

Geopolitical Tensions and Globalization: New Trends and Realities in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Globalization acts as a contemporary re-colonising force in Africa. Even for countries previously spared historic colonisation, it opens a new frontier of power dynamics. This entails utilizing predatory tools like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), and multinational corporations. Geopolitics and globalisation have both positive and negative effects on the African economy. The paper explores geopolitics and globalization in developing economies, irrespective of their level of participation. Achieving development requires full integration into the global framework, which implies adherence to the macroeconomic policies outlined by the Washington Consensus four decades ago. At the end of the Cold War, capitalism triumphed worldwide. East Asia serves as a model of how developing countries have opened their borders to find competitive niches and attract foreign capital, thereby triggering economic growth. This paper will further discuss the impact of geopolitics on globalization around Africa. While globalization would not accelerate economic growth, gross capital formation would, as the variables for employment and war were not significant. The paper concludes that globalization underpins transformation in the organisation of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents. Geopolitical and economic shifts may present both risks and opportunities for Africa to expand regional trade agreements, attract investment, and build industrial resilience. To achieve this, bold policy decisions are required in infrastructure investment and international engagement. In future, Africa should balance external partnerships and changing geopolitical realities to foster a competitive, and sustainable economic environment.

Keywords: geopolitics, globalization, developing countries, economy, policies

Introduction

Globalization has become one of the buzzwords in international politics. Notably, its conceptualisation and use across academic fields have sparked an interesting debate, as commentators view it from different perspectives. While some commentators view globalization in a positive light, others attach negative connotations to it and thus see it as a disadvantage to the world order. Economic and trade alliances with new economic partners, such as China, India, and others, have benefited Sub-Saharan Africa, but it has been adversely affected by the recent rise in geopolitical tensions (Paul 2023). For Held (2002), globalization leads to increased interpretation of economic, political, and social practices, and brings distant societies face to face both at the local and global levels. In this context, the world cannot live without globalization. The final opinion of the impact of globalization on African economies is probably not going to be settled for a while, in part because further research is not conclusively confirming or refuting either position, or in large part because most of these dramatic opinions are founded solely on ideological affinities (Ani 2013). Escalation of current geopolitical tensions would see countries in Sub-Saharan Africa hit by higher import prices or even lose access to key export markets (Paul 2023). African economies are currently in this state because of their own exclusion from international markets due to restrictive policies and market barriers. In a world of deep fragmentation, Sub-Saharan Africa stands to lose more than other regions, yet the upside exists if fragmentation is contained (IMF 2023). This makes a compelling case for pursuing a deliberate entry into international markets.

Globalization has integrated Africa into the world economy, yielding mixed results of increased trade and investment alongside economic marginalization, dependency, and de-industrialization (Ibrahim 2013). According to historical records, Africa is among the regions most dedicated to the structural adjustment projects of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the Bretton Woods twin organizations. It was impossible to avoid advocating for market liberalization from the 1970s through the 1990s. Since the 1990s, Africa has been gradually but steadily regaining its former glory. The services and export sectors' share of the GDP has been gradually increasing (Sundaram

et al. 2011). Geopolitically, the continent has become a crucial arena for power competition, offering opportunities for influence but also rendering nations susceptible to external pressures resulting from shifting alliances and reliance on primary commodity export (Ibrahim 2013). The region's financing options have deteriorated significantly over the past year due to the escalation and tightening of global monetary policy, prompted by the rapid rise in global inflation after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which led to higher interest rates worldwide (Paul 2023). Growing export and import flows are essential for promoting economic expansion and raising living standards in developing nations. Countries need to build resilience against likely fallouts from fragmentation and position themselves to benefit from possible changes in trade and capital flow patterns (IMF 2023). This paper seeks to discuss how geopolitical tensions shaped the dynamics and outcomes of globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the impact of geopolitical tensions on trade, investments, and technology in SSA?
- How do these tensions affect infrastructure projects and regional integration efforts?
- What are the benefits of globalization and risks resulting from geopolitical tensions across SSA?
- How do domestic political institutions, governance quality, and civil society respond to external pressure resulting from globalization and geopolitics?

