Globalization, "Globalization of Feminism" and the Liberation of Women: The Case of African women.

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of globalization and "globalization of feminism" in the liberation process for women in general and African women in particular, using the 2002 riots in Northern Nigeria associated with the 2002 Miss World Beauty Contest as its case study. A distinct contribution of the paper to the current literature is two fold: 1) it conceptualizes women's liberation at the global level as a process driven by and contingent upon globalization and "globalization of feminism" whose success is contingent upon intellectual and scholarly legitimation and justification; and 2) it recognizes and demonstrates the liberating potential of globalization and "globalization of feminism" and identifies the challenges and limitations of these liberating forces in any attempt to liberate women globally. Drawing on both the case study and the literature on globalization and "globalization of feminism" the paper concludes that: 1) globalization, driven by capitalism, has created favorable conditions and opportunities for a global expansion of feminism, aimed at women's liberation globally; 2) to achieve meaningful and realistic liberation of women at the global level, liberation must be conceptualized as a long process that involves mutual understanding, education and ultimately, an intellectual revolution based on communicative action, triggered by feminist scholarship of the type demonstrated in the works of Anderson and Collins (2004); Collins (1990, 1998); Harding (2000); Hooks (1981, 1984); Lotz 2003; and Whelehan (1995); and 3) this process must identify and address specific differences among women which stem, primarily, from culture, social class, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, customs, tribal origin, social and political systems and the status of different nations within the so-called "global capitalist society," as well as these nations' status within the "Global Political class System".

Introduction

Historically, women have been subjugated, dominated and oppressed by men, primarily, through discriminatory and exclusionary practices and the impact on women has been well documented (Anderson and Collins 2004; Collins 1990, 1998; Jaggar 1983; Laslett and Thorne 1997; Lotz 2003; Rhode 1990; Wallace 2000; Wood 2003). The crippling effect of this oppression notwithstanding, women have made great strides and continue to struggle to eliminate these discriminatory and exclusionary practices in order to gain parity status at the cultural, social, political, economic and global levels. In this struggle women have utilized several strategies. Prominent among these strategies are social movements, political activism, and intellectual expression. The intellectual struggle has been wide-ranging, involving interdisciplinary scholarship that seeks to present social reality and the world from a woman's point of view (Harding 2000; Julia 2000, Kelly 1984; Ritzer 2004; Wood 2003). However, most of this scholarship, for many, appears to be new because, historically, men have succeeded in systematically excluding women's contributions from major textbooks (Laslett and Thorne 1997; Ritzer 2000, 2004). The systematic exclusion and oppression of women have occasionally forced some feminist scholars to venture beyond pure academic endeavors. Some have become activist and in some cases radical in order to achieve the same freedom and equal treatment as their male counterparts. This radical activism is precipitated as well as justified by women's subordinate status and the discrimination directed toward them in every institution in society.

This paper addresses the following two research questions: 1) What is the role of globalization and the "globalization of feminism" in the process of women's liberation at the global level?; and 2) What are the challenges for and limitations of globalization and the "globalization of feminism" as catalysts in the process of women's liberation at the global level? The paper focuses on these two questions to critically assess the liberation process for women in general and that of African women in particular. A distinct contribution of the paper to the current literature is two fold: 1) it conceptualizes women's liberation at the global level as a long process driven by and contingent upon globalization and "globalization of feminism" whose success is contingent upon intellectual and scholarly legitimation and

justification.

Women's liberation conceptualized as such, the paper starts by tracing the origin of globalization and feminism to key social forces, their impact and the responses of classical social thinkers; and 2) it recognizes and demonstrates the liberating potential of globalization and "globalization of feminism" and identifies the challenges and limitations of these liberating forces in any attempt to liberate women globally. It highlights, particularly, challenges and limitations posed by differences among women which stem, primarily, from culture, social class, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, customs, tribal origin, social and political systems and the status of different nations within the so-called "global capitalist society," as well as these nations' status within the "Global Political Class System". Before we turn our attention to the subject matter of the paper, it is necessary to provide operational definitions of globalization, "globalization of feminism", and liberation of women as used in this paper.

