

Globalisation and the End of a Single Orthodoxy

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Abstract

The end of the bipolar world heralded a single capitalist economic system, known as globalisation, which was postulated to solve the problems of humankind on a global scale. Initially, this distinctive economic system although confusing and polarising, was greatly celebrated and accepted by many individuals and nations. However, soon after the euphoria that was associated with the triumph of capitalism, several problems emerged, as the perceived triumph of a single orthodoxy seems to have demoted growth of global prosperity. For example, almost half of the more than 6 billion people in the world are poor; 8 million people die each year because they are too poor to stay alive, while 1 billion lives are in danger because they lack food in a world of abundance. The disparity between the global rich and poor continue to expand. By the late 1990s, the richest 20 per cent of the world's population enjoyed 86 per cent of the world's GDP, while the poorest 20 per cent own a mere one per cent. The annual income of the world's 100 richest individuals is estimated to be sufficient to end global poverty more than four times. A total of 80% of the global populace live on less than \$10 per day. Five per cent of global income is generated by the poorest 40% of the world's population; while the wealthiest 20% of the population generates 75% of world income. The income of the wealthiest tenth of the world's households is more than eighty times the purchasing power of that of the poorest tenth. This disparity has been exacerbated by growing unemployment and poverty across the globe. Since 2000, European countries have witnessed a massive increase in unemployment. The situation is acute in Africa, where there are many problems. It is ironic that Africa has one of the world's richest concentrations of minerals and precious metals, yet some 300 million of its people live on less than one dollar per day. It seems that a casino economy of speculation has failed humankind. Indeed, current failure of a single global capitalist economic system to address the wider problems of humankind such as unemployment, inequality, oppression, poverty, food shortages and economic crises, will resurrect the question regarding whether the current economic logic is still sustainable.

Keywords: Capitalism, Globalisation, Inequality, Poverty, Socialism, Unemployment

1. Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the fall of the famous Berlin Wall heralded a neoliberal economic system known as globalisation, which was postulated to address the problems of humankind on a global scale. This development saw nations, particularly developing ones, rushing to infuse themselves into the capitalist global system, which was reflected by the opening of borders to the transnational juggernaut of capitalism. Indeed, Turner (2001: 4) reports: "The late 1990s and first half of 2000 marked the apogee of a sort of market triumphalism, a confidence- at least among the Western elites- that capitalism, and in particular, American free market capitalism, was the universal answer to economic problems". This specific capitalism bears little resemblance to the earliest one, hence full blown global capitalism appeared after the defeat of contending ideologies in Russia, Eastern Europe and other parts of the world. Sklair (2002) declares: "By the early 1990s, ruling groups in all the countries of Eastern Europe had abandoned communism and were trying, in a variety of ways, to insert themselves into the capitalist global system". Thus, as previously predicted, capitalism broke all walls of resistance and penetrated societies and nations as never before imagined. Even nations such as India and China, which were one time sworn enemies of the pure capitalist system, finally succumbed to the political ideology of capitalism (Heng, 2000; Kishore, 2002). After years of trade restrictions and protectionism, followed by a series of euphemistic economic policies, the Chinese government finally decided to liberalise, and opened up its borders to the trans-national forces of capitalism. The same can be said of India as Evans (1995) observes: "By 1990s, even an Indian government claiming economic nationalist credentials had succumbed to the economic transnational practices of capitalist globalisation and had open up its economy". During the same period a

French socialist government privatised more state assets in four years than any government had done previously in economic history (Ukperere & Slabbert, 2008). The successes that were achieved then in the USA, Britain and other nations that embraced the capitalist system and the weak performances by nations that adopted its alternatives, gave powerful credence to the notion that neo-liberal capitalism was the best of all options. In other words, capitalism was highly acknowledged as the best and only option to propel any global economic agenda. Even the present author can still recall being cautioned a few years ago by a colleague, Professor Braam Rust at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, that his statement could be 'dangerous', when he remarked: *"There could still be the possibility of a complementary relationship between capitalism and socialism. The silent moments of a particular system should not be construed as the end of that system. Otherwise, a battle-line could be drawn, and it may as well not be incongruous to assert that, 'positive socialism' lurks at the corner waiting to mock the circumstantial, inexplicable fall of capitalism"* (Ukperere, 2007:81). In another peer-reviewed academic engagement, Professor Amadu Sesay seems to concur with Professor Rust's reservation, when he queried: *"Would violent conflict, terrorism and intensification of anti-globalisation demonstrations not be the natural fall-out of the uneven or lopsided gains of capitalism rather than revival of positive socialism as predicted in the study? Would the predicted resurgence of positive socialism enact another ideological confrontation between capitalism and socialism as claimed in the study? This is clearly an implausible assumption"* (Sesay, 2007:1-2). Hence, the scepticism of these eminent scholars may not be incredible, since the ovation was high for capitalism as the only goose that laid the golden egg (Maxim, 2001). Indeed, a victory at least for Reaganomics and Thatcherism, which gave birth to TINA (There Is No Alternative...).

