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Street Economy and Anticipation of Livelihood: Understanding Globalisation and Family Incomes in the South

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Abstract

Although there are arguable deepening challenges of economic, market and trade globalisation to developing economies, most of its analysis seems to give priority to the technical aspects of its benefits. Most governments of developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, continue to be swayed to take a wholesome approach and act as though the challenges of globalisation to their poor civil society can solve themselves. Such a functional approach may be necessary for the analysis and understanding of the everyday hardships of poor households and increased participation of teenagers in urban street and highway/roadside trading on petty global items to support themselves and their family incomes. Drawing from Nigeria's experience, the paper analyses the effects of globalisation on family incomes in sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: Street trading, family income, globalisation, street economy, poverty, social development, Nigeria,

INTRODUCTION

States have historically engaged in 'development administration' of their economy in order to promote sustainable means to better the standards of living of their citizens through trade protections, balance of payment management, and protection of domestic production (Held et-al, 1999). Such approaches have, of course, been overtaken by greater focus on balancing GDPs with an influx of global finance, global traded goods and also influx of other services which are underpinned by parities on balance of economic power and purchasing power index (Scholte, 2001). As Soros (1999) remarked, the political economies of many states have not just become dependent on their openness to the market, but hang on the balance of the market fundamentalism. Understood contemporarily as globalisation, Kim (1998) points out that it is the liberalisation of political economy; a process whereby the market and nongovernmental actors have wrestled control of the economy from the state (Strange, 1996). This development is arguably in credence with a common perception that increased leveraging of globalisation increases both national and

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global wealth which will reduce poverty through increased private sector participation (Castells, 2000).

In Nigeria, from the early 1990s, successive governments have steadily pursued an un-chequered market fundamentalism and mass liberalisation of the national political economy aimed at increasing the inflow of foreign finance and trade. This has meant that national productivity and social development have become intertwined with the world financial and commodity market (Harris-White 2002, Kay 2002). In other words, more than in any other period, the everyday survival of most Nigerians is etymologically dependent on the economic policies that promote global financial inflow and the global sourcing of cheap 'new' and 'used' consumer goods. So, with the high influx of cheap 'Made in China' consumer goods to developing economies such as Nigeria, it has become most challenging to agree with the perception that government should endeavour to measure and weigh its economic policy implementations on the balance of their immediate and future global open market participation. The realities and effects of such policy perception are disproportionate between citizens of the South and North. This leaves the criticism of the global free-market economy to hang on its implication on the national government's social responsibilities, especially to the poor and disadvantaged people.

The question that this article seeks to address is whether the high-traffic of market fundamentalism into developing political economy produces the necessary outcomes on the everyday economic life and financial experiences of the citizens? The question is based on the Post-Fordism account of the New Economy as that which the 'present day capitalist dynamics' are interwoven into hi-speed technologically driven networks 'where individuals, firms and the macro-economy are increasingly mediated by new relationships with financial market' (Montgomerie (2008, p. 234). The paper is organised as follows. In the next section how globalisation literature is understood in the context of its market penetration and effects on the civil society is scrutinised. This is done, first, by examining the New Economy, Post-Fordism account of globalisation which seems to delineate its effects on different national citizens as though it is the panacea for poverty, wealth and growth. Then, secondly, by post-Marxian context analysis, which is carried through to the remaining sections. In the third section attention is directed at analysing the real effects of globalisation on social development, poverty and family incomes. In the fourth section the realities and performativity of globalisation is analysed in the context of the civil society anticipation of livelihood and the growing experiences of poverty and street-wise enterprise. Conclusions and recommendation on areas for further research are then presented.

Debating the Globalisation Effects

There is a growing divergence of views between economists and political economists over how global market/trade penetration is impacting on the financial and economic wellbeing of the civil society. Portrayed as the 'just' and 'unjust' views of the market penetration, the globalisation 'just' or 'unjust' dichotomy debates takes a more critical hold in the analysis of its effects on poor families and individuals especially those in developing economies. The views on this dichotomy are typically growing in the format of three variables. Firstly, that which is driven forward by the New Economy proponents that globalisation has positive effects in reducing poverty and increasing economic wellbeing (Edmond and Pavinik, 2005; Davies and Voy 2009). Secondly, that which its proponents argue that globalisation has poor or negative impacts on the civil society (Kis-Katos 2007, Martin 2013), and thirdly the view that there are even or no effects of globalisation on the economic wellbeing of poorer members of the civil society (Cigno et al, 2002; Aransionla 2009).

