

Democracy and development in the age of globalisation: Tensions and contradictions in the context of specific African challenges¹

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1 INTRODUCTION

In 1993 the World Conference on Human Rights adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which proclaimed, *inter alia*, that “democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.”² Whereas this interdependence is possible and indeed desirable, the statement tends to ignore the contradictions and challenges posed by the relationship between these ideals and one of the leading characteristics of the contemporary world – globalisation. The relationship between globalisation and democracy is quite complex. So, too, is the relationship between globalisation and development. Moreover, the structural and institutional changes associated with globalisation have a significant impact on the protection of human rights, particularly in the developing world. Nowhere is this complex relationship more prominent than on the African continent. This is due to the unique circumstances and peculiar challenges that African countries have faced in the past and will continue to face in the foreseeable future.

Besides reflecting on the impact of globalisation on development and democratisation, this article explores the various contradictions that arise out of the relationship between these concepts. It also highlights the challenges that underlie and further complicate this relationship in the specific context of African countries. Any meaningful discussion of these relationships and the attendant contradictions and challenges, however, requires a clear understanding of the relevant concepts. In view of the central focus of this article, it is not only appropriate but also necessary to begin by defining the key concepts. This is not an easy task, considering the

¹ The original version of this paper was presented at the Asia Association of Global Studies (AAGS) Conference on Globalization and Human Rights in the Developing World, University of Calgary, Canada, 21–22 March 2009.

² Article 8 *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* (A/CONF.157/23) at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b39ec.html> (accessed 26 May 2010).

diversity of interpretations of the terms “globalisation”, “development” and “democracy”. Nevertheless, it is to conceptual issues that we first turn our attention.

2 CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

2.1 Globalisation

There are numerous definitions of the term “globalisation”. Many of these definitions and descriptions, however, relate to economic globalisation, which is often seen as the main thrust of the concept. Globalisation has, for instance, been defined as “a process of integrating economic decision-making ... a process of creating a global market place in which, increasingly, all nations are forced to participate.”³ It has also been described as “an ever increasing integration of national economies into the global economy through trade and investment rules and privatisation, aided by technological advances.”⁴

It is submitted that globalisation is a much more complex process “with intrinsic, technological, economical, social and political components”⁵. As such, Brysk’s definition of globalisation as “the growing interpenetration of states, markets, communication, and ideas across borders”⁶ is more acceptable. Even more appropriate is the definition by Stiglitz, who sees globalisation as “the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world...the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flow of goods, services, capital, knowledge”.⁷

A simplified form of the above definitions is offered by Giddens, who sees globalisation as a consequence of modernisation and defines it as the “intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.”⁸ This definition gives resonance to other related terms that are increasingly gaining popular usage, such as the global village, the global economy, global society and global citizenship. It also echoes Wangwe and Musonda’s definition of

³ Kwanashie M “The concept and process of globalization” quoted in NS Okogbule, “Globalization, economic sovereignty and African development: From principles to realities”, (2008) 25(1) *Journal of Third World Studies* 215.

⁴ Adejo A M “The roots of globalization: A historical review” (2001) 1(1) *Journal of Globalization and International Studies* 4.

⁵ Assefa T, Rugumamu S M & Ahmed A G M, *Globalization, democracy and development in Africa: Challenges and prospects* (2001) iii.

⁶ Brysk A (ed) *Globalization and human rights* (2002) 1.

⁷ Stiglitz J *Globalization and its discontents* (2002) 18.

⁸ Giddens A *The consequences of modernity* (1990) 64.

globalisation as the “rapidly increasing complex interactions between societies, cultures, institutions and individuals worldwide.”⁹

2.2 Development

As mentioned earlier, definitions of development are quite diverse. Some conceptions emphasise economic development in terms of the growth of national productive capabilities. Others, however, focus on development in terms of human capabilities. For example, Amartya Sen sees development as freedom and argues that it is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.¹⁰ He contrasts development as a human freedom with what he calls “narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in the personal incomes, or with industrialisation, or with technological advance, or with social modernization.”¹¹ According to Sen, therefore, development entails the removal of things that deprive people of freedom, such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, social deprivation, neglect of public facilities, intolerance and repressive governance.