Methodology

The study utilized qualitative research to analyse pre-existing texts (Bowen 2009). This approach allowed the researchers to employ document analysis, including newspapers and academic papers. In this case, documents containing texts on geopolitics, globalization, tensions, trends, and realities were the potential sources for this qualitative analysis. The term document is used to refer to a variety of materials, including texts, photographs, and/or audiovisual material, as sources for qualitative analysis (Morgan 2022). The use of document analysis is a frequently underutilized qualitative research approach. Qualitative researchers often favour other methods over document analysis because they

want to be actively involved in field research (Bowen 2009). The scarcity of literature on document analysis has contributed to the lack of awareness of the important role this method plays in conducting qualitative research. The document analysis process involved identifying relevant documents. Several factors were considered in deciding which documents to include, which involved authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (Morgan 2022). The sample size was generally determined by the scope and depth of the analysis and the diversity of the data sources. Purposive sampling was used in selecting high-quality documents that best answer the research questions (Armstrong 2021). A total of 100 documents were reviewed, and only 20 were found to be relevant, credible, and accessible. The relevant documents were then themed and analysed to ensure authenticity and credibility. The analytic procedure involves selecting, appraising, and synthesizing data contained in the document in the form of excerpts, quotations, and categories.

The Dynamics of Globalization

A few concepts associated with globalisation will be explained and discussed in this paper to ensure easy reference. Globalization means different things to different people. Held (2002:2) refers to globalization as the ‘widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life. Globalization, according to Taylor and Dawn (1999: 11), refers to a growing openness of national economies to economic activity by companies from other states, greater interdependence between different national economies, as well as the harmonization of what is produced, exported, and imported within a nation with the demands of the international economy. Borrowing costs in Sub-Saharan Africa have also increased in both domestic and international markets (Ani 2013). For instance, Sub-Sharan African region could lose an estimated 10 billion of foreign direct investment and official development assistance inflows. Held (2002) further says that it is the movement of goods, ideas, information, services, cultural and economic activities across the political boundaries of the state. There is a need for strategic decoupling to ensure that Sub-Saharan African regions fare better and continue to trade freely, even if the US/EU cut ties with Russia (Fosah, Mama, Dinga 2023). Thus, trade flows will be directed towards the rest of the world, creating new opportunities for new partnerships and boosting intraregional trade (Lere 2014). Globalization is the interconnectedness of the global world.

According to Ibrahim (2013:85), the term globalization refers to the

‘process of the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across the international boundaries’. Furthermore, globalization is a concept principally aimed at the transcendental homogenization of political and socio-economic theory across the globe. Nsibambi (2001) sees globalization as a ‘process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world’s countries and peoples facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skill, as well as interfacing of cultural and value systems and practices’. Based on this definition of globalization, interaction amongst countries cuts across different spheres of life, thereby knitting together the countries involved in or affected by those changes (Fosah et al. 2023). The countries can expand financial inclusion, build a broader domestic investor base, and increase attractiveness to a larger set of external investors by upgrading domestic financial market infrastructure, which can be achieved through digitization, transparency, and regulation, and expanding financial diversity. According to Held (2002:15-21), the three main concepts used to define globalisation are: stretched social relations, intensified flows, and increased interpretation of globalisation. Riding on the tail winds of China’s globalization since the early 2000’s, the value of exports from Sub-Saharan Africa to China increased tenfold over this period, largely driven by oil exports (Fosah et.al. 2023). By contrast, the value of total external debt for the US and the EU declined by about 30% from their mid-2000s peaks. The US and EU still account for most of the region’s foreign direct investment stock, with China accounting for only 6% as of the end of 2020 (IMF 2023).