Therefore, almost in conformity with earlier predictions, other alternative economic configurations were irrevocably declared dead. Dahrendorf (1990:38) states: *"The point has to be made unequivocally that socialism is dead and that none of its variants can be revived for a world awakening from the double nightmare of Stalinism and Brezhevism"*. Giddens (1994:52) asserts that: *"the idea of burying socialism has become a reality"*. Slabbert (1996:1) states: *"The Russian bear is dead and buried. Floundering in its wake is a confederation of states, desperately trying to come to grips with a market economy... Two of the mourners at the funeral, comrades Marx and Lenin, were seen wearing expressions of astonished embitterment, disillusioned by the fading out of one of the world's primary ideologies (socialism)"*. In the United States and certain other capitalist nations, the triumph of capitalism was greatly celebrated, culminating in Francis Fukuyama's position that the triumph of capitalism over other alternative economic systems marked the end of history (Maxim, 2001).

However, Harvard Professor, Samuel Huntington, believes that the scenario could best be captured by the clash of civilisation. In his view, *"the future will be decided not by a confrontation between social theories and political orders, as in the days of the Cold War, but by conflicts of religious and cultural origin between civilisations"* (Huntington, 1996). The above assertion could presumably be linked to the current resistance in many parts of the world, as presently witnessed in Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan and Somalia, although these were considered by the present author as 'pockets' of resistance in the face of 'turbo' triumphant capitalism (Ukperere & Slabbert, 2008). Hence, to a great extent, capitalism became unchallenged- some sort of a demigod, implying that the world is left without alternatives, but to freely accept the total and final eclipse of other economic systems by American free market capitalism, which implies that those positive moral incentives of socialist system such as free education, minimum wage, employment creation, social welfare and security, unemployment benefits, government housing constructions, progressive taxation, old age allowances, to mention a few, become relics of a by-gone era to be confined to the dustbins of history, while profit becomes the icon of the modern economic world, leaving quality of life and labour a casualty of global cutthroat competitions (Matthews, 1998). In this vein, Sassoon (1996:648) observes that *"by the 1990s, it even proved too difficult to defend the gains thus far achieved by European socialism: the welfare state, full employment, and trade union rights; the first was in danger, the second had become a thing of the past, and the third were severely curtailed"*. Indeed, this was, in part, a reflection of the distinctiveness of capitalist globalisation.

2. Distinctiveness of Globalisation

Numerous authors have expressed their views about globalisation. Some have dubbed it as global capitalism (Hutton & Giddens 2000; Ross & Trachte, 1990); while others have called it globalisation of capitalism or capitalist globalisation (Sklair, 2002; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2000). Hall *et al.* (1988), in concordance with many others, believe that *"our world is being remade. Mass production, the mass consumer, the big city, big brother state, the sprawling housing estate, and the nation-state are in decline: flexibility, diversity, differentiation, and mobility, communication, decentralisation and internationalisation are in the ascendance. In the process our own identities, our sense of self, our own subjectivity are*

being transformed...” Before progressing, it would be necessary to also emphasise that views concerning globalisation were quite polarising and confusing from the onset. Some authors argue that globalisation is merely capitalism (Ross and Trachte, 1990; McMichael, 2000; Bhagwati, 2004), while others believe that globalisation is simply internationalisation (Hirst and Thompson, 1992; Gordon, 1988). However, there are others who believe that it is merely a product of technological explosion (McLuhan cited in Manicas, 2000; Went, 2000; Intriligator, 2003). Another school of thought argues that it is a result of deterritorialisation or supraterritorialisation (Scholte, 2000:46). These varied arguments may not be far from the truth. Nevertheless, the present author believes that globalisation is an effective synchronisation and crystallisation of these multifaceted, but correlated, variables (Ukpere, 2007:200). Therefore, to take one or two variables, which are mentioned above as a basis for an analysis of globalisation, would certainly lead to a redundant concept of globalisation, and thus vindicate sceptics’ argument that there is nothing new about globalisation (Kirkbride, 2002).

The perceived triumph of capitalism had triggered, at will, a massive internationalisation process that activated a kind of technological explosion, which resulted in deterritorialism and, of course, supraterritorialism (trans-nationalism). A combination of these forces, namely triumph of capitalism, intensification of internationalisation, technological explosion and resultant deterritorialisation and increased supraterritorial (transnational) activities, delineates the distinctiveness of globalisation (Ukpere, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that globalisation is capitalism, however, capitalism is not globalisation; globalisation is internationalisation, however, internationalisation is not globalisation; globalisation is technological explosion, however, technological explosion is not globalisation; globalisation is deterritorialism, however, deterritorialism is not globalisation; and, finally, globalisation is supraterritorialism (transnationalism), however, supraterritorialism is not globalisation. Since globalisation represents all others while all others do not fully represent globalisation, its distinctiveness is delineated. Renato Ruggiero was, therefore, not too incorrect to proclaim that *“globalisation is a reality, which overwhelms all others”* (WTO, 1996). Other domains within which current globalisation can be distinguished from other economic prodigies are within the realm of:

- A rise in speculative movement of funds;
- Astronomic increases in international trade;
- Explosive international amalgamations and acquisitions;
- Transnationalisation of production;
- Advanced sophisticated technological innovations;
- Dominance of transnational corporations;
- Global fragmentation and regionalisation; and
- Global competition.

