

The Philosophy of Globalisation and African Culture

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Abstract

This paper examines two claims about the ontology of globalisation. First, it interrogates the claim that the contemporary phenomenon of globalisation is underpinned by the theoretical construct of economic and information-epistemic determinism (*EI-ED*), which has been developmentally significant in the North. The paper contends that this claim is likely to propagate some values that ought not to undergird the end-state vision of the prospective global village (*PGV*) if the *PGV* is to be essentially conjunctive rather than essentially disjunctive. Second, the paper contends that if a cohesive and egalitarian *PGV* is truly the end-point of the philosophy of globalisation, then the African socio-cultural values of a relational understanding of the self and universal brotherhood ought to be globally recognised and emphasised by the North as fundamental to the realisation of the vision of the *PGV*. The paper seeks to illustrate that if properly applied to the globalising process, these cultural values are ontologically conjunctive in the sense that they have the potential to promote the building of a cohesive and egalitarian global village, since they tend to encourage acceptance and co-operation among the different peoples of the world.

Keywords

Africa, culture, determinism, globalisation, philosophy

Introduction

Volumes in academia and outside of it have attempted to examine the ontology and trajectories of the globalisation phenomenon. Some of these works have systematically attempted an extensive examination of the concept of globalisation (see Sklair 1999; Scholte 2002), while others have reflected on the multiplicity of practical dimensions of the phenomenon of globalisation (see, for example, Chase-Dunn 1999, 190-193). Along the same lines, in this paper, I examine the ontology of globalisation. However, I wish to contribute to the discourse by offering a critical and systematic attempt to articulate and interrogate the philosophy of globalisation within the theoretical construct of economic and information-epistemic determinism (*EI-ED*). The problem is that the phenomenon of globalisation is theoretically underpinned, to a large extent, by *EI-ED*, which supports the global propagation of the values of the West such as an atomistic understanding of the self along with a contractualisation of human relations, all with their inherent divisiveness, thereby undercutting the evolution of a truly cohesive and egalitarian global village, which is the declared *telos* of the phenomenon, at least according to the dominant Western outlook. The thesis argued out here is that the establishment of a cohesive and egalitarian global village could only be realised to a significant degree if the two African cultural values of a relational understanding of the human person and universal brotherhood are globally developed. These values are here canvassed because they inherently encourage cohesion and egalitarianism among people, regardless of their cultural region(s) of origin.

In summary, three fundamental propositions frame the discussion that follows in this paper:

- (i) The end-state vision of globalisation is historically a systematic move towards the creation of a common world on a Western model and on a set of ontologically disjunctive values;
- (ii) The contemporary dominant discourse on globalisation is largely motivated by economic and information-epistemic determinism (*EI-ED*);

- (iii) The values currently being propagated for the realisation of the envisioned global village may be obstacles to the realisation of a cohesive and egalitarian global community.

I have divided the work into five sections. After this introductory Section, the next one focuses on the preliminary conceptual mapping; the third section critically examines the philosophy of globalisation through the theoretical construct of economic and information-epistemic determinism (*EI-ED*); the fourth section attempts an exploration of some values in Africa which may be fundamental to the realisation of the vision of globalisation as a move towards the emergence of a cohesive and egalitarian global village; the fifth section summarises and concludes the discourse.

Preliminary Conceptual Mapping

For reasons of intelligibility, certain concepts that frame the present discussion must be given some preliminary clarification here. The concepts are globalisation, economic and information-epistemic determinism, and culture.

Globalisation

According to Scholte (2002, 2), knowledge of globalisation is substantially a function of how the concept is defined. Thus, every study of globalisation should include a careful and critical examination of the term itself. According to Scholte (2002, 8-13), globalisation has been conceptualised in four major ways - internationalisation, liberalisation, universalisation and Westernisation:

- (a) *Internationalisation*: Globalisation refers to a growth of transactions and interdependence between countries. From this perspective, a more global world is one where more messages, ideas, merchandise, money, investments and people cross borders between national-state-territorial units (Scholte 2002, 8).
- (b) *Liberalisation*: globalisation denotes a process of removing officially imposed restrictions on movements of resources between countries in order to form an “open” and “borderless” world economy. On this understanding, globalisation occurs as authorities reduce or abolish

regulatory measures such as trade barriers, foreign-exchange restrictions, capital controls, and visa requirements (Scholte 2002, 10).

