

# The Sociology Of Knowledge In Change Processes: Connecting Sub Saharan African Psychosocial Idiosyncrasies To The Global Development Discourse

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**Abstract**—What exactly constitutes an appropriate understanding of life issues is the degree of which these issues interrelate with the operational values and systems of a given community. The present study focuses on the interconnectivity of knowledge in this evaluative era of global development. It discusses from a psychosocial perspective, issues raised by Capra, David Bornstein and Jagdish Bhagwati, in their respective works: *Hidden Connections: A Science of Sustainable living*; *How To change The World*; and *In Defense of Globalization*. The communality in these three writings is that they somehow focus on the interconnectivity of global issues whose understandings make us live a fuller and more meaning life. In examining the salient different articulations of these writers, we will lay emphasis on the relevance of the issues raised from the lens of developing scholars of sub-Saharan African regions and the effectiveness, in a wave to contribute to the ongoing debate on the economic stagnation of African states south of the Sahara. We will consider matters at the individual programme and system levels and will examine issues related to process and outcomes. We will equally discuss the role for research and the importance of transformation/qualitative community education programs with emphasis on the development challenges of African countries south of the Sahara that echo the power of naturalness within the present context of globalization.

**Keywords**—*Psychosocial, idiosyncrasy, ethnological, sociocultural, globalization, conscience, interconnectivity*

## I. OUR GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE AUTHORS

From reading Copra's *Hidden Connections: A Science of Sustainable living*, we gather that Capra's conceptual vision is that of a world that integrates life's biological, cognitive and social dimensions because no individual organization can exist in isolation. But why should Capra highlight a thinking which seemingly is obvious? Since the start of the world, man has always relied on his/her natural environment for subsistence and progress hence the interconnectivity and interdependence within a persistent and evolving natural ecosystem. This physical symbiosis has a metaphysical connection with the Santiago theory which purports that "organizing activities of all living systems at all levels of life is mental activity therefore pushing aside the former view of mind as "thinking organ" to establish the mind as being the process where the "entire structure of the organism participate." By implication, any kind of thinking process is determined by the level of cognitive operations and the ecosystem within which the process occurs. If by natural ecosystem we are referring to the geographical location and behavioural system, then the systemic understanding of life allows us to use the fundamental unity of life as manifested within various social frames.

Consequently, social learnings most provide and represent an effective route teaching that supports personal and social transformative learning. Therefore, the systematic understanding of life allows it to appreciate the global phenomenon as a social stratification with various and varied frequencies of sedimentation. This is because we come from diverse backgrounds and our understanding of live and social constructs depend on our knowledge of life's basic patterns and principles: yet neither the knowledge nor the principles are universally framed to give a holistic appreciation of life and subsequently

the purpose understanding of living networks and social realities. Though Capra acknowledges that our social networks use communication within sociocultural frames, the knowledge content of the communicative art depends on the value system within which communication occurs and the sum total of the knowledge possesses by those involved. This knowledge includes traditional cognitive dominance and intercultural paradigms in pragmatics of communication within social structures.

#### A. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND CHANGE

According to Capra, the idea that people resist change is false as he argues that people only resist having changed imposed on them. Capra may be perfectly correct in his reasoning in the sense that his "people" is a homogeneous community virtually operating at the same levels with organized system and structures put in place to assure their functionality. It could have been more interesting if Capra examined this statement alongside with the controversies that animate the present world ideology as concerning globalization and change. Furthermore, the notion of change cannot be steam down to a collective art in the sense that only a few people understand what change is and can enact it. They are those who understand the complex nature of human reality and the reality of change in human development process. They harness the concept, motivate others to act, then pilot the process to success to the benefit of the entire community. These people are the agents of change and are generally called change makers because of their visionary leadership skills.

Within this perspective, the heterogeneous, variegated ethnological and anthropological setups of African communities pose problem to accepting Capra's idea of non-resistance to change. This is because issues in sustaining layer scaled participatory involvement, including the relationship of community groups to existing decision making structures are very complex. Compounding issues on organization and change within a global context without due considerations accorded to communities confronting multifaceted difficulties and operating under uncontrolled and misconstrued systems plagued by disease, war and hunger would only provide a mirage oasis in the Sahara desert. In Africa, communities resist change due to many reasons of which some are:

- Lack of education and the culture of change
- Change resulting from pillage and exploitation
- Psychological trauma and identity crisis
- Self-determinism and prestige.