For one thing, speculative capital has a negative effect on job creation owing to the fact that investors are not enthusiastic about long term capital investments such as construction of productive outlets, namely factories, schools, hospitals and so on. Therefore, a casino economy of speculation within a global financial system was volatile to exchange and interest rates (Ukpere, 2009). The state of affairs resulted in widespread economic crises, as witnessed in the 1994-1995 Mexican Peso crises, 1997-1998 South East Asia economic crises and, to an extent, the current 2007 to date global economic meltdown, with adverse consequences on human resources. The current meltdown has resulted in the worst recession ever witnessed, and has adversely impacted on international trade in spite of the fact that previous increases in profitable international trade (owing to pervasive trade liberalisation and border porosity within a transnational dispensation) could not produce any positive results in the area of job creation (Ukpere, 2011). Moreover, astronomic international trade reflected an unequal combat between the North and some Southern economies.

Hence, major governments, particularly in the South, have attempted to attract FDI through the encouragement of Merger and Acquisition (M&A) activities, which has become a strategy for corporate competitive survival within a global economy. However, it can be argued that a majority of the M&A activities were achieved at the expense of the majority of humankind, namely workers through rigorous re-engineering. Most organisations failed to place the interests of workers at heart when considering M&A, since corporate interest was at the forefront of most their agenda (Ukpere, 2009). M&As amount to the liquidation of previously existing organisations and the reconstitution of a new corporate entity- a process, which is characterised by endemic retrenchments and transnationalisation of production (outsourcing). Transnationalisation of production is the process of subcontracting certain production activities to low wage countries in order to take advantage of the *‘international division of labour’* in order to withstand putative global competition (Ukpere & Bayat, 2012). Despite the fact that these forms of jobs from advanced countries are valuable to workers in poor countries, most of the jobs do not arrive in poor countries in the same packages that they left the rich countries. This amounts to a reduction in the aggregate value of responsibility towards global workers by global businesses, which is a precursor of low consumer spending across the globe. Current low consumer spending has resulted in stagnant

inventories and sluggish growth, which resonates the wise words of former American President, John F. Kennedy, in 1962 when he said: “Consumers, by definition, include us all. They are the largest economic group... affecting and affected by almost every public and private decision ... but they are the only important group... whose views are often not heard” (cited in Oginni, 2002). However, it should be remembered that to disregard human (workers as consumers) potential is to commit productivity suicide (Ukpere, 2010). Moreover, the concentration of economy power in few hands within a global economy has resulted in monopoly capitalist tendencies, and a mismanagement of the world's resources, as the current global economic crises illustrate. At this juncture, it would be worthwhile to pause and reflect on labour utilisation in the era of capitalist globalisation. Ukpere (2007) points out that it was marked by:

- A growing downward spiral on wages and working conditions;
- Deliberate job destruction and losses;
- A race to the bottom in labour standards;
- Unrelenting corporate mergers and acquisition;
- Flexibilisation and casualization of employment relationships;
- Poor training/expenditure on workers;
- Huge expenditure on advertisements and sales promotion;
- Restricted labour mobility;
- Labour exploitation and abuse in the export processing zones (EPZs);
- Abusive labour relationships;
- Industrial actions, violent protests and employee killings;
- Increasing crimes, congested jails forced labour and child labour;
- Footloose speculative capital;
- Rapid technological changes with adverse impact on workers;
- Erosion of labour unions' powers; and
- Demotion of industrial democracy.

It is important to note that technological advancements within the global village have accelerated the number of virtual corporations. Current virtual corporations promise a reduction of the labour force as more and more purchases can be electronically manipulated (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2008). In addition, most corporations are empowered to send their data processing to any part of the world that can do the work at a cheaper rate. This is arguably the same story of the ‘race to the bottom’ concept, which is detrimental to global workers as they under-bid themselves (Ukpere, 2010). Furthermore, the virtual corporation does not promote industrial democracy as it deals with invisible workers. Also, it does not promote unionism, which is an essential ingredient for collective bargaining and industrial amity (ibid). The absence of worker representatives and, indeed, industrial democracy, has laid a solid foundation for labour exploitation, the outcome of which is endemic unemployment, inequality and poverty in the era of globalisation.