Operational Definitions

Globalization

Globalization, as used in this paper, is defined as "a set of institutional and ideological relations constructed by powerful social forces, e.g. managers of international agencies, states and firms, academic ideologues" (McMichael 1996:26). It is conceptualized as a global capitalist economic reality that is, however, not the only reality. It is considered to be an unrepresentative globalist capitalist economic regime whose impact, although limited in terms of the population it includes, is very extensive since states have coercively been absorbed into the regime (McMichael 1996; Ritzer 2000, 2004; Robertson 1992). This definition, implicitly, underscores the important role globalization plays in providing the basic framework for the "globalization of feminism".

"Globalization of Feminism"

Since the "globalization of feminism," as used in this paper, is really an extension of feminism to a global level, any attempt to define it must start with a definition of feminism itself. Feminism, as used in this paper, combines the following two definitions: 1) in its narrowest sense, feminism is defined as a complex set of political ideologies used by the women's movement to advance the cause of women's equality and put an end to sexist theory and the practice of social oppression; and 2) in a broader and deeper sense, feminism is defined as a variety of interrelated frameworks used to observe, analyze, and interpret the complex ways in which the social reality of gender inequality is constructed, enforced, and manifested from the largest institutional settings to the details of people's daily lives (Ali, Coate and Goro 2000; Barsky 1992; Bryson 2002; Johnson 1995; Ritzer 2000; Segal 1999; Zalewski 2000). The second definition implies as well as includes feminist scholarship.

"Globalization of feminism", as used in this paper, refers to the variety of interrelated frameworks used to observe, analyze, and interpret the complex ways in which the social reality of gender inequality is constructed, enforced, and manifested from the largest institutional settings to the details of people's daily lives *within the so-called "global capitalist society,"* (Ali, Coate and Goro 2000; Harding 2001; Lotz 2003; Ritzer 2000). The two definitions of feminism and the definition of "globalization of feminism" combined, capture: 1) the essence of feminism, namely its praxis dimension; 2) the essence of feminist scholarship, namely the theoretical, academic, and intellectual dimension of feminism; and 3) the essence of feminism and feminist scholarship at the global level, namely their global dimension.

Liberation of Women

Liberation of women, as used in this paper, refers to the struggles by various women's social movements to free women from the shackles and bonds of male domination, specifically patriarchy. The term, as used in this paper, emphasizes the ongoing, conscious struggle, a process driven by scholarship, intended to bring about an intellectual awakening, an intellectual revolution or "consciousness rising" considered to be the catalyst for women's global emancipation. As a process, liberation of women involves the following two levels: 1) intellectual level which is orchestrated, spearheaded, and driven by feminist scholars. This level is considered to be the driving force behind or the catalyst or the prerequisite for the liberation of women through what some feminist scholars have referred to as "consciousness-raising" (Laslett and Thorne 1997). It is also viewed as the prerequisite for the second level; and 2) practical level which emphasizes the need for all women to recognize and acknowledge the common interests and bonds they share and the need for them to work together toward achieving what is in their best interest, specifically the elimination of patriarchy, the liberation of women from all forms of male dominance and oppression, and the

maximization of women's labor force participation (Barsky 1992; Collins 1998, 2004; Julia 2000; Lengermann and Niebrugge 2002; Pearsall 1999; Ritzer 2000; Segal 1999; Smith 1987; Zalewski 2000). The realization of this level is viewed as contingent upon the first level.

Since women's liberation is conceptualized as a process, our assessment of the role of globalization and the "globalization of feminism," as catalysts in this process and the challenges and limitations that confront them, starts with an examination of the intellectual and scholarly responses to the impact of two key social forces, the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, with the main objective of demonstrating how these forces and the intellectual and scholarly responses to their impact contributed to the birth of feminism.

Many social forces contributed to the birth of feminism. However, our discussion here focuses only on the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, which, we argue, were instrumental in creating the social conditions that gave birth to modern capitalist society and contemporary feminism. We argue further that globalization and the "globalization of feminism" are logical extensions of modern capitalism and contemporary feminism respectively. We assume that a good understanding of the roots of globalization and "globalization of feminism" is essential to an assessment of the role of these two global forces in women's liberation in general and that of African women in particular.