In analysing the notion of concerted change within Copra's line of thought, it appears as if Capra is working from a position which is based upon the need for a paradigm shift in social policy where by

concerted change is a sociological shift and not a policy adjustment in line with the on-going process of globalization. Consequently, while the benefits of globalization are visible in various ways, global democratization, social integration and economic development to name but these, the whole process of self-determination carries along untold magnitude of social fragmentation as is the case with Africans countries south of the Sahara that has left Africa in the wilderness of ideological construction and identity relocation thwarting the very process of global progress. In addition, the increasing poverty and cultural alienations to which weaker economies like those of sub Saharan African countries are subjected to, are having devastating effects on global issues through the spread of new disease and the rapid and extensive determination of the environment which are not external to the communities.

#### II. THE ROLE OF NGO'S IN CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

In the Hidden Connections A science of sustainable development, Copra underscores the importance of NGO (nongovernmental organisations) in nation building; he sees them as institutions that leaders must rely on for sustainable developing in that, they are power builders in the natural operational capacity that links man and the universe together in search for a more harmonious and sustained way of life. This is the form of development that preserves the devastation of the natural ecosystem and the naturalization of human co-existence in social enterprise; development in the beat to respect and recognize nature as the context of our very existence.

Similarly, How to Change the World by David Bornstein looks at social entrepreneurship as a driving force in social change, while acknowledging the difficulties and challenges with which social entrepreneurs are confronted, he never the less sees such challenges as catalytic for the growth needed to trigger the systemic changes required to enact social and mental shifts alongside the transformation needed as per global communities.

What one observes in from the book is that social entrepreneurs are not just ordinary people; they have a vision of about how to better their environment and are possessed by the zeal to effect change. Consequently there are more often than not misunderstood especially in less developed countries where such visionary thinkers are almost inexistent. Bornstein holds the view that where children are involve in the social change process, the results are more visible in that everyone benefits when problem-solving knowledge is put directly into the hands of the family and community members. Contrary to what is generally practiced in sub Saharan Africa, leaders and governments have always entrusted development problems in the hands of even

“educated” people within the community. Bornstein holds a contrary view to this and argues that change in all respect emanates from “soft qualities” such as empathic, and listening skills which according to him are the required tools needed to “break free of establish structures to provide the most needed change”. Other qualities such as the willingness to cross disciplinary boundaries, solemnity and a strong ethical empathy equally work in favour of change makers. The observation I would like to make in this respect is that, the author has carried an in-depth analysis of the importance of social knowledge in the process of enacting change but that is not the case with Africa South of the Sahara. Those who are expected to bring about change hardly even understand their community; talk less of the real social problems to be addressed. What we find trilling in David Bornstein is that he has carefully carried out his investigation and in addition to these acquired skills in the determination and orientation of any change process, he has equally unravelled the advantage of mapping out the underlying factors, driving problems and the principles of innovation that cut across working solutions for social entrepreneurship.

With regards to Bhagwati’s In Defence of Globalization, he presents the actual economic system as a product of the effects of globalization, He holds the view that globalization has brought about greater economic development though some people especially those from less economically strong nations neglect the benefits of globalization which they think are purely capitalistic and to the advantage of the economically powerful nations. Bhagwati argues that globalization has enhanced global prosperity and reduced poverty as the world is being enrolled in a common unstated global literacy program of “development democracy”. He sees the process of globalization as a mind opening concept that valves the mind-sets of equal rights between men and women, consequently constantly pressing for greater freedom and liberty among the people of the globe. He believes that the “extremist” position is one that is unjustified, uninformed, and, thus, not open to discussion because many critics of globalization come from a more moderate background raising questions as concerns imperiled culture. This argument to him is too simplistic and pessimistic, admitting that the economist’s answer to this question will be “diametrically opposed to that of the anthropologist and the indigenous activist” and yet acknowledges that culture is imperiled but economists are not concerned with the preservation of culture.