3. Unemployment, Inequality and Poverty in the Era of Globalisation

The logic of capitalist globalisation seems to have exacerbated the level of global unemployment. In recent times top managers seem to have been encouraged to destroy jobs. For example, when a French branch of IBM retrenched 122,000 workers and reduced their total wage costs by a third in an era of globalisation, the management board rewarded those directors that were in charge of downsizing with non-pay related bonuses of 5.8 million dollars each (Martin & Schumann, 1997:121; Ukpere and Slabbert, 2008:5). Another notable example was in 1990, when Steve Ross, CEO of Times-Warner was paid the highest corporate executive salary of \$78.2 million and this occurred in the same year when he retrenched 605 employees of Times-Warner. The payment to Steve Ross would have covered the salaries of all discharged workers for two and a half years (Cohen, 1992:30). Hence, an increasing number of people have been added to global unemployment figures. More and more individuals are now moving from place to place in search of jobs, which might have evaporated owing to automation and managerial actions, or moved to other regions in order to take advantage of favourable business climates and government concessions, namely cheap labour, lax environmental laws and tax holidays (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2008).

The rising trend in unemployment within the global economy can be seen from the fact that since 2000 European countries have witnessed a massive increase in unemployment (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2009). The level of unemployment in the Eurozone rose to 12.3% in 2013, for example. Unemployment in France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Greece amounted to 11%, 14.2%, 17.5%, 26.7%, and 27.2%, respectively (Countryeconomy.com, 2013; Allen & Wearden,

2013). In a few years to come, many parts of Europe may likely assume Third-World country status. Even in Sweden, which had previously maintained a low level of joblessness, the rate of unemployment increased rapidly from 1.5% in 1990 to about 8.8% in 2013 (Trading Economics, 2013). In the UK, anxiety disorders seem to have infiltrated workplaces, as more than one in 10 workers fear that the economic meltdown could cost them their jobs (BBC News, 27 August, 2008). Unemployment in the UK now stands at 7.9% (BBC News Business, 2013). Interestingly, Austria and Germany have maintained some level of stability at 4.7% and 5.3% in terms of unemployment rates, respectively (Europa, 2013). This could be attributed to their governments' effective policies. Perhaps there is a need for other countries to find out what they are both doing right. In the USA about 12.2 million people are unemployed. Recently, the public sector shed about 13,000 jobs, while the rate of unemployment stands at 7.8% (BBC New, 4 January, 2013). It is indeed true that particularly during the last two or more decades, the labour markets in developed economies have exhibited unfavourable tendencies when compared to previous decades, which were known as the Golden Age.

In terms of Africa, within a capitalist global system, the situation is acute. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2013), about 11.7% of Sub-Saharan Africa's youths are unemployed. The youth unemployment rate in North Africa is high at 23.7% (ILO, 2013), while about 46.9% of African youths are inactive (ILO, 2009). In South Africa, for example, several female job seekers have often become victims of violent crimes owing to joblessness in the country (SABC News, 25 January, 2006). At a figure of 25.2%, more than a quarter of South African workers are currently jobless. Already about 4.6 million South Africans have become jobless in the first quarter of 2013. More than 66,000 jobs were lost in the trading sector during the last quarter alone. Of the 50 million South Africans, 2.3 million have become discouraged job seekers and more than 12 million are economically inactive. Among the unemployed, 59.4% has less than a secondary education, 49.1% are female and 70.7% are between the ages of 15-34 years (Statistics SA cited in The South African LED Network, 2013).

The discontentment among workers owing to job losses and poor working conditions is a reflection of the growing number of industrial unrest incidents witnessed in South Africa in recent times. Violent industrial action could be the outcome of poor industrial relations in an era of capitalist globalisation. For example, South Africa has witnessed several violent industrial action incidents from 2006 onwards, culminating in the recent industrial action at Marikana in 2012, which led to the massacre of more than 34 mining workers by the South African Police Services (Sosibo, 2012). It should be recalled that around 2006/7, the South African Police Services (SAPS) had contemplated engaging in industrial action if their plight remained unchanged (Ukperere, 2007:357). One wonders what would have happened in South Africa if such a strike was allowed to ensue. South Africa is not the only case where the police force had thought of the idea to strike. Even the Nigerian police force, one of the poorest paid police forces in the world, had contemplated industrial action, but later backed down, realising full well what Nigeria would have turned into before the strike was over (BBC News, 1 February, 2002).

Still on Nigeria, globalisation ecstasy seems to have made a particular previous administration to assert that it is not the responsibility of the government to create jobs. However, ideally, job creation is one of the crucial roles of the government. In other words, individuals with specific skills may become jobless when there is paucity of opportunities within a given society. For example, in Nigeria, the textile industry, which was the largest employer of labour, has folded. These textile companies, which totalled about 145 in the 1980s, have created millions of jobs for people. However, capitalist globalisation, which some refer to as '*financialisation*' (Went, 2000; also see Dorasamy, 2010) seems to have made the financial sectors more buoyant than the productive sector in Nigeria. Conversely, the financial sector has over the years been able to create only about 300,000 jobs, of which more than 50% are casual employment job. This is quite meagre when compared to jobs that were previously created through the productive sectors. Therefore, in an economy where the financial sector is more buoyant than the productive sector, there is bound to be problems owing to the vacuum, which emanates from the economic mismatch (Ukperere, 2011).