The foregoing conception of development is indeed consistent with the definition provided by the 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, which defines development as

“a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting there from.”¹²

2.3 Democracy

Over the years, democracy has been subjected to various competing definitions and interpretations. This is mainly because philosophers and policy makers sometimes chose to adopt definitions of democracy that they hoped would influence public opinion and solve their problems of the time.¹³ It is also because no government

⁹ Wangwe S M & Musonda F M “Local perspectives on globalization: The economic domain” in Semboja J, Mwapachu J & Jansen E (eds) *Local perspectives on globalization: The African case* (2002) 57.

¹⁰ See Sen A *Development as freedom* (1999) 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² See the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (GA Resolution 41/128 of 04 December 1986) at <http://www.un-documents.net/a41r128.htm> (accessed 26 May 2010).

¹³ See Ambrose B O *Democratization and the protection of human rights in Africa* (1995) 16.

wanted to be labelled undemocratic.¹⁴ Eventually a rather simplistic definition of democracy, as “government of the people, by the people and for the people” was advanced, initially by US President Lincoln in 1863 and subsequently embraced by Western scholars.¹⁵ Thus, according to Thomson, democracy literally means “rule by people”.¹⁶ Many other commentators have defined democracy along those lines.

Brendalyn Ambrose, for example, defines democracy as “a system of governance which allows people to freely elect their leaders and hold them accountable, and which provides opportunity for the greater number of people to use their human potential to survive in dignity.”¹⁷ This definition is echoed by David Held, who sees democracy as “a form of government in which, in contradiction to monarchies and aristocracies, the people rule.”¹⁸ These are all broad definitions, of course. Samuel Huntington defines democracy in a narrower political perspective. According to him, a political system is democratic “to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote.”¹⁹ A narrow conception of democracy, therefore, limits it to the procedures by which the people select their leaders whereas a broader interpretation sees it as a political system which allows the people to control public decision-making on an ongoing basis.

It is important to note that, whether broad or narrow, most if not all definitions of democracy have “people” as a focal point. As such, in a democratic society, leaders (or rulers) should be chosen by the people, they should be accountable to the people and they should act in the interest of, and on behalf of, the people. In a more holistic sense, democracy includes the respect of the rights of the people and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all people. The question, however, is: who are “the people” envisaged in the definition of the concept of democracy? Which people should participate in and benefit from the democratic process? Should the concept of democracy and its benefits be confined only to citizens of a particular state or be extended to non-citizens?

These questions are critical in the context of the relationship between democracy and globalisation. In South Africa, for example, although the preamble to the Constitution states categorically that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, political rights (including the right to vote) are confined to citizens.²⁰ This type of

¹⁴ Akokpari J K “Meeting the challenge of sustainable democracy” in Assefa T, Rugumamu S M and Ahmed A G M *Globalization, democracy and development in Africa: Challenges and prospects* (2001) 84.

¹⁵ Ambrose (n 13) 16.

¹⁶ Thomson A *An introduction to African politics* (2000) 216.

¹⁷ Ambrose (n 13).

¹⁸ Held D *Models of Democracy* (1987) 2.

¹⁹ Akokpari (n 14) 84.

²⁰ See s 19, Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

political exclusion is not unique to South Africa, as many other countries have similar provisions in their constitutions. It is submitted that the right to engage in the political processes of a state, and therefore the right to be among “the people” envisaged in the concept of democracy, should not be confined to citizens only. It should, democratically speaking, be enjoyed by all those who are “subject to the jurisdiction of the state, its courts and its laws.”²¹

3 TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

The implications and impact of globalisation have been widely discussed and debated. Many of the debates have concentrated on the positive contribution made by globalisation to economic growth and development, on the one hand, and the impoverishment and devastation caused by globalisation to poorer countries on the other. Such debates have therefore focused on the economic dimensions of globalisation, largely due to the fact that globalisation is often erroneously conceived in economic terms.