The Industrial Revolution, Capitalism and the Birth of Feminism

The basic underlying assumption that guides the discussion in this section is that the role of globalization and "globalization of feminism" in the process of women's liberation cannot be realistically determined without a careful examination of the contribution of the Industrial Revolution and capitalism to the birth of these global social forces. The discussion that follows focuses mainly on the responses of a subjectively selected number of social thinkers to the social problems which arose from the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, responses which, we believe, laid the foundation for contemporary feminism.

The advent of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism brought about major changes in social structure, economic arrangement, and the relationship between society and the individual. At the individual level, the impact of the Industrial Revolution and rise of capitalism, was both positive and negative. The negative effects included loss of economic security, excessive exploitation, poverty for many, devaluation and undermining of the family as both a production unit and a consumption unit, increase in crime rate and in general human alienation (Gilman 1898/1973; Thomas 1985; Ritzer 2004; Webb 1926; Weber 1905/1919). The positive effects included capital accumulation and self-actualization for a few, freedom of movement, increased individual rights and liberty, creation of conditions necessary for the destruction of vestiges of old tradition and customs (Kandal 1988; Thomas 1985; Ritzer 2004; Weber 1905/1919).

An important and guiding question for our discussion here is: How did the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, in particular contribute to the birth of feminism? Research shows they contributed in a number of ways. However, our focus here is on the most important, the conditions and social problems they created, such as the destruction of ancient societies, marginalization, subjugation, and oppression of women, poverty, alienation, increased crime rate, child abuse and neglect, social upheaval, which caught the attention of both male and female classical social thinkers. The birth of feminism, therefore, is traced back to the Industrial Revolution, the rise of capitalism and the social conditions they both created which resulted in the marginalization, subjugation and oppression of women. As a matter of historical fact, women were not always viewed as inferior to men prior to the Industrial Revolution. Historical records indicate that ancient societies were matriarchal and women's ability to procreate was revered as possessing supernatural power (Engels 1972; Perry 1978). What is of sociological significance to us here are the responses of classical social thinkers, both male and female, to the social conditions created by the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism. How did these responses contribute to the birth of feminism? The discussion that follows is guided and driven by this question.

For Auguste Comte, the focus was on the destabilizing impact of these forces and his response was both liberal and conservative. On one hand he supported equality in education for women and men but on the other he believed that only males had the intellectual ability to become sociologists and to understand a scientific examination of social reality. He argued that men were intellectually superior to women. This, of course, was not an accurate depiction of women's intellectual capacity and many female scholars immediately recognized this flaw in Comte's view of women and responded accordingly. For example, Harriet Martineau's work contradicts Comte's views of women. In 1853 she published an extensively edited English version of Comte's "Positive Philosophy", a version he so approved that he substituted it, translated back into French, for his original edition. According to Ritzer (2004), it is only in this relationship to Comte that, until the present decade, Martineau's name survived in the record of sociology's history. She can readily be considered the first sociologist, sociology's "founding mother." The failure to recognize her as sociology's "founding mother" and blatant acts of discrimination against and exclusion of women contributed to the birth of feminism.

Durkheim was concerned about industrialization and the growth of cities and the problems they created for society. However, his response was shaped by his conservative intellectual slant which was driven by his obsession with the need for social integration and firm regulation. Durkheim assumed that human beings were "impelled by their passions into a mad search for gratification that always leads to a need for more" and if these passions are unrestrained, they multiply and human beings become enslaved by them and they become a threat to themselves and society (Ritzer 2004:193). Although Durkheim was concerned that the division of labor was characterized by certain liabilities such as competition, class conflict, and the feeling of meaninglessness generated by routine industrial work, he did not believe that there was a basic conflict among the owners, managers, and workers within an industry and he argued that any sign of such conflict indicated a lack of a common morality resulting from a lack of an integrative structure that produces social justice and equality of opportunity. Therefore he proposed occupational association as the solution to conflict. His conservative response ignored gender and the negative consequences of gender socialization for females. For example, he viewed patriarchy simply as: 1) a form of division of labor by gender which socialized women into *expected* roles of subordination; 2) a result of conflicts arising from gender differences and gender inequalities; and 3) a form of discrimination, built into almost every institution in society, especially the economy. These later became major areas of focus for feminists and the feminist movement.

