

GLOBALIZATION AND THE EMERGING WORLD ORDER: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Abstract

Globalization has reshaped the world order, presenting both opportunities and challenges for Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. This article examines the implications of globalization on SSA nations, exploring the impact on economic development, cultural identity, and political sovereignty. We analyze the benefits of globalization, including increased access to global markets, technology, and investment, as well as the drawbacks, such as cultural homogenization, economic dependency, exploitation and economic inequality of developing countries especially Sub-Saharan African countries, etc. The article also discusses the emerging world order, characterized by shifting power dynamics, rising nationalism and growing multi-polarity. We argue that SSA countries must navigate these complexities to harness the benefits of globalization while mitigating its negative consequences. The article concludes by highlighting the need for SSA countries to develop strategic policies that promote economic diversification, cultural preservation and regional cooperation, ultimately enhancing their position in the global economy. By understanding the implications of globalization and the emerging world order, SSA countries can better navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, fostering sustainable development and consequently improving the lives of their citizens.

Keywords:

Globalization; World Order; BRICS; Sub-Saharan African

(i). Introduction

There is a generally shared opinion that the world is changing, but considerable dispute about how it is changing. Commentators on local, national, regional and global issues have variously located this change in a 'power shift' from West to east, a trade in superpower status between the United States and China or a transition from an era of bipolarity to one of unipolarity, multipolarity or even non-polarity (Buzan & Lawson, 2023).

With such inevitable change being experienced, what effects would this unavoidable change have on the advancement or underdevelopment of Sub-Saharan Africa, and what steps should be taken to ensure that the region's nations are not exploited as they are in the current Western orchestrated world order?

Since gaining independence from colonial domination in the 1960s, Africa has had a dismal and underwhelming growth and development. Capital and resource flows and mobilization, as well as trade patterns reveal crucial weakness of African economies that undermine its growth and prospect (Sundaram, Schwank & Von Arnin, 2011).

(ii). Conceptual Clarifications:

(a) Globalization

Globalization is a socio-economic phenomenon that encompasses numerous aspects. Its definition is not a singular, universally accepted concept that can be applied to all situations (Belete, 2024). The term "globalization" refers to a variety of cross-border changes in labour, capital, commodities, and services that result in a transnational character. Due to its widespread impact on contemporary societies, globalization has emerged as a crucial element of the current world. Globalization also promotes the cross-border exchange of related lifestyles, ideas, preferences; cultures and even values (Hosamani & Hosamani, 2024). There are several ways to define globalization. In Alli, Winter and May (2007), the term globalization was described as the interaction between economies, technologies and politics. They contend that it fosters an atmosphere that lessens government control over the market, giving big, multinational firms a more powerful position.

Globalization can also be defined as a historical process driven by technological factors such as the development of computers and the internet, which reduce the distance between people in terms of space and time (Oluwagbade & Ibidapo, 2024). Globalization is a comprehensive term for the emergence of global society in which economic, political, environmental, and cultural events in one part of the world quickly come to have significance for the people in other parts of the world. It is also used to describe the growing worldwide integration of the people and countries (Oluwagbade & Ibidapo, 2024). Globalization encompasses the diffusion of ideas, practice and technologies from one part of the globe to another. It cuts across the entire spectrum of academic thinking, as it is being defined differently by different scholars (Ocloo, Akaba & Worwui-Brown, 2014). For example, Gaither (2022) defined globalization as the process of interaction and integration among people, businesses, and government all over the world. Such integration and interaction have been made possible due to the advancement in information and communication technology, resulting in an intensified social, political, economic and cultural relationship among countries, globally.

(b) World Order

The establishment of diplomatic ties and the future forms of the European "Great Powers" system in the 16th century marked the beginning of the international order as a system of relations and ideas about the fundamentals that should guide relations between states and the rest of the world. The prototype of legal principles of international relation system emerged as a result of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia which finished the devastating thirty years war in Central Europe (Grinin, 2016). It should be noted that the term "world order" is occasionally employed in both analytical and prescriptive contexts. Both applications are crucial for understanding the realities of international politics. Analytically speaking, world order is the configuration of power and authority that establishes the parameters for conducting international politics and diplomacy.

Prescriptively, world order refers to a preferred arrangement of power and authority that is associated with the realization of such values as peace, economic growth and equity, human rights and environmental quality and sustainability (Falk, 2024). Scholars have not been able to agree on what the word "world order" means since its origin. Thornton (2014) assert that realist scholars tend to conceptualize world order as a system of states in which the distribution of hard power creates various types of orders such as multipolar, bipolar or unipolar. Marxist academics and international political economy typically associate the global capitalist economy with world order.

