## Chapter 3

# Globalisation and Transborder Trade: Implications for Work and Productivity in Nigeria

*Emeka J. Onyetube and Abubakar Liman*

## Introduction

Over the years, imperialism has manifested itself in the form of westernisation, modernisation, liberalisation and now globalisation. Its instrument of cooperation and conflicts are multinationals, IMF, World Bank and NGOs. The simple exploitative concept it conjoins with other words is "free" (free trade, free flow of capital etc) and therefore, respects no border and no culture. As globalisation becomes increasingly associated with the breaking down of national barriers, the internationalization of trade, financial activities, and the growing power of transnational corporations and international financial institutions (Khor, 2005), proponents seem to give credence to it as the panacea to world's socio-economic, cultural and political problems. The consequence of this according to Koshy (2001) is the integration of nations into the vicious circle of imperialism, or simply the global market economy for Western economic exploitation of the South. Although, the opportunities of this process have been stressed by supporters, recently there has been increasing disillusionment among many policy-makers, analysts and academics. Reasons informing the changing perceptions of their attitude towards globalisation are numerous. Among them is the lack of tangible benefits to most developing countries from opening their economies. Despite the publicised claims of export and income gains many believe that economic imbalance and social dislocation are the characteristics of economy of many developing countries occasioned by rapid financial and trade liberalisation, the growing inequalities in wealth and opportunities arising from globalisation keep expanding. In addition, environmental, social and cultural problems have been made worse by the operations of the global free-market economy (Ogunlana, 2004), a factor that has been responsible for the economic woes of the developing countries.

Multilateral agreements and institutions like WTO serve as instruments of powerful nations and multinational corporations for making super profits as well as influencing and sometimes coercing countries into accepting their policies. Consequently, many poor nations of the world are trapped in the web of a global economic network thereby making them incapable of self-determination. Nigeria is not an exception in this situation. It has over the years entered into bilateral and multilateral agreements with many nation-states and the WTO. The implications of these are that Nigeria open up its economy through deregulation, liberalisation, privatization etc by allowing for free movement of goods and services and capital across its borders. Significantly, globalisation has affected transborder trade and has a far reaching effect on work and productivity in Nigeria. Ironically, rather than enjoying the dividend of globalisation–industrialization, agricultural mechanization, etc. industries crashed and their workers were sent to the streets.

In the light of the foregoing, several questions need to be raised and answered. Is transborder trade a product of globalisation or an outcome of historical development? What are the forces behind the trend? In doing so, the paper is structured into the following sections: Section one builds on the clarification of major conceptual issues and theoretical framework of analysis. Section two examines pre-colonial socioeconomic formations and their role in work, trade and productivity. Section three examines the role of colonialism in the transformation of the pre-colonial structures into the capitalist system. Section four looks into the implications of international trade policies on work and productivity in Nigeria. Section five concludes the paper by suggesting ways through which Nigeria can maximize the benefits of transborder trade and minimize its negative effects.

## **Clarification of relevant concepts**:

***Globalisation:*** The concept of globalisation could be likened to the story of the "seven blind men" who went to identify an elephant; each describing the elephant based on the part of the body he touched. Chatterji and Gangopadhyay (2008:4-5) sees globalisation as a multidimensional concept that possesses vital facets that entails economic, financial, technological, social and political processes that continually change the global economy, society and polity. This suggests globalisation as a complex process that gradually unleashes a series of transitions: the process starts off with an increased integration of the world economy through trade. Globalisation entails a detailed process of governance at various levels by MNCs, governments and regulatory agencies that engender a gradual integration of the global economy. Khor (2008) suggests that globalisation is a process that has increasingly extended its outreach through trade and production activities to territories all over the world with a long historical evolution. Here, emphasis is simply on economic interests that profess breaking down of national economic barriers; the international spread of trade, financial and production activities, and the growing power of transnational corporations and international financial institutions. Mckinnon (2000), conceived globalisation to include many things such as culture, politics, technology, etc, as well as offering "plentiful opportunities for countries" that are willing and able to face the challenges. The implication is that globalisation is fraught with a lot of challenges. However, globalisation in this context refers to the process of the integration of poor nations into the world of imperialism. By imperialism we mean the process whereby the dominant politico-economic interests of one nation appropriate for their own benefit, land, raw materials, and markets of another people (Parenti: n d).

