an irreversible process in which TNEs tend to be the key players to the detriment of poor countries. Sadly, the stage unfolds in some societies, with the active encouragement of governments who do not seem to critically examine the nature and consequences of globalisation for their societies. As a result, the rights, or the " Paradise " of Indigenious Peoples is lost to TNEs and nations from the North.

The Starting Point

The point of departure for this analysis is the Nation-State, the society which becomes either a passive or active participant in the globalization process. By debunking the sociological origins of the process itself, it becomes easy to determine a country's ability, such as Cameroon, to cope with globalisation " for better or for worse ". This also gives us the chance to explore Karl Marx's maxim that all societies possess the seeds of their own destruction.

A careful analysis of globalization shows that it is neither a panacea for development nor a nightmare. Like technology, globalization can be guided to reinforce social values, and bring about positive change at the individual, community, national and regional levels. Unfortunately, current experience suggests to the contrary : Power and control of access to technology are at the centre of the struggle.

Thus, the starting point for beginning to understand the nature, consequences and implication of globalisation is for social scientists to take a leading role to study the practices and institutions operating at the micro level. These include the family, small-scale enterprises, communities and community associations. Next, they should watch with a critical mind, the behaviour of macro institutions such as governments, policies, transnational enterprises and regulatory instruments and regimes to determine how they are influenced by the process of globalisation.

The analysis of these relationships and the complex interactions between micro and macro level practices and institutions allow us to understand the dynamics of globalization, the opportunities it offers for improving human conditions in some settings while at the same time posing a threat, decline and stagnation in others (Hersberg, 1998). Such an analysis of local circumstances against a background of inevitable global dynamics is the critical starting point to determine the survival of poor nations, such as Cameroon, as participant or observer in the 21st Century.

Coping with Globalization

There are a number of prerequisites or attitudinal or behavioural changes required for coping with globalisation. The mapping and understanding of the process of globalisation would lead one to review first the local enterprise structure, industrial behaviour and the entrepreneurial spirit of local firms. Furthermore, the state and level of technology in the country is a good predictor of a nation's readiness or preparedness for the inevitable and irreversible process of globalization. The indicators are that a nation must encourage all the sectors of the economy to strive to achieve a high level of technological innovation and innovativeness.

The concept of industrial up-grading has been advanced as the conceptual approach to getting ready for involvement and participation in global trade. Up-grading here refers to the act of improving the existing technological capability of a Nation to achieve " ...increases in the complexity of economic activities encompassing technological sophistication as well as knowledge and skill levels ", (Hersberg, 1998 :16).

A key element for survival in the global trade of goods and services are **competition, price, equity, equality, efficiency and effectiveness**. What this means is that a human organization (e.g. enterprise or community or country) that fails to adapt to the fast changing pace and nature of science and technology is likely to be left behind in the struggle being dictated by globalization,. Similarly, a government that allows itself to be " trapped " in the nostalgia of post-independence autocratic leadership will pay a dear price

for a lack of the vision that is so crucial for national survival in the face of unstoppable globalization.

Getting ready further requires that countries rid themselves of the nostalgia of state supremacy, and hand-clapping, halleluya chorus singers who tend to be definitely out of tone and the times. Getting ready for globalization also means that sleepy entrepreneurs and excited-absent-minded leaders in the public sector especially be called to order because the wave will move on unabated. Innovativeness, forecasting and risk analysis are part of the requirements for getting ready for globalization in all societies today.

Lessons from the Asian countries suggest that a country's capacity to innovate and thus up-grade all the sectors in the economy depends on its technological base and institutional strength. The " East Asian Miracle " or the growth of the " tiger economies " has been traced to the ability of the local enterprises to absorb higher levels of technology, by building on existing technological capabilities. After thoroughly mastering the production of toys and clothing, the local enterprises were able to demonstrate capacities in intersectoral shifts by moving from toys to the manufacture of consumer electronics, cars computers and information technology.

SOME CURRENT FACTS ABOUT GLOBALISATION

Fact#1. Globalization benefits the Rich and the Already Powerful

Based on the current trend of events in the world market ? globalization invariably benefits the developed countries and rich individuals. According to the New Internationalist (n.d.) " ...the unjust economic relationship between the rich and the poor world creates, maintains and exacerbates global poverty and inequality ". TNEs account for the discrepancy as they operate in many countries simultaneously, capable of moving their capital at will. The Internationalist further states that " the combined sales of the 10 largest corporations outweigh the combined GNPs of the world's 100 poorest nations. " With this in mind, it is not hard to find answers to why politicians become rich overnight especially those who have to grant rights of way to representatives of TNEs in developing countries.

Fact #2. International Standards Organization (ISO)

ISO is an international organization recently created to encourage international standards for products. The effect of ISO presence is to reinforce the privileged position of TNEs. To the extent that TNEs have more resources including social and economic power to order the course of things in any country at any time, they will be the first to derive the benefits of ISO protectionism. This will be the case in so far as it is recognized that local entrepreneurs do not have the resources nor the capacity to compete with the international corporations.

Unless the poor countries upgrade their skills and technology to satisfy minimum international (ISO) standards, it will

be extremely difficult for them to compete effectively on the global market.

Fact #3 : The Multinational Agreement on Investment (MAI).

The MAI is a set of rules that govern international investment. The rules are written by a group of industrialized countries who belong to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The MAI proposes to give international investors rights and freedoms that even sovereign governments cannot limit. Examples of such laws include forbidding governments from placing special conditions on foreign investors such as restrictions of investments by TNEs in agriculture, transportation etc. The MAI gives TNEs the right to sue governments that restrict OECD member countries from participating in activities in which they otherwise would, even if such restriction is seen to be in the best interests of the government and its people.

The MAI was conceived to even override voluntary agreements, such as those agreed upon at the Earth Summit in 1992 (Pittet, 1998). The implications of the MAI for farmers and indigenous peoples in developing countries is that they will not be able to stop a TNE from logging a rainforest for instance or from buying large tracks of farm land to grow crops for export. As we all know from past experience with contract farming and plantation agriculture, the landlords soon become transformed into landless labourers on their own land.

Fact #4 : Paradigm Clash and Paradigm Shift

In mid-1990, the US government estimated that TNEs control 25 % of the world's economic activity. In the US alone, 40 % of all trade in goods takes place between parent and/or sister companies (Mooney, 1998 :134). It is further estimated that on some of the popular trade routes (e.g. between USA and Europe or USA and Japan) between 43 % and 71% of the trade respectively takes place between economic and social siblings. In other words, we are being treated to a Soap Opera in which the "buyer" is often at the same time the "seller", or sister subsidiaries buying and selling to each other.

This is the nature of the globalisation that is threatening our common future, as we find that not only our physical space but also our fiscal resources are in the hands of a few multinational conglomerates. In addition to single enterprise dominance, we see an increasing and alarming form of integration taking place. TNEs are absorbing all the segments of the production chain in some industries through vertical integration. Horizontal integration is also taking place through mergers and take-overs. No matter which way we look, globalisation, an economic process driven by social forces, is increasingly becoming perhaps the most obnoxiously persistent phenomenon of our times. The action is being driven by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of TNEs who have been waiting impatiently in the corridors of development theory. Uninvited to come in, they have decided to force their way in, to stay.

