



A RE-READING OF THIRD WORLDISM IN AN UP-TO-DATE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

Abib Sène

Department of Anglophone Studies, Laboratory of African and Postcolonial Studies, Cheikh Anta Diop University - Senegal

Email: abib.sene@ucad.edu.sn or senabb2@yahoo.fr

ABSTRACT: *In a context of Cold War, the world deglobalized itself to let appear a hierarchized and divided face from where one could localize a Western area, an Eastern zone, a Northern region and a Southern expanse. Mainly dominated by the West and the East antagonistic relationships, the world international interactions welcomed a third block that stood as a point of contact between the two ideological and political slabs to illustrate a philosophy of non-alignment. It is such a context of mutual suspicion and high distrust that has inspired this paper which, indeed, targets to pinpoint the moving and changing place of the Third-World in the worldwide economy and its relations with other areas in a current background of a global pandemic.*

KEYWORDS: Cold War, Third Worldism, Third-World Economic Order, Global Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

“One planet, three worlds” (Nuia Badia 97: 7) is the way Badia describes the world in the 20th and 21th centuries. Through the dual competition between the capitalist and the communist poles, the Third-world appeared to be the whooping cough to inveigle and conquer so as to reinforce one camp and weaken the other. Indeed, with the bursting of the First and Second World Wars, great nations’ decision-makers exercised due skills to define and create international safeguards through international organizations such UN, IMF, WB, etc. With a high-pitched determination, these institutions, in a clear-sighted view, were engaged to bail humanity out of dim times and correct the beleaguered international economy. Thus being, Post-war European and Asian countries were healed of man-made disasters and were given a fresh start. That economic progress bloomed out in Europe and “Great Britain, Germany, Japan, and Italy recovered from the devastation of war” (Isaac 2016, 181). Actually, such a clear-cut success inspired a cut and dry attitudinal judgment through which institutions like UNCTDA were bestowed with the duty-bound mission to single the Third World out of its economic quagmire. Isaac informs us well in the followings:

In 1964, the United Nations conference on trade and development (UNCTDA) was created to further enhance and coordinate campaigns for a comprehensive support for the principles of free trade. The feeling at that time seemed to back up the idea according to which, the miracle of European and Japanese recovery after the Second World War, could as well be experienced in the Third World countries if ever the latter were connected with the developed countries (Isaac 2016, 182).



Next to the aforementioned international institutions, existed in the Third World particularly in Africa countries of which existences were dictated by both geographical, political and economic reasons. Defined as a theory that defends the idea that “human activity is determined by geographical conditions” (Collin Dictionary), geographical determinism, in the eyes of great thinkers such as Ellsworth Huntington, Jared Diamond, is about spatial conditions that put a vice-grip on all-aspects of life and each society is shaped out of their environmental realities. In so doing, African countries, in a tripolar context, expressed a premium concern to fan the burning and necessarily need to achieve a regional strategic cluster. In this way, from the South to the North, from the West to the East, organizations of all-kinds emerge to trim the institutional landscape in Africa. In addition to political and economic organizations such as ECOWAS in West Africa, SADC in Southern Africa, one can point out other movements such as the African Nationalism which were ideologically-based organizations.

Contrary to the ideological-based organizations, the Third Worldism stood as a movement that vocalized the political and social aspirations of non-aligned countries. It departed itself from the mainstream to build up a counterbalance and express a Third voice in the worldwide geopolitic strategies that were fueled by the philosophy of *those who are not with me, are against me*. Thus, in this work, it will be about contextualizing the Third-world movement before laying an emphasis on the new international economic order.

A Historical Background of Third-Worldism

With the organization of Asian Relation Conference in 1947 in New Delhi (pix Bajpai ix: 1983), a movement was strengthened and an ideology specialized. Third world states stressed the prickly question of colonization which gave rise to “three types of inequalities: between the colonizer and the colonized; between races; and between the rich and the poor” (Singham & Hune, 1986: 22). Economic equality became a centralized objective in the bundle of concerns voiced out by Thirdworldists. Their struggle aimed at promoting a policy of Next International Economic Oder through which “the disrupted traditional economic of Africa, Asia and America” (Singham & Hune, 1986:22) would be rehabilitated and fixed from the global market economy. Thus being, the capitalist aftermath on the developing process in poor and colonized countries could be erased and definitively wiped out. Capitalism was not to be seen as “a modernizing and liberating movement [but] as a system which produced a new relationship of dominance and subservience between landlord and peasants, and between colonizer and colonized” (Singham & Hune. 1986: 23). Contrary to regional organizations, the economic target of thirdworldists went beyond geographical borders to plead equality for all dominated peoples in all continents.