While the world is striving for democracy and development, however, there is also a growing realisation that globalisation is here to stay. What follows is not an extension of the debate on the pros and cons of globalisation but an attempt to highlight the tensions and contradictions that arise in the inevitable relationship between globalisation, democracy and development, particularly in the context of the African continent.

3.1 Globalisation and democracy

To begin with, it could be argued that globalisation has a tendency to narrow the scope of democracy.²² One of the inevitable consequences of globalisation in developing countries is the rearrangement of social classes by the creation of a dominant capitalist class. When this happens, the sphere of private decision-making expands at the expense of public decision-making. This is a result of the increase in capital’s influence over governments and decision-makers. This narrowing of democracy is particularly worrisome in Africa, where problems of social inequality are more severe and social-economic disparities more prevalent.

How globalisation affects the state is another important indicator of the tension between globalisation and democracy. It has been argued that the widespread disengagement of the state from economic activity (as a result of globalisation) has

²¹ Le Roux W “Migration, street democracy and expatriate voting rights” (2009) 24(2) *SA Public Law* 393.

²² See Zeleza P T & McConnaughay P J *Human rights, the rule of law and development in Africa* (2004) 98-101.

made the state a victim of globalisation.²³ From this perspective, “globalization has undercut the conventional national economic as well as political authority of the state”.²⁴ The other side of this argument is that globalisation has elevated economic issues into prominence at the expense of democratic concerns. For instance, “government’s important foreign policy decisions are informed more by economic than political considerations.”²⁵ As a result, a situation emerges where “both the state and democratic forces are losing effective control over decision-making”.²⁶

A significant tension between globalisation and democracy is what could be referred to as globalised dependency. Africa’s growing dependency on Western patronage is well-known. This patronage has a disastrous impact on democracy and governance. Because most of their revenue is generated through such patronage, many African countries are more accountable to Western donor countries than to their own people. An example is often given of Uganda which, having achieved important advances in terms of poverty alleviation and HIV policies, is considered to be an “effective reformer” and is a recipient of generous international aid packages.²⁷ But, it has been pointed out, “the fact that the Uganda government today depends on donors for 53% of its revenue has clear implications for governance because ultimately the Ugandan government is more answerable to donors than to its citizens.”²⁸ The tension between globalisation and democracy here is inescapable. The total lack of democracy in Uganda today is testimony to that.

It was mentioned earlier that democracy includes respect for human rights. A discussion of the tensions between globalisation and democracy would therefore be incomplete if it did not incorporate human rights. In that regard the main question is whether globalisation enhances or inhibits the realisation of human rights, particularly in the African context.

In attempting an answer to that question, the broad definition of globalisation adopted earlier should be kept in mind. If, in terms of that conception, globalisation is seen as the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world, breaking down all barriers and leading to a freer flow of goods, services, capital and knowledge, one would assume that globalisation would bring prosperity to all corners of the globe and with it would come democracy, freedom and human rights. That unfortunately is not the case. The opposite is true. With globalisation, the world is experiencing unprecedented levels of conflict accompanied by gross violations of human rights. Africa is home to many of these conflicts, with human rights abuses often at the centre of such conflicts.

²³ Zeleka & McConaughay (n 22) 103.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Akokpari (n 14) 93

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Griffith P *Unbinding Africa: Making globalization work for good governance* (2003) xiii

²⁸ *Ibid.*

One of the effects of globalisation is that it has turned the world into a global market for goods and services produced and supplied by powerful transnational corporations and countries of the West. These are mainly driven by the maximisation of profit. It can therefore be said that while there is no doubt about the Western origin of human rights, it has been argued that the West will support the violation of those same human rights if such violation is deemed to be in the best interest of its global capitalist agenda.²⁹ In support of this argument Alamin Mazrui suggests that, since the Cold War, the Islamic world has come to be seen as the greatest threat to the West's neo-liberalist doctrine.³⁰ Mazrui gives the example of the acquiescence of the Western governments in the military coup that overthrew an elected government in Algeria in 1965 only because it was strongly Islamic in orientation.³¹ Indeed, while some argue that attributing some military coups in Africa to foreign intervention is nothing but a conspiracy theory by "bashers" of Western states, there are those who point to the well documented history of foreign governments in bringing down governments in countries such as Angola, Congo and Nigeria.³²