Poverty alleviation for example has been a development theme for nearly five decades. Protectionism, import-substitution paradigms, and beggar-my-neighbour policies have never been appreciated by TNEs. For them, all economies ought to operate in a free market without restrictions. After all, TNEs have lots of money to spend, lots of power to wield, and great potential to soak up greater profits especially in the virgin lands of the poor, "needy and backward tribes" of the developing countries. Furthermore, since developing countries are resource-poor, they are teased with the so-called Free Trade Zones and "tax holidays", and favourable profits repatriation clauses in the name of industrialization.

Even international organizations that were on the side of the poor now think that it is time to "cross the carpet or twist the tongue", even a little. In the agricultural sector, the World Trade Organization (WTO) now thinks that food self-reliance is no longer a valid position ideologically. It is something of the past, particularly as the advocates of self-reliance development strategies cannot even rely on themselves nor can they be relied upon. WTO now opts for liberalization of agricultural trade which it sees as the surest and shortest route to food security (Mooney, 1998 :134 ; Falk, 1997 :4). More so, some people argue that because those poor school-boy-students of the Masters of the West have been learning for so long ; but are not passing the tests. Maybe they need easier exams so they can catch up with time, for "Time is Money" !

The expectations of this paradigm shift is that the TNEs should after all be allowed to go where they want, invest where they can and reap whatever profits their capital can fetch. This is the very essence of the MAI. The consequences of this brand of globalization are well depicted in an exquisite world map recently produced by the New Internationalist (1998). The map shows the Northern countries as the host and possessor of the world's wealth, mercilessly tapped from unfair trade, debt repayments and arms sales in the South. An analogy of these negative consequences for developing countries is depicted in a cartoon in which the supplier of arms comes back during the truce in a different outfit to talk peace and promise disaster aid. That is what PL480 stood for, and colonies continue to be viewed as farms for their Colonial Masters.

The power of TNEs is being strengthened by the effect of company mergers. In 1990, the value of US mergers was estimated at 190 USD billion. This has increased by almost 400% within the last 7 years to an alarming merger value of 725 billion USD in November 1997. According to The Economist, mergers and take-overs by TNEs worldwide accumulated to 3 billion USD (Mooney, 1998 :135) with major concentrations in the USA, Canada and European countries. Here again is Pat Mooney with his fire-eating demonstration of how deep the globalisation sword of mergers and take-overs can cut :

" Within the food and beverage industry,... half of the top 50 companies of the late 1970s were (sic) either "disap-

peared " or merged into the remaining companies by the last 1980s. RJR Nabisco, originally a tobacco company, was swallowed-for a record USD 24.9 billion-by Kohlberg Kravis/Roberts, a notorious wheeler-dealer which had already consumed both Beatrice and Safeways. Philip Morris, another tobacco company turned food mogul, spent USD 12.8 billion gobbling up Kraft", (Mooney, 1998 :136).

During the same period, the analysis goes one, the health care sector knew a number of mergers that raised eyebrows : Kodak, the camera film giant bought-out Sterling Drug as well as a number of small seed and biotechnology outfits. The agrochemical magnet, Monsanto, moved into pharmaceuticals for the first time with the purchase of G.D. Searle. After all what do you do with large chunks of money except use it to bring in even more money ? Isn't it a hot iron that is needed to take out another hot iron from the furnace like the old-saying goes?

The sad thing about mergers and take-overs is that companies would cut back on R & D spending, since they usually consolidate their research programs following take-overs and mergers. Interestingly, and contrary to major sociological theory on adoption and diffusion, it is not the big rich companies that innovate. A survey of the top 25 innovative firms in the USA showed that the top innovators were small businesses: The top two of them-Dekalb Genetics and Pioneer Hi-Bred were survivors as family seed businesses (Business Week, 1989).

Sociological theory generally postulates that farmers with the most resources (financial, technical, organisational and human) have a greater propensity to innovate than smaller farmers. This hypothesis collapses in the face of TNEs. For example, in mid 1996, 70 leading US-based bio-pharmaceutical companies with a combined market capitalization of USD 50 billion developed 280 new drugs whereas Merck, a global giant with a market capitalization of USD 80 billion is said to have developed only 26 new drugs. This only about 10 % of the combined development of the smaller boutiques with relatively a smaller market capitali-

zation of 60.8% of Merck's market capitalization in pharmaceuticals, (Mooney, 1998).

If this finding is to be considered as a reliable indicator, it can be expected that globalisation does not necessarily result in more innovativeness nor add to financial resources for R & D. And since the " buyers " are generally the " sellers " in global trade, competition, and Adam Smith's incarnate value of the free market (McMurty, 1998) will seize to hold. Besides, one could raise the question : 'in whose interest is it to conduct R & D anyway?' It makes economic sense not to invest in more R&D once the world has been conquered. Then and only then can the dynamics of monopoly set in again for bigger profits.

Fact #5 : The Social Manufacture of Losers and Winners

The craze for economic and social power and the drive towards control of access to new technologies are the driving forces behind this form of globalisation. Denial of access and power brokerage conspire to keep poor nations poor.

Table 1 shows how the South loses to the North as globalisation moves on, in three key areas : Health, Food and the Environment.

Food and health are critical areas of survival in any society. By seeking and gaining control over global food security and health needs, TNEs will be able to subdue and can even 'buy' poor Nations. Adequate nutrition, a cornerstone of health, can be achieved through biodiversity. By safeguarding indigenous knowledge of the diversity of food crops that can be grown in the fields, or gathered from the forests, rural communities can maintain better lives. They can retain their independence and esteem, and progressively move out of the doldrums of poverty with pride and dignity.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that about 90 % of the World's population still relies on indigenous health providers for almost all their medical needs.

Table 1. Losers and Winners in the Globalisation Race in three key areas

	Minus (-)	Plus(+)
Health & Medicine	80 % medical needs met by community health providers using 1K \$	25 % patented medicines derived from medicinal plants & indigenous preparations
Medicinal Wealth	99 % of health practitioners are community healers	32 billion USD of South's medicinal plants moved to the North
Health Risk	Almost all local knowledge of medicinal plants and systems could disappear within a generation	No risk for developed countries as new drugs would have been developed for marketing and consumption in the North
Agriculture & Food	Almost 90 % of all of the South's food needs can be met through local production based on community value systems	90 % of the world's plant genes are derived from the South's farming communities. Dependency on the North for improved varieties and breed inevitable

Yet, rather than strengthen indigenous knowledge systems and the existing infrastructure in developing countries, TNEs are breaking the immune system of the South through the process of globalisation by exposing them to technology that is yet socially, economically, culturally and politically outside their reach. Table 2 shows that even as globalisation pushes on, access to health care services in developing countries is still predominantly being provided by traditional medicine.