Entrepreneurial initiatives in Nigeria have not been properly funded by the government, mostly because global logic seems to have taught the nation's leadership that governments do not interfere with the economy or job creation. Consequently, about 54.4% of the nation's citizens go to bed hungry every night. In the same gloomy picture, over 5 million Nigerian youths are estimated to be unemployed. Unemployment has reached a critical height in Nigeria, namely 23.9% (Trading Economics, 2012). The everyday sight of the growing armies of unemployed youths who roam the streets with despair written all over their faces attests to the gravity of the job market situation (Samson, 2009). In the absence of any national security system to cater for the jobless, more people will turn to crime. Indeed, there is a globular relationship between retrenchment, unemployment and crime. Rising unemployment increases the number of idle persons and, hence the number of criminals (Chinonso, 2007). As the crime rate increases in any society, investors become increasingly less confident. Decreased economic growth leads to a higher level of unemployment, while the

unemployed, unable to make a living, turn to crime (Bendix, 2005:493). It can, therefore, be asserted that, as unemployment decreases, the crime rate will decrease, but the problem lies with fuelling necessary economic growth, while crime prevails. Crime affects every aspect of society and business. Therefore, companies, which are quick to retrench workers without considering the social effects that it may have, may be acting irresponsibly and will in the end suffer the consequences of increased crime and economic recession (ibid). While the evidence is not definitive, several studies of criminal behaviours within a capitalist dispensation have linked it to inequality, which points to the fact that high rates of crime are associated with falling income (Freeman, 1995, cited in Matthews, 1998:384).

In fact, unemployment could be a reason why one finds university graduate criminals presently in Nigeria. These are able-bodied persons who are willing to work after attending university for years and engaging in a year of national service, but are without jobs (Chinonso, 2007). Even some previously employed graduates may have to face the wind of competition, which capitalist global forces have unleashed, and it seems that the only way out for corporations to respond to these putative global forces, is mainly through further retrenchments and unemployment (Bloch 1998; Scholte, 2000). Hence, frustration has led youths to crime. Presently, about 90% of arrested criminals state that a main reason why they engage in crime is hunger (Matthews, 1998:384). In addition, the growing number of graduates that are unemployed, have increased the rate of some sophisticated crimes such as money laundering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, bank and lottery fraud (popularly known as 419 amongst Nigerians or 420 amongst Indians), child labour, female trafficking and, recently, terrorism.

In Kenya, the labour-intensive horticultural industry, which employs an estimated three million people, suffered a 35% drop in the export of flowers and has cut around 1, 200 jobs in 2007 (Saleh, 2007). In Zambia, 8100 of the 30,000 workers in the mining sector lost their jobs in 2008, while further increases in unemployment are anticipated (Taiwo & Moyo, 2011). In the Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 60 per cent of enterprises have closed down and about 300,000 people have been laid off. The volume of rubber exports from Liberia decreased from 135,000 tonnes in 2007 to 88,000 tonnes in 2008, which also exacerbated the unemployment situation in that country (UNDP, 2011; Melik, 2011).

The Arab Spring of 2011 is a reflection that youth unemployment should be at the heart of a nation's growth agenda. Youth unemployment/inactivity was able to bring down authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, and should also be recognised as a threat to democracies in South Africa and Ghana (Taiwo & Moyo, 2011). For example, in Ghana, unemployed youths have resorted to barricading government offices and making demands on politicians. In Egypt, thousands of men have lost their lives while trying to cross illegally into fortress Europe. Some sail from the Egyptian Mediterranean coast aboard fishing boats that are operated by smugglers. Many of them travel first to Libya, before attempting the perilous crossing to Italy (Saleh, 2007). The main reasons why they undertake such dangerous and excruciating journeys are the same, which drive illegal migrants from Nigeria, Togo, Ivory Coast, Republic of Benin, Congo DRC, Zimbabwe and other African countries, namely unemployment, inequality, poverty and a lack of opportunities (Ukpere, 2011). The right to gainful employment was indeed one of the fundamental rights of every individual, which is enshrined by the UN Charter for Human Rights as far back as 1945 (UNDP, 2003:1). However, it is a pity that the current global capitalist logics have exacerbated the erosion of this fundamental right of the working person, and expanded the level inequity in societies.