In general, realists, international political economists and Marxist scholars see the world order as an arrangement of actors such as great powers or economic classes (Thornton, 2014). However, liberals, constructivists, and globalists believe that nations and dominant classes are not the only participants in the process of creating the international order. Various transnational institutions, norms and values transcend borders and continuously shape world politics (Thornton, 2014).

Aka (2001) defined it as a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the international community. "It is a set of norms for global conduct at a specific historical moment". More specifically, a world order is a collective security arrangement in which great powers develop common expectations about the rules for their behaviour (Aka, 2001). The 'Global Order' on the other hand, refers to the international system of rule-making, decision-making and compliance embodied primarily by, but not restricted to, the (UNSC) United Nations Security Council (Murithi, 2017).

(iii). Statement of the Problem

The process of globalization has led to an increased economic, political, social, and cultural interconnectedness among countries on a global scale (Ocloo, Akaba & Worwui-Brown, 2014). This has resulted in a profound shift in the global economy, making developing nations even more reliant on the actions of the world's wealthy nations.

For many, this intensified interconnection has not actually brought about the desired outcome for many countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The prevalence of abject poverty, rise of global religious militancy, political instability, resurgence of military coups in the sub-region of West Africa, the loss of western colonies to rivals in the opposing bloc and global environmental degradation point towards a global order

that has failed to meet the expectations of many nations of the world, especially in the Global South, and specifically, the Sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa has had a very poor growth record since obtaining independence from colonial domination in the 1960s. The economies of many African nations were expanding more quickly than those of other developing nations during the first decade of their independence. However, the continent's economy suffered a severe setback in the late 1970s, which caused them to stagnate and retreat throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Africa's role in global economy is largely responsible for this economic backwardness, expressed most visibly in insufficient resource mobilization and capital formation and the continent's lopsided trade relations (Sundaram, Schwank & von Arnin, 2011).

In consideration of the economic woes experienced by Sub-Saharan countries under the contemporary western orchestrated and exploitative world order as well as the inevitable formation of a new global order, comprising several big players based on multi-polarity, what are the implications for Sub-Saharan countries in the emergent world order. Are Sub-Saharan countries going to be faced with the same exploitative mechanisms prevalent in the current world order? Would African countries' membership in organizations such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have any significant influence on the growth and development of Sub-Saharan Africa? In order to determine if third-world nations, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa, would be able to play a crucial role by becoming relevant in the new world order by overcoming their previous economic difficulties, this article will adequately address the aforementioned issues.

(iv). Objectives of the Study

This paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

- (i). To ascertain if Sub-Saharan countries are likely to experience same exploitative mechanisms they are currently facing in the emerging world order.
- (ii). To determine if Sub-Saharan countries' membership of an organization such as BRICS would have any significant impact on the growth and development of Sub-Saharan African countries.
- (iii). To determine the problems of globalization that Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to face in the emerging world order.

(v). The Contemporary World Order

The United States had by far the largest national economy in terms of GDP and one of the most prosperous in terms of average income for the majority of the second half of the 20th century. It exercised political primacy in the non-communist world, using its position to a liberal, market-based economic order (Wade, 2011). The understanding of the past is necessary in order to comprehend the modern reality.

The contemporary world order seemed so troubled. Since Russia annexation of Crimea, analysts wrote about the collapse of international order, a tendency that was reinforced by the proliferation of failed states and refugee crisis in the Middle East, Brexit, the election of President Donald J. Trump and other

populists, the rise of Chinese power and consequent increased rivalry between Washington and Beijing, resulting in a worsening climate (Blackwill & Wright, 2020).

The post-Cold War world order was overthrown by two events in the last ten years. The first was a string of rulings by powerful nations that deviated from the consensus on enforcement and restrictions that dominated the 1990s. Second, the significant shifts in global affairs—technical, economic, and environmental—that resulted in problems that the post-Cold War world order was unable to resolve (Blackwill & Wright, 2020).

After World War II, a new order was created that was very different from the one that had existed before. First of all, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic were the only two powerful nations. In other words, two military blocs—NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization—made the world bipolar. Second, it had ideological underpinnings that the prior global system did not. However, as new nations enter the global arena, the new global order appears to be taking on a multipolar dimension (Grinin, Ilyin, & Andreev, 2016).

It should be noted that the former bipolar order was broken by the fall of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Bloc, which paved the way for the creation of the unipolar world. The ideas developed in the new world order that began in the late 1980s were representative of the beliefs in the absolute domination of western economies, institutions and ideas and became almost synonymous with the idea of Pax Americana (Grinin, Ilyin, & Andreev, 2016).