Globalization, Trade, and Investment Dynamics

When a country penetrates another country or other countries, there is an increase in the interpenetration of economic and social practices, likely to bring distant cultures and societies face to face, at both the local and global levels (Held 2002). For example, the case of transporting nuclear waste from Britain to Australia is one in which a nuclear waste reprocessing firm processes waste from Japan and dumps it in Australia. This shows the complexity of global interaction, whereby a process that starts in one country ends elsewhere in the world and yields either good or bad results (Fosah et al. 2023). Sub-Saharan countries can identify a niche sector that may benefit from trade diversion to capitalise on potential shifts in trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows (Paul 2023). The phenomenon of globalization has proven itself as working for

the rich and developed countries at the expense of the poor or Third World countries (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). This implies that the growing interconnectedness that is said to be brought about by globalization is a myth. According to Chinwe (2010:2), Africa is confronted by globalization.

This globalization has brought many challenges to Africa with significant impacts and effects on all economies of the world (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). Multinational institutions will need to continue facilitating dialogue among nations to promote economic integration and cooperation. However, on the positive side, globalization has affected the production of goods and services. It affects technology and leads to its diffusion from originating nations to other nations (Aderonke 2012). Aderonke (2012) says that neoliberalism's ideational power in Africa has been improved and undergirded by the uneven power relations between the post-colonial African state and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). One key implication of the collective effects of globalisation and neoliberalism is the weakening of national sovereignty (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). The prompt increase in cross-border economic activities due to globalisation has led to a rising asymmetry between the rule of government and globally expanding markets. Strange (1996: 72) argues that 'the hasty interpenetration of economies is facilitated by a global drive for liberalisation of markets, privatisation, deregulation and a dramatic reduction of the commanding role of the government in national planning, especially in Africa'. The downside of increased economic integration is that Sub-Saharan Africa has become more susceptible to global shocks (Ibrahim 2013). For instance, many countries that rely heavily on imports of food, energy, and fertiliser suffered one of the worst crises in decades when global commodity prices soared in 2022, on the heels of the war in Ukraine and amid the effects of COVID-19.

Furthermore, the Commission on Global Governance (1996) confirmed that 'it is becoming gradually evident that the step of globalisation of markets is presently exceeding the capacity of governments to provide the necessary framework of rules and cooperative measures to ensure stability and prevent exploitations of monopoly and other market failures'. The rise in global tensions is spilling into the region, and the recent increase in protectionism, including in Sub-Saharan Africa, threatens to unravel earlier gains from integration (IMF 2023). On his part, Mazrui (1999) highlighted this by pointing out that 'every stage of Africa's contribution to globalisation was also a stage in its own marginalisation'. This conventional wisdom suggests that globalisation raises the rewards of good policy and highlights the costs of poor policy

(Ani 2013). For several countries currently facing aggravated debt vulnerabilities, the roads to debt restructuring have been marked by coordination problems among a diverse group of creditors, which could worsen if geoeconomic fragmentation deepens. In that sense, globalization is a phenomenon worth studying and analysing if we are to understand how the global economy operates and how countries are interconnected. Copper (2001) advances the view that globalization has influenced health in contradictory ways, where globalization has spread infectious diseases and everything from cholera to HIV/ AIDS.

He further states that globalization has also diffused unhealthy products such as tobacco and narcotics (Cooper 2001). However, globalization has also led to improved public health systems, particularly sanitation and vaccinations. In this regard, a rigorous global effort is about to follow the eradication of smallpox with the eradication of polio (Honey 2004). According to Tsai (2007: 103), 'globalization has also led to the diffusion of expensive medical technologies, even into places where much less expensive public health measures could yield much greater gains in health'. These views lead to the conclusion that globalization has both negative and positive effects on countries and their societies.

Global Trade and Economic Flows

Economic globalization is not a new process by any standard (Ibrahim 2013). For the past five centuries, firms in economically advanced countries have expanded and extended their reach through trade and production activities to territories worldwide (Khor 2000: 1). Khor further states that over the past two decades, economic globalisation has accelerated due to various factors, particularly technological developments and the liberalisation policies that have swept the world (Khor 2000). In a nutshell, economic globalization is the process whereby the economies of the international community are connected and interconnected. Furthermore, economic globalization is about the interdependency of states financially (Ani 2013). Economic events constitute one part of the world that affects the economies of other parts. This is demonstrated by the interdependency of the world currencies (Held 2000). However, the value of each currency is determined by its relation to other currencies. Economic globalization further reinforces, instead of replacing, patterns of dominance and dependency of capitalism and richer states (Held 2000: 29). Hence, the economies of poorer countries depend on foreign

investment. Sub-Saharan African countries were split on the UN resolution following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with half of the countries condemning the invasion while the other half did not or abstained (IMF 2023).