Table 2. Access to medical care and information in selected developing countries

Country	Persons Per medical doctor	Persons per tra traditional healer
Zambia	26,038	130
Tanzania	25,229	400
Ghana	20,028	224
South Africa	17,400	980
Swaziland	10,738	110
Zimbabwe	8,528	956
Kenya	8,219	245
Nigeria	5,998	110

Source : Adapted from Mooney, 1998 :80

The problem in poor Nations is that even as their virtues of traditional medicine are recognized, multinational pharmaceuticals are not leaving any stone unturned in their search for ways to weaken and kill Indigenous Health Systems. And as the system collapses, the same TNEs are scavenging the developing countries for remnants and traces of indigenous medicinal plants and therapeutic practices for cures of everything ranging from AIDS to Worms. With due apologies to some of my colleagues who put their names in the Halls of Fame by scraping barks in our rain forests for laboratories in the North and to some (they are all my friends !) who recently combed our villages talking to traditional healers in a research cum consultancy projet funded by the North, this practice brooks no detail. I do not claim acquittal either.

The position of this paper is not to say that Western medicine is bad. Or that laboratory research and consultancies for companies and organizations in the North is ethically wrong. What I say is to ask an ethical question within the " appropriate technology " paradigm : Western medicine for

what and for whom ? At what Cost, and How can we guide Science and Technology to protect human values ?

The major problems with Western medicine is both cost and access. As a Vietnamese proverb states, traditional medicine costs one chicken but western medicine costs one cow, and western-type hospital care costs the entire herd ! (Bodeker, 1994 :12). Information collected from 30 students taking my applied rural sociology course by distance shows that they spend approximately 40% of their income for health and health-related problems. The costs comprise essentially prescriptions from drugstores and laboratory examinations. Expenditures in indigenous therapeutic systems are sometimes only 10% of the costs in Western-type hospitals.

In a recent study of poverty in Cameroon (Nji, 1994), it was found that the health route for Cameroonians before one of globalization's babies was born-the economic crisis-was for patients to go directly to the hospital when they became ill (illness->hospital). As the economic crisis deepened, the purchasing power sagged and social problems mounted, the route changed drastically from illness->self medication->Quack doctor/street vendor->faith/traditional healer->hospital (World Bank, 1994 : 36).

At the present level of poverty in Cameroon where the average gross income in Cameroon in 1994 was less than the 1980 take home earnings (Nji, 1994), it is not surprising that globalization of life and life savers should be seen, at least for the moment, as evil and not a panacea for underdevelopment.

Fact #6 : Craze for Social and Economic Power

With these global trends pushing on at brake-neck speed, it is important that developing country governments reassess their priorities and policies to protect local wealth and people's health. Unless they do that, the Northern giants are bound to grow taller and bigger, as they concentrate even more power and greatly limit access to technology, through the privatization of the private parts of the lives of individuals and communities. Trends towards global control and concentrations, as well as limitations of access to technology are reinforced by mergers and take-overs in the life industry (pharmaceuticals), food and agrochemical companies and other aspects of our lives (Tables 3-7).

Table 3. World's top Pharmaceutical Corporations in 1996

Company	Headquarters	1995 Sales in million USD	CFA
Glaxo Wellcome	UK	13,026	7,815,600,000,000
Merck	USA	11,617	6,970,200,000,000
Novartis (Merger between Ciba-Geigy & Sandoz)	Switzerland	9,858	5,914,800,000,000
Bristol-Myers Squibb	USA	8,702	
Hoechst	Germany	8,652	
Roche	Switzerland	8,462	
Pfizer	USA	8,188	
American Home Products	USA	7,924	
SmithKline Beecham	UK	7,431	
Johnson & Johnson	USA	7,188	4,312,800,000,000

Table 4. World's top 10 food and beverage corporations in 1996

Corporations	1996 annual food and drink sales (USD million)	Food and drink as % of total sales
Nestlé SA	43,662	96
Philip Morris Inc.	32,277	47
Unilever PLC/NV*	25,785	49
Pepsi Co Inc.	20,204	64
Coca-Cola Co.	18,546	100
ConAgra. Inc.	18,074	75
Cargill Inc.	15,680	28
Danone Group	14,796	92
Mars Inc.	14,000	100
Kirin Brewery Co.	13,337	97
Archer Dan. Midland	13,314	100

Source : Mooney, 1998 :150

*Also a major stakeholder in agroindustry. Was main stakeholder of Pamol Plantations du Cameroon and major shareholder of BIAO, Cameroon. (personal research)

From table 3, it can be seen that the World's top pharmaceutical companies are located in 4 countries : USA (47.9%) ; UK (22.5%) ; Switzerland (20.1%) and Germany (9.5%). Many of the pharmaceutical corporations also hold animal patents (e.g. Bristol-Meyers Squibb). It is feared that the patenting of animals enables the life industry to use intellectual property to have a greater control over agriculture and the livestock gene pool that is already in rapid decline. Some

Table 5. World's top 10 veterinary medicine corporations in 1997

Meriel Animal Health Hoffman-La Roche Pfizer* Bayer BASF	Merger of Merck and Rhone Merieux to form Meriel Bayer bought-out Upjohn/Pharmacia's vaccine business
Amer. Home Products*	AHP's animal health business in Fort Dodge took over Solvay (Belgium) for USD 450 million
Rhone-Poulenc Animal Nutrition (USA) Shering-AH Novartis* Elanco	Acquired animal health business of Mallinckrodt

Source : Adapted from Mooney, 1998 :145

*TNEs already among the top 10 pharmaceutical corporations

of the World's top pharmaceutical corporations are also among the world's top 10 veterinary medicine corporations (Table 4).

Nestlé, as the world's largest food TNE, has a turnover that is greater than the entire global seeds and pesticides industries put together, while Coca-Cola and PepsiCo each control world market sales greater than the world's veterinary medicines. Japan's Kirin Brewery has very strong alliances with the seed industry and is a leader in biotech R & D. Mars, a cocoa company, is investing heavily in biotech R & D.

As can be seen from table 4, Pfizer, American Home Products and Novartis which are among the world's top ten pharmaceutical corporations are also among the world's top ten veterinary medicine corporations. Five of the top ten veterinary medicine companies also rank among the leading pesticide TNEs. This confirms the observation made earlier about "buyers" and "sellers" and the concentration of power and control over technology.

It can be seen from table 6 that Novartis and Monsanto are still all present. The south's token presence in this group is represented by Grupo Pulsar who are not even sure to resist globalisation. Monsanto and Novartis are also among the top ten agrochemical corporations as shown on table 6.

Table 6. World's top 10 seed Corporations

Company	Comment
Pioneer Hi-Bred International	Dupont owned 20% share in Pioneer in 1996
Novartis*	Formerly Ciba Geigy and Sandoz
Lim agrain	A French Cooperative
Advanta	A joint venture of Zeneca and Royal Van der Have merged in 1996
Grupo Pulsar	A giant agro-industrial corporation also owns Empressas La Moderna in Mexico, itself a majority shareholder of Seminis Inc.
Sakata	Japanese corporate giant of vegetables/flowers/turfgrass seeds
Takii	Private Japanese TNE in vegetables/flowers/maize/turfgrass seeds
Dekalb Plant Genetics	Monsanto owns 40% shares
KWS	Controls 25% of the world market share in sugar beet seeds
Cargill	Private company. Financial records not for public consumption. Major player in seeds and poultry genetics.