- (c) *Universalisation*: globalisation, according to this conceptualisation, is a process of dispersing various objects and experiences to people in all parts of the world. From this perspective, “global” means “worldwide” and “everywhere”. Hence there is a “globalisation” of business suits, curry dinners, Barbie dolls, anti-terrorism legislation, and so on. Frequently, globalisation as universalisation is assumed to entail homogenisation of worldwide cultural, economic, legal and political systems (Scholte 2002, 11).
- (d) *Westernisation*: globalisation in the sense of Westernisation is regarded as a particular type of universalisation, one in which the social structures of modernity (capitalism, industrialism, rationalism, urbanism, etc.) are spread the world over, destroying pre-existent cultures and local self-determination in the process. Globalisation understood in this way is often interpreted as colonisation and Americanisation - a form of “westoxification” typified by the imperialism of American products such as McDonald’s and CNN (Scholte 2002, 12).

It is worth noting that none of the four conceptions of globalisation above is yet committed to a verifiable claim that the present world has actually become a global village. Thus, one could deduce that globalisation as a concept and as a phenomenon is still in a state of becoming.

Therefore, in the present work, I examine the leading conceptions of globalisation using a two-level analysis: the ontological level (that is, the level of what it is that constitutes each understanding) and the end-state level (that is, the ultimate goal [*telos*] of the phenomenon of globalisation).

On the first level of analysis, one could argue that the first conception of globalisation is inherently global - spatially reductive for emphasising on the growth of transactions and interdependence of states, and by the shortening of distance separating them. The concept of globalisation is spatially rendered here because, according to Scholte (2005, 3), the term “globality” resonates with

“spatiality”. The second emphasises on the economic through the entrenchment of the neo-liberal policy of free trade across borders, thereby reinforcing the first one, given that free trade up-scales the degree of economic (and, perhaps, other) transactions among states. The third understanding stresses the homogenisation of values of peoples across the globe, be they cultural, economic, legal or political, and this emphasis also makes it consistent with the first and second definitions: just as the second understanding provides an economic support for the first, it also grounds the third conception, given that free flow of economic capital and goods among states would also encourage and deepen the free interaction of other human values. The fourth is Western value-biased: it is expressive of the propagation of Western values to the rest of the world, and is coextensive with the first three conceptions (especially with the second one, since liberalisation is an economic value in the Western world), given that it clearly states what the earlier conceptions simply imply. Specifically, I argue that the propagation of these values that I describe as disjunctive is a second-order effect of globalisation, the reason being that it is a necessary output of both the (b) and (d) interpretations of globalisation above.

On the second level of analysis, one could argue that each of the four conceptions of globalisation above is a systematic attempt to articulate a given end-state vision of the world, that is, a global village. The first conception expresses this vision by noting the present increased transactions and trading, through the shortening of distance separating states; the second approaches the vision from the angle of a unified world economy; the third lends its support to the vision through homogenisation of values across state borders; the fourth supports the vision in a peculiarly Western way, that is, by spreading Western values to the rest of the world. To begin with, the vision of a global village is a morally laudable enterprise, given that it would promote and protect the equal dignity of all the peoples of the world, wherever they may individually find themselves. It is a common sphere where divisive moral vices, such as ethnic cleansing, racism, sexism, and the like are discouraged, while the virtue of fellow-feeling is actively promoted in their national and transnational relations with one another (see Badru 2009, 27).

However, we need to exercise some caution: this vision may be vitiated in practice if the embedded values are disjunctive rather than conjunctive. For example, liberalisation is an economic outcropping of the liberal (political) philosophical principles of *freedom* and *equality*. However, liberalisation tends to favour those who have competitive, value-added products and services to offer more than those who are content with primary products. Some scholars have argued that liberalisation (just as other liberal economic principles such as privatisation and deregulation) have a tendency to be sectarian in the distribution of economic benefits and burdens. In the area of economic justice at the transnational level, Ethan Kapstein (2004, 82) states that "... if there is growing convergence among different schools of thought (*the communitarian model, the liberal internationalist model, and the cosmopolitan model*) with respect to where our policy attention ought to be focused, it is probably on the political structure of multilateral governance, which, ... privileges the interests of rich and powerful states and the business interests within them, and perhaps the elites in developing countries as well." Similarly, Dani Rodrik (2002, 24) notes: "Global economic rules are not written by Platonic rulers ... those who have power get more out of the system than those who do not." As such, it is evident that the equal dignity of all the peoples of the world is not equally promoted by the global rich.

Given the foregoing end-state analysis, globalisation could be metaphysically taken as a gradual process towards, using the language of Heraclitus, the unity of opposites - a systematic attempt to subsume *the many* under *the one*. In a simple sense, the opposites or the many are represented by the diversity of the cultures of the peoples of the world, while the unity or the one is represented by the vision of a global village where the diversity of the cultures are reconciled and harmonised. Similarly, Meurs *et al.* (2011, 12) note that the idea of globalisation implies a suggestion of a certain unity.

