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GLOBALIZATION, PANAFRICANISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT QUESTION IN AFRICA: FORCES AND COUNTER-FORCES IN THE LINGUISTIC MARKET PLACE

Development challenges facing the continent of Africa have been lucidly discussed by among other scholars Walter Rodney. A lot has been documented on the causes, courses and consequences of the Development Question in Africa. In response to persistent and emerging development problems on the continent, and informed by arguments of modern theorists and scholars of African development, there is an emerging school of thought that argues against purely economic models and instead seeks a broader discourse and alternative approaches.

Conceiving globalization as a hegemonic project that represents an ideology of neo-liberalism and understanding Pan-Africanism as resistance to it and as a form of counter-hegemony in which various forces contest and challenge its legitimacy, this paper confines itself to the linguistic market place in Africa as one site and arena where the development battle has to be won. Focusing on cultural linguistics, the paper argues that despite language, culture, participatory communication and sustainable community development in Africa deeply influencing one another, the connections between them have not always been explicit. With globalization impacting on all aspect of human life, the development challenges that African countries confront will undoubtedly increase and that inevitably demands for development policy re-examination, redefinition, innovation and reform. The need for this approach is informed by the fact that existing theories of African development overlook important explanations and aspects by not focusing on language, culture, communication and community participation. This is an unfortunate situation considering that in the recent past, all over the world, language and culture have come to be viewed as important resources and mediating agents in a holistic approach to sustainable development.