Marx and Engels (1956) considered patriarchy to be a product of capitalism and women were oppressed by capitalist society and the "bourgeois family." In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,* Engels (1970) argued that with the transition from a subsistence economy to one "with inherited property," the man took control in the home, and the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude. Those women and children who could find jobs, worked sixteen hours a day for low, starvation level wages. Women, in particular, experienced job discrimination and those who found employment made much less than their male counterparts. These ideas provided the basic foundation for feminism and contemporary radical, socialists, and Marxist feminists draw on this foundation.

Georg Simmel's response was shaped enormously by his views of cities and the money economy. In his response, especially to the impact of cities and the money economy, he emphasized the unfair dominance of women which, in the cultural domain, prevented females from both contributing to common culture and achieving autonomy in their identity (Kandal 1988). He clearly attributed this to the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the money economy.

Like Comte, Herbert Spencer's response was both liberal and conservative. In *Social Statics* (1851), Herbert Spencer expressed his concern about the unequal treatment of women. According to him, "Equity knows no difference in sex....the law of equal freedom manifestly applies to the whole race-female as well as male" (Kandal 1988: 24). Later, Spencer changed his views on the subject and argued that women were intellectually and emotionally inferior to men as a result of early socialization and the need for them to reserve vital power for reproduction (Ashely and Orenstein 2001). After 1854, Spencer argued that females were emotionally and intellectually inferior to males because of an early arrest of their evolution necessitated by the need to reserve vital power needed for reproduction. Prior to 1854,

he explained this difference as a result of early socialization. According to him, women are destined by nature to take on domestic roles of motherhood. It is unnatural, he argued, for them not to be married; and their education and opportunities should be limited to learning those things necessary for their biologically ordained social role. These claims enraged feminist scholars and they responded by espousing different views.

For Thorstein Bunde Veblen, women were the first industrious class from the evolutionary transition from savagery to Barbarianism (Ashely and Orenstein 2001). But then, he argued, men removed them from productive labor and put them in conspicuous wasteful activities such as the binding of women's feet in China, women's supporting roles, typing, and copying. He argued further that men promoted the ideal female beauty as a frail, pale appearance which symbolizes a person incapable of hard work, with dresses that constrain movement, and fabric impractical for work. According to him, men have succeeded in removing women from all publicly visible important labor. All these, he argued, designed to perpetuate patterns of job discrimination against women.

Max Weber focused on free market and "free labor" and argued they were the precondition of modern industrial capitalism. In his response, he argued that capitalism provided for individual freedom through "free labor". However, he argued, on the face of it, workers hire themselves out voluntarily, but actually it is "....under the compulsion of the whip of hunger...."(Weber 1961:208-209). To both Karl Marx and Max Weber, free labor has a double meaning: workers' freedom from slavery and other forms of forced servitude and workers' separation from any and all means of production.

For Weber, capitalism is liberating for women, even though it fails to provide women the same opportunity to own the means of production that it does for men. In this sense, therefore, capitalism is viewed as both liberating and enslaving for women. Female scholars such as Jane Addams, Anna Julia Cooper, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Harriet Martineau, Beatrice Potter Webb and Marianne Weber responded to the problems and challenges posed by the Industrial Revolution and capitalism in unique and different ways. It is the responses of these female scholars and the systematic exclusion of their scholarly and intellectual contributions that provided the basic intellectual roots of modern feminism.

Jane Addams's response was shaped partially by the fact that from an omnibus in London she saw poor people desperately bidding for rotten food and eating it raw. This contributed to her creation of Hull House. She focused on the need to socialize democracy, aimed at creating a society in which relations are based on what contemporary feminists describe as inclusivity, empowerment, and vantage point. She aimed at presenting a feminist sociological theory created around the pursuit of a distinctively cultural feminist goal for society. She envisioned a society of relationships of human beings in social interaction who are filled with the desire for kindness and recognition of others' vantage point (Ritzer 2004).

In her response, Anna Julia Cooper focused on race, gender and class stratifications which she viewed as ultimately the product of a global capitalist economic system. She demonstrated a clear understanding of the fact that domination, inequality, and race conflict were not only issues in the various nation-states of the West, but a process in the "global order" of capitalism. She never identified herself as a sociologist not because of her intellectual alienation from sociology but because of the enormous barriers to her participation in the sociological community posed by a combination of sexism and racism (Ritzer 2004). In the *Voices from the South,* she discussed Comte and Spencer and presented her most general principle of social organization as a sociological one: "This.... law holds true in sociology as in the world of matter, that equilibrium, not repression among conflicting forces is the condition of natural harmony, of permanent progress, and of universal freedom,"(Cooper 1892/1969:160, cited in Ritzer 2004:294).