For the proponents of the New Economy, globalisation is 'just'. They argue that trade globalisation, which involves open and unrestricted market for global economic activities, has the capability to create new social wellbeing which will 'freely produce prosperity' that will overall pull down poverty amongst the poorer members of the civil society (Gray, 1998; Castells 2000). This perception which is commonly understood as 'globalisation-confidence' has also been further argued as the expansion of the networks for the sourcing and provisioning of cheap goods and services for poor citizens of developing countries (Gilpin, 2001). For others, globalisation is 'unjust' because it has 'poor', 'negative' 'even' and/or 'no' effects on national economy and civil society. To this effect, some studies have shown that most developing economies are mere consumerist (Stanton et al, 1981) and their market and productive economy are outcompeted by that of the developed countries (Bigman 2002). To problematise this, then, is to ask the question whether the effects of globalisation are the same in every country? The modest but obvious answer to this question is NO.

Arguably, therefore, the 'just' or 'unjust' effects of market penetration on the civil society are country specific in contrast to the predominant globalisation literature and practices bandied about by the New Economy global perspectives (Wolf, 1993; Townshend, 2002). As Rahman and Khanam (2012, p.53) noted, the "empirical evidences from different countries and regions give mixed results with regard to the…globalisation nexus, [and its] actual effects depends on country/region specific, other socio-economic factors and government policies". It is on these terms, then, that the analysis of the globalisation-civil society wellbeing nexus should be re-conceptualised and situated in a theoretical paradigm that capsulate existing political and socio-economic particularity or country specific. Consequently, to underscore the variables of 'open trade/market' or the effects of globalisation to civil society provokes theoretical multiplicity or the ambiguity of theoretical paradigms. Arguably, therefore, is that to address the effects of globalisation on civil society is, first, to undertake an evaluation that it is not only underpinned by the dichotomy of 'just' and 'unjust' but also on other conjectures. This includes the 'plurality' and 'uniqueness' of citizens of various countries and the 'peculiarities' of variables associated to the citizens and their country. Put differently, the explanation of the effects of globalisation arguably revolves round theoretical modelling based on country specific. As Neumayer and De Soysa (2005) pointed out theoretical paradigm provides the mechanism for understanding the efficacy of globalisation and economic wellbeing. Indeed, clear theory will be necessary for the analysis or critique of globalisation-civil society wellbeing nexus in sub-Saharan Africa where most of the civil societies are uneducated, unskilled and unemployed. So, a post-Marxian orthodoxy is postulated for the analysis of globalisation-civil society wellbeing.

Therefore, the spatial penetration of the market and its continuing deepening processes of commodification and profits on all social and economic relations are arguably widening the gap of struggles and survival amongst the civil society in the South. The effects of globalisation on civil society cannot be said to be 'just' or 'unjust', 'negative' or 'poor', 'even' or 'no effect' as doing so will portray a position of choice. To the poor citizens of developing countries, these descriptive terminologies do not provide choices to the challenging realities of their daily struggles for livelihood. To them globalisation is a monster of two extremes, one of which is for the poor to get poorer and the other is for the rich to get richer (Buss 2010). As Palan (2002) noted, globalisation have paved way for complex and class based development which protects the rich more and undermines the poor majority. In the same vein, Hanson (2003) also pointed out that amongst the core adverse dredge of globalisation is its negative implication to the vulnerable poor. Therefore, to the ordinary and/or poor person, the effect of globalisation, simply put, is its unbalanced deepening of profit motives and its commodification of everyday life where cheap and inferior goods are sourced and distributed globally by the rich or the privileged few for their profit motives. It is the creation and expansion of the opportunities of profiting from the poverty of the poor. An economic process which facilitates calculative mechanisms for measuring and profiting from the vulnerabilities and the poverty of the poor (Chima and Langley, 2012)