***Work:*** Both John Locke and Karl Marx hold that work could be the means through which people might express their creativity (Baradat: 2008). Both men believed that work is the process through which people advance their humanity and experience self-fulfillment. According to Marx, noted Baradat (2008), by interacting with nature through labour power, individuals develop and change nature. Therefore, he argued that work is a form of "self creation".

***Productivity:*** Prokopenko (1987) conceived productivity as the relationship between the output generated by a production or a service system and the input provided to create this output. This implies that the efficient application or use of resources such as labour, capital, land, materials, energy and information in the production of goods and services is generally productivity. Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1984) observed that productivity is that which is concerned with the overall effectiveness and efficiency of getting things done. It, therefore, suggests making more from what you have and working smarter than harder. Yaro (2005) conceptualized productivity as "the effective and efficient utilization of resources to achieve organization's objective or set goals at a given period" (p2). Productivity here suggests duration and therefore should be measured in relation to a given period of time. Regardless of the type of production, economic or political system, the definition remains the same. The basic concept is always the relationship between the quality and quantity of goods and services produced and the quantity of resources used to produce them.

***Transborder Trade:*** This is conceived by the World Bank as "an activity that increases competition, supplies products across borders," it provides as well an avenue for engaging people in economic activities in neighbouring countries, and encourages entrepreneurial activities (cited in Meagher, 2003 :p.58). Transborder trade is also credited with opportunities for indigenous accumulation and productive investment thereby serving as a basis for the development of an authentic "indigenous bourgeoisie".

***Theoretical Perspective:*** A number of theoretical standpoints have been used to explain the role of transborder trade on work and productivity in various socioeconomic formations. These have yielded results in explaining the resilient nature of transborder trade coupled with the dynamics of job creation and its effect on production. Among these theories is the neo-liberal approach with its basic emphasis on structural reformation. Expectation widely celebrated is that reforms will drastically reduce, if not eliminate totally, unofficial transborder trade through liberalisation and closer "integration" into the global economy and will definitely usher in a significant economic growth. Contrary to the above expectation, Meagher (2003) noted that transborder trades tend to persist and often in a more dynamic pattern. The failure of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), as evident in Nigeria, suggests that SAP is not the right policy option for solving Nigeria's socio-economic problems.

However, another theory that could be used to explain transborder trade as it applies to work and productivity is dialectic materialism. This theory adopted the dialectic as the fundamental motive of history, as Baradat (2008) puts it, "one need not be a Marxist to believe in economic determinism". Consequently, economic motive principally drives other factors, and serves as a foundation for the superstructure. The foundation of the superstructure is to assure the rulers continued dominance and to subject the people to obedience, yet Marx holds that society's foundation gradually changes. As these changes occur new economy evolves giving birth to new owners who are in opposition to the old dominant class. Friction between these two classes that are diametrical eventually motivates historical changes and progress.

Again, Karl Marx's theory of alienation is equally another theory that could add value to analysing the impact of transborder trade on work and productivity. Marx believed that workers become alienated from themselves essentially due to three exploitative features of capitalism. First, Marx reasoned that instead of enjoying work or act of creation, workers grow to detest the very process through which they could refine their own natures, simply because of capitalist exploitation and unacceptable working conditions. Hence, they are alienated from a part of their own selves. Related to the above, is the second feature which states that capitalism must exploit the workers in order to produce a profit. In return, the profit is used to further exploit the workers who are forced to sell their labour power, thus making the workers to regard their own product, as alien and even harmful to them. The third feature appears paradoxical. Marx argues that the introduction of machine will ultimately rob labourers of their skills and reduce them to mere feeders of machine. Consequently, it becomes impossible to realize societal development fully. This is ultimate alienation.

Although the impact of transborder trade on work and productivity in this era of globalisation may not be wholly explained from a Marxist perspective it significantly underscores the fundamental issues of work and mode of production and its attending consequences of exploitation of workers, occasioned by the capitalist's inordinate desire for profit maximization. This paper therefore, adopted Marxian theory of dialectic materialism as the basis for analysis.