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's response focused on what she viewed as the fundamental social institution, the economy, in which gender stratification is the primary tension in all the economies of all known societies, producing in effect, two sex classes-men as a "master class" and women as a class of subordinate and disempowered social beings (Ritzer

2004:279). She called this pattern the "sexuo-economic arrangement. Her explanation of the consequences of this sexuo-economic arrangement parallels Marx's exploration of the implication of economic class conflict for history and society. Ritzer (2004:279) argues, "that Marx is more familiar to us reflects not only his position in world history but a massive politics of knowledge in both society and sociology that has periodically advanced the Marxian thesis and systematically erased Gilman's feminist thesis." Like Marx, Gilman argued that: 1) the economy was the basic social institution, an area of physical human work that produces individual and social life and moves society progressively forward; 2) it is through work that individuals potentially realize their species-nature as agentic producers; and 3) our personalities are formed by our actual experiences of work. According to her, meaningful work is the essence of human self-realization and that restricting or denying the individual access to meaningful work reduces the individual to a condition of nonhumanity. This is the criterion by which she judges the essential fairness or unfairness of the society in place.

She argued further the sexuo-economic arrangement is a major barrier to self-actualizing work for both men and women, though for women much more than men, resulting in individual unhappiness and major social pathologies such as class conflict, political corruption, distorted sexuality, greed, poverty, waste and environmental exploitation, inhuman conditions in both wage labor and unpaid household labor, harmful educational practices, child neglect and abuse, ideological excess, war, and above all, a systemic structural condition of human alienation. The solution to all these social problems of the wasteful sexuo-economic arrangement, according to Gilman, was to break up the arrangement of the sex classes. She argued that the first step to achieving this is the economic emancipation of women which requires: 1) fundamental changes in gender socialization and in education; 2) the physical development of women to their full size and strength; 3) a rethinking and renegotiation of the personal, relational, and sexual expectations between women and men; and 4) the rational dismantling and reconstruction of the institution of the household so that women can have freedom to do the work they choose so that society may be enriched by their labor (Ritzer 2004:282).

Harriet Martineau's response focused on investigating "women's education, family, marriage and law, violence against women, the tyranny of fashion, the inhumanity of the Arab halem, the inhumanity of the British treatment of prostitutes, the nature of women's paid work in terms of its brutally heavy physical demands and wretchedly low wages. Her particular focus was on the wage labor of working-class women in factories, agriculture, and domestic service and in these studies she brought together the double oppressions of class and gender," (Ritzer 2004:277).

She viewed society as a nation state or politico-cultural entity produced by interacting individuals as autonomous moral and practical agents with the ultimate goal of providing for human happiness. Overall, she focused on a woman-centered sociology and argued that the domination of women paralleled the domination of slaves.

In Beatrice Potter Webb's response, she decided to devote herself to: 1) the problems of "poverty amidst riches", focusing on the causes of poverty ; 2) the problems of economic inequality; and 3) finding ways to reform the capitalist economy. She admitted that her focus on these problems was not because she was moved by charity but because she was moved by the unease that "affected much of the class of wealthy British capitalists to which her family belonged as they confronted the fact that four-fifths of the population of Britain had not benefitted from the Industrial revolution and were indeed the worse off for it," (Ritzer 2004:301). Webb found the solution to these problems in Fabian Socialism which sought to influence the course of reform in Britain by a process of "permeation" which involved supplying information and platform planks to any political party that would champion any aspect of the reform of inequality.