Economic and Information-Epistemic Determinism (EI-ED)

As one can readily see, the phrase "economic and information-epistemic determinism" is a lexical conjugation of two, though highly related, aspects - the economic viewpoint and the information-epistemic perspective. The central claim

of the economic angle is that the economic structure and organisation (the base) largely provides the foundation for the physical existence of the human person as well as the establishment, functioning and effectiveness of most of the other things that make his/her life pleasant and secure in society, such as legal, cultural, political and religious institutions (the superstructure). The thinking behind the foregoing is that this economic base largely determines what and how the human person becomes in society. In other words, the status of the human person in terms of the degree of richness or poverty is largely a function of the degree of accessibility or inaccessibility to the productive forces in the society. A person who has abundant access to the productive forces (land, labour, capital and organisation) in society is more likely to be richer, all things being equal, than his/her compeer without such access or with reduced access to such productive forces.

This theory of economic determinism is historically traced, according to some reading of it¹, to the socialist-communist philosophers of social development, Karl Marx (1818-1883) and his friend Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). According to Blackburn (2005, 35), the metaphor “base and superstructure” is used by Marx and Engels to characterise the relation between the economic organisation of society which is the base on the one hand, and the political, legal and cultural organisation and social consciousness of a society which is the superstructure on the other. *It is the sum- total of the relations of production of material life that “conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general”* (italics not in the original). For Resnick and Wolff (1982, 31), economic determinism refers to the position that “... economic aspects of the social totality determine its non-economic aspects.” Note that the adoption of economic determinism as part of the theoretical framework of the present work does not imply its flawlessness, since no human theory is infallible. Rather, I only make the modest claim that

¹ It is plausible to say “some reading of it” because other thinkers have argued that economic determinism could only be attributed to Marx and Engels on the basis of a selective reading of their works. According to them, a coherent reading of their works would not yield this position. Moreover, the point of economic determinism has been challenged by some (other) scholars. See, for example, Stephen A. Resnick and Richard Wolff (1982).

economic determinism, in conjunction with information-epistemic determinism, offers a powerful tool with which to explain globalisation.

The central claim of the information-epistemic angle, as used in this context, is two-fold. *First*, information is knowledge and knowledge is power, intrinsically and instrumentally: intrinsically, the mere awareness by *X* that *X* is better informed than *Y* is self-satisfying to *X*, even if all the resource of information were not to be used by *X*; instrumentally, *X* may deploy the resource of information to achieve some specific objectives or realise some goals in society in ways that *Y* could not possibly do. *Second*, given the first, an informed *X* is well-placed in fundamental ways above an uninformed *Y*. Inferentially, an informed *X* may always dominate an uninformed *Y* in their association and interaction. Note that the second part of the second claim necessarily derives from the first part of the second claim, which itself derives from the very first claim: if it is true that information-as-knowledge is superior to ignorance, then it follows that an informed/knowledgeable *X* would always dominate an uninformed *Y* to the extent of the information/knowledge base and capacity of *X*. Note that what determines the superiority of *X* to *Y* in this context is the fact of *X* having access to information-as-knowledge. Put slightly differently, the domination of *X* over *Y* consists in the fact that it is more likely for *X* than for *Y* to derive more from *his/her* interaction with the environment, and this is a function of *X*'s possession of information-as-knowledge which *Y* does not possess. Note also that information-as-knowledge is presently used to mean either one or a composite of the following three:

- (a) Received sensations that have been internally processed to become a resource, enriching the mental capacity of the human person to effectively and successfully interact with the environment;
- (b) The experiential output of the exercise of the reasoning faculty of the human person;
- (c) All the human-made means involved in the conversion of raw data to information as a resource, as well as all the human-made means of extending intelligible codes or symbols from a given source to a given target.

For simplicity, one could reiterate that the first of the tripartite understanding represents information as a mental resource with an experiential background (sensations received) and focus (environmental interaction); the second takes information as a concrete output of reason, while the third gives an instrumental idea of information - it is a means to an end. In the third account of information, it must be noted that the emphasis is not really on the instrumentality of the so-called means; rather, it is on the information-as-knowledge involved in making the means what they are. It is the information-as-knowledge that produces the means and their instrumental capacity. In short, the means are a product of information-as-knowledge.

An objector could point out that there is no clear-cut symmetry between “information” and “knowledge”, on the one hand, and “domination”, on the other. Nevertheless, this is easily dismissible. Comparably, the North has been better informed in almost every area of human discipline (sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities, etc.). This explains why there is usually a high migration flow from the South to the North academically, scientifically, among others. Obviously, societies in the North have transformed information into an epistemic architecture, enabling them to come up with first-rate medical technology, produce the best of computers, transport and military planes, ships, missiles, among others. Invariably, this epistemic architecture has been deployed to marginalise and dominate the rest of the world. This amply illustrates the symmetry between information-as-knowledge, on the one hand, and human domination, on the other.