## Trade, Work and Productivity in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

In the pre-capitalist social formations that make up what is now Nigerian socio- economic formation, there existed significant trading activities between and among various social formations which could be regarded as "transborder" trade. These created jobs or employment opportunities for people. For these reasons, there are indications that these social formations have experienced a high level of productivity that might have been responsible for certain degree of development as witnessed in most of these areas. This included the ability to harness their environment for maximum output (Macphee; 1971). However, they existed under different modes of production at differing levels of development – the communal, slave and feudal modes. The technologies employed in the production processes were simple but efficient and effective. For instance, in the Hausa and Kanem areas the use of iron in agricultural production dated back to 500BC to 200BC, as was evident in the Nok culture of the people of central Nigeria. Onimode (1983) remarked that the use of implements involves specialization.

Related to the above, is the demonstration of a high degree of excellence and skills in their societal transformation. Apart from the organized and centralized political and social system, Udo (1980) pointed out that the Hausa people were skillful in crafts and perhaps the most traveled traders in West Africa. Some of their skilled products included: wood carvings, blanket from camels' hair, perfumes and leather goods. These products were taken to Libya, Morocco and beyond. Allen (1983) added that pot making was central and was made in organized manner. Textile industries in Kano in Onimode's estimation made Kano the Manchester of Nigeria. These activities propelled industrial development. Adebayo (1992) identified these as the hallmark of some of the great productive works that the Hausa land was well known for. In the north east of Nigeria, the Kanem Borno made a remarkable progress in work and productivity through inter-trade activities with different social formations. It could be noted that mass production and trade witnessed high volume of activities. Tin and antimony or lead sulphates (kohli) were imported from Plateau and Wase areas. These were further re-exported to supply brass industries in Fabina. Exportation of clothes, onions and most importantly, potash, were carried from Borno to Yoruba land and Benue valley. Gold dust was also processed and exported to Egypt (Lavers; 1980). Rodney (1976) gave an account of Nupe's great role in the glass and bead industries:

> In Nupe (now northern Nigeria) the glass and bead industry operated on guild basis …..What this amounted to was simply that there was increasing specialization and division of labour.

Specialisation and division of labour, so necessary for productivity were the characteristics of pre-capitalist Nigeria. Evidence suggests that Yoruba land was best known for its preservation of ivory, terracotta and bronze sculptures. There existed between Yoruba land and its neighbours a significant trade relationship as well as with Hausa land. Blacksmithing was also popular especially in the making of instruments of production – cutlasses, hoes, knives, guns, spearheads etc (Onimode, 1983:15). These have helped in the industrial transformation of Yoruba land as work and productivity truly supported transborder trade, thus creating social relationship among these social formations.

In the eastern part of Nigeria, the Igbo people showcased great works of art. Among these were chair making and pottery, which existed 200years before the advent of the Europeans. Again, the use of iron in fashioning instruments of wars and farm implements such as knives, hoes, as well as instruments for hunting, were common features of this area. The emergence of slavery, however, gave rise to Igbo traders that later controlled many of the region's trade activities. In upper Benue and Plateau, great skills were shown by its people through salt mining, production of antimony and fish farming and smoking. The excess of these were traded outwards. For instance, smoked fish and antimony were exported to Igbo land and Nupe land (Abubakar, 1980). It is evident from the above that different social formations of Nigeria had to a greater degree performed credibly in harnessing their human and natural resources to produce beyond their consumption, the surplus of which supported transborder trade between and among them. Trade relations were free since no institution regulated it and social formations enjoyed equal benefits of their trade. Consequently, these economic relations, strengthened further these social formations as the cases of Borno, Hausa land and that of Yoruba have demonstrated.

## The colonial era

The Nigerian pre-capitalist social formations were on the path of development when the forces of British imperialism stepped in and changed the Nigerian social structure and the pattern of trade through different policies and structures. Social formations were violently conquered, subjugated and subsequently amalgamated into a single colonial economic and political system. The power of these states was usurped into a single hand – the British. This power was, however, not enough in controlling the social relations of production as well as the trade system of Nigeria. In other words, political power alone was incapable of breaking the pre-colonial economic system, economic policies were therefore necessary. First, the British introduced forced labour. Nigerians found themselves labourers and producers of primary products – agricultural produce, mining, and building of roads and railways and this was followed by insignificant wage policies (Ofonagoro, 1979:219-239, Rodney, 1976:181, Onimode, 1983:36-37). Consequently, their labours were appropriated for the colonizers and oppressors interest thus making them workers instead of producers of goods and services.