Though we may give credit to globalization as the pressure of human goals, it would be a hurried conclusion if we equally fail to acknowledge that the on-going and unstoppable process of globalization has limitations that weigh heavily on the economies of less developed nation. For instance, we

recognized that developing countries are economically and technologically wanting in relation to the West and it is almost certain to everyone that the fundamental cause of this underdevelopment is essentially internal to the developing nations themselves. This means that the failure to develop is due to the lack of an inner drive to progress aggravated by the violent impact of colonization with a static cultural psychology. Today, there are many other obstacles to this forward march of countries such as local cultures, geopolitics, costumes, beliefs and even cultural neo-colonialism. Yet globalization is just another form of distraction to poor countries torn apart by fratricide wars and poverty.

If globalization is human drama involving all, then what is its responsibility towards developing countries? Are there specific measures that the on-going train of globalization has highlighted in its agenda for the countries that are unable to go on-board the train or for those who are advancing very slowly?

In general we are able to say that the solution to underdevelopment is to be found in the elimination of the entire internal and external obstacles to progress, to which we alluded to earlier, which impede the forward advance of poor peoples. If it is the question of commercial exploitation of rich countries in relation to poor countries, then this exploitation must cease. If the politics of the great powers prevent economically weak countries from any autonomous decision making, clearly this form of power politics is to be condemned and changed in to a politics of service. It is necessary, however, to note that the wretchedness and hunger in Sub Saharan Africa is a colossal, explosive fact that involves everyone and globalization must clearly address this issue to the satisfaction of humankind

#### *A. FULL DEVELOPMENT IS POSSIBLE EVEN FOR SUB SAHARAN AFRICA*

What, then, is to be done? How can globalization practically, and without further theorization transform the world’s poorest economies into vibrant markets and production chains?

The first obligation seem to us to be the overcoming of pessimism and defeat in regard to Sub Saharan African countries’ development. Development is possible for all. Hunger can be overcome—at least world economic powers can try to do something about it. To think that nature has not given mankind sufficient resources for the development of all is absurd. There are far too many writers and experts, strongly active pessimists, who believe that sub Saharan Africa will never reach the levels of economic development the countries of the North are enjoying today for reasons that Africa lacks the right kind of resources (human and material), its overpopulation impedes all progress, rich nations take advantage of the situation and prevent

development, or other similar reasons. There are others, racists, who think that underdeveloped peoples are inferior to Westerners in intelligence, willpower, and competence; and since they can never perform up to their levels, they are condemned to be the poor of the world.

We think that pessimism as concerning this question does not only run counter to the hopes of us Africans and therefore is inhuman, not only have negative results inasmuch as it discourages any kind of zeal, but is clearly opposed to both logic and reality. Pessimism is contrary to logic whereas development processes obey to a common logic.

If the world economic powers and governments believe in the fundamental equality of humankind and are not racists, they ought to admit that all people are equally capable of development. The fact that some are more backward than others in moving toward modern progress does not mean that they cannot, whenever conditions are suitable, take their place among the more advanced. It is merely a question of creating efficient and adequately adjusted conditions "for the development of a people".

Still within this global development dialogue, some critics have come up with the idea that colonial masters of the African continent and other governments of rich countries already have too many problems about their own development and consider payments made to poor countries especially sub Saharan African countries as money wasted because they do not know how to use it. Therefore no gifts should be made to them because since these countries are free and independent, they should look after themselves.

This statement sounds very plausible but within the present context of globalization, would it not be more plausible that nations with already high technological progress take a genuine oath to transform and in good time assure to these less developed nations the means of leaving humanly and with dignity, and to really help them to develop? We believe this is possible if the economic concept of globalization gives it a blue print in its agenda.