In the present work, I adopt the theoretical aggregation of economic determinism and information-epistemic determinism, thereby arriving at *economic and information-epistemic determinism*, the reason being the natural synergy between the economic factor and the factor of information-as-knowledge. Socially, for economic forces to be effectively organised for productive processes, there must equally be proper information-input and information-outflow among them. For a simplistic example, a farmer with accurate knowledge of the weather, where to plant, what to plant there, how to plant it and in what proportions to plant it, is more likely to reap more benefit from his/her interaction with the land than

another who is devoid of such information. Therefore, the following verbal calculations obtain:

- (a) Labour + land + information = more economic returns; however,
- (b) Labour + land - information = less economic returns.

Using similar reasoning, the combination of extant experience and scholarly literature has amply and repeatedly demonstrated that the difference between material development and underdevelopment is largely a function of appropriate combination of information-as-knowledge with economic factors of production. States that have achieved this (such as the US, the UK and Japan) are at the top of the development ladder, while those that have not achieved this (such as many African and Asian countries) are at its lowest rung.

Moreover, biologically, information flow must be unimpeded for the human person to be active and economically productive. If the internal organs of the human body are cut off from one another in terms of information flow, the human organism would be biologically dysfunctional, leading to external problems for the human person in terms of physical inactivity, resulting in economic inefficiency. Therefore, at the level of the individual, economic mobility and productivity of human labour largely turn on his/her unhampered internal information flow and balance.

Culture

According to Li (2006, 9), the question “*What is culture?*” is both empirical and analytic in nature. To understand what culture is all about, we need to undertake some analytic examination of its constituent elements, explore some empirically-gathered historical data, and examine some competing conceptions of what culture is. Thus, Li (2006, 10) attempts to explicate the concept of culture from the angles of what she calls the classical school and the contemporary school. For her, the *classical school* views culture as a bounded entity - largely homogeneous, holistic, systematically structured, and time-insensitive; and it determines the destiny of the members of a population and the ways in which they think, feel, judge and behave. However, the *contemporary school* sees

culture as open and influenced from outside - if it has any borders at all, they are porous and fluid; it changes over time, often drastically; it is internally heterogeneous and dynamic; and it is its people, not culture itself, who are the agents capable of action and innovation.

However, neither of the conceptions of culture above is satisfactory: the classical school is too rigid to embrace the fact of dynamism which experience shows to be indispensable to the growth of cultures. For example, due to the cultural legacy of the colonialists, the mode of dressing of many contemporary Africans is markedly different from that of the pre-colonial era. Similarly, the all-inclusive posture of the contemporary school forecloses the fact that there are some aspects of human cultures that experience has equally shown to be time-insensitive. For instance, in spite of the cultural legacy of colonialism in contemporary Africa, the cosmology of a dualistic reality is still strongly held in Africa (see, for example, Teffo and Roux 2003). So also is the metaphysical belief in witchcraft. These beliefs are cultural constants in Africa - they are time-insensitive. Furthermore, the asymmetrically deterministic view of culture by the classical school fails to recognise the fact that human beings and culture are symmetrically deterministic - just as culture largely determines how the human person behaves, so also, through innovation, the human person determines the growth of culture.

Nevertheless, the strength of the two conceptions of culture lies in the fact that each of them avers a fundamental aspect that any adequate account of culture must have - persistence of core beliefs and values as well as innovative dynamism, respectively. These aspects may seem opposed, but experience and reason show that they are somehow co-extensive within all known human cultures. Thus, in the present context, culture is neither of the two accounts in isolation; rather, it is the synthesis of the two accounts.

Globalisation, Economic and Information-Epistemic Determinism, and the Inherent Problematic for the Envisioned Global Village

As I noted in the introductory section, I set out to advance and defend three fundamental propositions. Below I now undertake this task.

Proposition I: The West has always Made Systematic Attempts to Build a Common World on its Model and on Ontologically Disjunctive Values

These attempts have been manifested in several ages.

(a) The age of discovery and colonialism

The age of discovery, otherwise called the age of exploration, and the age of colonialism jointly marked a starting point in the search by Europeans for other lands beyond the geographical limits of Europe, and the search had two interrelated dimensions - the economic and the political. The economic dimension of the expedition manifested in the early 15th century through the 17th century when Europeans explored Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 broke European trade links by land with Asia, and this spurred many European explorers to seek alternative trade routes to other lands. The pioneering European nations in this exploration age were Portugal and Spain (Marc 1997). Moreover, as shown in the work of Kohn and Reddy (2022), many thinkers were divided on the issue of colonialism. Some justified colonialism (and colonisation) while others were against it (see Kohn and Reddy 2022).