Moreover, Western countries are increasingly using their view of human rights as a yardstick for judging developing countries with regard to trade relations and extending development assistance.³³ As a result, "globalization intensifies impoverishment by increasing poverty, insecurity, fragmentation of society and this violates human rights and human dignity of millions of people."³⁴ In the African context, a clear example is Zimbabwe. That is not to say that Western governments are responsible for the violation of human rights and the widespread poverty in Zimbabwe and similar African countries. Indeed, the role of the governments in those countries in impoverishing their own people and the role of other factors beyond those people's control cannot be overemphasised. The point, however, is that globalisation tends to paint all developing countries with the same brush and see them through the same Western human rights lens. In so doing, many of those responsible for human rights violations get away with it while millions of helpless people bear the brunt of a world economic and political order created and governed by forces beyond their control.

An important contradiction between globalisation and human rights is illustrated by the highly political nature of the relationship between the two. There are some

²⁹ See Mazrui A M "Globalism and some linguistic dimensions of human rights in Africa" in Asefa T, Rugumamu S M and Ahmed A G M, *Globalization, democracy and development in Africa: Challenges and prospects* (2001) 55.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² See Ngoma N "Coups and coup attempts in Africa: Is there a missing link?" 2004 13(3) *Africa Security Review* 92.

³³ See Chunakara M G "Globalisation and Its Impact on Human Rights" at <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1559&c=1398> (accessed 28 May 2010).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

who argue that globalisation can have only negative social, political and economic effects and, as such, undermines human rights. This, according to Rhoda Howard-Hassman, is because people “are more likely to enjoy their human rights if they live in a locally, rather than globally-controlled environment.”³⁵ In the African context, this perhaps explains the untold suffering and gross violation of human rights associated with immigration, and human trafficking, both of which are rampant on the continent. It also explains why the worst forms of human rights abuses in Africa were occasioned by slave trade, colonisation and apartheid, all of which were a consequence of human movement into or out of Africa.

3.2 Globalisation and development

There are many who would argue vehemently in support of globalisation and its endless list of benefits. They may point to advances in communications and information technology, global economic integration, international movement of goods and services, technology transfer and increased international trade, to mention but a few. They may then conclude that globalisation has enhanced global competitiveness and revolutionised the world economy and, hence, is the best vehicle for development. Others, however, would disagree and point to the economic devastation and social instability associated with globalisation, particularly in developing countries. Therein lie the tension and contradiction between globalisation and development.

In order to understand this contradiction in Africa, it is important to see globalisation in the context of Africa’s history. Mulinge and Munyae, for example, have argued that globalisation is the third phase of colonisation, following on the second phase which was neo-colonisation.³⁶ They further argue that the goals of globalisation are diametrically opposed to the goals of development in that “the process of globalization is geared toward the entrenchment of the same forces, processes and structures that hampered the development of Africa under colonial rule.”³⁷ For them, what distinguishes “globalization as a form of economic imperialism from the old order (of the 19th and early 20th centuries) is that the colonial powers are no longer competing among themselves but working more or less in unison.”³⁸ Taken to its logical conclusion, the basis of this argument is that, just as there was no real development under colonialism, there is equally none under globalisation. Here, real development is seen in the context of the definition

³⁵ See Howard-Hassman R E “The second great transformation: Human rights leapfrogging in the era of globalization” 2005 (27) *Human Rights Quarterly* 16.