In Marianne Weber's response she argued that "the interaction of capitalism and patriarchy creates barriers to the attempts of women, especially non-elite women, to seek greater liberty and autonomy," (Ritzer, 2004: 300). She contended that in capitalistic work arrangements, women are doomed to wage-sector work that is exhausting, onerous, and grossly underpaid. This situation, she believed, produces meaninglessness and alienation for these women. It is worthwhile noting and recognizing her excellent grasp of the ambivalent and contradictory position of women as she argued further that most working women have not chosen to work outside the home. They have been forced to seek wages by capitalistic and class pressures. These working women, she pointed out, have a double burden of wage-work demands and unaltered expectations for them to be fully responsible for child care and house work. Marianne Weber, however, did not suggest that the home situations of women become an alternative to wage work either because house work is an area of incessant drudgery and women who stay at home, regardless of their

social class, are oppressed by economic dependency and patriarchal male authority. According to Marianne, the improvement of women's situation required a reform of the patriarchal household rather than the capitalistic workplace since patriarchy, more than capitalism, is responsible for the subjugation, oppression and domination of women by men.

It is clear from the preceding review of the responses of male and female classical social thinkers to the social problems unleashed by the Industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism that the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism contributed tremendously to the birth of feminism. Rowbotham (1989) argued that feminism came, like socialism, out of the tangled, confused response of men and women to capitalism. Modern feminists have drawn on these classical traditions, statements, foundation and responses to continue the struggle for freedom, gender equity in all institutional arrangements in modern society, and women's liberation nationally and internationally. In this struggle, feminism has achieved a certain degree of success in liberating women in most Western societies, in large part, because of capitalism.

Capitalism, in particular, has been identified as the driving force behind globalization which is viewed as responsible for the creation of the so-called "global capitalist society" (McMichael 1996; Ritzer 1996, 2000). It is within this globalization framework that some modern feminists, building on their successes in the West, are attempting to create what we refer to in this paper as the "globalization of feminism". Our discussion in the next section focuses on globalization and the "globalization of feminism".

Globalization and "Globalization of Feminism"

Modern capitalism, globalization, and "globalization of feminism" are interrelated concepts whose roots can all be traced to the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism. Studies have traced the origin of modern capitalism to the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism (Homans 1950; Kandal 1988; Ritzer 2004; Zeitlin 2001). Also, our discussion in the previous section traced the origin of feminism to the responses of classical social thinkers to the social problems unleashed by the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism. Rowbotham (1989), for instance, argued that feminism came, like socialism, out of the tangled, confused response of men and women to capitalism. The Industrial Revolution, she argued, involved the separation of the workplace from the home, thereby producing roles for women as workers distinct from their roles in the family and that this resulted in a double oppression for women at home and in the workplace. Women, she argued, were faced with an unprecedented choice between home and children on the one hand, and the continued possibility of earning a cash wage, however meager, on the other. Globalization has been conceptualized as an extension of modern capitalist economic relations to the global level (McMichael 1996; Ritzer 2000). As some scholars have pointed out, this globalization has come to mean the so-called "global society" that is capitalist, of course, and that owes its birth and limited successes to global capitalist economic relationships (McMichael 1996; Ritzer 2000).

It is this globalization framework which provides the basis for what is referred to in this paper as "globalization of feminism." Based on the success of feminism in the West, some modern feminists have focused on extending feminism to the global level within this framework provided by globalization. According to some, capitalism, in particular, must be given credit for creating conditions conducive to women's liberation. For example, Marianne Weber, unlike Karl Marx, saw capitalism possibly offering some emancipation for women in its acceleration of individualism and its erosion of ancient relational patterns like patriarchy (Thomas 1985; Ritzer 2004:300). For Max Weber, capitalism provided freedom from slavery (Zeitlin 1990). Kandal (1988) argued that opportunities were created for: 1) weakening patriarchal authority in working-class households; 2) financial independence for women; and 3) women to fight collectively for new rights as workers and citizens.

By extending and applying these liberating potential and power of capitalism, recognized by Marianne Weber, Max Weber, Terry Kandal and others, to global level analyses, the argument can be made that globalization, which has come to mean   "global capitalism," has the capability to liberate women around the globe by accelerating

individualism and eroding, not only ancient relational patterns like patriarchy, but also eliminating other barriers associated with traditional, customary, cultural, tribal, religious, ethnic, racial, political, social and economic practices. In this sense, globalization can be viewed as a driving force behind global feminism, whose main goal is to accelerate the liberation of women globally. For example, Ritzer (2004: 300) points out that Marianne Weber "is a significant contributor to an international effort by women sociologists to create a feminist sociological theory in the classical period of sociology's history." However, before embarking upon this monumental task of women's liberation at the global level, it is important and necessary to recognize the differences among women even within the same nation or society in what feminist theorists such as Dorothy E. Smith (Ritzer 2000) and Marianne Weber (Ritzer 2004) refer to as "standpoint." In "Jobs and Marriage" Marianne Weber attributed these differences among women to social class stratification. She contrasted women's experiences in agriculture, paid domestic employment, factory work and professional employment and demonstrated that most of professional work for women is relatively low status, with 61% of this category being midwives.