The political dimension, represented by colonialism or imperialism, also came to the fore from the 15th to the mid 19th centuries when European nations (once again led by Portugal and Spain), including Britain, the Netherlands and France, extended their territorial boundaries to establish colonies in other lands beyond Europe, such as Africa, the Middle East, India and East Asia (Marc 1997). Thus, the quest for economic capital by the European nations for both domestic and international economic prosperity first constituted a drive for the European sea explorations of other lands. For instance, between 1750 and 1800, Britain extracted from India 150 million pounds in gold alone. Besides, while India had been a major producer of textiles and thus a competitor of Lancashire's growing cotton industry in Britain, Britain deliberately de-industrialised her and made her a provider of cheap food and raw materials to Britain (Ojeili *et al.* 2006, 20). Moreover, the desperation for political power to protect and consolidate their

economic reach into other lands contrary to the economic and political interests of those lands was a goad for the European powers to establish colonies abroad. Thus by 1880, 25 million square kilometres of the earth's surface was under the control of the big European colonial powers. However, by 1913, this control had extended to 53 million square kilometres (Ojeili *et al.* 2006, 22).

It is worth noting that the economic and political control by European powers over lands outside Europe, during the age of exploration and colonialism, fundamentally changed the moral, economic, political, cultural and intellectual courses of the peoples in the vanquished lands. Morally, the peoples of the colonies were treated as inferior human beings, and this inhumane treatment was morally justified by some European philosophers of note, such as Kant and Hegel (Makumba 2007, 37-43). Economically, the colonies were exploited to serve the interests of the European nations (Rodney 1981). The European nations superimposed their political ideas and values on the peoples of the colonies. Given that language is a veritable vehicle of cultural dissemination, the European powers systematically forced the peoples of the colonies to adopt European languages as their official languages during the colonial era, and the situation largely persists in Africa decades after independence. Intellectually, the colonialists infused the minds of the peoples of the colonies with concepts, principles and theories of scholarship developed in the West, which the peoples of the colonies passed on to subsequent generations, leading to a profound academic dependency of the Global South on the Global North to the present (Alatas 2008).

The foregoing facts constitute some of the externalist bases of the present problem of underdevelopment in the regions that bore the brunt of Western colonialism.

Some critics might argue that the contemporary status of underdevelopment in some regions outside Europe and the rest of the Western world might not be causally grounded in occurrences during the European age of exploration and colonialism. They might appeal to what could be called institutional determinism or institutional thesis, which states that social stability, growth and prosperity are largely a function of the quality of social institutions. Thus, according to this view, a state develops or fails to develop to the extent of the strength or weakness of its

institutions (See Risse 2005, 355). On this premise, the critics might advance the argument that bureaucratic and political corruption of leadership, coupled with general leadership inefficiency in those regions, largely explain their contemporary status of underdevelopment. However, the criticism grossly overlooks the way in which colonialism contributed to the current problem of underdevelopment of those regions, quite apart from the contemporary externalist dimension (of neo-colonialism) which still contributes to their underdevelopment (Nussbaum 2006; Pogge 1994, 213, 213-214; Pogge 2001, 61-62), and also beside the internalist dimension of corrupt, poor and inefficient leadership.

(b) The age of industrialisation

The age of industrialisation, which started in England, was from about 1760 to sometime between 1820 and 1840. It was marked by a transition from hand production methods to machines, new chemical manufacturing and iron production processes, improved efficiency in the utilisation of water power, the increasing use of steam power and development of machine tools, as well as the change from wood and other bio-fuels to coal. All these were positive aspects of industrialisation, although Nef (1943) noted some of its negative aspects. Nevertheless, the impact of the age of industrialisation on societies inside and outside Europe could be examined both from economic and political viewpoints.

Economically, industrialisation substituted machine production for hand production - the small-scale production of goods in private homes was supplanted by mass production in factories. This led to the mass movement of labour from the farm to the factory, from the countryside to the city, from agriculture to industry. In brief, it signalled the emergence of capitalism (Appadorai 1968, 231). However, what Appadorai (1968) does not state is that the age of industrialisation intensified the aggressiveness of European states in their quest for sources of raw material for their factories and markets for their excess manufactured products outside Europe.

Politically, the industrial age led to what has been termed the “scramble for Africa” - a tussle by European powers for the political control of Africa because of its vast resources. Thus, the age of European industrialisation deepened the

Western domination of other lands, a process which had been started by European states during the age of exploration and colonialism. It is noteworthy that the geopolitics of the European states then focused on the physical occupation of other lands. This was to later give way to the Western aspiration for informational occupation and domination of the globe in the contemporary epoch - the post-industrial age.