Sources : Compiled from RAFI website and Mooney, 1998 :149.

Table 7. World's top 10 agrochemical corporations in 1996

Company	1996 Sales (USD million)	Comments
Novartis *	4,511	Bought-over Merck & Co. Crop Protection unit for USD 910 million in May 1997
Monsanto	2,997	
Zeneca	2,638	Formerly ICI
AgrEvo	2,475	Bought-out Plant Genetic Systems International for DM 1 billion. Baby of the merger between Hoechst and Schering's agrochemical boutiques. Acquired 20% of Pioneer Hi-Bred in August 1997
Dupont	2,472	
Bayer	2,350	
Rhone Poulenc	2,293	
Dow Agrosciences	2,010	
American Home Prod./		
American Cyanamid	1,989	
BASF	1,536	

Source : Adapted from Mooney, 1998 :147.

*Novartis, already a top in 3 different classifications is the giant in this group.

The structural changes that took place between 1996 and 1997 among the agrochemical TNEs in respect of globalisation include the acquisition by Novartis of Merck's agrochemical division in 1997. Zeneca Agrochemicals and Cosun merged their seed businesses to form Zeneca Seeds and Royal Van der Have Group in 1996. And Zeneca recently bought over Mogen, a Dutch plant biotechnology company.

AgrEvo (Germany), purchased Plant Genetics Systems International (Belgium). PGS holds many valuable biotechnology patents including broad patents on male sterility genes, bacillus thuringiensis, and herbicide tolerance (Mooney, 1998 :147). Many of the TNEs in the preceding tables are large stakeholders in other TNEs as well. Even in the Beverage business, big-brother or big-sister financial relationships are rife.

All the TNEs are under the control of the North except Mexico which owns Grupo Pulsar and Seminis, Inc. Although Grupo Pulsar now controls more than 22 % of the global vegetable seed market, it is doubtful if it can escape the thirst and appetite of North's TNE's for control and power. Limagrain (France), a seed cooperative owns 75 subsidiaries. After taking over Ferry-Morse, Harris-Moran and Clause, Limagrain now boasts of, and claims to be the third largest seed company and the largest vegetable and flower seed company in the world (Freiberg, 1997).

The data on the preceding tables show the seamless web of alliances, dealings, and partnerships. The evidence also shows the deliberate and conscious narrowing of doors leading to the eventual exclusion of players in the globalisation trade arena. These companies have virtually bought the world from agriculture to zoological research for more and more wealth and for greater control of space and species and technology.

Fact # The Privatization of Private Parts

Globalization's toll in the field of agriculture ought to make scientists and politicians shade tears In 1995, the German group, Hoechst which has been doing intensive research on soil samples and traditional medicine in India screened 90,000 Indian Soil samples. And in conformity with the widespread belief that patents belong to companies not individuals, the Hoechst Group held 86,000 patents and patent applications.

Many of those patents are based on original/indigenous materials from the South. For instance, one of AgrEvo's patented and highly profitable genes for herbicides resistance-PAT gene-comes from a Cameroonian soil sample. The company's best selling herbicide, Basta, was also developed from a soil bacterium of Cameroonian origin (Keller, 1996 : also see Money, 1998). A short list of some of the most astonishing patents obtained by TNE's is presented in Table 8. The facts remain unchanged : exploitation of the South by the North through research in the process of globalization. Haven't you heard already, that a new strand of AIDS has been discovered that cannot be detected by existing HIV tests in " the Central African country of Cameroon " ? Get ready, the research grants are coming !

THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIBERALIZATION AND GLOBALISATION

Paradise Lost and Paradigms Clash

Perhaps the basic and most obvious effect of globalization is the clash of paradigms. This clash is accompanied by a loss of paradise as the society grapples with mounting and rapid structural changes. Two teams can be seen to be at work here. On the one hand, there are the advocates of sustainable development who stand on the side of consensus-seeking international relations.

Some of the world's " most outrageous " patents made possible by Globalisation

Patent	Description
Homo sapiens Umbilical Cord Cells US 5,004,681	Human umbilical cord cells patented by the US company <u>Biocyte</u> . Any doctor wishing to use umbilical cord blood cells in surgery of transfusions must pay royalties. The cells may be crucial in treating bone marrow diseases .
Human Genes US 5,597, 709	A human growth hormone gene has been patented to the US company, <u>Human Genome Sciences</u> (HGS) which also has alliances with at least 10 major drug corporations dealing with human genes and genetic information.
Human Cell Lines WHO 95 12814	Australian company, <u>Flinders Medical Centre</u> is seeking patent monopoly on human cell lines on five continents.
Cloning : Animal species WO 9707668	The UK-based <u>Roslin Institute</u> is claiming its cloning patents, (including humans) in Liberia and North Korea .
Agriculture Cotton Gossypium hirsutum US 5, 159,135	Monsanto claims patents on all genetically-engineered cotton
Soya (Gysine max)	Another of Monsanto's long list of monopoly patents after buying-over WR Grace's agbiotech division.
Brassica Rapeseed, broccoli, Cauliflower, cabbage etc. US 5, 188,958.	One of the most sweeping and broad patents by Monsanto on transgenic brassica, covering any plant in the entire brassica genus genetically-engineered using the agrobacterium method.
Sangre de Drago Croton sp. WO 9206695	Obtained from the Amazon by <u>Shaman Pharmaceuticals</u> and patented in the US, Sangre de drago (dragon's blood) is an indigenous peoples' medicinal plants. The patent is said to have enabled Shaman to raise millions in the US capital market.
J'oublie <i>Pentadiplandra brazzicana</i> US 5,304,718	« I forget » from Gabon is famous for the sweet bliss of its berries. Patented in the US by the University of Wisconsin which has in turned licensed it to industry. The researchers claim that 'j'oublie' is 500 times sweeter than sucrose. It is estimated that the product will hit USD100 billion a year in the global sweetener market . Researchers are trying to grow brazzein in transgenic micro-organisms so that berries don't have to be obtained in Africa.
Health Snakegourd Trichosanthes kirilowii	The Chinese from whom the plant has been stolen, call it « the powder from the gods ». patented in the US by the <u>National Institutes of Health</u> and <u>New York University</u> . A compound derived from Snakegourd is purported to treat HIV.
Kava <i>Piper myhesticum</i> 5,585,386	Patented by the French cosmetic giant, <u>L'Oréal</u> (of which <u>Nestlé</u> is a major shareholder), the product is originally US from the Pacific countries (Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, etc.). Drug companies are racing to patent the product's many beneficial uses especially the reduction of hair loss.
Tumeric <i>Curcuma longa</i> US 5,401,504	Patented by the University of Mississippi (USA), the product is an ancient and Indian ayurvedic medicine used for centuries to promote the healing of cuts and wounds.
Barbasco <i>Clibadium sylvestre</i> EP 610059	Cultivated by the indigenous peoples of the Amazon for its effectiveness as a poison that stuns and paralyzes fish. A barbasco compound has been patented by <u>UK's Foundation for Ethnobiology</u> . The Foundation is in turn marketing it to pharmaceutical TNEs such as <u>Zeneca</u> and <u>Glaxo</u> . The product claims to regulate muscular activity .
Quinoa <i>Chenopodium quinoa</i> US 5,304,718	A staple food crop for millions of the Andes (Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador). One of the quinoa varieties, <u>Apelawa</u> (named for the farmers of a small Bolivian town) has been patented by two professors at the Colorado State University because this variety « is the key to a male sterility system ».
Bitter Melon <i>Momordica charantia</i>	This is a fruit that has been used in SE Asia and China for centuries against tumours and infections. Patented in the US by the <u>US National Institutes of Health</u> , the <u>US Army</u> , and <u>New York University</u> for its anti-human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) effects.
Endod <i>African Soapberry/ Phytolacca dodecandra</i>	A product of African origin (particularly Ethiopia), Endod has been patented by the <u>University of Toledo</u> . The product is used as a soap and shampoo as well as a poison to stun fish. An Ethiopian scientist discovered that Endod is lethal to snails and may be effective in controlling schistosomiasis. After an Ethiopian scientist demonstrated endod's potency to Toledo scientists, they took out a patent, hoping to sell Endod as a biological control for the Zebra mussel, a pest in the Great Lakes of the US and Canada.