But does economic globalization bring justice to everyone across the globe? To answer the question, economic globalization as a feature is characterised by unequal development. Allen (1995: 237) contends that contemporary society is characterised by the growing dependence of the developing countries on the richer economies of the developed world. About half of the region's current international trade value would be affected in a scenario in which the world is split into two trading blocs: one centred on the US/EU and the other on China (IMF 2023). Cases in Latin America and Africa are cited as evidence of this view. The two regions serve as the source of raw materials, whilst developed countries export manufactured goods to them (Allen 1995: 243). The prices of metals like gold are set by developed countries worldwide, whereas the prices of manufactured goods are determined at the state level (Allen 1995). Globalization has manifested itself in different forms in Africa (Ani 2013). Economic globalization is a very uneven process, with increased trade and investments being focused on a few countries but affecting almost all countries differently. As the region loses access to key export markets and faces higher import prices, Sub-Saharan African countries would be expected to experience a permanent decline of 4% in real DGP after 10 years relative to a no-fragmentation baseline (Ibrahim 2013). Disruptions to capital flows and technology transfer could bring additional losses. However, not all is bleak, and some milder scenarios of shifting geopolitics may create new trade partnerships for the region (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). For example, there is a view that a low-income country may account for only a minuscule part of world trade, but changes in demand for prices of its commodities or a policy of rapidly reducing its import duties can have a major economic and social effect on that country (Khor 2001).

On the other hand, the fact that economic globalisation has deteriorated with the crisis does not suggest that the world is observing an end to globalization (Olasunkanmi 2011: 62). However, countries are irregular in their donation of various types of resources and technologies. Countries differ in their capabilities to produce different types of goods and resources, and in the demands for certain goods in individual countries that exceed the country's ability to produce them (Olasunkanmi 2011). Economic globalization had a great impact on African communalism, where many policies were made, and these policies hurt the African people. Moshirian (2011) argues that the process

of globalization continues to take forms and characteristics prompted by global phenomena today. Economic globalization brings about global apartheid (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). This is between developed and developing countries. There is an increasing split between the rich and the poor, and there is also no justice between the sexes (Beck 2000: 50). Furthermore, women are being exploited because they work in the industries under bad conditions for long hours and they earn low wages. According to Khor (2000), the uneven nature of the present globalization process is manifested in the fast-growing gap between the world's rich and poor people, between developed and developing countries. This results in the polarisation of societies, and Africa is not immune to this reality. According to Olasunkanmi (2011: 62), the structure of the global economy makes most people poor'. This leads to the conclusion that global economic performance and structure generate societal inequalities worldwide.

Economic globalization negates the ideals of cultural relativity and cultural pluralism today in such a way that Africa suffers from a crisis of identity because of the importation of foreign values (Ani 2013). Furthermore, in Africa, economic globalization has been accused of creating globalized people, destroying the unique national cultures and identities (Olasunkanmi 2011). According to Castells (2002:38), economic globalisation demanded new forms of work characterised by high performance driven by international standards. This is because completion drives economic growth. Beck (2008: 38) says that societies could run out of jobs if no precautions are taken. It is imperative to take a quick look at how the global economic meltdown affected the African continent (Ibrahim 2013). This is not to suggest that Africa is a homogeneous geographical space, but the reality is that the entire continent has been affected by globalization.

