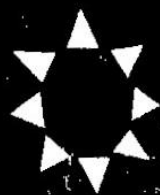


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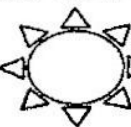
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Globalization and the Search for New Markets: Lessons from the Past.



David L. Imbua*
&
Winifred E. Akoda*

Abstract

This paper traces the phenomenon of globalization in historical perspective and argues that attempts at establishing global markets are a historical rather than spontaneous development. Globalization merely represents the culmination of the age-long capitalist search for the exploitation of the economic resources of the less developed nations of the globe. Using the capitalist sojourn in the Americas and Africa as case-studies, the paper portrays that a common index that runs through all previous attempts at integrating the societies and people of the world is exploitation. The local Amerindians were mercilessly exploited and Africans were savagely exploited. Unless we refuse to learn from history, the missionaries of globalization would find it impossible to convince the developing World that the emerging global village is devoid of inequalities and enslavement. The globalizing World, which is dominated by the descendants of the slave-owners and colonizers, has merely found in globalization the endorsement and propagation of recolonization through the sophistry of free trade language of the World trade organization. Relying on historical evidence, the paper submits that the linkages between colonization, the slave trade, and globalization leave no one in doubt that it is the same old wine in a unique new bottle. Globalization, in this analysis, is the consummation of that aspiration of several centuries ago to dominate, exploit, and compel Africa among other third World nations to open its borders and treasures to western capitalism. It is nothing more than the return to free maximally predatory international trade by 'unmixed' capitalist economy.

I: Introduction

This paper has two intertwined goals. The first is to examine the European early search for new opportunities outside of Europe, especially the politics of occupation and exploitation of the New World beginning from 1492. To this end, we shall anchor this segment of the discussion on the Treaty of

* David L. Imbua Department of History/International Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar – Nigeria

* Winifred E. Akoda, Department of History/International Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar – Nigeria

Tordesillas, which was intended to settle the great question of resource control in newly discovered American lands. Relying on the verdict of history and empirical data, the second part focuses on the African experience under the European beginning from the slave trade era through colonialism. Again, this segment of the discourse establishes a historical framework on which to build our understanding and analysis of the noised about globalization which has provoked inter-disciplinary controversy.

Globalization is deeply rooted in the past and represents the age-long manoeuvring by Western Europe and North America to monopolize world trade. To some commentators, "it is a cry to enable western Europe and North America engage in their high industrial and monopolistic competition with the 'yellow peril' at the expense of Africa, Latin America and developing Asian countries" (Toye,2004:37). The driving force behind globalization is that all countries of the world with viable markets must bow to capitalism and necessarily be lackeys of the USA to eke out a livelihood. In other words, the developed countries of Europe and America reap the fruits of globalization, while the third world countries bear its burden. Indeed, globalization has resulted in high social and political costs to the poor countries.

It is argued here that under development of the third world is directly linked to the extractive and exploitative effects of capitalism, and globalization on its part evokes memories of ugly experience of exploitation by the advanced and industrialized world. Attempts at establishing global markets are a historical and not spontaneous development. The analysis here compares globalization with its historical predecessors which prepared the enabling environment for its smooth take-off. The phenomenon becomes more worrisome and its goals more suspicious when it is realized that exploitation has not ceased. When globalization is unmasked a picture of subordination of the economy of the third world by the industrialized nations will emerge. A relationship of unequal exchange has been part of the industrialized world in its imperial sojourn.

III: The New World Experience of European Search for New Opportunities

Before European voyages of "discovery", what came to be known as the "New World" was a land of relative obscurity to the Europeans who were going to be dragged into a fratricidal struggle over the resources of the area after 1492. Though punctuated by several hamlets and empires at various stages of civilization, the Americas was not regarded by the Europeans as occupied by people with any stable political structure or with any inalienable rights of possession. Exploration was normally taken in hand under the

auspices of one or other of the western Littorine states, which gradually asserted and consolidated their claims as well as sovereignty on such American land as it could effectively profess to occupy and exploit.