Proposition II: The theoretical framework of economic and information-epistemic determinism could largely explain the globalising process in the contemporary era

It needs no serious argumentation to aver that the contemporary world - the post-European industrial age - is characterised by the outburst of information and communication technology (ICT). For Hoven and Weckert (2008, 1), one of the most important features of information technology (IT) today is its ubiquity. Computers can be programmed to perform a large variety of tasks - route information packets on the Internet, simulate hurricanes, make music, and instruct robots, among others. They can be adapted to many different devices and put to a large variety of uses - they allow us to work online, shop online, relax by playing computer games interactively with people from all over the world, get our news, study for our degrees, and find most of the information that we require. In short, ICT enables human beings to advance and deepen their knowledge. However, the undeniable functional values of ICT such as efficiency, co-ordination, speed, reliability, ease of use, and so on do not eliminate the fact that it also embraces and propagates the values of its designers or their societies, and these may or may not have anything to do with the functional values. As such, my argument is that the economic, which is, liberal capitalism, has been a fundamental value to the development and promotion of other values in the West. To promote and sustain this economic value against any counter thinking and practice, it is imperative to replicate it along with correlative Western values in other parts of the world, ultimately building a global village on a Western model. To successfully achieve this global replication without physical occupation as was the case during the age of discovery and the age of colonialism, the instrumentality of information as knowledge becomes pertinent. Meurs *et al.* (2011, 18) argue that a critical

understanding of the contemporary form of globalisation should be nothing other than this combination of the dis-covering of the world and the expansion of a neoliberal ideology. What matters is the deep interwovenness of the expansion of the liberal world with the encompassing of the world. It is in this way that globalisation has to be understood - it is not just the *globe* that becomes globalised, but it is a *certain* globe that is being globalised. Today, this globe is undeniably neoliberal, modernist, and arguably maybe even Western. Meurs *et al.* (2011, 19) somewhat temper their position shortly after when they argue that the world has not become Western as such; but they cannot but still aver that the Western and capitalist discourse does lie at the basis of the anonymous system that today has come to penetrate every segment of the world. In this sense, Meurs *et al.* (2011, 19) agree with the French philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy (2002), that the crucial point of globalisation is a connection between the evolution of capitalism and the capitalisation of the views of the world. It is noteworthy that the positions of Meurs *et al.* (2011) and Jean-Luc Nancy (2002) do not essentially depart from the ontological analysis of globalisation that I earlier presented in my conceptual mapping. Also noteworthy is the fact that the West has largely succeeded so far, according to Odukoya (2002, 5), quoting Samir Amin, because of its monopolies over technology, financial markets, access to the planet's natural resources, mass media, and weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, it is a truism to state that those who have access to these resources invariably have *power over* those who do not. One could readily see that only the last of the monopolies is not, at least in the direct sense, ontologically economic and informational. This now brings us to the values saliently promoted from the West in the present world.

Proposition III: The Dominant Western Values in the Contemporary World may not Achieve a Cohesive and Egalitarian End-State Vision of Globalisation

An incisive examination of the contemporary world shows that there are some values in the West that are being projected to the rest of the world with liberal capitalism. Perhaps, the popular ones are the conception of the self as unencumbered and the contractualisation of human relations. This Western conception of the self goes back to the Enlightenment philosophers such as

Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Immanuel Kant.. Nevertheless, the epistemic basis of this ontology of the self goes back to the French philosopher, Rene Descartes (see Badru 2009, 28-30). Put simply, Western philosophy is dominated by a view of the self as ontologically unconnected to the other - self-atomism - except in some legally defined areas where human relations are contractual, that the self always reserves the right to enter and exit as it deems fit. In the contractualisation of human relations, the parties involved only relate with one another on the basis of formal proposal and consent, and their correlative rights and duties to each other are also viewed in the same way. In the absence of this set-up, no relationship exists, and the claim of rights and duties does not arise.

Apart from the Western conception of the individual from the Enlightenment philosophy which could be referred to as ontological atomism, the West takes the self to be the receptacle of knowledge, be it through reason (the position of the rationalists) or sense-experience (the position of the empiricists) - a view which can be referred to as epistemic atomism. The summation of the two positions, namely, ontological atomism and epistemic atomism, is echoed by Rene Descartes, when he states that in order to arrive at an epistemic base that is beyond any sceptic attack, one must start from the knowledge of the self (see Badru 2009, 30). This epistemic view of the self could also be said to have been earlier expressed in the Protagorean dictum that “*man is the measure of all things*”. Since knowledge is, by inference, included in “all things”, and “man is the measure of all things”, it follows that it is the human person who solely determines, apart from other things, what is knowable and unknowable.

The economic atomism of the self is traced to the British empiricist and political philosopher, John Locke. For him, God gave the earth and its fruits to humankind as a common possession. Labour is the origin and justification of, and confers value on, private property. Locke states that private property arises when individuals “mix their labour” with what God has provided. In fact, Locke argues that it is because the human person carries property in himself/herself that whatever to which he adds his/her labour becomes his/her’s (see Adams and Dyson 2007, 59). Note that Locke is significantly concerned with the economic *being* of the self in his/her interaction with the external environment, making this

the economic basis of whatever input the self could possibly make to general community development.