A second attitude is found among those governments who are quick to aid even generous donations in time of crisis; but they never go any further. This is the classic mentality of almsgiving, or "beggar's mentality." These governments believe that in putting their hands in their economic and technology pockets they have done their duty once and for all, and they take no interest in the day-to-day living and utilization of the assistance offered to these countries. This is a widespread attitude; and the most common of all, though it does mark an advance over the proceeding position and over the ignorance of the present prevailing situations influenced by geostrategic and geopolitics

A third attitude, just as ineffective as the second but for opposite reasons, is found among groups rather than among individuals. These groups base all their activities on behalf of the third world on a hopeless denunciation of injustice. This is an attack on capitalism and imperialism, on the failure of governments to take action, on the undemocratic and corrupt practices in Africa, on the unfairness of international trade, and so forth. They argue, make protests, and attempt by various actions to arouse public opinion and awareness. This is the case with many International Humanitarian NGOs operation in Sub Saharan Africa.

All this seems to be one way, among many others, of forming "a global conscience." The more one protests, the more he/she feels "involved," in the fight against global social injustice. And it does not matter if the protest action is effective or not in developing and liberating the third world economically; it does not matter whether it is or is not the best thing one can do to help the third world's people. Such an in-depth examination of reality does not seem of great importance today.

In our opinion, to denounce the injustice unquestionable is a duty, but concrete help to the third world is more important for its liberation than more protests. It seems at least, this is the impression one gets from personal contact with certain "protest groups" that those vocal NGOs, even with all the generosity and good will, are not serving the course of sub Saharan African development, but are instead using it as an instrument for their own political ideological polemics and for their own psychological experience.

We also have the impression that there are those in areas of the publishing fields dealing with the black Africa economic and development matters who are thinking like this: The third world is just a timely subject through which one can carry on discussions about governments and the ethnology. To them, facts and the reality of the third world are not of great importance; they are much more concerned about theories, hypotheses, and academic discussions. The great waste of ink and words, for instance, concerning the civil conflicts in Sudan, Congo, the Central African Republic and of now Cameroon; instead of really finding lasting solutions by helping the people understand their situation or helping them to make their own decisions in an autonomous way, the writer prefer simply to talk about the choice ("Others should decide, not we!") in a purely academic way, thus misinterpreting the meaning of global efforts and obligations to foster global progress.

### III. HOW TO SENSITIZE WORLD OPINION

As Social studies scholars, what then, is our real duty towards our community's development? Here are three guidelines;

1). Progress is a product of justice and unity among all men. Therefore we must first understand this ourselves and then work to sensitize public opinion so that everyone in our community will realize his individual responsibility to contribute to the progress of humanity. When this happens, the pressure of public opinion will force government to work for justice and democratic reforms, that offer concrete, disinterested help to those in need.

2). Peoples of the developing countries must be the creators of their own progress; The countries of the North "must" help them in this respect by providing them with opportunities, with impetus, and the necessary assistance for their development

3). The progress of people from both the developing and the developed world must be "integral." In other words, increased production and the promotion of social justice are not enough; the countries of the north must not forget the spiritual and moral dimension of man either. Hence the duty developed countries with advanced technology have toward developing countries should be equally spiritual and integrationist, not materialistic and diversionist

These convictions are far from receiving a universal acclamation especially from those with a purely capitalistic tendency, but we must acknowledge that the worst thing that exists in today's world is not the poverty of he who is deprived of means, but the lack of conscience of he who possesses them. Unfortunately, the Western world does not want to upgrade this in its globalization concept agenda. The Western world is imprisoned by its own quest for world leadership conceptions, cultivating a mentality specifically canonistic, and maintaining itself by attaching to an economical system of dominance regardless of the needs and the aspirations of the poor. The Western world, busy, above all, in keeping and increasing lead in technology at all cost, proves itself impotent to understand the developing world's economic plight. The Western world does not see the necessity of a universal economy based on the needs of the people, since it would be a deterrent to the present capitalistic model under the umbrella concept of globalization. The worst part is that the Globalization has partially refused the scale of values that good sense of living and morality has brought to the world- the only real human values that, as one can see today, could give life to a new civilization.

We in Africa recognise the work done by international NGOs in creating a new mentality, despite the ravaging damage caused by HIV/AIDs, abject poverty, corrupt practices and undemocratic governments on the African continent. We recognized that much has been done, but much more is left to be done. In order to be effective, the work of sensitizing the developed nation's governments to the needs of the poor countries must be carried on through every possible means (World Leaders summits, international economic forums, lectures

debates, articles, books, etc...) within the respect of the dignity and cultures of these underdeveloped countries.