(vi). The Emerging World Order

According to Sorge (2023), as the world continue to fracture into different blocs, a new world

order is in the making. This is in tandem with the view of Khan (2023) that rightly posits that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has exposed and upended assumptions and the conventional wisdom about the international order, where the prime motivation for states should be conforming to the dictates of neoliberalism, an imperial war for territorial expansion is unthinkable. Russian invasion of Ukraine has confirmed the weakening, if not the gradual collapse of the liberal international order led by the US and its allies. Additionally, the inexorable rise of China and its illiberal ethos has left students of global order in a precarious position. They can see the existing order recedes with clarity, but they cannot see with even a modicum of certainty what will replace it in the near and long-term future (Khan, 2023).

According to Yilmaz (2008), the conclusion of the Cold War affected international relations in two ways. It made major strides in ending a number of Third World conflicts that had grown protracted during the Cold War and permitted the democratization of numerous nation-states that had previously been governed by Marxist dictatorships. However, a number of significant conflicts that had been comparatively dormant during the Cold War began to resurface or erupt after the fall of the Soviet Union. Aside from ethno-political disputes, there have been additional dangers to the global order that are, in fact, outside the complete authority of superpowers, including the US. The most prominent ones include fierce rivalry for limited resources, terrorism, North-South conflict, and militancy.

Hence, the end of the Cold War can be said to have brought both stability and instability to international relations (Yilmaz, 2008). Since nations may believe that the current international order is insufficient to address the demands of post-Cold War states, this is undoubtedly a prerequisite for the creation of a world order.

As an emergent China and a resurgent Russia continue to strengthen their ties with countries of the Global South, especially with emerging economies, the balance of global economic power seems to be shifting (Grinin, Ilyin & Andreev, 2016). Presently, in the wake of Russian-Ukrainian crisis, the liberal world order that had assembled Post-World War II is facing multiple challenges. While the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been criticized for lack of reforms and misuse of veto powers, global trade and financial institutes are repeatedly facing financial crisis like 2008 sub-prime crisis, rise in protectionism and the more recent Covid-19 pandemic. These instances in the contemporary world point towards altercation in the existing Rules Based world order (Visionias, 2023).

(vii). BRICS, Sub-Saharan Africa and the New World Order

BRICS is an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, a bloc of countries that formed a partnership with respect to their rapid economic growth with the aim to create greater economic and geopolitical integration and coordination among member states (Kenny, 2025). BRICS, no doubt, is considered an integral part of the emerging world order, considering the fact that its membership and global influence are likely to expand considerably, judging from the indication of many countries' willingness to joining the group. Several scholars have already examined the extent to which BRICS has resulted in a radical turn in development or has reinforced neoliberal trends. A more specific debate has focused on whether BRICS and individual countries within the bloc act as agents of imperialism or a new form of imperialism or chart a new path of cooperation (Chisholm & Chissale, 2024). Acting as a counterweight to imperial powers such as US, BRICS has effectively accommodated imperialism re-legitimated neo-liberalism. It has also ensured regional geopolitical stability in areas suffering severe tensions and advanced the broader agenda of globalized neoliberalism, so as to legitimately deepened market access (Chisholm & Chissale, 2024).

Numerous discussions and disputes along geostrategic, geoeconomic, and geopolitical aspects have been fueled by the rise of BRICS in the international system. Since the group's founding, the sociopolitical and economic choices made by its members have had a significant influence on the political and economic landscapes of both established and developing nations. BRICS has emerged as a crucial African ally in continental and international affairs, as seen by the development of Sino-African ties, the Russian-African cooperation, and the expanding trade power of Brazil and India in Africa and beyond.

The existing relationship between African countries and BRICS over the last few years has gathered significant momentum and headlines. This can be attributed to the growing influence of BRICS members in Africa alongside multibillion dollars investment, trade partnerships, infrastructural loans, foreign direct investment and diplomatic relationships (Yemisi, 2024).

On the other hand, could the emerging world order usher in another round of the 'scramble for Sub-Saharan Africa? This is in consideration of the fact that Russian influence has been gaining ground across Africa in recent years, placing the continent at a crux of the growing geopolitical context between the

Kremlin and the White House. US officials say Russia's efforts to develop a 'multipolar' world order, its deployment of disinformation and its use of mercenaries have undermined democratic stability and driven conflicts on the continent. Russian economic and military involvement in Africa still pales in comparison to that of both China and the West. Yet, amid the upheavals of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, some African governments, such as South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, are moving closer to Moscow (Ferragamo, 2023).

(viii). Impact of Globalization on Sub-Saharan Africa.