From about 1492, competition for the resources of the New World was mainly between the Spaniard and Portuguese (Delpar, 1974:585). The desire by both of these catholic nations to have dominance over the area often resulted in a hectic struggle which was only remedied by the intervention of the Papacy. It was this process of dialogue on the terms of exploiting the riches of the New World that culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Tordesillas. The treaty was an agreement drawn up by Pope Alexander VI and signed by the monarchs of Spain and Portugal. In this diplomacy, the world outside of Europe was divided in exclusive duopoly zones of influence between the Spaniards and the Portuguese. The Tordesillas' diplomacy gave the entire New World to Spain and Africa and India to Portugal (<http://infoplease.com/ceb/Aistony/A084975.html>). The extent and configuration of the territories acquired by both countries were very imperfectly known at the time and this fomented discord for the future as new sites of wealth called for new negotiations.

Once an area was agreed as belonging to either of the nations, the nation consolidated its hold with speed and determination. It was known in Europe that the newly found lands would yield wealth and opportunity for the beneficiaries of the Treaty. The commercial empires were reported to be greater and vaster than anything known in the 'Old World'. True to fact, much silver was extracted from the New World and this enabled the Spanish and Portuguese kings to sustain their wars and diplomacies in Europe. The catholic Clergy who were the advisers and ministers of kings benefited tremendously from the wealth that was generated from the New World gold mines (Delpar, 1974:121). In Spain particularly, much of the treasure was squandered by devout catholic king, Charles, in a futile effort to stem the tide of Protestantism then sweeping through Spain's holdings in Germany and the Netherlands. Encouraged by the resources from the New World, Charles, and later Philip II, with the Pope's backing vowed not to spare their "dominions, friends, body, blood, life or soul" in the fight against heresy (Dresner, 1973:11).

The wealth that reached Spain and Portugal from the New world created tension in Europe as other European nations, including France, England and the Netherlands, who saw the prosperity and well-being of their nations equally tied up with the ability to control New World resources challenged openly the duopoly of exploitation. Economic considerations made it extremely difficult to convince the challengers that their quest of exploration

and search for new opportunities was curtailed by a conspiracy between Spain and Portugal on the one hand and the Pope on the other. These nations with a high feeling of oppression considered the Popes as creatures of their age, politicians and worldly men with worldly interests (Peter, 1979:134). Based on this perception, the authority of the papal Bulls lost influence, especially among those nations like England, which had broken with Catholicism and set up their protestant Reformed Churches.

The challenging nations were bent on the acquisition of markets and productive sites in the New World. Francis I of France for instance considered the treaty of Tordesillas null and void if there was no substantial evidence to prove that Adam bequeaths the earth and its treasures to Spain and Portugal. In 1515, Francis wrote a scathing letter to the king of Spain saying:

Show me, I pray you, the will of our father, Adam that I may see if he has really made you and the king of Portugal his universal Heirs (Quinn, 1978:139).

Treaty or no treaty, Francis declared that he would break the unjust and aggravating duopoly over exploration, trade and treasure in the New World. The fury of the Challengers was on the increase based on the stories of Spanish and Portuguese progress in the Americas. In 1581, an expedition led by the Spanish Juan de Grijalva had explored the Mexican coast from Yucatan to what is now Veracruz and came back with stories about a fabulously wealthy people living somewhere in the interior. Within the next three years, Hernando Cortes, discovery and conquest of the Aztec, which contained the gold and silver Spain had dreamt of confirmed the stories of Grijalva's expedition. In even greater proportion was the magnificent hoard of gold and silver uncovered by Francisco Pizarro in Peru in 1532 (Dresner, 1973 37). The conquistadores report also increased tension in Europe. They reported that:

We believe this land to be the richest in the world in stones of great values; of which many samples were brought back...we do not know what more to say to these people, because even discounting much of what was seen it is scarcely believable (Hordern, 1971:162).