Economic and Geopolitical Frictions in Africa

African nations that depend heavily on these exports have suffered due to the crisis's impact on commodity prices, which have fallen, especially for minerals and oil (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). It is now harder for many African countries to implement programs to mitigate the consequences of the crisis due to a drop in export revenues, which has restricted their fiscal space (Balchin 2009). The two most important sources of foreign cash and investment for many African nations, foreign direct investment (FDI) and remittances, have dramatically declined. African countries' fiscal freedom has been further diminished by the fall in FDI and remittances, which has increased their reliance on aid and other

outside financing sources. Many African governments are now facing even greater financial difficulties due to the crisis's impact on aid and development support from industrialised countries (Ibrahim 2013). Building resilience requires strengthening regional integration and expanding the pool of domestic resources to counter potential external shocks (IMF 2023). To ensure that African nations receive the assistance they need to recover from the crisis, there is an urgent need for greater accountability in international aid commitments.

The demand for African exports has decreased due to the slowdown in global growth and the steep decline in industrial production worldwide (Ibrahim 2013). Greater integration would require reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers, strengthening the efficiency of customs, leveraging digitalization, and closing infrastructure gaps (IMF 2023). This is most evident in the downward trend in commodity export prices. The fact that most African countries rely primarily on commodity exports for their export earnings makes this particularly concerning (Dullien & Kotte 2010). Moreover, the decline in export earnings is likely to have detrimental knock-on effects, lowering government revenue and exacerbating the already precarious fiscal situation in many African nations. The impact of these crises has varied across countries, including in Africa (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). Prioritizing improvements in quality in institutions, especially the regulatory framework, is an effective way to help promote private infrastructure. While many countries have experienced a sharp deterioration of growth prospects, others have continued to record improvements. For example, within Africa, as more countries saw their economies plunging, others (including South Africa and Nigeria) remained relatively stable despite the challenges. According to the G20 (2009), the African government has taken the most important steps to lessen the economic crisis. Depending on domestic financial markets can broaden financing sources and lower volatility associated with excessive reliance on foreign inflows (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). Moreover, improving domestic revenue mobilisation requires both revenue administration, tax, and policy reform to alleviate constraints on social and infrastructure expenditures (IMF 2023). Most commentators overlook the fact that several structural and macroeconomic growth initiatives dubbed 'finance-driven capitalism' are largely responsible for the financial crisis.

Geopolitical Trends and Realities

Countries in the region can position themselves strategically to benefit from trade diversion and potential new FDI flows (IMF 2023). From a general

perspective, there are several advantages associated with globalization. Some apply to individual countries, while others apply to the world at large. For example, according to Nsibambi (2001: 2), globalisation opens people's lives to other cultures and to all their creativity, as well as to the flow of ideas and values. Creating the right environment to attract FDI would allow countries to reconfigure global supply chains by choosing like-minded partners (Qobo & Mzyece 2023). He further says that information and communication technologies have eased interaction among countries and people. Moreover, globalization has eased international trade and commerce, facilitated foreign investment and the flow of capital (Nsibambi 2001). Globalization has eased international trade and commerce to facilitate foreign investment and the flow of capital, for greater accountability and responsibility of the leaders to serve their people. Reducing domestic policy uncertainty, including improving governance, could reduce the country's perceived risk level and help attract more foreign capital investment (Ifedi 2020). However, this has forced African leaders to create or adopt policies and measures that are opposed to the feelings of many (Ibrahim 2013: 88).

Moving further, the international lobby and pressure groups from different groups have combined to reinforce the phenomenon of globalization to force the state to shift its behaviour and the way it relates to its internal and external partners (Ibrahim 2013). Identifying and building sectors that benefit from trade diversion can increase a country's success. Importantly, globalization has been described as generating a sense of unity among nations and groups (Ifedi 2020). According to Aderike and David (2012: 194), information and communication technologies have facilitated interaction among countries and people, creating a global village from a world that is wide and diverse. Countries can also rely on trade promotion agencies to help identify potential opportunities, build the necessary skills and capacity for exporters, and eventually re-orient production to take advantage of new flows (Mukhtar & Abdulqadirr 2025). Hence, it is said that a major positive impact of globalization on Africa is that it has made information available on how other countries are governed and the freedoms and rights of the people. Moreover, globalisation has opened African countries to intense external scrutiny and exercise pressure for greater transparency, openness and accountability in Africa' (Ibrahim 2013: 89). The enormous rise in global interconnectivity is affecting people's lives in different ways, some predictable and others unforeseen (Ibrahim 2013). Furthermore, one of the major changes that is seen as an increase in global awareness is that globalization has freed labour across

boundaries. The region can leverage its abundant labour force in agricultural resources to become the world's factory and food exporter if the necessary investments are undertaken in human capital and sustainable agricultural practices (IMF 2023). People everywhere are now much more aware of events and issues. This has massively increased awareness of global differences in living standards, life chances, and political and social rights and liberties.