The implication of the contemporary world order for Africa can be viewed from the effect of globalization on the development of Sub-Saharan Africa, since globalization is a facet of the contemporary world order. Africa's growth performance since gaining independence from colonial rules in the 1960s has been quite disappointing. Africa, at least in the first decade of independence was growing faster than other developing countries in the world. However, the late 1970s dramatically set back the continent and led to stagnation and regression through the 1980s and 1990s. For many scholars, Africa's role in the global economy is largely responsible for this (Sundaram, Schwank & von Arnim, 2011). Between 1970 and 2000, real income growth failed to keep pace with population growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. After posting a modest average annual growth rate in real capita income of about 0.76% during the 1970s, these rates turned negative during the 1980s and 1990s, falling to 1% and 0.56% respectively (Sundaram, Schwank & von Arnim, 2011).

Wondim and Chang (2024) further assert that Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, has encountered impediments to economic progress exacerbated by globalization, amplifying existing disparities. They also opined that despite globalization's emphasis on interconnectedness, it often disregards distributional inequities, perpetuating global inequalities and that is how globalization has affected economic growth in certain developing nations. Theories like Wallerstein's World Systems Theory underscore the enduring inequality between developed and developing regions (Wondim & Chang, 2024).

As opined by Ibrahim (2013), the process of globalization has negative impact on the development of Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in the political sphere, the most important consequence is the erosion of sovereignty, especially on economic and financial matters, as a result of the imposition of models, strategies and policies of development on African countries by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Globalization does not facilitate the establishment of economic conditions necessary for genuine democracy and good governance to take solid roots and thrive. Economically, globalization has, on the whole reinforced economic marginalization of African economies and their dependence on few primary goods for which demand and prices are externally determined. This has in turn, accentuated poverty and economic inequality as well as the ability of vast number of Africans to participate meaningfully in the social and political life of their countries (Ibrahim, 2013).

(ix). Emerging World Order: Implication for Sub-Saharan Africa

According to Anekwe and Oddih (2020), the new world order is often seen as a way or means through which the security challenges of the Third World are noted after the collapse of the old order. This paper is of the opinion that the African Union has not been slumbering but it is still limited by domineering influence of the West. This domineering influence of the west over Sub-Saharan Africa can be considered

a threat to the region's actual development and sovereignty, as western liberalization policies, as instituted by the Bretton Woods' institutions have actually not brought about the desired growth and development. Another threat to peace in the post-Cold War era is the rising of religious militancy that has become a menace in Africa, especially the Sahel region where several religious groups now operate (Yilmaz, 2008).

Even though Africa is endowed with a wealth of resources, it has been caught up in a never-ending cycle of conflict, poverty, political unrest, and problems with transparency and governance.

Combined, these issues have compounded Africa's development and increased her dependence on former colonial powers, thus, limiting Africa's say in the global world order (Mlambo, Enaifoghe, Zubane & Mlambo, 2021). The structure of the new international order does not indicate the existence of a dominant state that can function as a formidable economic and military force. Additionally, major nations like China, India, Russia, and the United States are not working together. They never have the same perspective on the world system, much less their own home ones. The US and a number of western European nations are currently pursuing a revolutionary foreign policy, which poses the greatest threat to the stability of the international order. The underlying domestic order of the main nations will not be reflected in the new international order for the first time.

If the current unfolding internal order in the West requires expansion in addition to recognition, as was the case in revolutionary France, Bolshevik Russia or Nazi Germany, the future will be very alarming by being nostalgic negatively (Bordachev, 2022).

(x). Conclusion

It is clear from the research reviewed thus far that Sub-Saharan African nations' future in the new global order appears to lie on a delicate balance between their interests and the exploitative ambitions of rival global powers.

The continued increase in Africa's exploitation in a sky-rocketing manner over the years has hindered the desire to project the continent in the international system and the actions of the global powers in Sub-Saharan Africa are likely to intensify this exploitation at the expense of Sub-Saharan Africa. Considering that the contemporary world order has not actually brought about the much desired development for Sub-Saharan African, thus, African leaders, in an attempt at assisting in tearing down the current unipolar world order, should ensure to create a niche for their respective countries, so as to be in a position to dictate or at least, have a say in dictating favourable terms of trade and agreements or else left to be further exploited in the emerging world order, similarly to their current experiences under the world capitalist order. Furthermore, globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa will tend to further affect the sovereignty of African countries, reducing their capacity to control their societies, both actively and reactively. It also becomes evident that there is the likelihood of sub-Saharan Africa being turned into another ideological battlefield between the competing great powers and this is considered unhealthy for the continent's development. Many African states have lurched from crisis to crisis since attaining independence from their colonial masters and there is the tendency that Sub-Saharan Africa are also likely to experience similar crisis in the emerging world order, emanating from the fallout for the new scramble for African countries by the competing global powers.

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