Indeed, the Bandung conference with the participation of 25 African and Asian countries thought over ins and outs of their defendable common interests. In the perspective to lay the bases of a South-South international cooperation, third-world states laid emphasis on cultural, political and economic solidarity among themselves. The final communiqué of the conference highlighted the first fiddle role played by colonialism in impoverishing process Africa and other non-African continents were victim of and their awkward dependence to the Northern and developed states (Singham, AW & Shrirley. 1986: 7). The Bandung conference preoccupations and objectives were then furthered by the Belgrade (1961) and Alger (1977) conferences issued and attended by a G77 countries which identified themselves through the pseudo of the Non-aligned States. The latter put on the limelight their main objective which



was to clearly cut themselves off the two main blocs and adopt what they called *an active neutralism*. They as well required the reorganization of the worldwide economy for the sake of a New international Economic Order that was to help stop the ongoing discrimination, the insolvency of colonized countries and unfair trade. They targeted to decentralize the world economy so as to balance the terms-of-trade and therefore turn the periphery into another center among others with equal dignity. It was in such a context that the ANC in an Apartheid-South Africa broke down physical borders to draw near the thirdworldist ideology and philosophy in the perspective to put a definite end to its discriminating and dehumanizing racial system.

Any organization has an open or a restricted dimension according to the objectives it stands for. Some regional organizations were created to safeguard the specific interests of a particular group of states. Among them one can underline a post-soviet society that has ingrouped oil producers' countries: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries OPEC. With some common laws, and common principles, OPEC plays a normative role in coordinating and harmonizing state-members' oil policies and productions. Their solidarity is pronounced not in the name of geographic proximity, but for the sake of material wealth to protect a common resource so as to remain a key partner in the shaping and reshaping of international relations.

Regarded as being the New Exporting Countries, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and The Philippines are, next to the Asian Dragons (South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan), the new emerging powers in Asia in the 1980s. Their accelerated developing process, redefined the relationship between the Asian continent and the economic triad which aimed at extending its trade relations in Asia. That plot twist, brought about economic unbalance in the third world which was now amputated of some of its dynamic members. Countries like South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, took advantage of European and American industrial delocalization to further and advance their developing process. The ideology of solidarity that rhymed the Thirdworldists weakened and cracked. The 'game' of neutrality could not be entirely played out, for in countries like Malaysia "the foreign direct investments increase from 1,85-dollar billions in 1989, to 4,12 billion in 1992" (Badia-LLoveras, 1997: 133). In South Korea, the industrial progress won ground and a world giant moved out of the Third world borders in the 1970s "to collaborate with the Japanese NEC" (Badia-LLoveras, 1997: 132). From a South-South solidarity, some new Emerging Powers in the third world moved to a South-North economic partnership. Real politics and economic pragmatism seemed to take precedence over an all-for-one élan. Indeed, it was commonly agreed that the liberal-oriented worldwide economy stemmed Third Worldist economies from taking off. In a political environment in which nations drew close to each other to valorize and protect their common points, Asian countries huddle together in organizations such as the Central Asian Cooperation. They look forward boosting and revitalizing their collective conception on social and economic equalities of the Asian region. However, this was foiled when in 1980s the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad (1981–2003), pronounced chiefly and vociferous anti-Western Pan-Asianism that was stranded in an openly racial outset of national and international power relations (Khoo 1995).

Evaluating Third-Worldism in the Stirring of NIEO

Characterized with permanent ups and downs, the economic order organizes and reorganizes the strengths and weaknesses of regions according to their economic, geopolitical and



military potentialities. Areas, today, coalesce around political project to weave local or international tangible influence on the world stage. The Maghreb Union stood as an example. It bore cultural, linguistic and religious, hallmarks to pan the North of Africa into a sense of belongingness. Those who spoke the same language, and belonged to the same religion broke the shackles of isolation to conjugate a common destiny, through a common regional organization, whose basic meaning was ideological. Alike philosophy and ideology were noted some years before AMU with the Negritude Movement which indeed was institutionalized and regarded as being a continuity of Pan-Africanism, Senghor, Césaire, Damas and their companions focused on race-identity to, tooth and nail, defend a black culture and stood to shake off the colonial biddings in Africa and among the African diaspora.