Geopolitical Contradictions in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the context of rapidly changing geopolitics in Russia/ Ukraine, African leaders must absolutely rethink and develop strategies to serve their straddling economies (Klomegah 2024). Despite all the good things enumerated above, globalization also has a negative impact. The underlying causes are well known and, therefore, allowing their possible effect to largely influence the already stressed economic processes will spell disaster and tragedy for Africa. According to Ibrahim (2013: 87), the Cold War, which was born out of the process of globalization, has had significant consequences for Africa. Archival records show that Russia not only supported African countries in their efforts to liberate themselves from the yoke of colonialism and attain political independence but also facilitated the UN General Assembly's adoption in 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Klomegah 2024). Moreover, foreign technology enables TNCs to outperform local firms, thereby increasing unemployment. Notwithstanding higher wages paid by TNCs in certain countries, only a limited number of workers were hired in TNCs' capital-intensive sectors (Mukhtar & Abdulqadir 2025). There is an argument that more jobs were created in labour-intensive agricultural and manufacturing production at the cost of poor working conditions (Kiely 1998: 59). However, 64 years later, Africa is still far from attaining economic freedom despite its vast natural and human resources. Approximately 60% of the population is impoverished, with untapped resources and shabby development.

Globalization has introduced anti-developmentalism by declaring the state irrelevant or marginal to the developmental efforts (Mukhtar & Abdulqadir 2025). He further says that as development strategies and policies which focus on stabilization and privatization are being pushed by the external donors, this has resulted in greater poverty and inequality and undermined the ability of the people to participate effectively in the political and social processes in their countries (Ibrahim 2013). Some say leadership attitudes and

approaches are holding back development in Africa. Others blame external factors, including opaque relations with foreign barriers. Without an effort to negotiate and identify development priorities, without an effort to cut off self-centred attitudes, our development in another country would be prolonged. According to Held (2000:11), income inequality has increased in some industrialised countries, reflected in a higher share of capital in national income and greater wage inequality. This emergence of wealth is important for the analysis of globalization since exceptionally high earnings have typically been linked to compensation paid by MNEs. Went (2000: 46) suggests that the creation of globally reaching businesses and international superstars has heightened wealth concentration and likely increased market and political power for the beneficiaries, locally and globally. If underdevelopment is attributed to imperialism and colonialism, why should responsibility not also be directed toward African leaders and their executive and legislative institutions? Africa does not need weak public institutions and a public society with obsolete, parochial ways of managing its economy. The development of Africa requires a thorough examination of how geopolitical changes are influencing Africa's unity and development, and how they have impacted the continent across its regions (Henckert 2024). It is also an important influence on people's perceptions of globalization.

The economic benefits and social costs of globalization are not evenly dispersed amongst the social groups (Ibrahim 2013). In many countries, some groups of workers have been poorly affected by trade liberalization and the transfer of production to lower-wage economies (Went 2000). Furthermore, this has primarily affected the unskilled workers, while some skilled and professional workers have been affected by the development. Africa's development processes need to be reviewed, obstacles identified, and the participation of foreign players controlled and monitored, and its role in the emerging new world order reimagined (Klomegah 2024). However, in some countries, globalization has caused a serious gender imbalance. Hence, the magnitude of this imbalance largely depends on the level of gender equality prevailing in a country's standards and institutions at the time of integration into the global economy (Milner 1998). Several external players are swiftly dividing Africa and undermining the unity it has sustained over several years by using anti-Western slogans and rhetoric, staging political confrontations, and consistently urging African countries to embrace hatred toward foreign entities' participation in Africa's economy (Henckert 2024). According to Aderonke and David (2012), another side effect of globalization has been a sharp growth in the level

of illegal cross-border activities. This has involved augmented tax evasion, and the rise of multinational crime groups involved in money laundering, trafficking in people, and the sex and drug trades (Nkurayija 2011).