Therefore in scrutiny of the views of Gilpin (2001) that globalisation help for the sourcing of goods and services designed to alleviate poverty and/or help the poor civil society, the questions to ask is which of the civil society, and if the civil society is that of the West or the South? Obviously, Gilpin's view could be relatively acceptable for the civil society of developed countries. As for the civil society of developing countries, the balance of power between productive-led economy and consumer-led economy in the neoliberal globalisation is indicative that it is exponentially unequal. No wonder some contributors to the globalisation debate argue that developing countries have become a dumping ground for the surpluses of the developed country (Jacobs 1996). So, while almost all the households and citizens of the developing countries such as Nigeria have become citizens of the fundamentalities, complexities and fragilities of globalisation – free/open market economy, they are locally and globally unequal citizens and the majority of them, with neither national support nor private social cushions, struggle at the extremes of the non-negotiable global commercialism.

Globalisation, Social Development, Poverty/Family Income

The forces of market liberalisation and the globalisation of trading and marketing of goods, services and financial products are often described as having eclipsed the autonomy of states from the global world model of capitalistic homogeneity of economies. But, has this not gone further than just providing a model? Yes, it has. Such a development of capitalistic homogeneity of economies, have arguably carried forward the 'reshaping of the geography of economic activities' (Mackinnon and Cumbers 2007, p.17) through a technologically driven commodification of social relations. These arguably have produced national economic policies, especially in the developing countries of the South, which are exogenously embedded and interdependent with the West's neoliberalism and its social order of consumerism and individualism. The neoliberalism social order of consumerism and individualism in shorthand is typified by its encouragements for mass consumption of global goods and services. But, at their risk and self-responsibility, all individuals and households who without any alternatives had to respond and actively participate in the competitive and complex consumer market structures. To survive or gloom, individuals and families have to either take a leap out or into poverty. And, for poorer teenagers and families, without any form of private, government or social support/security, their leaps are often a mere prod to nothing. According to Lodge and Wilson (2006), the poverty of individuals and families whose government has lacked 'either the desire or the ability to act' has worsened and epidemic.

The question, then is, can globalisation provide the means to the ability of developing countries especially the sub-Saharan African governments to act or take responsibility for the provision of basic social security to their citizens? In this regard, some commentators and scholars have argued that increased global market integration increases multinational investments and improvement in employment and social development (Davies and Voy, 2009). Such argument tends to take a trajectory perception that national foreign direct investment (FDI) automatically provides national governments with the requisite revenue for economic and social development. But, as often times compared to other poor regions such as developing Asian countries, Latin America/Caribbean, Central/Eastern Europe, the IMF data on purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita of 2009 - 2013 indicates that families and teenagers of sub-Saharan Africa are the poorest (Global Finance, 2013). Also, the world development indicators of global financial flows show that cumulative FDI net inflows to developing countries especially of sub-Saharan Africa are comparatively lower than those of developing Asian countries, Latin America/Caribbean, Central/Eastern Europe and exponentially lower than that of EU, US and G20 member countries (World Bank, 2013). And, by virtue of the FDI net inflows, the development indicators of the sub-Saharan African countries show poor and regressive PPP. This also meant that despite sub-Saharan African countries having rich natural resources such as natural gas, crude oil, gold, copper, silver and other precious/rare metals, 'thousands of [their civil society] live in crippling poverty' (SOS Children Village, 2013).

As Anyanwu (2012:5) noted "One of the targets for reducing extreme poverty in Africa involves halving the proportion of people living in absolute poverty from 48 percent in 1990 to 24 percent by 2015. *However*, available data so far indicate that it is only the North African countries of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia as well as Mauritius that have already met this target. [Likewise] available data also indicates that in sub-Saharan Africa, the $1.25 a day poverty rate has shown no sustained decline over the whole period since 1981, starting and ending at roughly 50 percent at 2008 purchasing power parity (PPP) – the highest in the world. Indeed, in absolute terms, the number of poor people nearly doubled from 205 million in 1981 to 386 million in 2008." Also, in their recent case study on the poverty indicators in Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics found that 60.9 per cent or 112.47 million Nigerians are living in 'absolute poverty' (NBS 2011, 2012). This occurrence, however, is certainly taking place despite several social and poverty alleviation projects and programmes that Nigerian governments has implemented since the early 1980s.