The disparity between the global rich and poor continue to expand. According to Oxfam (2013), the annual income of the world's 100 richest individuals is enough to end global poverty four times over. In a world of about 6.7 billion people, 80% live on less than \$10 per day. Five (5) per cent of global income is generated by the poorest 40% of the world's population; while conversely the wealthiest 20% of the population generates 75% of world's income (Shah, 2013, also see Slabbert & Ukpere, 2011). By the late 1990s, the richest 20 per cent of the world's population enjoyed 86 per cent of the world's GDP, while the poorest 20 per cent own a mere one per cent. The income of the wealthiest tenth of the world's households is more than eighty times the purchasing power of that of the poorest tenth (Therborn, 2001, cited in Amin, 2004:1). This disparity is a product of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer; a trend, which affects developed countries, but is severe among developing nations, with large sections of the population being in sub-Saharan Africa, East and South Asia, Latin America, while the post-communist states are forced even further into abject poverty. Lloyd (2001:21) notes that *"half of the global population- roughly 3 billion people live in abject poverty; nearly half of these- 1.2 billion in 2000- live in utter destitution, on less than \$1 a day, in danger of death by starvation or related diseases. Access to safe drinking water is unknown to 1 billion people; 2.4 billion people have no adequate sanitation"*. The consequences of this poverty are manifested in the form of increasing early mortality, diseases and malnutrition, prostitution, child labour, displacement and forced migration, the violence of social breakdown, state social control and fractional war, acute risk and uncertainty, environmental degradation and vulnerability, as well as a loss of existential

material security (Amin, 2004:1).

The top 500 richest people currently own US\$ 1.54 trillion, which is more than the entire GDP of Africa (Prabhakar, 2010). It is ironic that Africa has one of the world's richest concentrations of minerals and precious metals, yet some 300 million of its people live on less than one dollar a day (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2005). In the case of Africa, *"inequality is worsened when growth, which creates wealth, is not accompanied by decent jobs; the sort of growth that distributes wealth, foster consumption and drives investment"* (Juan Somavia cited in News from Africa, 2010). A study by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (2005) reveals that focussing on economic growth alone might not be the best way to half poverty by 2015. The study further states that a crucial factor in the equation is income inequality, because it is not so much the growth figures themselves that matter, but the fact that economic growth is intricately linked to unequal income. In fact, poverty reduction or escalation is determined by levels of inequality in society. Thus, even if there is growth in a country, the way that income is distributed is vital. Nevertheless, in many African countries growth in national income rarely trickles down to the poor workers (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2005). In South Africa, for instance, more than 22 million people live, on average, on less than R144/ (about \$15) per month; the poorest 40% citizens remain overwhelmingly Africans, female and rural; 60% of female-headed households are poor versus 31% of male-headed households; two out of 3 children live in poverty;... which renders South Africa as one of the most unequal societies on earth (Adams, *et al.*, 2006:13).

In Nigeria, where some politicians earn more than the USA president, workers are comparing their difficult conditions with the affluence of the elite members of their society. Another case in point is Burkina Faso, where thousands of trade union members shut down economic activities four times in 2005 through a series of national protests over low salaries, high prices, lost jobs and inadequate social benefits (Harsch, 2006). One of the Union leaders, Bakary Millogo, decries workers' 'rampant pauperisation' as opposed to the 'scandalous and ostentatious' lifestyles of high government officials. According to Balemans, *"the gap between the rich and the poor is widening ever more. Such a situation is all the more insupportable, in the midst of relatively high economic growth rates, which have been mainly for the rich... The workers have a right to their share of the national wealth, which, according to the government, grew in 2005 by 7 per cent."* Another commentator added: *"Burkina is running the risk of a social explosion of unpredictable consequences. The dangers are all greater because endemic poverty exists alongside visible signs of wealth. Some take a plane to get treated for hay fever, while others die because they cannot afford malaria treatment"* (cited in Harsch, 2006).

Elsewhere in Africa, similar development is also instigating growing concerns. For example, in Senegal, a boom in housing construction in Dakar has led to the emergence of a middle class. Meanwhile, instability and poverty are gaining ground at the other end of the social ladder (Fatimata Sy, cited in Harsch, 2006). Nix (2007) traces income inequality in South Africa to a lack of skill and education by certain sections of the labour force. She, therefore, advises that: *"if education is the source of the high income inequality in South Africa, the best way to address this issue is to make a concerted effort to increase quantity and quality of schooling among all South Africans"*. Inequality has indeed widened in Africa, with a tiny section of the population getting richer, while a greater number of people are forced into abject poverty. Herein re-echoes the words of wisdom of our icon, Nelson Mandela: *"Combating inequality... is an ethical and moral imperative. Massive poverty and obscene inequality is such terrible scourge of our times- times in which the world boasts breath-taking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation- that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils"* (Mandela, 2005). According to the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Jose Antonio Ocampo, *"ignoring inequality in the pursuit of development is perilous. Focussing exclusively on economic growth and income generation as a development strategy is ineffective, as it leads to the accumulation of wealth by a few and deepens the poverty of the many... failure to address inequalities means that communities, countries and regions remain vulnerable to social, political and economic upheaval"* (cited in Harsch, 2006). In fact, extreme wealth in the midst of inequality is economically inefficient, politically corrosive, socially divisive and environmentally destructive. More inequality in the Third World is reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Inequalities in Selected Third World countries