Source : Mooney, 1998.

In the paradigm, the needs of the big and small, rich and poor are incorporated in a partnership in which the strong find wisdom in helping the weak in a space which they see as ours all, not ours only. The majority of the players on this team are over-whelmed by the phenomenon of change and are resigned to " the good old ways of the past ". The past is seen as old but beautiful.

On the other team is the liberalization or free market players who stand for the reduction or cancellation of government regulations in the market place so that free market forces may reign undisturbed. Here, the private sector is seen as King. The players on this team are discouraged optimists whose real goals are hampered by road blocks and institutional lethargy.

This social and psychological drowsiness opens windows of opportunity for the TNEs and give room for large corporations to exert their " inalienable " rights as global citizens, to wield economic power and force wealth-driven, market-given freedoms. These are the disenchanted disciples of the market place in developing societies crippled by factionalism, corruption, inefficiency and inward-looking behaviour. Even in social services, the disciples of the market place plead to the State to reduce its role to that of a symbolic monarch and do nothing else, or if anything, blow the whistle. But the players on the other side of the fence are more engrossed in the here and now, resigned to the " we and they " syndrome.

Compare the two paradigms, and it will be seen, from a neoliberal perspective, that strong public response is needed to try and curb the thirst of Multinationals for economic power and social control. Consensus is the key to resolving the paradigmatic conflict. One conclusion seems obvious : Indigenous Peoples, Communities affected by globalisation and those to be caught in the 'wave', even benevolent dictators, for want of better democrats, can put concerted and concentrated pressure on Multinational Conglomerates to give developing countries a break ; if not for themselves in the long run, at least for our common future.

Perhaps it is time that by so doing, we can revisit the moral-theological formulations of John Locke's Second Treatise of Government, Adam-Smith's free market theory, as well as the Smithsonian conception of the " sacred and inviolable right of private property " largely considered to be the engines of development by free market thinkers (McMurtry, 1998 :48-49).

IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALISATION FOR CAMEROON

During a radio Talk-Show on globalisation broadcast over Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) in November 2000 in preparation for the France-AFRICA Summit which held in Yaounde from 17th to 21st January 2001, a listener lamented that " we do not want globalisation. Those people (the industrialized Nations) should be told that this thing (globalisation) is not good for us. We don't want it. "

Apparently, the speaker did not understand the nature of globalisation. The reaction of many people in developing countries is similar to their behaviour vis-à-vis other phenomena such as devaluation, democracy, good governance and foreign assistance.

Yet, for Cameroon and other poor and debt-ridden countries, they must be aware of three imperatives if they are to survive the impact of globalisation :

1. That globalisation is irreversible ;
2. The best coping mechanism for globalisation is a) to develop indigenous technological capabilities and b) intensify appropriate research and development.

i) The irreversibility of globalisation

This is a process over which no one has control except the rich and powerful economic and political leaders of industrialized countries. Poor countries must come to the realization, albeit bitter, that economic power and control of access to technology are at the centre of the struggle. The ultimate goal is to expand and conquer the world economy by a limit few.

ii) Indigenous Technological Capability.

This involves a country's capacity to deal with its own problems based on i) training of its human resources ii) management of human and natural resources iii) encouraging creativity and problem solving attitudes among its citizens ; iv) building capable institutions ; and v) formulating and enforcing appropriate public policies. (Nji, 1992).

If Cameroon is to cope successfully with globalisation it behooves its leadership to recognize Cameroonian brains, encourage rather than dehumanize and ignore them. Politicians and policy-makers should create an enabling environment for Cameroonians to make their contribution to sustainable, national development so that Cameroon can compete and survive in a world increasingly characterized by inevitable global changes.

Unfortunately, choice and decision-making in Cameroon (even in the 21st Century!) is based not on what one knows but on whom one knows ; not on what is good for the country but what is good for the political party in power ; not on how efficient and effective a recommended process is but on how much " water the supplier will throw up ".

A country that has twice been awarded the International First Prize of the " most corrupt country in the world " would have a hard time indeed competing with others unless it walks on the path of merit. More so because building an indigenous technological capacity is based on fact, truth, the pursuit of reason and rationality.

iii) Research & Development

The data presented in this paper demonstrate that research and development (R&D) are consequential for partnership and effective participation in the process of globalization. Tons of papers have been written on the weakness of re-

search focus and support in developing countries. Few people are oblivious of the current pitiful status of researchers, scientists and technologists in Cameroon in particular and Africa as a whole. Cameroon's research infrastructure and institutes (ISH, IMPM, IRAD etc.) have suffered and are still suffering from serious lack of attention and assistance. And Cameroon politicians know just so well what they have done to encourage brain drain from the Cameroonian soil, particular in the aftermath of the pro-democracy years of the early 1990s.

Can Cameroon continue on this dark road and survive the global onslaught ? Current global trends call for dialogue, concertation and consensus at all levels of the Cameroon society. The trends strongly suggest the need for strong, committed and demonstrated Political Will to set things on the right track. Politicians and policy makers play a key role in this process because public policy is the realm of policy-makers, who are aided by scientists, engineers and technologists.