What has become significant is that social development has been, in effect, intertwined with globalisation and FDI. This arguably has paved the way for probabilistic social management and development. In a related development, social and economic growth planning - policies, programmes and projects - are emerging as part of a discursive relationship between globalisation and FDI. So, although globalisation and FDI could be a possible conduit for improving social development in developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa, their impact, if any, has not brought about 'poverty reduction', reduction in 'social inequality', and neither has it facilitated 'sustainable development' in Nigeria (NISER, 2013). In the same light, the net inflow of FDI into Nigeria which have seemingly been increasing since 2011 mainly on the oil sector (World Bank 2013) shows that economic growth has been falling from 7.4% in 2011 to 6.6% in 2012 (African Economic Outlook, 2013) while the real life experience of 112.5million Nigerians have been classified as living in 'absolute poverty' (NBS, 2012). This was somewhat different from the discourse of globalisation-confidence to yield desired outcome on social wellbeing and livelihood. Rather, the experiences of globalisation-confidence and anticipation of livelihood has been a pathway for experimentation of several failed social development programmes whereby, especially in sub-Saharan African countries like Nigeria, the everyday social and economic livelihood of most households and individuals are now met by their struggles on the streets of slow moving traffic, roadsides and on highway potholed traffic jams.

It has become an uncommon experience that there is a speedy growth of grime streetwise economy in Nigeria. As Aransionla et al (2002) pointed out; it is an economy where teenagers, children, women and men of all ages are dangerously competing for their everyday wellbeing. They engage in daily navigation between hawking their petty global items and the risk of disease, fatal accidents, and crimes that ranges from, drug abuse, rape, murder, kidnapping to assaults. This, specifically points to the failures of the globalisation promise, and the increasing gaps of unemployment, social and income inequalities. In the case of Nigeria, the streets and highway roadside have provided major means for earning of income by the unemployed mass or alternative means for augmentation of income by the underpaid employed few. Arguably, this has also led to disruptions in family relations as majority of poor children of school ages without any other options, has become desperately included in the making of family incomes. No wonder the United Nations Development Millennium Development Goals (UNDP MDGs) for a worldwide eradication of poverty by 2015 have made little impact in sub-Saharan African countries. In Nigeria, for example, very little progress has been made in the reduction of the number of people living in 'absolute poverty' – the inability to afford the essentials of life of food, shelter and clothing. According to the UNDP MDGs report for Nigeria (2014) the human development index of the 166 million Nigerians is an abysmal 0.47percent while the poverty rate is 62.6 percent. The report also stated categorically that Nigeria "social protection and poverty eradication programmes needs to be scaled-up and better coordinated."

So for any improvement to be made on the social and income wellbeing of the poor-Mass of the population of the sub-Saharan African countries, sub-Saharan African countries should be at the forefront of the design of another round of the MDGs from 2015. It is essential that the design and plan should be to address the issue of trade/market globalisation especially its disproportionate participation, which has implication on increase in streetwise economy. As already analysed, the prospect of livelihood and family income in the developing countries has emerged to be a common experience of toil and struggle on the street/highway roadsides where poor children and their households engage in dangerous trading on petty and often inferior global goods which does not alleviate their poor family income and wellbeing but instead deepens their exclusion from training, education and decent social life. It should then be emphasised that the new MDGs should have development framework aimed at 'minimum' globalisation which will allow for developing countries to make market commitment that would not be harmful or potentially harmful to their local structural and social development; and the wellbeing of the poor and vulnerable citizens (Rodrik, 2011, 2012).