Spain and Portugal were encouraged by the Pope to resist attempt of encroachment by other European nations. In the circumstance the challengers who had already crossed the Rubicon resorted to piracy. Attacks were carried out by various pirates – the French Buccaneers, Elizabethan seadogs and Dutch beggars of the sea. Records reveal that:

As early as 1532 part of the treasure taken by Cortes in his conquest of Mexico was sized by French Privateers off the Azores. In 1537 French privateers sacked a number of the Spanish French in Hispaniola, destroyed shipping, and captured part of the treasure fleet....In 1543 Santa Marta on the Spanish main was plundered; between 1533 and 1555 the French ravaged the coast of Puerto Rico and Hispaniola, and finished by plundering and burning Havana (Hussey, 1966: 87-88)

Also in 1526, a French corsair, Jean Fleury, had commandeered some of Cortes' treasure ships in mid-Atlantic and sailed them home to his own king. Likewise in 1586, a single French Buccaneer demanded and received a large sum of protection money from the Spanish port of Havana. Spanish ports and treasure ships were considered fair game to buccaneers (Hillman, 1971:9).

Apart from the French, English and Dutch pirates had equally begun waylaying gold-laden Spanish galleons on their way back to Spain despite official Spanish protest. Indeed, the English and Dutch challenge against Spain and Portugal was formidable. The claims and argument presented by Spain and Portugal could not reverse the trend to piracy and toward the end of the 1600s the French and English Buccaneers operating in the West Indies raided Spanish shipping and colonial possession with impunity (Gilbert, 1971:96). The Dutch East Indian Company founded in 1602 challenged the Spanish and Portuguese duopoly and was able to register Dutch presence. Hussey's study reveals that:

In 1602 the Dutch defeated a large Portuguese fleet off Bantam in Java, where they soon established a trading station. The spice Island of Amboina, Ternate and Banda welcomed the Dutch who they regarded as deliverers from the cruelty and the religious intolerance of the Portuguese; trading concessions were granted and some of them like Amboina and Ternate placed themselves under Dutch protection (Hussey, 90-91).

It is worthy of note that the challengers who found consolation in piracy increasingly preferred to get crushed in the new lands of abundant wealth than to helplessly see Spain and Portugal swelling their treasures at their own expense. This resolution found encouragement in the natives (often mercilessly exploited) of these regions that were not consulted about the assignment of their resources to Spain and Portugal. Extant literatures indicate that the natives were living in abject poverty in the midst of plenty and desired an end to the exploration of their resources. This explains in part why the spice islands of Amboina, Ternate and Banda welcomed the Dutch as deliverers from the cruelty they went through under the Portuguese. In the course of the seventeenth century, England, Netherlands and France became empire – makers in the Americas from where they got vital raw materials. The Dutch for instance carried a pair of scales and ledger in search of new

markets and trade routes and were able to establish trading posts as well as conducted sea-borne trade on a global scale (Gilbert, 86).

IV: The African Experience of European Global Interest

The attempts by the Europeans to maximally exploit the resources of the New World resulted in the incorporation of Africa into a globalised economic system controlled by imperialist forces. The Catholic Church that had played a major role in the occupation of the New World also influenced the enslavement of non-Christians to ensure the profitable exploitation of its resources (Uya, 1992:91) to the advantage of those who regarded it as the final arbiter in matters of global concern. Africans were regarded “crucial for the exploitation of the enormous natural resources of the Americas which made the Europeans colonization enterprises in those Amerindian lands attractive and profitable” (Uya, 2003:11). As slaves, Africans worked for the economic benefits of a ruling class that was too sophisticated to degrade itself with work. This scheme was meant to, and actually generated poverty and backwardness which globalization aspires to sustain in Africa.

In essence the earliest commercial relationship between Africa and Europe involved plunder (of slaves and wealth) and export of capitalist manufactures abroad. This subverted and impeded the development of Africa. The race for slaves, as Dumont has put it, arrested development in every society that experienced it. Slavery involved the carting away of able-bodied men and women, who constituted the active sector of the population. As Walter Rodney points out; “the massive loss to the African labour force was made more critical because it was composed of able-bodied men and women (Rodney, 1990:105). Again, slaves were got through warfare, trickery, banditry, kidnapping among other means that made the people restless and most often abandoned their areas. This resulted in a situation in which people in fear and speculation left no room for inventiveness (Offiong, 1980:94).