If one considers the analysis above within the context of the end-state vision of a global village, it becomes evident that the Western values of the atomic self and the contractualisation of human relations may not lead to the realisation of the vision. The end-state vision of a global village, in the normative sense, prescribes a conscientious promotion of a relational understanding of the person - a conception that promotes the intrinsic value of the self-other complementarity, making the self to see self-other relations not only in contractual terms, but rather as ontologically binding relations that extend beyond the level of contractual contacts. It is this thinking of ontological relationality which has the potential to bind the peoples of the world together, since, if they were to adopt it, they would see themselves as brothers and sisters rather than as strangers who are only inhabiting the world together. This can ultimately lead to a realisation of the end-state vision of a cohesive and egalitarian global village. However, it is not clear whether or not the Western values discussed above can promote this ontological relationality. This is because an atomistic view of the self makes the individual see the other as “separate from” rather than “connected to” him/her. Besides, the contractualisation of human relations reduces human beings to objects of formality who believe that they have moral obligations only to those to whom they are formally connected. Clearly, such thinking is not likely to promote ontological relationality. What, then, are the values that could actually lead to the realisation of the end-state vision of a global village?

African Culture, and an Idea of a Cohesive and Egalitarian Global Village

A true reconciliation and/or adequate harmonisation of diverse cultures is not yet a reality in the present world in which some cultures are regarded as “master cultures” while others are considered to be “inferior cultures”. Reconciliation and harmonisation in the ontological sense involve some egalitarian and normative recognition of the value of each culture, as well as the promotion of any cultural values with a bonding propensity whatever their origins. By egalitarian

recognition, we mean no culture is to be taken as superior to the others, while by normative recognition we mean (i) a conscientious commitment to the belief that every culture has some value to contribute to the general progress of humanity, and (ii) this value ought to be properly explored. However, since cultures evolve through human dynamism, reconciliation and harmonisation may only be a mirage if there is no coherent conception of the person that supports an ontological relationality between the self and the other. Where the self and the other see themselves as ontologically related, they would also see themselves as having the same moral worth, and would in turn see their cultures as having the same worth.

It is the foregoing reasoning which invariably leads us to a relational understanding of the person within the cosmology of the African people, as well as to the idea of universal brotherhood inherent in African cultures. These two notions form what we earlier referred to, in our conception of culture, as core cultural beliefs and values, in contrast to the area of cultural innovative dynamism. Thus, the interaction of the peoples of Africa with the outside world has not erased these core cultural beliefs and values.

That a relational understanding of the self is predominant in Africa is abundantly attested to in scholarship. According to Oguejiofor (2007, 12), quoting C. Okolo, "... the African is easily identifiable ontologically or as a being-in-the-African world. He is not just a being but a 'being with'." This ontology of personhood in Africa as "I-Thou" relatedness, according to Badru (2009, 31 citing Benjamin Ewelu 1999, 41), also figures in the Igbo-Nigerian context as brotherliness or *Obi nwa nne*: a person can arrive at the house of the other whom he/she regards as his/her *nwa nne* without any prior notice, with the confidence that he/she will not be turned away. Similarly, Kuckertz (1996, 62) emphasises that African thought appears to have greater ease of access to the relational existence of the self-hood of human beings without reducing them to mere products of any kind of collective or community.

The relational understanding of the self in African culture is further underscored by the value of universal brotherhood, that is, the brotherhood of all human beings within a global culture. According to Gyekye (2011), most foreign visitors to

Africa often testify, in amazement, to the ethic of hospitality and generosity of the African people. According to him, that ethic is an expression of the perception of our common humanity and universal brotherhood. Note here the practical, as against the merely theoretical, dimension of the idea of brotherhood, as attested to by even outsiders to the cultural environment.

The Philosophical Dimensions of the Relational Self

Before going further, we should note the cosmological, ontological, moral, epistemic and logical dimensions of the African concept of the relational self.

Cosmologically, the African concept of the relational self essentially takes the world as a composite of relations rather than as a mere collectivity of unencumbered selves. Ontologically, the being of the African concept of the relational self is understood in the extended sense, which means that it necessarily embraces within its fold of being-ness the being of the other, rather than in the restrictive (atomistic) sense which generally separates the being of one from that of the other. Thus, one could state that this extended account of being is more human-integrative than the restrictive (atomistic) account.

Morally, the African concept of the relational self, deriving from the ontological account presented above, necessarily brings the other within its fold of consideration of moral community. In other words, this understanding of the self takes it as a moral duty to work towards the well-being of the other in society (and this also obtains in the converse). This moral duty is positive in that it enjoins the self to actually take concrete steps to promote the well-being of the other, and negative in its requirement that the self refrains from taking steps that could jeopardise the well-being of the other.