Created on April 1949, NATO is a military organization that bridges, strengthens and secures an ideology that has been shared by the victorious camp of the Second World War. The North Atlantic Treaty is an Organization that defined military strategies to block out the expansionist policies of the Soviet Union. Two ideologies then stood in a face-to-face Cold War and bipolarized the world into a Good and Evil Camps, each blaming the other for being the Axe of Evil. NATO emerged in such circumstances to bear the mission of breaking the long wings of the Soviet States in Europe and the rest of the world. Today, it has updated its objectives in integrating the struggle against terrorism and cyber criminality which have become other forms of ideological expressions.

The emerging markets in Africa (COMESA) in Asia CACM (Central Asian Common Market), in America (MERCOSUR), were some adequate answers to the domination of developed countries. They stood as full expressions of the will to stop being the 'world trash' in welcoming polluting delocalized industries, outdated and out fashioned commodities from the West. However, it is it worth noting that in spite of the revolutionary ideologies that cemented their creations, that common markets are today being explored by the occidental powers through economic deals like the ACPs. That agreement hustled the local enterprises and compromise any form of fair trading and competition. Far from being an old fashion organization, The Third-World has been going through great experiences in terms of development processes. In fact, in the awake of trade areas, Africa has become a favorable groundwork for both the Western and Asian companies with the rising of China, the BRICS, and other emerging powers, the South-South region reveals itself to be on the front line of a worldwide development struggle.

Being the only African country accepted among the G20, South Africa, in spite of its South-South economic orientation, has, as a first economic partner, the European Union.

The EU represents a huge market for South Africa. It receives the 1/3 of South African exportations (Diplomatie.gouv.fr). With its policy of delocalization, The European Union concentrates the ¾ investments in Africa in South Africa. (Diplomatie.gouv.fr). indeed, more than 2000 European enterprises are implanted in South Africa with a total generation of 500,000 local jobs creations (Diplomatie.gouv.fr). Such a partnership has been strengthened by the common agreement on economic partnership between EU and SADC since 2016.

As a full member of the BRICS, South Africa has been managing to safeguard its South-South partnership while maintaining its commercial ambitions with the North. Through its double-faced partnership it reinforces its interest with the Intergovernmental Authority for



Development (IAD) in East Africa where countries like Somalia, Djibouti Ethiopia and Kenya play a key role in the trade exchanges in the region.

Located in East Africa, Kenya has been harmonizing its macro-economic policies to better favor its business environment. Its efforts have been noticeable in some domains with concrete results even if there still a long way to go.

Kenyan Importations and Exportations/ 2015

Traded Good	Importations	% *	% **	Exportations	% *	% **
Agricultural Products	2 007 728 012	12,476	0,128	3 133 907 871	53,061	0,200
Oil and Mining Products	2 661 955 813	16,541	0,110	841 650 363	14,250	0,035
Manufactured Good	11 031 783 492	68,550	0,097	1 830 456 433	30,992	0,016
Other Commodities	391 693 683	2,434		100 260 333	1,698	
Other Good and services	16 093 161 000	100,000	0,096	5 906 275 000	100,00	0,036

Source : *Perspective Monde : OMC/2015 data. Visited on 10-10-2019*

Kenya is among the most industrialized countries in the region. However, its trade balance is unbalanced with Importations that are much more important than its exportations with a big focus on good and services, manufactured commodities, oil and mining products. Such a dependence on oil product is a serious handicap for the emerging of the Kenyan economy. However, its agricultural policy is strong enough to enable the country to export much more farm products than it imports. The high figure on manufactured goods tells much about the necessary efforts to achieve an advance of the industrialization of Kenya.

Tanzanian Importations and Exportations/ 2015

Grandes catégories pour les biens	Importations	% *	% **	Exportations	% *	% **
Agricultural products	649 615 428	6,316	0,041	2 571 472 238	52,218	0,164
Oil and mining products	5 280 944 050	51,344	0,217	697 282 176	14,160	0,029
Manufactured good	4 325 773 088	42,057	0,038	1 154 231 030	23,439	0,010
Other comondities	29 144 434	0,283		501 483 556	10,184	
Other good and services	10 285 477 000	100,000	0,061	4 924 469 000	100,00	0,030

Source : *Perspective Monde: OMC/2015 data. Visited on 11-10-2019*



Next to Kenya is Tanzania, another East African country which draws similar results in the domain of agriculture. Indeed, both Kenya and Tanzania make some great headway in farming results and have recorded honorable and satisfactory statistics data. That says a lot about the good option of both countries to turn agriculture into an engine of economic growth. However, that concrete efforts are compromised by the steep bill of importations of oil and manufactured products.