As with globalization, the slave trade did little to advance the technology of those that were involved in it (Ryder, 2000:245). Even more devastating is O.E.Uya’s assertion that the slave trade was a major factor in the collapse of major African states (Uya, 1992::55). The articles for which slaves were exchanged did nothing to positively impact on African economy. While the slave trade contributed immensely to the development of Europe, Africa became a victim of underdevelopment. In the Americas the slaves who were mercilessly exploited from dawn to dusk produced profits running into multi-billions from the cotton, sugar, rice tobacco, hemp, gold, coal and lumber their labor created (Williams, 1966:18). In a related argument, O. E.Uya insists that:

As farmlands and plantation workers, miners ranchers, in-keepers, tailors, pear/ divers, carpenters, barbers, body guards, teamsters, masons, blacksmiths, artisans and domestics, Black slaves participated in the creation of the wealth of that formed the basis of European Economic transformation in the 18th a and nineteenth centuries (11).

It is no longer being argued that through the slave trade and slavery, Europeans and Americans made huge profits and produced enormous raw materials that made industrialization possible. Once industrialization was achieved, emphasis shifted to the search in Africa for raw materials and viable markets for industrially produced goods that were in excess of demand in Europe. This search culminated in colonization which fettered and hampered development in Africa.

There is a growing emphasis that any measure of development that was embarked upon by the colonizers in Africa was in reality aimed at underdevelopment. In Nigeria for instance, the construction of roads and railways was meant to facilitate the evacuation of the resources of the area. The rail routes were designed to pass through areas like Kaduna, Jos, Enugu, Aba, Port Harcourt which has great potential for agriculture and mining. This was also true of medical facilities which were meant to keep the people fit for the interests of the colonizers. This explains why as late as 1915 an official report could show that 51 percent of children in the Northern Region of Nigeria “died before they were six, while 70 percent of all children admitted to the hospital in the Eastern Region were found to be suffering from malnutrition” (Offiong, 1980:103). Malnutrition could not be avoided since the people were compelled to produce cash crops for the global economy at the expense of food crops.

All now agree that the colonial state moderated and directly participated in the economic exploitation and impoverishment of Africa. Africans had to pay high taxes and received low wages. The Enugu coal miner for example earned far less than Scottish or German coalminers would earn (Ekereke & Ekpe, 2002:107). Expatriate companies had exclusive control over trade, transportation, shipping and banking in order to ease the expatriation of resources. They in turn sold their manufactured goods at exorbitant prices. Rather than bugging ourselves with the familiar under developing policies, it should be stated concisely that while Africa was being devastated, pillaged and its development stunted, Europe was the beneficiary. Walter Rodney captures the picture graphically when he argues that the development of Europe is part of the dialectical process in which Africa was underdeveloped. Colonialism in his view, “was not merely a system of exploitation, but one whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profits to the so-called mother country” (Rodney, 1990:162). The interest of the colonial administration

could not walk hand in gloves with the indigenous interest. The indigenous interest was compelled into submission and like George Padmore argued “the black man certainty has to pay dear for carrying the white man’s burden”. The Arusha Declaration expressed one of the deepest truths of colonial experience in Africa when it stated that:

*We have been oppressed a great deal,
We have been exploited a great deal,
And we have been disregarded a great deal.*

The story has remained fundamentally the same many years after independence since neo-colonialism inhibits the accumulation and re-investment of capital by indigenous entrepreneurs who lack the resources necessary to compete with vertically integrated multinational corporations (Chinweizu, 1978:38) that have in reality come to accomplish whatever slave trade and colonialism failed to do in the underdevelopment of Africa as a member of the global village of inequalities and injustices.