That is, those who are really sincere in wanting to help the third world by collaborating with its people most have a thorough knowledge of countries in question and the problems, that hinders their progress. Within the present context of globalization, it would be needless repeating the things, the statistics, the same slogans, nor base development concepts on fleeting enthusiasm. Discussions about the underdevelopment of countries like those of Africa south of the Sahara should take place within the cultural framework and contextual realities of the populations, One cannot understand the differences between peoples if he only considers the political and economic aspects, because these, even if they are of more immediate interest, are much less deep than the socio-cultural ones; one cannot reach a point of understanding and collaboration without a dialogue concerning cultures and religions (or political ideologies). Therefore, in order to develop a profound and sustained development concept concerning sub-Saharan African countries, we believe that an in-depth study of these cultural values and community need assessments are of extreme importance.

#### A. CHANGE BASED ON CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.

The worth of any campaign against hunger can be judged, then, by asking oneself: Is it to help the poor, or is it also used as a motive to denounce the injustice of the wealthy? To respect, injustice should certainly be denounced; but there are ways and ways to do it. It does not help to shout on the streets, In our opinion, the denunciation of injustice must be undertaken in a serious and concrete way and must be accompanied by proposed alternatives that are capable of becoming realities. To protest, or to suggest global development hypotheses, without offering constructive proposals, can become mere verbal exercises, abstract and ambiguous. For instance the political and economic situations of black Africa has always been a top agenda issue in many international gatherings of Heads of States and economic/ development scholars but hardly has any concrete decision been taken above paper levels The limitations in such approaches reside in the fact that must African governments are very good at making speeches but when it comes to taking actions their hands are tied either due to political raisons or the simple fact that the speeches do not reflect the inert realities of the populations they serve. This further justifies why must development projects fail because at the moment of implementation the realities which wear not given thorough considerations stand out as stumbling blocks.

#### IV. HELPING DEVELOPING NATIONS TO BE THE SHAPERS OF THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT

Another aspect of the obligation towards developing countries within this era of globalisation and sustainable living is addressing the concrete needs as expressed by the communities so that they may start marching towards progress and developed real opportunities. The underdevelopment of the third world derives, as we said, mostly from a lack of an inner impulse within static and conservative societies. There is also the aspect of international injustice when rich countries oppress and control the poor ones, but this is only one element that marks the sub Saharan African context. In fact, as it can also be observed, countries and peoples who were not colonized are also among most underdeveloped and not civilized countries. Therefore it may not be right to purport that international justice alone can solve the problem.

Even if rich countries were perfectly fair towards the poor ones, the poor ones would still be underdeveloped (for the real causes are inside the country), and they would always need help. Even if the rich countries were to give them not one, but ten per cent of their wealth, the poor countries –though they would, of course, have more money to spend, would still have the problem of underdevelopment for it is not certain or true that with more money poor people would automatically be in better condition to develop themselves; too much money for one who does not know how to use it causes corruption and encourages wasteful spending. In fact if we look at some very rich countries with petroleum “royalties,” like Iraq, and Iran; they are no better off than the poor countries which lack raw materials-such as Nigeria and Tanzania. That is why, as we have said, it is not money that creates the march for progress.

Equally, justice among people is necessary, naturally; but it cannot play a solitary role in revising the drama of the setback of huge human masses. It needs the accompaniment of solidarity, brotherhood, and accountability that goes beyond the narrow concept of justice

What then can be done to help Sub Saharan African countries begin the march for development and become themselves the creators of their own progress? Should they do just as the governments of the rich countries do, or the international organizations of the UN; this would take too long a time, as they are very complex. We already mentioned the importance of making the public aware of the problem so that it, in turn, will put pressure on the governments to act resolutely and generously in favour of the countries which are on the way to development. Besides, there is already in existence a vast amount of specialized literature on what the governments should do, and we cannot present them in this analysis, written only for an academic purpose.