³⁶ See Mulinge M M & Munyae M M “Globalization and sustainable development in Africa” in Assefa T, Rugumamu S M & Ahmed A G M, *Globalization, democracy and development in Africa: Challenges and prospects* (2001) 102.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Mulinge & Munyae (n 36) 106.

given earlier: development that is not measured only in terms of quantitative economic growth but also in terms of its improvement of the lives and well-being of the people. Real development is one that helps to change the living conditions of the people rather than merely increasing the economic wealth of the country.

There is no doubt that globalisation has resulted in economic prosperity for developed countries. At the same time, however, it has intensified poverty, created unemployment and promoted social disintegration in the majority of developing countries. As a result, there are inevitable but perverse flows of human capital. Ademola Oyejide points out that skilled professionals tend to flow from developing to more developed countries, thus worsening the global distribution of human capital.³⁹ The consequence for developing countries is obvious. It is for that reason that the United Nations Development Programme pointed out in its 1999 Human Development Report that

“[r]apid technological change and globalization are transforming the world at unprecedented pace, but the benefits are going to the rich and strong rather than the weak and poor... The gap between the wealthy and poor is growing even larger”.⁴⁰

Mention was made earlier of Africa’s growing dependence on Western countries and the impact of such dependence on democracy and governance. It is submitted that dependence has even greater impact on development. In this context, dependence may be described as a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected.⁴¹ What this means is that due to unequal power and economic relations, the structure of the dependent economy is shaped more by the requirements of the external economy than by its own domestic needs. As a result, foreign factors of production such as capital and technology have become the determinants of socio-economic progress and political life in most developing countries. Globalisation is the lifeblood through which all this takes place.

Other factors that highlight the tension or contradiction between globalisation and development in Africa include the role of multinational corporations (whose main goal is to maximise profits) and Western media (whose main goal is to westernise the rest of the world). But perhaps the most significant factor is, arguably, the role of the so-called Bretton Woods Institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) in Africa’s development. Although many underdeveloped countries greatly distrust the IMF and the World Bank, the very same countries continue to be recipients of huge loans from these institutions. Debt repayments and interest have translated into unbearable hardships in many of

³⁹ See Oyejide T A “*Globalization and its economic impact: An African perspective*” in Semboja J, Mwapachu J & Jansen E *Local perspectives on globalization: The African case* (2002) 19.

⁴⁰ UNDP Human Development Report 1999 at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1999/chapters/> (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁴¹ See Irogbe K “Globalization and the development of underdevelopment in the third world” (2005) 22 (1) *Journal of Third World Studies* 42.

those countries. Moreover, the IMF and the World Bank have regularly imposed structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) intended to open up poor economies to global markets through export-led strategies. These programmes are typically accompanied by “deregulation, an end to price controls and subsidies, currency devaluation, privatisation of state enterprises, and sharp cuts in government spending, including cuts in the size of the civil service.”⁴²

Many have argued that SAPs have hurt the poor, deepened poverty and increased the gap between the rich and poor, particularly in developing countries.⁴³ They are also blamed for entrenching inequalities between and within countries.⁴⁴ It has further been argued that “the IMF and the World Bank have institutionalised economic stagnation in the underdeveloped countries.”⁴⁵ Needless to say, nowhere has the impact of IMF and World Bank policies been felt more intensely than on the African continent.

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that certain tensions and contradictions do exist between development, democracy and globalisation. In Africa, these tensions and contradictions are exacerbated by several challenges that are prevalent and are unique to African countries. It is to those challenges that we now turn our attention.

4 AFRICAN CHALLENGES

4.1 Conflicts

One of the main challenges underlying the relationship between development, democracy and globalisation is in the form of never-ending regional and internal conflicts. Today there are several on-going conflicts in various African countries including Somalia, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Uganda, to name but a few. In all there are more than 20 recent or on-going conflicts in one form or another on the African continent. Several factors are often mooted as causes of these conflicts. One factor is poverty. It has been argued however, that poverty “does not simply exist but is created by the manner in which a region is integrated into the global economy.”⁴⁶ Yash Tandon argues that the process of globalisation breeds violence and conflict when it continues to produce inequality,

⁴² See Mlambo A S & Pangeti E S “Globalization, structural adjustment and the social dimensions dilemma in Zimbabwe” in Assefa T, Rugumamu S M & Ahmed A G M, *Globalization, democracy and development in Africa: Challenges and prospects* (2001) 164.