Epistemically, the African concept of the relational self refuses to arrogate epistemic superiority to the self against the other, and is instead committed to the belief that the other is as knowledgeable as the self. In short, the relational self is committed to what one could take as epistemic egalitarianism between the self and

the other (see Badru 2018). This epistemic orientation is of cardinal value in a world that is conscientiously working towards true human unity.

Logically, the African concept of the relational self takes rationality as intrinsic to the functionality of both the self and the other rather than the sole preserve of either the self or the other. Thus, it inverts and precludes the racist belief that some groups of people are more rationally developed, more logically-minded, than others.

Consequently, in the context of the globalisation discourse, the relational account of the self, coupled with the value of universal brotherhood, have a high propensity, if conscientiously globally cultivated, to ultimately lead to the realisation of the end-state vision of an egalitarian global village, since the two have an essentially bonding feature. It is noteworthy that I do not advance these values because they have a particular origin as the critics might be quick to point out, but rather due to their intrinsic value - the value they have in themselves and which we would appreciate if we truly understood what they are - and their instrumental value, which is their bonding feature which is desperately needed to bring the various peoples of the globe together in order to practically appreciate their ontological oneness. In much the same way, I am sceptical about the potential of the Western values discussed earlier to promote the ultimate realisation of the end-state vision of an egalitarian global village simply because of their nature rather than due to their origin from a given region of the world.

Two objections might be raised at this point. *First*, one might claim that the ‘relational self’ is not yet a globally accepted understanding of the self. *Second*, given the first, to advance the values of the relational self, as I have done here, is simply to replace (without argument) a Western ideal with an African one. However, these objections can be easily dismissed.

First, the ideal of a ‘relational self’ (critically considered) could lead to a more robust sense of respect and cohesion in human relations than an atomistic one which separates and privileges the interests of the self over that of the other. Perhaps, many of the interaction problems we have experienced among human

beings such as slavery, colonialism and racism could be attributed to the atomistic conception of the self: when I take the other as not ontologically connected to me, I can do just about anything to him/her. For example, I can look down on him/her as inferior, and this can occasion other ills from me to him/her. However, if I think that the other is ontologically connected to me, I might not be so readily disposed to ill-treat him/her. *Second*, given the first point, an ontologically relational conception of the self has a high propensity to create a more morally egalitarian global village in the final analysis.

Realising the values of the relational self and universal brotherhood

In order to globally realise the values of the African concept of the relational self, and ultimately build an essentially conjunctive, rather than disjunctive global village (as we experience now), there are at least two moral duties binding on all territorially disparate human stakeholders (both individual and institutional).

First, at the intra-state level of citizen-foreigner relations, every citizen of a state ought to take a foreigner resident in the state as a brother, and this ought to be reciprocated by the foreigner. Moreover, the spirit of relationality ought to define the domestic policies of every state, within the international system, in its interaction with the foreigner-other within the state. This is both a positive moral duty and negative moral duty. It is a positive moral duty when either the citizen or the foreigner within a state is committed to taking steps that promote interests that are morally justifiable in relation to one another. It becomes a negative moral duty when either the citizen or the foreigner within a state refrains from taking steps that could be injurious to the promotion of the interests of either party in their interaction with one another, all things considered.

Second, at the inter-state level of human relations, all human stakeholders ought to perceive and treat one another as brothers and sisters. As noted above, this is also both a positive and negative moral duty. It is a positive moral duty when all human stakeholders (understood as states) conscientiously formulate and diligently implement foreign policies, factually, but not factitiously, affirming that

all human beings are brothers and sisters despite the fact that they are nationally and territorially disparate - a separateness that is largely arbitrary from the point of view of justice (see Satz 1999, 67), just as the conditions we are born into are morally arbitrary (see, for example, Sangiovanni 2011). It is a negative moral duty when all human stakeholders (understood as states supported by transnational economic institutions) conscientiously refrain from making foreign policies that have the propensity to jeopardise the morally justifiable interests of other states, nations and individuals.

Conclusion

In the foregoing reflections, I have made an attempt to interrogate the phenomenon of globalisation in the contemporary post-European industrial age, observing that it is largely explainable within the theoretical framework of economic and information-epistemic determinism (EI-ED). I have noted that the globalising process has an ultimate, end-state vision of evolving a global village, but that the values associated with the West's conception of the self as unencumbered and its contractualisation of human relations, both of which are predominant in the contemporary world, are not likely to lead to the realisation of the vision because of their tendency towards competition rather than co-operation. Consequently, I have argued that a conscientious cultivation of a relational understanding of the self and the value of universal brotherhood have a better propensity to realise the end-state vision of an egalitarian global village because of their bonding feature.

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