South African Importations and Exportations/ 2015

Grandes catégories pour les biens	Importations	% *	% **	Exportations	% *	% **
Agricultural Products	5 596 925 483	5,350	0,357	9 573 255 915	11,721	0,610
Oil and Mining Products	15 940 857 056	15,237	0,656	24 350 120 414	29,814	1,002
Manufactured Good	51 168 405 082	48,909	0,449	33 119 604 898	40,551	0,290
Other Commodities	31 913 442 234	30,504		14 629 989 743	17,913	

Source : *Perspective Monde: OMC/2015 data. Visited on 10-10-2019*

Contrary to Kenya and Tanzania, South Africa is a country whose economy is much balanced in terms of importations and exportations. Manufacturing goods are quite well balanced on the commercial exchanges. As for farm products, exported elements are much more important than the imported ones. The good stand on the energetic policy endows South Africa with a good command of manufacturing good hence its high figures in exportations. The difference between South Africa and East African countries is mainly to be found in oil potentiality and energy efficiency. As Third world countries, Kenya and Tanzania and South Africa could achieve profitable economic growth if ever a South-South partnership were *in fine* reinforced *in extenso*.

South Africa's strength in oil and manufactured merchandizes could be put under the service of the worse off neighboring countries. That would close the widening prosperity gap between African countries.

Furthermore, in its perspective to win every time it plays, the South African state extends its reach and tentacles in the third world, building a historic corporation with Iran. Since the late 1970s, actually, Iran and South Africa have been fostering economic and diplomatic relationships, even if that bilateral cooperation was broken in the 1940s with the implementation of Apartheid as a political system based on segregation and discrimination. Teheran disapproved the White supremacy policy and rejected the inhuman treatments reserved for Blacks and other Non-White communities. A diplomatic crisis aroused and Iran withdrew from South Africa until the mid-1990s with the toppling down of the system of separateness, Iran opened its doors to the new regime and the new rainbow nation under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

In their capacities as emerging powers, Iran and South Africa reinforce their partnership in the domains of nuclear, oil, mineral, etc. In fact, in the 2000s, South Africa imported 40% of its oil needs from Iran. and with the 40 agreements signed between the two countries, the



commercial exchanges between Iran and South Africa, were estimated around 730 million (Us dollar) in 2002, a figure that could reach billions (US dollar) in years to come, according to Ismael Bakary (sen24.com). Even if the cooperation between Iran and the African continent is not in plain sight, it can be noticed that South Africa remains a faithful partner as Jacob Juma's official visit attested in 2016 with a bundle of South African businessmen, whose main objective was to take advantage of any possibility of investment in Iran. In spite of the withdrawal of Sasol group in 2013 from a joint venture petro-chemistry project in Iran, other groups like MTN have furthered their investments in mobile telephony. Indeed, in 2006 MTN controlled 49% of Irancell. (www.rfi.fr).

The South-South relationship between Iran and South Africa has enhanced the stand against the dominating and subjugating Western discourse. It appears as an alternative to the occidental hegemony and expresses a possibility of formation of another center among the third worldlists. As the D-8 illustrates with its components and objectives that consists in liberating the South from the grip of the North.

A Third-worldization of Globalization Under a Covid 19 pandemic

Although the crisis concerns global public health, it has deeply rekindled perspectives about a new world order. In a context of an Americanized globalization, the Covid 19 pandemic gives the trims on a point related to a new form of globalization under China's leadership.

Indeed, with the advent of the corona virus crisis, European countries retreated themselves in a Self-isolation and failed to flag out the values of internal and external solidarity. Italy and Spain had been, at the commencement of the crisis, left for themselves to cope alone with their daily sad figures of ill-and-dead citizens. The European Union became noticeable with its voicelessness and egotist stand of my *country-first attitude*. The communal values based on mutual assistant and solidarity for the best and the worst among its members are deeply shaken. The social distance is erected into a rule that highlights a self-centered élan through which the EU is strongly stunned.