⁴³ See “Major criticisms of SAPs” at <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/polsci/ppp/sp97/imf/POLSAP3.HTM> (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁴⁴ Mlambo & Pangeti (n 42) 164.

⁴⁵ Irogbe (n 41) 59.

⁴⁶ See Tandon Y “The Violence of Globalization” at <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/echoes/echoes-18-08.html> (accessed 28 May 2010).

poverty, environmental destruction and unprecedented concentration of economic power in the hands of a few while the majority are marginalised and excluded.⁴⁷ This is how Africa has become a victim of globalisation.

It has been observed that some of the deadliest conflicts that have taken place in Africa in the recent past can be traced to the expansion and domination of transnational corporations. Examples usually given are those of the war in the oil-rich Niger Delta, the long-standing civil war in Angola involving “blood diamonds” and the ongoing conflict in the DRC centred on the exploitation of the rich mineral reserves.⁴⁸ The same may be said of the recent conflicts in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Sudan, Liberia and the Great Lakes where people have taken up arms to fight in oil, diamond and copper wars. Those arms themselves, moreover, are supplied by none other than transnational corporations and foreign governments. The role of transnational corporations, as agents of globalisation, in the escalation of conflict and violations of human rights in Africa cannot be over-emphasised. The negative impact on democracy and development is obvious.

4.2 Poverty

Poverty, as mentioned earlier, is one of the greatest African challenges in the face of globalisation. Indeed, Africa is generally a continent of extreme poverty. It is estimated that about 315 million of the 700 million people who live in sub-Saharan Africa survive on less than one dollar per day.⁴⁹ Statistics also show that one third of the African population (about 184 million people) suffer from malnutrition, less than 50% have access to hospitals or doctors, the average life expectancy is 41 years, and one in six children dies before the age of five.⁵⁰ The total gross domestic product (GDP) of sub-Saharan Africa amounted to US\$978 billion in 2008 (less than that of Australia or Mexico), of which about 50% was contributed by South Africa and Nigeria.⁵¹ The levels and extent of poverty and its effect on the African people cannot be over-emphasised.

The scope of this paper does not lend itself to a detailed discussion of the causes of poverty in Africa. Suffice to say that globalisation has, in various ways, contributed significantly to the extent and impact of poverty on the African continent. In that regard it has been argued that the structural imbalance at the global level and the old-fashioned social and economic structures in developing

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ See Dare S “A Continent in Crisis: Africa and Globalisation” *Dollars and Sense Magazine* at http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Africa/Continent_Crisis.html.

⁴⁹ See “Facts on Poverty in Africa” at <http://www.food4africa.org/index.asp?pgid=42>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ See World Bank “Gross domestic product 2008” at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf> (accessed 26 May 2010).

countries, such as those on the African continent, interact to aggravate poverty in those countries.⁵²

Take, for example, the problem of African debt. It is estimated that African states owe foreign creditors some US\$300 billion today.⁵³ To service this debt, African states must come up with some US\$15 billion each year.⁵⁴ Another example is the perpetual agricultural crisis facing African countries. This crisis is created by, among other things, the protectionist policies of rich Western countries. These countries “operate a battery of tariff and non-tariff barriers (duties, quotas, subsidies to domestic producers) against agricultural products from the Third World.”⁵⁵ Such practices inevitably hurt African agriculture, leading to a decline in per capita production and thereby increasing poverty.