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Accra (Ghana) death rates from infectious disease are twice as high for those living in the poorest areas compared with the richest areas.• In the Philippines, South Africa, and Nepal infant mortality rate for the poorest 20% of children is twice as high as for the richest 20%.• In NE and SE Brazil the under-5 mortality rate for the poorest 20% of children is over six times that of the richest 20% of children. |
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- In Peru, rate of underweight and stunting amongst the poorest 20% are about five times those amongst the richest 20%
- In Indonesia only 21% of birth of the rural poor and 49% of birth of the urban poor were attended by medical personnel, compared with 78% and 93% for rural and urban rich.
- 59% of deaths amongst the poorest 20% of the world were caused by communicable diseases, for the rich 8%.
- In Cameroon, a child born into the poorest 20% of families is more than twice likely to die before the age of 5 as one born into the top 20%.
- In Sierra Leone, the richest 20% of the population accounted for more than 63% of all expenditure, while the bottom 40% had the resources to spend just a meagre 3.1%.
- In Accra water consumption per capita is three times higher for the one third of people living in the richest areas compared to those living in the poorest areas.
- In India, 15-19 years olds from the richest 20% of households have completed on average ten years of schooling, children from the poorest 40% of households have on average no schooling.
- 39% of poor 6-14-years-olds in Nigeria were in school, compared with 91% of rich 6-14s; in Madagascar, 47% compared with 90%.
- In Ecuador, 75% of households among the poorest fifth lack piped water, compared with 12% among the richest fifth.
- In Sao Paulo the 9% living in the richest areas consume five times as much water per capita as the 41% living in the poorest areas; in Accra water consumption per capita is three times higher for the one third of people living in the richest areas compared to those living in the poorest areas.
- In Guatemala, the richest 20% of under-5s have a 47% rate of stunting, whereas the poorest 20% have 70% rate of stunting; 25% of the richest 20% of children under 5 are underweight, compared with 41% of the poorest 20%.
- In Morocco, 15% of the wealthiest under-5s quintile suffers from stunting, 39% of the poorest quintile; 6% of the richest children under 5 in Morocco are underweight and 23% of the poorest are underweight.
- In Peru, 10% of the richest children under 5 suffer from stunting, compared with 51% of the poorest; 5% of the wealthiest quintile of children under 5 are underweight, 22% of the poorest.
- Across sub-Saharan Africa, 37% of children did not go to primary school in 2001, the highest rate in any world region, while female share was 41%, and almost all children out of school are from poor families.
- Females have less than ½ the average number of years of education than do males in Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Niger, Senegal and South Africa.
- In Cameroon, Cote d' Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone, women often earn less than half of what their men earn.
- In Chad, women on average complete less than a quarter of the schooling that men do.
- In Togo, 91% of women from the richest 5th of the population are attended by skilled health personnel during childbirth, while women from the poorest 5th, that share drops to 25%.
- In Mauritania, 93% of women from the richest 5th of the population are attended by skilled health personnel during childbirth, while that of the poorest 5th is 15%.
- In Zambia, the richest 10% of the population earns a total income that is 42 times larger than the poorest 10%.
- In Ghana, the incidence of poverty in Accra the capital is only 2%, while in the rural savannah regions in the north, it is 70%.
- In Guinea-Bissau, women have only about ½ the income of men and are only ½ as likely to be able to read or write.
- In Guinea, 48% of all people visiting hospitals and primary health facilities come from the richest 5th of the population, while those from the poorest 5th make up only 4% of patients.
- In Morocco, 15% of the wealthiest under-5s quintile suffers from stunting, 39% of the poorest quintile; 6% of the richest children under 5 in Morocco are underweight and 23% of the poorest are underweight.

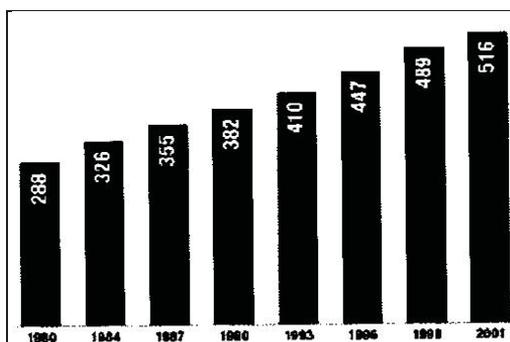
Source: Adapted from <http://worldbank.com/poverty/date/trends/social.pdf> cited in Sklair 2002:51; Harsch, 2006.

Indeed, increases in income inequality and poverty in the poorest developing countries, over the past decades, can be attributed to globalisation (Salvatore, 2004:548). Bonded and trafficking labourers, owing to restrictions on global labour mobility, are locked into livelihoods that provide no opportunity to shift from poverty (Chronic Poverty Report, 2005:17). Chronically poor people are found across the world, while the largest numbers live in South Asia (135-190 million). However, the highest incidence of chronic poverty is in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 40% live on less than \$1 per day (Ukpere, 2011). East Asia also has significant numbers of chronically poor people, namely between 55-85 million, who live mainly in China (Chronic Poverty Report, 2005). Considering the situation, Ukpere and Slabbert (2007:5) posit: *"Most of the incidents increasing the rate of poverty around the world today cannot be attributed to nature, but to man and the selfish capitalist institutions created by man"*.