In addition to demonstrated Political Will, scientific thinking and discourse is required in a number of thematic paths :

1. The need to develop a theoretical understanding of the relationship between the sociological bases of societal goals, economic growth, equality and sustainability.
2. Determination through empirical research of an explanation and understanding of the nature and consequences and implications of globalisation at the individual, community, national regional levels. Who has ever heard the " President's Task Force " on this or that in Cameroon ? Where is the location and Terms of Reference for a Cameroon National Science and Technology Council ?
3. How individuals and communities cope with globalisation and the role of social and economic safety nets in this process. The most popular way by which Nations try to solve their problems in today's global environment is by asking the age-old question WHY ? How many times has Cameroon asked itself the question " Why Cameroonians have become poorer and poorer " and " Why the poor remain poor " (Nji, 1981). How many times have the powers that be ever stopped to ask What Cameroonians are doing to cope with poverty, What is the cause of erosion of our place in the world commodity markets, and How are Cameroonians coping with prevailing circumstances in the face of an increasing world space and economy ? Once a country knows and understands the safety nets of its own citizens under difficult, new and nascent conditions, it will be better prepared to help them cope with crises, by reinforcing those nets.
4. The preparedness of the private sector in Cameroon to compete with the rest of the world. The evidence provided so far shows that the survival of any Nation no longer depends on its governments alone but on a partnership that must include the civil society. The analysis also demonstrates

beyond any doubt the crucial role of the private sector in helping the rest of the society to find and keep its niche in the global market. The top tens who control the world's economy are not top ten governments but top ten Enterprises. Industrial up-grading has been mentioned as a prerequisite to cope with globalisation ; but that is only one little bit of a whole series of prescriptions for coping with globalisation.

In order for Cameroon to successfully face the challenges of globalisation and derive the opportunities it offers, the Nation's leaders in all sectors (economic, political, cultural and technological) will be required to revisit our value system, re-order our priorities, and undertake a critical self-assessment in all matters ranging from the role of the individual to that of the State. If the country persists in its present behaviour characterized by petty nonsense quarrels over the " political *gombo* " and the colour of the ballot ; chronic corruption , the careless attitude towards quality and merit, then the Nation has sown the seeds of its own destruction predicted so well by Karl Marx.

THE ROAD AHEAD

As a Nation, Cameroon needs to mesh into the global market striving for greater value-added, increased employment and greater opportunities for local capacity building (Nji, 1981 ;1986 ;1992). Another approach is to advocate industrial up-grading as a prerequisite for accommodation of the globalisation process which has been described as " flexible specialization " (Piore and Sabel, 1984). In this process, small firms can specialize in products in which they not only have the " comparative advantage " but where they have also succeeded to master the technology and adapt " ...specialized production capabilities to the exigencies of highly-specialized markets in which quality, rather than cost alone determine competitiveness, " (Hersberg,1998 :17).

Apart from product specialization, enterprises have been able to upgrade by decentralizing production so that a particular set of actors may specialize in producing specific components of a product within a given global commodity chain or cross-national production networks (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz,1994 ;Borru and Zysman,1997)..

Knowledge Acquisition

Thus far, I have tried to present a conceptual view of the process of globalization and the theoretical framework in which the process operates. It must be seen by now that globalization is an economic activity with predominantly sociological origins and socio-cultural and political consequences. The place of Cameroon on the playing field of globalization depends on three key factors : Knowledge, Institutions, and Policies. The KIP triangle (fig.1) postulates that knowledge (including Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Science and Technology) is the basic take off point to determine an entity's (individual, community, enterprise or country) preparedness for globalisation. What people can do depends on what they know.

Awareness, a critical initial step in the adoption-diffusion model (Nji, 1980) is the diving board for participation in global processes of trade and social relations.

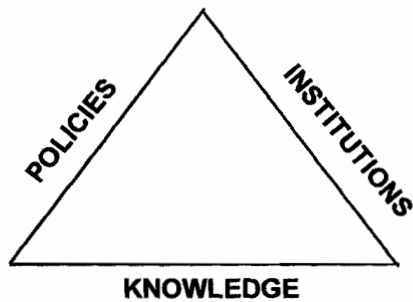


Fig. 1. The KIP Triangle for coping with globalization.

How aware are Cameroonian entrepreneurs, policy-makers and scientists of the forces (social, economic and political) that push globalization? What knowledge and skill levels do they have, or are they developing to cope with the inevitable phenomenon of globalization?

Industrial up-grading as discussed earlier in this paper places a premium on knowledge acquisition. Learning (the process of acquiring skills) and knowledge (skills or capabilities acquired) are necessary for design, engineering, adaptations and adoption of technology. They are indispensable to understand the nature, consequences and implications of globalization. Individual learning skills, knowledge levels, community knowledge base and national technological capabilities constitute the bases for industrial up-grading and technological development.

The economic theory of the past 20-30 years is depleted with saintly descriptions of "capital" as the predominant factor for the "take-off" of developing economies. But it is now clear that capital formation and accumulation are a function of the socio-cultural environment of the entrepreneurs. Although understanding the role that culture plays in the acquisition of technology ("know-how", "know-what", and "know-why") is essential for a better appreciation of global trends in production, trade and human communication—and how these create opportunities or build roadblocks on the path to individual happiness, community development and societal health. Upgrading should not be limited to technological processes alone, or to specific skills in engineering or marketing. Rather, it is a fundamentally political and social challenge "...that groups of people and institutions confront by developing capacities for learning and, in turn, for acting on the basis of that knowledge", Hersberg, 1998 :18).

Anecdotes in support of the KIP Paradigm

1. Knowledge

a) The Cameroon cocoa experience

In 1995 during a private trip to West Germany, I had the opportunity to dine with a German manufacturer of cos-

metics and chocolate bars. He had been importing Cameroon cocoa for several years until 1990. As from 1991, he switched his supply source from Cameroon to Columbia. The reasons for switching were both sociological and economic. This is what he said :

" The demand for Cameroon cocoa has fallen in Europe. The demand plunge is due to three distinct reasons :

- a) Cameroon cocoa is too dark. Consumer preferences in Europe have shifted from dark chocolate products and by-products to light-coloured products ;
- b) The new equipment are calibrated such that the large beans are recognized as good quality beans and the small beans are automatically sieved as poor quality cocoa. Unfortunately, cocoa beans from Cameroon are too small and do not respond well to calibration.
- c). The poor quality of Cameroon cocoa due to poor quality control at port of shipment. "

For this informant, good grade I Cameroon cocoa always appears mixed with bad cocoa. This poses processing problems and increase costs for importers (brokers and industrialists). The above example provides a classical case for Knowledge generation, skills acquisition not only at the farm level but also in the policy arena and in the marketing chain of the cocoa production process in Cameroon. With this kind of experience, is there any wonder that commodity producers of the hey days of the 1980's should complain of Paradise Lost ?

2. Institutions

Learning is crucial in all human activities because of the rapid social change taking place. Institutions provide the framework for effective learning to occur. Not only are learning institutions such as schools crucial (e.g. institutions of agricultural training and agribusiness) but also the institutions that participate in the global economy such as banks, the postal system, marketing boards, cooperatives, transportation, telecommunication networks etc.

The effectiveness of an institution depends on the degree to which it meets its goals, and the degree of satisfaction of the actors involved in the institution. Efficiency, cost and competitiveness are guide-posts for institutional survival. It is crucial to understand the micro relationships that thrive on networks of enterprises and between institutions that are expected to play complementary roles.