In most sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria for example, market based policies have arguably paved way for class-type structures of economies/markets where the poorer teenagers and their parents/guardian share common experience of toil and exploitation. Put differently, the deeper penetrations of the market have eroded traditional communality of sharing and lending of help. In Nigeria, this is typified by increased number of school age teenagers who either independently or with their parents engages in street/highway roadside trading of petty consumer goods, some of which include coca cola, mobile phone accessories and baseball hats. This is because, in society where the majority of the parents and guardians are poor and the state, pressured by the market, fail to protect her population, poor families and teenagers become haplessly neglected.

There are therefore not many interstices between the understanding of globalisation as the practices of opening and ordering of modern national economies including those of communist countries and the promotion of market fundamentalism which discourages the state from its social responsibilities. It is instead the entrenching of a market-oriented complexes of self-governing, self-organising, and individualisation to success or failure. While this is good for individual enterprise, attainment of set goals and realisation of dreams; it is embedded in individual ability and strength without care for the weak, poor and the vulnerable. The poor and most vulnerable such as teenagers, women and children of school ages without choices engage in exploitative and dangerous streetwise entrepreneurship to support their livelihood or that of their families. A situation which has led to the 'proliferation of street children' that despite government agencies' programmes which specifically target street children, the children have no 'cordial relationship' with the agencies but instead perceive the government agencies as 'punishment' and their programmes as 'unattractive' (Aransionla et al, 2009).

So in this continuing tumult of lack of dependable social policy and high unemployment are global inferior goods taking an alternative dangerous presence where family members (parents, children and teenagers) without any other means of income alternatives, engage in active trading on streets and/or highway roadside. The final section below provides a refocus on the contentious perception that globalisation is a panacea to poverty. Drawing inference from Nigeria experience, the section asks how this is possible by analysing the practicality and performativity of globalisation by taking account of government failures and the continuing poor level and unstable means of incomes amongst poor households in sub-Saharan African countries (Bobbit, 2002).

Nigeria: Practicality and Performativity of Globalisation

From the early 1980s and continuously, various Nigerian governments have implemented several policies, projects and programmes aimed at social development and poverty reduction. These have taken place through such projects and programmes such as the Green Revolution, Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the People's Bank of Nigeria, Community Bank scheme, Better Life Programme (BLP), Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP), Strategic Gains Reserves Programmes (SGRP), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Scheme (SOWESS), National Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). Also in conformity with IMF guideline, Nigeria's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (IPRSP) of 2001/2 led to the creation of strategies for eradication of poverty at all levels of government. Consequently, from 2003 to 2007 the federal, state and local governments respectively established National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS). The key questions yet to be answered are why has the Nigerian political economy witnessed so many failed and/or unsuccessful social development projects and programmes?

A review of some of the existing research on Nigeria social development policies, programmes and projects show a trajectory of failures caused by internal, human and governance frailties. In this regard, Anyawu (2012) argued that all economic and social development programmes in Nigeria since 1980s have ‘proved unsustainable’ and did not lead to ‘sustainable poverty reduction’ because of their ‘design and implementation. According to the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), some of the ‘easily identifiable’ causes of ‘decline of Nigeria economic fortunes’ and social development are political instability, lack of focused and visionary leadership, economic mismanagement, corruption and prolonged period of military rule (Sanusi, 2010). Arguably, the common feature of the causes of failures of the various economic and social development experimentations have been attributed to a ‘culture of corruption’ in the everyday life of Nigeria political economy (Agbiboa, 2012; Smith 2008). As pointed out, corruption and fraud have become ‘the largest source of foreign revenue after oil’ in Nigeria (Smith 2008, p.2).

Without joining issues on the above postulations on the causes of failures of economic and social development programmes in Nigeria, on the other, it will be added that trade and market globalisation have commoditised social relationships, increasing oneself culture and individualism where all including the very poor and vulnerable are expected to survive on their own. In this extant economic and social milieu, the expectations of success and failure are intertwined with the Shakespearian *Merchant of the Venice* market mentality where those who are expected to protect the poor are themselves Shylocks. The managers and officials of government, then, compete within the ‘public opportunities’ they occupy in other to maintain or exceed their social standards or wellbeing. This has strongly led to a ‘pro-rich mentality’ (Ejumudo and Ejuvwekpokpo, 2013) driven by mass-market commitment to individualism and profit. Arguably, therefore, is the view that trade and commodity globalisation is fuelling corruption in the developing or consumption-led economies such as sub-Saharan African countries.