Therefore, we ask again: What must be done to really help sub Saharan Africa? Arturo Escobar, a social development scholar used to say, “It would be absurd just to sit still, waiting for the governments to decide to move.” What organizations, unions, associations, and communities themselves can do is of extreme importance, since they have to assist people to become responsible for their own development with education, concrete help, and small ways that should serve as examples for them to imitate. And, as we have said, since underdevelopment is essentially a “failed development” of man, a failed set of conscience and mentality, a failed interior push of a culture towards “modern progress”, it is clear that the essential element for a people’s development can only be in the formation of conscience and mentality; this is the push towards progress which can only come as a “revolution of ideas” about man, the world, and history. In a study of Sachs’ concepts of development one reads that the necessary arms to fight underdevelopment are three:

- First, education, in order to change the mentality, to awaken the intelligence, to interest man in his future;
- Second, cooperation, since man cannot develop by himself or change society by himself, but must work together with financial help and with technicians from outside, always helping and collaborating together;
- Third, material help, to buy tools, to finance construction, and to create the necessary structures.

#### A. NURTURING DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN ATTITUDES

It therefore stands clear that for a healthy global economy, African nations need to invest on these three cardinal points mention above and which are so self-explicit. It also implies that Africa has to attract and nurture both domestic and foreign attitudes of life. While the economic fate of nations is still tied closely to the success of their domestically based corporation, most governments negotiate regularly to lure foreign companies to invest within their borders. Government policies play an important role in shaping trade decisions, without which multilateral trade discipline is impossible

Capra counsels that free trade, fair access to all markets and reciprocity among nations are the best policies in an age of financial interdependence. Most Americans intuitively assume that what is good for the American Company is good for the nation. The competitiveness of the U.S. economy means the competitiveness of corporation based internationally and in the United States. This identity of interests has been so widely taken for granted that only a few theoreticians like Wolfgang Sachs (2010) and

(Cheddo Pirro (1973), have seen the need to express it.

They express the opinion that the tradition of identifying nations with corporations extends far back into the past when corporations served the Monarchs who gave them special charters. But whether that promise makes sense today is not all clear. The actual behaviour of many American Corporations shows that they do not always act as if national loyalty were their guiding motivation. Corporations are quick to relocate to remote countries with lower wages, less demanding social standards, or national laws requiring local production. Indeed, some are now suggesting that national corporations are entirely a thing of the past. In several articles and books, the concept of the integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, direct foreign investments and international flow of workers has fast replaced this old order of international trade and flung open gates to the present global economic order

An in-depth analysis of this situation is not advantageous to countries of Sub Saharan Africa in that there is a shortage of trained economic and financial professionals. This situation is causing untold damage to the continent's economic development and the international donor community, African governments, and the World Bank all shared responsibility for the solution to the problem. Resorting to resident expatriate technical assistance officials is in a way undermining the development capacity in Africa. In our opinion, it is "a systematic destructive force ", because "most of this technical assistance is imposed. It's not welcome, there's no demand for it, really, except on the donor side. A good development strategy would be making an effort to get the Africans to do things for themselves rather than have foreigners do it for them, and, naturally to their own profit.

There is an urgent need for economic reforms in Africa, and the only way to start the forward march towards development now, is that the governments generate their own economic reform plans and look for financial assistance to train in those things which seem to be reasonably making sense. Moreover there are African brains all over the globe and if governments desire, they can attract these brains

back to their respective countries from wherever they are.

## V. CONCLUSION

We lie globally in a valley with a "dam" of hunger poverty and disease," ready to burst above us. The future calls for human solidarity. Underdevelopment problems of less developed countries are a global concern. World leaders have the duty to denounce and act against global social injustice. Positive action calls for NGOs to sensitize world opinion that progress is a product of justice and unity among all nations. Peoples of the developing world especially sub-Saharan Africa, must be creators of their own programs. Rich countries must provide assistance, opportunities, and impetus to poor countries. Concepts of global development must integrate spiritual values that develop humankind in his wholeness. Alleviating disease and hunger in less developed countries and installing democratic governments can move a people march forward in the direction of global development. Once our global society and our world leaders truly embrace the natural ecosystem view of life, we will begin to forge ahead and create a world that has a future. We will learn from nature rather than always looking for a way to control and dominate it. This is the only way to achieve the merging concept of development and humanity.

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