There are clear indications that Africa is sharply divided, with diverse conflicts taking a heavy toll on its development. For instance, there is a lack of a unified approach to the continent's development in the African Union (de Coningi 2024). The strengthening of African Unity has long been sought, but it has never been fully achieved. On these grounds, globalisation does not always yield positive results (Hussein & Nyanhoga 2025). To foster integrated development, regional integration organisations have been established across Africa, but overall, they have done little to improve their respective regions. On the contrary, it is also associated with negative effects at the individual and global levels (Ibrahim 2013). As a need for regional integration, and the reasons for past failures become better understood, new efforts are being made to strengthen economic and political ties between countries. Africa is no exception in this regard, as evidenced by the 2008 world economic meltdown (Henckert 2024). In many cases, African leaders continue to have the most extensive bilateral relationships with their colonial powers (Mukhtar & Abdulqadir 2025). However, Russia and China are critical to Western and European trade connections.

The Role of Multinational Corporations

Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have a major role to play in the globalization debate. Held (2002: 6) argues that globalisation does not erode the North-South divide but, instead, intensifies it by marginalising many third-world states. African countries need to consolidate their political independence and sovereignty while overcoming acute socio-economic issues and development (Bull & Banik 2025). Russia has blamed African leaders for their inability to employ common sense and, in their own interests, and, most importantly, within the principles of the supremacy of international law, especially amid the current geopolitical changes rapidly shifting from the unipolar system to a multipolar world order. The dominance of Multinational Corporations has brought many crises to societies, including those in Africa (Henckert 2024).

Russia's active work on the African continent is a significant part of the broader set of measures to develop constructive cooperation with a greater number of countries pursuing an open and balanced foreign policy guided by common sense and their own interests. Hymer (1975: 83) argued that the

impact of this latest evolution of the business enterprise is uneven development, as it produces poverty. According to Held (2000: 8), Multinational companies have been engines of global economic development, technological transfer, and deepening globalisation. Russia advocates a more equitable and democratic international order that will promote reliable security, the preservation of unique cultural and civilizational identity, and equal opportunities for the development of all states (Bull & Banik 2025). It is said that Multinational Corporations have grown not only within their domestic corporate frameworks but also by setting up new subsidiaries in host economies and by purchasing subsidiaries through mergers and acquisitions (Allen 1995: 246). Beck (2002) illustrates that the significance of the role of Multinational corporations in determining the global economy has improved in the 20th century. Driven by Western and European aspirations pursued over the past three decades since the collapse of the Soviet era, Russia is shifting toward a multipolar configuration and is now moving into Africa (Klomegah 2024). Hence, multinational companies are generating the highest production and employment worldwide.

They are obligated to their mutual relationship with globalization, in which globalization has led to higher FDI flows to countries, while the opportunity of receiving a greater share of global FDI flows has encouraged several countries to undertake further liberalization (Castells 2002). In the context of development processes, African leaders are aware of the need to prevent neo-colonialism and destructive attitudes towards resources. The fight against neo-colonial tendencies remains a daunting task for African leaders, the regional organizations, and the African Union (Hussein & Nyanchoga 2025). In addition, multinational companies have enabled the international integration of markets for goods and services, helping to form the global village. Whilst the inclination to receive cohesive support from the global economy, the reduction in the prominence of the state's economic role led to the expansion of MNCs, especially in developing countries (Ani 2013). Moreover, the corporations have built local relationships and established a strong local presence through FDI to benefit from the different advantages. According to the G20 (2009), countries aiming to attract higher FDI were busy granting MNCs greater freedom and support in pursuing economic cooperation with them.