Y: Globalization Akin to Colonialism

Recently, Dr. B.C. Yusuf joined those who see globalization as a very uneven process with unequal distribution of benefits and losses. Denouncing globalization, he described it as the Western countries devices to achieve domination over the rest of the world and maintained further that globalization is a by-product of capitalism which is akin to colonialism. In his own assessment, “While the colonizers kept themselves in power on the basis of their power, the forces behind globalization held on to power through their control of finance, trade, politics, media and advancement in science and technology” (See New Age, Wednesday, August 24, 2005, p.6). More than this, the attempt to achieve complete domination of the developing countries, two leading institutions (international monetary Fund and World Bank) Champion the market deregulation crusade. The developing nations whose well being has systematically been tied up with global institutions must implement whatever policy is prescribed for them or face threats of sanctions among other punitive measures that will compel them into opening their borders for the free flow of capital. The IMF and World Bank are not the right places to look, to see the essence of globalization. These ‘missionaries’ are out to enforce globalization against opposition since they want the market to be as large as possible.

In historical perspective, the Western world has often been driven by the need for economic gain in their imperial sojourn. True to fact, the Tordesillas project accomplished for its beneficiaries what the Berlin Conference was to achieve for European powers in the course of history. Though several factors necessitated the Tordesillas and Berlin diplomacies, economics consideration

attracted priority. Britain, France and Germany felt the need for market for their manufactured goods and raw materials for their machines. Bismarck, the Chancellor of Germany (1871 – 1890) hit the nail on the head when he said “colonies would mean the wining of new markets for German industry, the expansion of trade and a new field for German activity, Civilization and capital” (Anene Ed, 1977:14). Jules Ferry, the French premier who evinced great interest in colonization, struck the same note. According to him,

Colonial policy is the offspring of industrial policy... European consumption is saturated. It is necessary to raise new masses of consumers in other parts of the globe else we shall put modern society into bankruptcy and prepare for the dawn of the 20th century a cataclysmic social liquidation which one cannot calculate the consequence (Anene 14).

Allusions from the foregoing strongly suggest that the nearest fulfilling explanation for the current emphasis on globalization by Western capitalists and imperialists is the need for new markets and the search for areas of profitable investment. A close examination of the internal dynamics of globalization shows that it is:

...a Western (Euro-American) driven market based process designed to ensure that developing countries have the physical infrastructures necessary to facilitate their integration into the global economy with the main objective of exploiting their abundant natural resources, cheap labour and markets by Western corporations (Uya, 2004:37).

All agree that globalization is more or less the manufacture and global sale of industrial goods by countries that are technologically capable of doing so. Countries with abysmally low level of technology are doomed to perpetually bear the ugly scars of this parasitic economic arrangement. Globalization is undoubtedly, the endorsement and propagation of recolonization through the sophistry of the free trade language of the World Trade organization (Toyo, 2004:57). The hypocritical claim that Multinational Corporations are the major sources of foreign capital to the underdeveloped world is more metaphoric than real. The activities of Multinational corporations in the developing world remind one of a man who prepared a meal for a blind man. As soon as observers turned their back to propagate the news of his generosity, this seeming Good Samaritan went back to snatch the pot of soup and spoon from the blind man for himself. Rather than develop labour intensive technology for poor countries, the global giants export and repatriate capital intensive and labour saving technology.

The cardinal point is that the launching of western capitalists into other lands has over the years been associated with profit maximation. The resurgence of the need for tropical markets following the pressure of over-production and the concrete attempts at finding new outlet for the surplus goods of the West is responsible for the global noises about globalization. A common index that runs

through all attempts at consolidating globalization is exploitation. As demonstrated above, the local Amerindians were mercilessly exploited, Africans were savagely exploited. The attempts by globalization referees to stylishly encourage the poor regions to accept globalization on the persuasion that it will profit them maximally become highly questionable when it is realized that European launch to other lands was abinitio conceived in deceit and exploitation.