To ensure an effective and efficient trading system, the British monetized the economy of Nigeria. Monetization however, does not necessarily imply the presence of money as a means of exchange. This was to facilitate inter-dependence (of unequal relations) because a non monetized economy cannot be integrated into the vicious circle of imperialism (Ake, 1981:3). This led to the introduction of currency which was achieved through the gradual destruction of pre-colonial currencies and the establishment of a unique currency all over the country. Thus, convertibility of this currency was easy. To ensure that people worked towards the British needed materials, taxes were also imposed which contributed immensely to destroying the older currencies. Rodney (1976:181) argued that taxation was forced on people including several items such as cattle, land and houses. Consequently, people had to work to pay taxes in the currency newly introduced.

To facilitate trade, Marketing Boards were also established. Among these were West African Board and Cocoa Board. Their function was to serve as intermediary between the peasants and the international market. Prices of goods and services were equally determined by these boards. In an attempt to ensure that the earlier trade between Nigeria's social formations and their international partners no longer existed, new borders were created and trade directed solely to the western powers. Adebayo (1992) posits that after the defeat of the northern region in 1903, by 1906 the British had started exporting hides and skins of over £50,000 and by 1938 it had already exported £13millon annually. Between 1900 and 1960, the volume of export of food and cash crop sky rocketed. The export of palm kernel for instance, rose from 834 tons to 26 thousand tons, palm oil rose from 631 to 13 thousand tons, 1 ton to 36 thousand for Cocoa, from 4 tons to 28 thousand for groundnuts, 186 to 14 thousand for rubber etc. Apart from cash crops, food items also experienced mass output. In 1957 alone, the nation exported 6 million tons of yam, 4 million tons of cassava, 2 million tons of guinea corn and 1 million tons of millet. Others include; Tin ore, Columbite, Coal, Gold, etc (Onimode 1983, 49-54).

The consequence of all these was that the Nigerian pre-colonial industries were destroyed or incapacitated due to their inability to withstand the superior technology of imperialism. The work system created was also geared to serve none other than colonial interest. Their policies also gave way for Nigeria's integration into the web of international division of labour. Nigeria became a primary producer, depending on the colonizer for the value of its international commodity, while the colonizer became the manufacturer. Work and productivity were therefore, said to serve only British interests.

## International trade policies and their implications

The economy of Nigeria in both the colonial and post colonial periods was virtually the same in character and significantly nothing changed (Onimode, 1983:137). The First Republic leaders adopted capitalism as the new mode of production (Onimode, 1983:138). In this sense, multinational corporations of colonial era such as the United African Company (UAC) and British Petroleum (BP), still maintained firm influence and control in their areas of operation. Conducive environment was provided for these multinational corporations through favourable laws and joint production in some aspects of the economy. Consequently, Nigeria consented to and adopted a number of international trade agreements and investment policies. The origin of these agreements could be traced to the failed International Trade Organization (ITO) in 1948, in Havana, Cuba. This was followed by another multilateral agreement on Government procurement in the Tokyo Round in 1976 (Ogunlana, 2004). But with the emergence of WTO in 1995, World leading industrialized countries began to expand the scope of trade and investment agreements primarily to strengthen their position and dominance in a hitherto global world of inequalities. Ogunlana (2004) remarked that the justification for expanding WTO's scope by the developed countries was chiefly to secure foreign investments and ensure free and unrestricted access to market through application of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Also, the involvement of the WTO in issues relating to investment such as agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) (Khor, 2005; Ogunlana, 2004), suggests unfair competition and rationalize the fear of the developing countries in international trade due to the disadvantaged position in global trade.

On the issue of competition, the developed countries argued that standardization will ensure unrestricted market access through the WTO. This means that issue of multilateral framework of cross border regulation would enhance the contribution of competition to the development of international trade. Similarly, El-Rufai (2002) stated that…"privatization … is being undertaken… to allow the establishment of more firms for competition". This he argued means more "employment to Nigerians". Today, Nigeria operates an open "free trade" economy, commercializing and privatizing most public enterprises. Capital flows (both electronically and in cash) freely without objection. The currency of the country continues to depreciate. In 1980 for instance, naira was exchanged for 0.70 to 1 dollar. Today Naira is exchanged at 149 to a dollar (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, n.d) which indicates not only the drastic fall of the value of the Nigerian currency but also renders the values of Nigerian produce cheap in international market. This also explains why Nigerian farmers and producers are incapable of accessing inputs (tractors, fertilizer, etc) in the international market. Some of the multilateral disciplines exerted on Nigeria and other developing countries through WTO agreements have to be re-examined. This will eliminate unhealthy competitions in the international markets, thus creating employment through our industries.