Consequently, the realities of life amongst poor teenagers and families have become the experiences of frenzied urban migration where cheap labour are sources and distributed in street and highway roadside trading of petty global goods. As Lucas (2003:261-2) pointedly states, ‘globalisation is exacerbating the gap between the poor and the rich’, the performativity of globalisation have not only exacerbated gaps in the political economic governance of developing countries, it has led to declining levels of real income and growing poverty. In Nigeria, it has indeed induced extortionate market economy whereby social relations and development are markedly individualised, and hierarchically commercialised. Teenagers and families of poor background, then, suffer from class and commercially induced poverty. So the globalists’ (Edmond and Pavnik, 2002, Cigno et.al 2002) perceptions that globalisation increases competition and availability of global goods without evidence of negative implications on poverty and income parity is arguably a blatant negation of the disproportionate effects of globalisation and the crisis of struggle amongst the poor people and governments of developing countries.

In Nigeria the failures of poverty alleviation programmes amidst the increased presence of inferior global goods, which are often made in China, has led to increase in the number of teenagers whose everyday life experiences are on the street. To survive, therefore, poor people has to aggressively and dangerously engage in the selling of petty goods to ‘motorists who are stuck in traffic jams or in slow moving traffic'(Okeshola and Ukiri-Mudiara 1996, p.186, Aransionla et.al 2009, Okoli and Cree 2012, Akpan and Oluwabamide 2010). So while some commentators may portray the growing participation of teenagers and families in street hawking as a sociological problem, it remains contentious. The faster and wider participation in hawking in urban street, highway roadside and potholed traffic jam amongst poor family members and teenagers of developing countries arguably cannot be a mere sociological particularity, it is as the evidence that there is growing South/West divide in the actualisation of the benefits from the trade/market globalisation-confidence on poverty reduction and income enhancement, as it is also evidence of the deepening divide between the rich and the poor

CONCLUSION

The globalist inferences that market/trade globalisation reduces poverty is probabilistic, and in various ways, part of the repertoires of globalists perception. So, while this perception could be overtly plausible for developed countries and for some emerging market in Asia and the Gulf states, it has led to increased struggle for survival amongst poor families and poor teenagers in many developing countries of the sub-Saharan Africa. An evident re-confirmation that the 'rich get richer and the poor get poorer [and] more impoverished' (Buss 2010:194). In Nigeria, globalisation and aggressive programmes of free market enterprise have exhibited an arbitrary creation of income volatilities, the commodification and trading of social relationship in a risky and sprawling streetwise economy. This, argued, has led to exploitative street entrepreneurship for poor teenagers of school ages; a problem which has come to be categorically driven forward by the inability of governments in sub-Saharan Africa to wither globalisation and the incapacity to maximise the promised effectiveness of globalisation-confidence on poverty reduction.

This is most particularly noticeable from the imbalance of negotiations and the arrangements of the apparatus of trade and market globalisations and the disproportionate implication of globalisation on governments and the civil societies of the South and North. In most sub-Saharan African countries, poverty and development projects failures are commonplace. This is influencing an increased poverty-induced urban migration for dangerous participation in urban street and highway/roadside trading on petty global items. So if globalisation is a means to escape poverty, its aggressive market fundamentalism, and its prolific antecedences of individualism, commodification and commercialisation erodes its opportunities for poor people – youths, teenagers, men and women – in Nigeria. Yet, most governments of developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, continue to be swayed to take a wholesome approach and act as though the challenges of globalisation to their poor civil society can solve themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper has provoked some interesting questions that require further inquiry to be carried out. The following areas require further investigation:1) the role of globalisation in economic, social and political participation, 2) global products and services and their satisfaction in developing countries, 3) theoretical assessment of the practices and understanding of globalisation in the South and North, 4) globalisation: corruption, fraud and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa, 5) globalisation and the erosion of individual and public social security and 6) the implications of globalisation, devaluation, and poor purchasing power of currencies on poverty reduction.

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