There is no falsity therefore in asserting that globalization is doing for the 21st century what colonization did for the earlier centuries in different parts of the world. Like in all previous economic conspiracies, the apostles of globalization argue that it is both beneficial and evitable. The lesson from the past shows clearly that it is meant to silence decolonizers and keep the developing world a perpetual importer of results of the latest inventions of the developed nations. Globalization has not given the developing world any signal to be optimistic about the future. Understandably, the emerging global village is one of inequalities and this engenders fear and hopes. True, economic globalization has widened the chasm between rich and poor. Kofi Annan supported this line of reasoning when he pointed out recently that "the international community...allows nearly 3 billion people-almost half of all humanity-to subsist on \$2 or less a day in a world of unprecedented wealth".

An erudite economist, Joseph Stiglitz lends credence to this skepticism of globalization. In his own words:

Globalisation is not helping many poor countries. Incomes are not rising in much of the world and adoption of market based policies, such as open capital markets, free trade and privatization is making developing countries less stable, not more.

Our World, which in the words of Okon Uya is still "dominated economically and politically by the descendants of the slave owners" and by extension colonizers is poised to enhance capital accumulation for the domineering powers of the globe while at the same time bring about economic domination and exploitation upon its less privilege citizens. There is an alarming rate of impoverisation of the developing countries, especially African countries resulting from the policies of economic globalization which to a large extent may be considered as the closest cousin of the slave trade and slavery which as international enterprises locked Africa, Europe and the Americas into an unbroken global network in which Africa lost while Europe and the Americas gained (Uya, 2003:35-36). It is glaring that African countries are still in desperate need of the apparatuses necessary to facilitate their integration into the global economy on equal footing and are, once more being condemned to having their resources, labour and consumers exploited by Euro-American Corporation (Uya, 2003:37).

The linkages between the slave trade, colonization and globalization leave no one in doubt that it is the same old wine in a unique new bottle. Slavery and colonization enhanced the maximum exploitation of the slave and colony respectively for the economic well being of the master. It is argued in some quarters that it was the industrialization of Britain that rendered the slave trade irrelevant. Africans had to remain in Africa to play the dual role of feeding the British industries with her enormous raw materials and patronising the finished products that exceeded what the Europeans needed. In more sense than one, globalization is the consummation of that aspiration of several decades ago to dominate, exploit, oppress and compel Africa among other developing nations to open its borders and treasures to Western capitalists.

Conclusion

All in all, we are led by the foregoing analysis to the conclusion that the current emphasis on globalization merely represents the culmination of the age-long capitalists search for the exploitation of the economic resources of the less developed nations of the globe. Undoubtedly, the seed of capitalism and imperialism so visibly displayed in the much noised about globalization are rooted in the distant past. The Europeans relentlessly exploited the enormous natural resources of the New World without any meaningful compensation to the aborigines who suffered neglect and deprivation.

We are compelled by evidence from the past to agree with Eskor Toyo that "Globalisation is the return to free maximally predatory international trade by the 'unmixed' capitalist economy". The launching of globalization according to him, was partly occasioned by the rise of very large transnational firms in the USA, Western Europe and Japan, since globalization is nothing more than a cry by the World Trade Organization to get all nations to practice free trade and open capital and financial markets in favor of giant transnational in imperialist countries with a conspiracy to frustrate independent industrialization in other countries that can compete with them (Eskor.Toyo, 2004:37).

The third world ties with the western world are replete with features of exploitation, domination and control whose gains accrue to the exploiter at the expense of the exploited. The colonial pattern of trade in the New World and Africa in which colonies exported raw materials and colonial master countries specialized in providing industrial products has continued in the main to the present. The world trading system since the 1500s have been favouring the exporters of manufactured goods, while proving disadvantageous to the exporters of raw materials and importers of finished products. We end this paper in Bond's view:

The interactions between industrialized democracies and between them and the developing state, which result in the principal negotiated allocations of values in the international political economy, have thus far been

institutionalized in ways favourable to the large advance open polities and their transnational enterprises (Boyd, 1981:387-388).

There is therefore every reason to be sceptical with a globalization that is not ensuring economic educational and social security for all nations of the world.

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