A final example is the so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to which reference was made earlier on. As was mentioned, SAPs are usually imposed by the World Bank and the IMF on developing countries to ensure debt repayments and economic restructuring. These programmes normally require poor countries to reduce spending on health, education and development in order to prioritise debt repayment and other economic policies. The main effect is to damage the interests of the poor and of developing countries and to lower the standard of living of their people. This is because the SAPs are designed to dismantle the role of the state in economic development, liberalise trade and investment regimes and privatise economic activities.⁵⁶

The link between poverty, human rights, democracy and development is the basis of a complex but extremely important relationship. At the heart of that relationship is the recognition that poverty is not only a denial of human rights, but also undermines democracy and reverses the gains of development. In the age of globalisation, that relationship is not only complex and important but also potentially contradictory. Nowhere is this more real than on the African continent.

4.3 HIV/AIDS and other diseases

According to the 2007 *UNAIDS/WHO AIDS Epidemic Update*, sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most affected by the AIDS epidemic and is home to two-thirds

⁵² See Nuruzzaman N “Economic Globalization and the Production of Poverty in the South: A Structural Explanation” at <http://www.devnet.org.nz/conf/Papers/Nuruzzaman.pdf> (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁵³ See “Debt in Africa” at <http://www.mbendi.com/land/af/p0060.htm> (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁵⁴ See Nagan W “Implementing the African Renaissance: Making African Human Rights Comprehensive for the New Millennium” at http://www.cha.uga.edu/CHA-CITS/Nagan_paper.pdf (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁵⁵ See Ayitteh G B N *Africa Unchained: The Blueprint for Africa's Future* (2004) 244.

⁵⁶ Nuruzzaman (n 52). See also A Shah “Structural Adjustment – a Major Cause of Poverty” at <http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/SAP.asp> (accessed 28 May 2010).

(68%) of all people infected with HIV worldwide.⁵⁷ It is estimated that 50% to 80% of tuberculosis patients in Southern Africa are also HIV-positive.⁵⁸ Indeed, TB is considered to be responsible for about 1 500 deaths every day in Africa.⁵⁹ In 2005, the WHO Africa Regional Committee adopted a resolution declaring TB an emergency on the continent. Equally serious is the problem of malaria; in fact, 90% of estimated malaria deaths worldwide occur in Africa.⁶⁰ One in every five childhood deaths is caused by malaria and it is estimated that the disease costs Africa more than US\$12 billion in lost GDP every year.⁶¹

The link between the above-mentioned diseases and development is easy to establish. So, too, is the link between such diseases and the enjoyment of human rights, particularly socio-economic rights such as the right of access to health care services. Much less obvious, however, is the link between HIV/AIDS, TB or malaria and globalisation. It may be argued, though, that the ability of African countries to respond to these diseases is dependent on their ability to climb out of poverty, enjoy favourable terms of trade, implement and control fair patent policies on medications, all of which are issues linked to globalisation. An argument could be made in favour of globalisation and its contribution to addressing health problems in Africa; for example, through the role of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Indeed, there is no denying that such initiatives have had some positive outcomes. However, these outcomes seldom reach the rural poor who form about 80% of African populations. Apart from the strings attached and the problem of “globalised dependency” that was referred to earlier, such initiatives usually fail to achieve the intended results. For example, grants from the Global Fund in Uganda were stopped in August 2005 when serious financial irregularities were discovered within the Programme Management Unit of the Ministry of Health.⁶² This is yet another African challenge, to which we now turn our attention.

4.4 Corruption, poor governance and mismanagement

In many parts of Africa corruption has reached endemic proportions. According to the 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Somalia is the most corrupt country in

⁵⁷ See 2007 UNAIDS/WHO AIDS Epidemic Update at <http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/EpiUpdate/EpiUpdArchive/2007> (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ See WHO “TB Emergency Declaration Issued by WHO Regional Office for Africa” at http://www.who.int/tb/features_archive/tb_emergency_declaration/en/index.html (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁶⁰ See “The Access Project” at http://www.theaccessproject.com/index.php/about/a_global_problem (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² See Musoke C “Global Fund Cuts Uganda’s HIV/AIDS Funding” *The New Vision* 6 November 2006.

the World.⁶³ The CPI also shows that Sudan, Guinea, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zimbabwe (all African countries) are among the 12 most corrupt countries in the world.⁶⁴ The high levels of corruption in other African countries such as Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and Sierra Leone are also well known and documented.