Allen (2008) illustrates that MNCs were not only supported for their impact on economic growth, but also for their significant impact on productivity and industrial development driven by FDI. African leaders have political mandates from their electorates; they should take sole responsibility for African problems and find African solutions within their professional skills and

competencies (Klomegah 2024). According to Nsibambi (2001: 6), the opening of technological and managerial assets of foreign investors to developing countries, employment with a better-trained labour force, higher national income, more innovations and enhanced competitiveness have led to the addition of foreign market outlets for a developing country's exports. Moreover, the MNCs tried to attain competence by minimizing their cost and maximizing economies of scale while reducing duplication (Nsibambi 2001). However, by maximizing economies of scale, they invest in several regions to gain diverse advantages from host countries, allowing them to operate more effectively in their home base (Cheni 2004). Furthermore, across the various elements, it is believed that indicators would encourage enterprises to grow and invest abroad, thereby fostering multinationalism.

Eweje (2006) argues that economic growth is the most used indicator of human progress and development, given the increasing level of environmental degradation. Furthermore, environmentalists have raised concerns about the negative impacts of global trade and the overuse of the natural environment for domestic production (Cheni 2004). Subhash (1981) states that multinational corporations do not seem to be contributing much to promoting political stability, preserving local culture, or enriching consumer lifestyles. The gradual growth of contradictions between Russia and the West accelerated the formation of the pivot-to-the-East idea, though its implementation was slow (Bull & Banik 2025). However, the current crisis in relations between Russia and the West, for its own sake, is irreversible and has driven an increase in the number and quality of ties with countries outside the United States (Klomegah 2024). This is interesting since it is their role in the political and socio-cultural affairs of developing countries that is usually questioned. As the economic crisis hit the continent, Multinational Corporations played a pivotal role in helping countries with struggling economies.

According to Honey (2004:94), 'policy makers agreed that an image of stability and reliability is of great importance in attracting foreign investments. The world majority is closely embedded in Western-centric globalisation, although it has its own problems. But half of them were willing to guarantee no changes in tax rates for a certain period. In addition, it is significant to note that multinational employment is predominantly important to Africa because unemployment is predominant, and wages are low (Tsai 2007). For example, the unemployment rates in Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa in 2001 were about 27 per cent, 34 per cent, and 26 per cent, respectively, which resulted in poverty due to high unemployment (G20 2009). Hence-

forth, countries such as South Africa faced a high unemployment rate as they faced an economic crisis. Russia's ties with its western neighbours have accumulated over centuries and cannot be cut overnight (Bull & Banik 2025). Within the West itself, there is both an ideological and purely material stratification. This has led to the involvement of a Multinational Corporation in assisting the country with infrastructure development to rescue the economic situation (Mendez-Parr, Agarwal, Luke, et al. 2025). Behind this façade of general political slogans lies an extremely heterogeneous political and mental space.

Conclusion

In conclusion, geopolitics and globalisation have both positive and negative effects on the African economy. Africa needs a comprehensive strategy to successfully navigate the geopolitical and economic transformations. While globalization has increased trade and investment opportunities, geopolitics poses significant risks to economic stability and development. African countries must develop effective strategies to navigate these complexities and ensure sustainable economic growth. Africa must improve regional trade and supply chains by eliminating trade barriers, strengthening transportation logistics, and promoting intra-African trade. To reduce reliance on external suppliers, African nations must establish industrial hubs that enable them to specialise at various stages of production. To navigate geopolitical tensions, Africa needs to boost local manufacturing and attract foreign direct investment by incentivising domestic production and diversifying investment sources beyond traditional partners. Trade disruptions and regulatory changes must be addressed for African trade policy to align with emerging standards. This necessitates improving infrastructure and technological capabilities to support Africa's technology-driven industry. By strengthening policy frameworks and strategic partnerships, Africa should be able to secure long-term funding from multilateral institutions for expanding industrialization. The paper concludes that geopolitical and economic shifts may present both risks and opportunities for Africa to expand regional trade agreements, attract investment, and build industrial resilience. To achieve this, bold policy decisions are required in infrastructure investment and international engagement. Thus, Africa's future depends on striking a balance between foreign partnerships and shifting geopolitical realities to maintain a competitive, sustainable economic environment.

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