In such a situation, communist countries like China and Cuba, distinguished themselves in the attitude to assist and bail out impacted countries. China deploys its medical diplomacy and succeeds in showing an image of a conscious and responsible super power nation which does not hesitate to enlarge her generosity to weaker nations around the world in the name of human dignity. In so doing, Chinese authorities set an indirect parallel with the USA in the purpose to afford a messianic standpoint. And Martin Jacques to illustrates in the following: "China's star [...] is patently on the rise and that of the United States on the wane" (Jacques 2009). The Covid 19 pandemic has exposed the brittleness and liability of the health system of some developed countries which, paradoxically, rely on China to supply themselves with logistics and medical consumables. China, as an emerging superpower, is turning the world upside down by acting as a saving giant. Chinese authorities' sending medical teams and equipments to Europe and to The United States, is a sign of the emerging of a new world order which is being more and more *Asianized*. At a time when the United States engulf in a racial crisis that bears the slogan of "Blacks' lives matter", China reassures and shows itself into a position of a leader, and a philanthropist of the world gangrened by a pandemic which has overwhelmed the great Western powers. And the same 'humanitarian' aid is deployed in Japan, Korea, Italy, Iran, France, Spain and to all the African countries. Thus being, Chinese



hegemony is more and more becoming a reality. And it is described by Martin Jacques as “as a rising global power” p316

China’s policy throughout the world is mainly based on its Belt and Road initiative, which is as well called the New Silk Road. This pharaonic project stretches from East Asia to Europe and would greatly expand China’s economic and political influence. But it must be stressed that the dominant ambitions of China were declined by President Deng Xiaoping since 1978 with his liberal economic reforms in a country of communist ideology. After having succeeded in overshadowing the supremacy of the West and in imposing itself as saviour of the world during the Covid 19 health crisis, is not China right to expand its policies and ideology in a perspective of a post-Covid world new economic order?

US-China competition is giving birth to timid, but strong changes in the geopolitical organization of the worldwide business and bilateral corporations. The option of the first super-power to be more aggressive toward China with hardening measures and sanctions against Chinese interests, impact on the geopolitical and security issues on a Pacific-Asian scale. China strengthens its relations with the BRICS countries like South Africa. In so doing, the South-South cooperation grows stronger and much more visible. Furthermore, the decision of the US to withdraw from international treaties and international organizations *degloblizes* the United States’ power and influence on the international scale.

The Covid 19 has provoked political quakes and economic desiderata. It impacts on partners’ relations with the resumption of trade wars symbolized by the constant quarrels opened by Washington, not only against states deemed to be rogue states like Iran and North Korea, but China and even Europe as well.

The Brexit, for its part, is pushing another wedge into free trade, with the prospect of bilateral treaties involving one of the world's leading powers, the United Kingdom, in particular with regard to its natural economic area: the European Union.

CONCLUSION

The cooperation between Africa and Iran has been expressed for several years. However, it is important to put it clear that in the domain of culture the Iranian influence is modest and mild growth. Introduced in South Africa by the Khoja group, the Shiism is a branch which plays a particular role in the religious landscape in South Africa. With 0, 25% (Perspective monde) of South African population, Shiites are an active minority who give voice to the Iranian version of Islam in South Africa. In addition to religion, the Persian language use in teaching and learning in South African universities is another window through which Iran underpins the delivery of strong the loading dose of its culture in the rainbow nation.

Furthermore, the coming up of emerging powers in the international relation-map misbalanced the equilibrium that would prevail in the Third world. The non-aligned states organization was then deprived of certain geographical regions which, to safeguard their own interest stepped out of the Global-South’s thoughts to embrace the Global-North principles. In so being, it became clearly expressed that materialist realities very often outdid philosophical and ideological belonging. From a solidary standpoint, new industrialized countries turned into order-givers. The third world wobbled in in a wind of incongruity and



became a den for weak and poor states whose destiny was controlled in a way or another by super-powers who bipolarized the world into good and bad nations.

The grouping of institutions and countries into alliances was, consequently, to be done according to their common and tangible interests. Hence the birth of common-interests-organizations such as the BRICS, the CEN-SAD, NIC, NEC which, today, has stood as the visible truth that cracks the third world, that indeed is much more ideological than locational. In the 21st century in which everybody helps themselves, locational theory is on its slope to die down. In addition, the Covid 19 crisis has definitely engaged the world into a perspective of a redefinition of political and economic partnerships, hence the repositioning of the Third-World in the concert of nations.

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