It is important not only to realise that corruption, poor governance and mismanagement are “birds of a feather”; their effect on development and democracy should also be noted. As one commentator has stressed: “widespread corruption stunts economic growth, undermines political legitimacy, and demoralises public officials and ordinary citizens.”⁶⁵ These sentiments were echoed by the South African Minister of Education (then) Kader Asmal at the 9th International Anti-Corruption Conference in Durban in the following words:

“Corruption, maladministration and poor governance do more than undermine economic stability; they undermine government in the eyes of the people. They lead to a pervasive cynicism about politics and politicians, which is disastrous for democracy.”⁶⁶

Corruption, poor governance, and maladministration often provide the backdrop for other crises in Africa. It is therefore no wonder that political unrest and civil strife are rampant in countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Burundi, the very same countries that are most corrupt and most poorly governed. It is also no wonder that in these countries widespread poverty prevails. Moreover, and quite importantly, it is these same countries that have the most dismal human rights records on the whole continent.

What does corruption or poor governance have to do with globalisation? Firstly, research has shown that the more corrupt and poorly governed countries receive fewer benefits of globalisation.⁶⁷ One form of such benefits is direct international investment. For international investors, having to pay bribes and line the pockets of corrupt government officials is equivalent to paying extra tax. As such, some foreign firms may be reluctant to pay bribes in order to obtain business. Secondly, due to the new economic interdependence, corruption has itself become globalised. It is therefore argued that “greater levels of economic integration have increased [the] chances that corruption in one region of the world will have an impact on economic

⁶³ See Transparency International “2008 Corruption Perceptions Index” at http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2008/cpi2008/cpi_2008_table (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See Klitgaard R “Political Corruption: Strategies for Reform” 1991 2(4) *Journal of Democracy* 86

⁶⁶ See Harsch E “African Mounts Drive Against Graft: International Anti-Corruption Conference Spotlights Global Malady” *Africa Recovery* at <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol13no4/8corrupt.htm> (accessed 28 May 2010).

⁶⁷ See Shang-Jin Wei “Corruption and Globalization” *Brookings Policy Brief* No 79 (April 2 2001) 8.

and political activities in other parts of the world.”⁶⁸ John Mukum Mbaku further argues that

“developments in communication technology have revolutionized the international financial system and enhanced the ability of traders to engage in corruption. The emergence of electronic networks for the transfer of funds has made it quite difficult for countries to deal effectively with corruption. In fact, in recent years, many anti-corruption organizations have argued that the ease with which funds can be transferred ... implies that corrupt civil servants can effectively hide their extra-legal income from the public, making it virtually impossible for such funds to be recovered in the event of conviction.”⁶⁹

Finally, it has been argued that, in a globalised economy, corruption and poor governance significantly raise the likelihood of macro-economic instability in addition to reducing economic growth. This is particularly true in the African context where several other factors such as crime, unemployment, low levels of education and poverty come into play.

5 CONCLUSION

Advocates of globalisation may point to its benefits and its positive contribution to economic growth and development worldwide. Critics, however, will disagree and point to impoverishment and devastation caused by globalisation, particularly in poor countries. It was never the intention of this paper to determine who is right or wrong. Rather, the paper is concerned with highlighting the contradictions and tensions that arise from the impact of globalisation on an already complex relationship between human rights, development and democracy, especially in the context of African countries already beleaguered with unique challenges and problems.

It may be concluded that, due to the various tensions between globalisation, development and democracy, the benefits of globalisation may not only remain elusive in many African countries but that globalisation may indeed undermine human rights, impede development and threaten democracy in those countries. In the face of the unique challenges faced by African countries this means that, while the Western world will continue to be winners in the race for the benefits of globalisation, most African counties will continue to be relegated to the position of losers.

⁶⁸ See Mbaku J M *Corruption in Africa: Causes, consequences and cleanups* (2007) 118.

⁶⁹ Mbaku (n 68) 118–119.

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