Almost half of the more than 6 billion people in the world are poor; more than 8 million people die each year because they are too poor to stay alive, while more than 1 billion lives are in danger because they lack food, whilst living

in a world of abundance (Times Magazine, 2005:26; Ukpere and Slabbert, 2007:5). In a shocking report on human poverty, the UNDP recorded the income or consumption share of the poorest 20% of the population in fourteen countries across four continents. Based on these figures, people in the poorest quintile in Brazil, who share merely 2.5% of its total income, appear to be affected the worst. Comparable figures for South Africa are 2.9%; Russia 4.2%; and Thailand 5.6%. In addition, the UNDP (2000:43) states that *“economic growth cannot be accelerated enough to overcome the handicap of too much income directed to the rich. Income does not trickle down; it only circulates among the elite groups* (cited in Sklair, 2002:49). Data from 85 Third World countries (including Africans) reveals a wide range of deprivation among them. For example, 64.7 per cent of the population in Niger lived in severe poverty during the late 1990s. In general, more than one-third of people in African countries lived in extreme poverty (Chronic Poverty Report, 2005:9). Figure 1 below shows that the number of people in sub-Saharan Africa who live in absolute poverty, has more than doubled within two decades. The number increased from 288 million in 1981 to 516 million in 2001.

Figure 1: Rising poverty in sub-Saharan Africa in millions



Source: UN Africa Renewal, from data in UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs, cited in Harsch, 2006

The situation in sub-Saharan Africa is severe. For example, up to 65% of Malawi's 13.1 million people live on less than a dollar per day, according to Malawian government statistics. The United Nation-Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has repeatedly warned of catastrophic food shortages in many African countries. Currently, the average per-capita calorie intake has now fallen below minimal nutritional standards. The FAO recently estimated that of Africa's 750 million people, more than 270 million suffer from some form of malnutrition associated with inadequate food supplies (Prabhakar, 2010). The food and global crises is likely to fuel incidences of poverty and vulnerability in poor countries such as Ethiopia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique and Tanzania (Ngowi, 2010). The situation could be worse in other parts of Africa such as Congo, Burundi, Malawi and Comoros. Despite the fact that most poverty in Africa is attributed to drought, famine, internal strife, wars and HIV/AIDS, it must be stated here again that capitalist globalisation has not spread the benefits of increased efficiency and openness it more evenly and equitably amongst individuals and nations. Therefore, within the domain of global unemployment, inequality and poverty in the era of globalisation, renewed problems of global competition, job termination, wage reductions, labour immobility and technological displacement of workers have accelerated the rate of global unemployment, the corollary of which is endemic inequality and poverty.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, there could be other better global alternatives than the current single capitalist triumphant orthodoxy. This particular view is reinforced by recurring protests and confrontations around the world owing to increasing social and economic exclusion of a majority of people from the benefits of globalisation. Hence, based on the current deplorable social and economic situation, it would be erroneous to claim that all aspects of socialism is dead and buried, because to bury socialism in its entirety would be to bury unionism; to bury socialism would be to bury industrial democracy and economic empowerment; to bury socialism would be to bury government regulations and interventions; to bury socialism would be to bury harmonious industrial relations; to bury socialism would in fact be to bury all alternatives to the present

world of exploitation, poverty, inequality, squalor and disease, unnecessary deaths and hopelessness. It is true that socialism has failed; however, capitalism has failed woefully. Hence, the only hope that is left is a renaissance of positive aspects of socialism in order to resuscitate capitalism. Therefore, a complementary and comprehensive ideological order is urgently required within the current global crisis because it is only determined government action, which is orchestrated by a strong sense of true nationalism that can limit the worst effects of the current global economic meltdown. In concordance with the author's view, Turner (2001:20 states that: "the belief of capitalism and economic development helped generate the ideas, as well as the prosperity, which characterises the developed world today, but, en route, they generated the inequality and insecurity, which almost blew up this post facto progressive path, but capitalism was only saved by the emergence in the late 19th and 20th centuries of a countervailing force, which many capitalists opposed: a state powerful enough to redistribute economic opportunities and to provide collective goods, and intellectually competent enough to absorb and apply Keynes's intellectual revolution- a state, which was the product of ideas and political will, rather than a natural and automatic product of capitalist system itself". Therefore, the state cannot continue to be a passive onlooker amidst economic mismanagement and industrial cacophony because humans, in search of peace and progress, have surrendered their sovereign identity to the state. The state is indeed a fine product of human civilisation, and should be the authoritative supreme power- the actual sovereign, which should formulate and execute the will of the people, while stimulating private initiatives towards the full actualisation of capisocism. This will ensure an end to a single orthodoxy, namely capitalist globalism.

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