For example, what networks exist in Cameroon's agro-industries? How are the supply and demand functions coordinated and maintained? What interests are served and how are decisions made within the industry? Who benefits, the poor peasant, the urban bureaucrat or the rich CEO of a Multinational Corporation?

At the level of government institutions, how do they relate to each other as they strive to produce their individual out-

puts. Institutional possessiveness, territorial aggression and protection are common characteristics of Cameroon's bureaucratic institutions. The degree to which policy-makers perceive globalization as a common foe or friend determines the nature of their institutional relationships.

b) Preparedness for the global tourist dollar

Public speeches have been made about Cameroon's desire to snatch a fair share of the tourist trade. As a global enterprise, tourism is a good example of the interrelationships that take place at the local and international levels. In a world where the environment has become a big issue, eco-tourism is a concept that must be understood and mastered by the Cameroon Ministry of Tourism.

Tourist preferences have changed just in the same way that eating habits have changed in Europe. Today's tourist is likely to be younger, more leisure prone and pro-environment. New values and pressure groups have emerged such as the Greens in Germany, Brazil or Mexico. The implication for tourism is that when such people travel for leisure, they want to go where the environment (forests, water, nature, parks and wildlife) are protected.

In 1998, I took a pair of leather sandals and purse to my daughters in the US but was politely asked to take them back because the materials were made of leather from wildlife. My daughters who have since become fans of nature politely told me to go back to Cameroon and protect the beautiful wildlife.

Apart from the values that tourists have on the environment, there are constraints of time. And as most tourists are working-class travelers, they can afford to take only two weeks of holidays a year. And those two weeks better be two weeks of fun, not furry ! But Cameroon is far from satisfying the new breed of tourists in a number of specific areas :-

1. Poor human/market relations
2. Poor and unsafe roads and transportation system
3. Roadblocks and police harassment reduce travel time for tourists ;
4. Tree logging runs parallel to the value systems of eco-tourists ;
5. Inefficient banking, telecommunications, transport systems do not give the time-conscious travelers the flexibility they need ;
6. The famous " mange mille " phenomenon.

In 1995, a foreign official to the University of Dschang was harassed by two army officers between Douala airport and Dschang (specifically in Santchou). His passport and camera were seized for a reason that will sound really silly for a Western visitor : he was taking a picture of the bridge at the same time that a vehicle two soldiers had boarded was crossing the bridge. But the visitor was taking a picture of a wooden bridge which he found very well laid out and interesting. (Wooden bridges are not common anymore in the traveler's country). It took more than one hour of negotiation by the author to retrieve the camera and the passport. Many more examples can be given to demonstrate weak

links in Cameroon's chain on the globalisation trail. But as can be seen from these few examples, a country needs to develop and establish the safety nets, coping mechanisms and adaptations needed to cope with globalisation.

c) Price, demand and social change

Global trade tends to flow where the price and quality are right. Safety, travel costs (air and ground travel) and communication facilities (telephone, fax, email) are critical variables in the choices people make when they do business or travel for leisure. In 1996, the author was a member of a 5 person team to choose a site for an international conference. Based on five criteria, (price, safety, hotel services, communications, human rights), we were to select the country with the best (highest) score to host the conference. Of 27 countries for which tourist data were obtained, Cameroon topped the list with the highest hotel, room and communication costs.

My own research comparing Canada, USA, Ghana and Kenya on postal charges reveal that it costs almost double the amount it takes to mail a 20g letter from Cameroon than from Ghana, Kenya, Canada and the USA. Differences in air travel costs are alarming. My personal research (September 1998) show that a RT economy air ticket Toronto-Douala-Toronto is CA\$2,405 bought in Canada. But if the same ticket were bought in Cameroon, it costs CA\$3,169. At the same time, a RT economy air ticket Toronto-HongKong-Bangkok-Columbu (Sri Lanka) costs CA\$1,390, while a similar ticket to India attracts a ridiculously negligible price tag of \$CA1,209-almost 1/3 the price of a ticket to Cameroon ! Ironically , the travel distances to India and Sri Lanka are almost twice as long as the trip to Douala.

Under prevailing circumstances, Cameroon already loses out on globalization on two interrelated criteria : competitiveness and price. Uncompetitive prices in the absence of a free market economy will lead Cameroon to pay higher costs in the process of globalization. The agricultural sector will be the most hit because of no or little value-added. When raw materials are exported with little or no transformation, the costs of transportation (due to bulk) are extremely exorbitant and discourage potential buyers. Yet, globalization, like devaluation, can be beneficial only to countries that have value added exports of good quality.

Social and political institutions offer mechanism for collectively achieving efficiencies and capabilities that cannot otherwise be achieved by isolated actors on their own. In a global economy, institutions strive to cut down costs while improving quality in order to remain competitive.

One of the postulates of social change theory is that innovativeness and learning are high in social institutions with no or little State presence ; because it is only in such institutions that information and resources can flow freely. The opportunities created by globalization are unachievable without easy access to information, institutional and personal accountability and basic values of freedom and safety.

d) Undeveloped Information capability

Cameroon still lags behind many countries in the area of information technology. Telephones are not available in many cities. And those available are unreliable. Internet connectivity is still a luxury in at least 90% of the national territory, and communication charges are among the highest on the African continent. In 1999, the author made a 3 minutes call from Johannesburg, South Africa to Germany for one US dollar. That call would cost 10 US dollars from Cameroon !

Yet, as globalization continues to bring profound changes in developing and developed countries, governments will be required to take action on a wide number of options to improve institutional and policy carrying capacities if they are to meet international standards. But, institutions alone will not help governments cope with globalization unless they are aided by effective laws and vigilant and objective enforcement.

3. Policies

Knowledge and Institutions alone cannot bring a Nation to the fore in the process of globalization. Appropriate policies are required in addition. In developing as well as developed countries, public policies are central to successful growth, equity and poverty reduction programmes (Nji, 1981 ; 1992 ; 1994 ; 1999 ; Nji & Tchakoa 1999). Equitable policies ensure that individuals (particularly rich investors) and groups such as TNEs can exert uncontrolled pressure on weak, poorer and less powerful groups.

In Malaysia, large forest fires caused the nation an estimated loss of about \$1.6 billion US. The embarrassing thing about it is that the fires are said to be caused by the TNEs involved in timber exploitation and export-oriented plantation companies. The peasants who practice slash and burn are spared of any blame for the mishaps. TNEs get on the hook because an objective analysis of the situation showed that the companies burned the trees to prepare the land for plantation agriculture since it is cheaper to burn than to clear (Khor, 1997 :5).

The fear of invasion and wanton destruction of the environment has been raised in the case of the MAI if it is passed into law. Khor (1997 :5), states that in the Malaysian forest crisis, the situation portrays once again the ugly face of power and short-sightedness in the urge for short-term profit by Multinational Corporations, over the need to conserve the environment for long-term social benefit.