Capitalist policies could also be viewed from the point of import substitution. In 2005 alone, Nigeria imported foreign goods worth 26 billion dollars, China having 9.4 percent, US (8.14 percent), UK (7.8 percent), the Netherlands (5.9 percent) Spain (7.1 percent) and France (5.4 percent). Nigeria, moreover, exported goods worth 52 billion dollars out of this, United States (74.4 percent), Brazil (10.7 percent) and Spain (7.1 percent). The major goods imported by Nigeria were chemicals, machineries and manufactured goods. However, over 90 percent of its exports came from oil with less than 8 percent accounted for by cocoa, rubber, etc (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, n.d). The developed countries encourage and sometimes coerce the developing nations to remove subsidy for their farmers, while subsidies are heavily granted to their own farmers. Feffer (2007) observed that the developed nations give 1 billion dollars as daily subsidy to their farmers while using machineries like IMF, World Bank, and the WTO to constrain third world farmers from gaining access to agricultural subsidy. Nwachukwu (2008), pointed out that Nigerian farmers could not even compete with their counterparts in Ghana, Ivory Coast and Cameroon who don’t pay duties to export their cocoa.

Unfortunately, where subsidy is granted, it is mostly enjoyed by the "big time farmers" in conjunction with multinational corporations who are gaining ground in the production of raw materials, livestock and poultry (http//iss.co.za.). There should be alternative options for Nigeria and other developing countries. Attention should be on increasing concern for developing economics and approaches that are based on sustainable development.

The industrial sector is not excluded from this, in 1998, the sector contributed 48 percent of the GDP and employed 8 percent of the work force. The common products of most of these companies are textile materials, cigarettes, food and soap. These account for 60 percent of manufacturing output (http//.iss.co.za). Others have however collapsed due to their inability to compete with the cheap imported goods from outside. In textile industries for instance, Salami (2009) reported that most of the textile materials which circulate as "made in Nigeria" are imported and 90 out of the 80 percent were imported from China (lomnie. com), even though Nigeria has banned the importation of textile materials. The government neither ensures the protection of industries nor safeguards the security of its border. Wikipedia, (n.d) further stated that Nigerian factories would have for long closed if not for the extreme cheap labour in the country.

The above mentioned policies were moreover worsened by deregulation policy. Deregulation has over the years proved to be the backbone of capitalist intrusion into various socioeconomic formations. It is the engine of promoting international capitalist exploitation. To the capitalist however, deregulation ensures productivity and "free" operation of the economy (Ndiribe, 2009). In Nigeria, deregulation along with other liberalisation policies of international capitalism became active in the 90's under Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Since then, the policy has been called into question by many observers considering its role in increasing inflation, shortage of foreign exchange, low capacity utilization, unemployment, etc (Ndiribe, 2009: onlinenigeria.com). Oshemohle cited in Ochu (2009) posits that the current global economic meltdown which Nigeria found itself in is nothing but the failure of deregulation policy. He argued that money can only be misappropriated, diverted, or even saved but "cannot just melt away". He maintained that the policy has a far reaching effect on the current devaluation of Nigerian currency which further strengthened the ability of companies to purchase foreign goods, thereby destroying virtually every aspect of the economy. It also gives foreign nations the leverage to exploit Nigeria's human and material resource. To stamp out the effect of this ugly developments effort should be geared towards Nigeria considering her option in the globalised economy by making serious review on liberalisation experience and having a clear stand on what the role of the state and the market should be. Instead of rapid liberalisation, a selective approach to liberalisation is more appropriate. The aim of this is to strike a balance between opening the domestic market (to benefit consumers) and protecting it (to take into account especially the interest of small producers).

## Conclusion

This paper concludes that the globalisation of transborder trade is nothing but imperialism manifesting through different trade policies and methods. This has been demonstrated through history to the present. It also shows how imperialism instituted the new system. The globalisation of transborder trade is simply a web of exploitation and suppression. Therefore, globalisation is regarded as the root of the socio-economic decay in Nigeria. It destroys the condition of living of the people and direct work and productivity towards the western industrialised world for its maximum benefit. Again, in order to widen her policy options in the future and to strengthen its bargaining power, Nigeria should join forces with other developing countries and fashion out a strategy in order to strive for a more democratic global system.

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