The financial turmoil that affected Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines triggered by a devaluation of the Thai currency came on the heels of the forest fires. Thus, global financial interests in the North, relocated to Asia for higher profits (thanks to lower labour costs) are seen to be effectively holding whole Sovereign Nations to ransom. Khor sums up the pain meted on the poor Nations by globalisation in these words.

"...the globalization process spits company against company, country against country, and individuals against one another. Under the vicious fight for larger market shares and healthier profits to survive and thrive (italics mine), globalization and liberalization replace every environmental and social item on the high-priority agenda list. And because of its unequal nature, globalisation may benefit a small number of countries and people, but alienates, marginalizes and impoverishes large numbers of countries and peoples", Khor, 1997 :7).

As can be seen from the foregoing analysis, even public pronouncements by politicians may pass for mere noise because governments in the North and increasingly in the South too have decided to pamper and cater to the demands of TNEs and rich individuals. These actors are uncompromising when it comes to the urge and search to capture, retain and control competitiveness and power in the global market place. The characters on stage are free market maniacs who will yield to nothing and care less about nobody, except the world investors who see " market as God " (McMurtry, 1998) and are determined to control access to technology at all costs.

e) Diversity, Opportunity and Globalization.

How can a country like Cameroon prepare to face the challenges posed by globalisation ? As social scientists and economists grapple with the theoretical and empirical issues, a number of windows can be opened :

1. **Watchful Liberalization** is crucial for effective participation in the global market. Central to this is the recognition of the pivotal role that competition plays in a free society. Competition is facilitated by effective regulatory mechanisms and instruments including quality control and standards.

2. **Standardization.** Quality control is possible in a society that has minimum standards. In Ghana for example, the National Standards Board (NSB) prepares local entrepreneurs technically for the challenges imposed by international competition. At the same time, a NSB gives consumers psychological assurance that dog meat is not going to end up on the kitchen table in place of beef.

3. **Capitalizing on Ethnic Diversity.** Ethnicity was seen in past development paradigms as a liability than an asset. Today, convincing empirical sociological and anthropological research shows that ethnic diversity opens a window of opportunity for innovation, imitation, healthy competition and adaptation to change. The role of ethnicity in economic and social development largely depends on the political system. Evidence is rife that in democratic regimes, ethnic diversity is a strength ; but in dictatorial regimes and autocracies, ethnicity is detrimental to economic and social development (World Bank, 1998 :3).

4. **Indigenous technological capability (ITC).** Building indigenous technological capacity is fundamental to

knowledge generation, dissemination and utilization. ITC is central to upgrading in local enterprises especially as success in the globalisation race is ultimately determined not only by what a Nation knows but also by the quality and quantity of its resources.

5. Democratic Governance. Merely increasing GDP is no longer seen to be a sustainable goal of development. Institutions should be present that guarantee personal freedoms, security for persons and property, as well as income and employment guarantees to workers. Globalization finds its niche in a society where improving living standards, and pursuing development goals that are egalitarian, equitable, democratic and sustainable are part of a national system of social values. In this wise, governments keen on opening any of the windows of opportunity offered by globalization should strive to reduce the role of the State machinery in development and instead channel resources to ensure higher-order values such as economic, political and social stability through organized civil society.

6. Investing in People. Empirical social science evidence is not in short supply to show that there are very close links between diagnosis and policy. It is now widely known that investment in human resources has the highest multiplier effect and greater sustainability than other forms of investment. Unfortunately, developing countries create unfavorable conditions that push their citizens to migrate to "greener pastures" in the industrialized countries. And as it turns out, those who leave the country are among the cream of the society. Countries in the North are only too happy to receive them because these new residents come to add to their human capital at very little or no cost to them. In this way their position of power is reinforced —and the poor will remain poor !

Training and education through formal and nonformal approaches can improve the productivity of individuals and hence the overall contribution of the social organization to the country's achievements in a global economy. This goes to reinforce the knowledge component of the KIP triangle. Just as developed countries take advantage of brain drain from the South, some countries in the South do not seem to take the opportunities provided by South-South migration patterns.

7. Creating an enabling environment. The appropriate environment must be provided for knowledge to be generated through R&D and skills improvement. Countries that do attract the best brains can find and consolidate their place in the global market place through effective competition and wise acquisition and use of technological power. Whoever believed that millet and sorghum can grow in Canada Canadian Hybrid Pearl Millet and Canadian Forage Sorghum are two new crops developed for Canadian farmers by Agriculture & Environmental Renewal, Canada Inc. (AERC). And guess the brains behind this technological revolution ? A cereals breeder of Indian nationality who worked in Cameroon's National Cereals Extension Project, at IRA, Maroua, for more than 10 years until the begin-

nings of 1990 !

8. Strengthening the Private Sector. Liberalization presupposes that governments are called upon to do less where market mechanisms work or could be made to work better. It also means that governments will see their role limited to regulatory issues such as ensuring that the right policies are in the right place and applied rightly. This objective is achievable even as the wave of globalization advances, provided that the private sector is strengthened, assisted and encouraged to create economically and socially enabling environments.

As globalisation takes deeper roots, politicians will be doing their societies much harm if they insist on trying to hold back the clock of scientific and technological advancement. One way in which this is done is by crippling the private sector with irrational and excessive taxation and the creation of artificial social distortions that negate personal initiative and sow seeds of injustice and corruption at the work place (Nji, 1981 ; 1992).

f) Risk and Uncertainty

Innovativeness and risk-taking and management have a long standing relationship established in the social sciences. Farmers who are less innovative (laggards) also tend to be risk averse. But globalisation is a game that can be played only by risk-takers who are undaunted by uncertainty, propelled by the profit motive, and excited by the prospects of achievement by design and error. Unless people are prepared to transform their obstacles into challenges and opportunities for change, they will be excluded from the power sharing that takes place in the global market place.

Cameroon's development future is characterized by a disturbing quilt of uncertainty. Farmers are unsure of the sale of farm produce ; traders are uncertain of their profit margins especially if each roadblock on the highway is mounted by gun-tooting, money thirsty human speed brakes ; and consumers are unsure to put their stakes in uncertified products.

On September 29 1998, the author was entertained by a mop of moaning and groaning tax payers who queued up to declare their taxes at a local tax station in one of Cameroon's cities. The main complaint was about unannounced and ill-prepared recovery procedures and subjective implementation of the law on property taxes. Farmers and rural dwellers were the most disheartened. Frustration and anger stopped many from declaring their taxes. Property tax must be compensated by guarantees for the protection of property by the State. But taxpayers in Cameroon were not only taken aback by complex tax return forms, they were embarrassed that they cannot even claim a tax rebate on the repairs they carry out on their property. Worse still, they are being asked to pay tax for renting someone else's house !

Perhaps, this is Cameroon's own unique method of facing the challenges of globalisation. But the problem with

Cameron's the taxation technology is that it is not appropriate. There was no fiscal education, and the tax collectors were just as bullish as Texas cowboys in a rodeo ring.

Yet, we are reminded by the wisdom of social science that predictability in the mind of the consumer and a minimal measure of forecasting are critical to cushion the negative effects of unfamiliar and unpopular fiscal measures (World Bank, 1998).

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