The percent of high-status, self-actualizing jobs which the women's movement depicts as the ideal for women's workplace participation is very small (only 2% of professional women in Germany). But unfortunately, she argued, the standpoint of the spokespersons for the women's movement is in this privileged group. Marianne Weber argued that "it is absurd to speak from this standpoint about the reforms needed in all women's home and work lives," (Ritzer, 2000:300).

Marianne Weber insightfully recognized the differences among German women, created by social class stratification and the mistake made by the women's movement, led by a small percent of the privileged, with high-status, self-actualizing jobs. It seems logical to argue that by extending the level of analysis to the global level, these differences among women would multiply and their contributing factors will increase to include factors such as traditions, customs, culture, tribal origin, religion, ethnicity, racial background, and political, social and economic status within the "Global Political Class System" (Ngwainmbi 1998). Theorists within the Marxian feminist world-systems theoretical orientation argue that women's experience of class-based inequality is affected and intensified by their position in the global system. According to Ward (1990), women in peripheral global locations have a different experience of class-based inequality than women in core locations. Therefore women are unequal to men not because of any basic and direct conflict of interest between the genders but because of the working out of class oppression.

Based on this possibility, it is therefore dangerous and misleading to assume that women are a monolithic group, united by common experiences and therefore what applies to and is good for women in one society applies to and is good for those of other societies around the globe. This is implicitly the assumption that drives some feminist scholarship, actions of some radical feminists, and actions of some in the leadership of women's movements who want to take their crusade to a global level. For example, according to Dicker (2003), as international contact between women increased, a new focus evolved on understanding and addressing the needs of *all* women, regardless of race, class, age or other characteristics. It is our contention in this paper that those who operate under this assumption fail to recognize the risks, dangers, and challenges associated with actions based on this simplistic, unrealistic assumption as demonstrated by the case study below.

Case Study

The Miss World Beauty Contest of 2002 in Kaduna, Nigeria

In Africa the social status of women varies based on tribe, ethnicity, culture, religion, nation, political system and level of economic development.

Compared to the status of women in Western societies, African women still have a long way to go with respect to gender equality. Cognizant of the variation in African women's status imposed by tribes, ethnicity, religion, nation, political system and level of economic development, this case study, however, focuses narrowly on Nigeria and primarily on the role of religion in an effort to highlight the challenges and difficulties that face the "globalization of

feminism" project within the African context.

In general, gender inequality is widespread and more accentuated in Muslim societies. The status of men is much higher than that of women. Women's experiences in institutions such as marriage, family, politics, religion, law etcetera are distinctively different from those of men as demonstrated by this case study. The 2002 Miss World Beauty Contest was scheduled to be held in Kaduna, a Muslim city in Northern Nigeria. In this northern region of Muslim dominated states, sharia law had recently been adopted. "Sharia courts do impose strict Islamic laws, which prescribe flogging, amputations and so on for crimes like theft and adultery," (*Frontline*, *Volume 19, Issue 25, December 7-20, 2002:3)*. Prostitution, gambling and alcohol consumption are banned under sharia. Prior to the Miss World Beauty Contest, a sharia court had passed a death sentence by stoning on Amina Lawal for committing adultery and bearing a child out of wedlock. This action produced two important reactions of global significance. First "international pressure heightened against granting Nigeria the hosting rights because of its perceived poor human rights record and the general state of insecurity in the country" (*Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:1*). Secondly, Isioma Daniel, author of an offending article and a reporter of an English newspaper, *This Day,* "made a disparaging remark about prophet Muhammad" (*Frontline, Volume 19, Issue 25, December 7-20, 2002:1)*, in connection with the Miss World Contest. The remark suggested that if Muhammad himself were alive today he would have dated and married some of the Miss World Beauty contestants, a remark which indirectly condemned the death sentence on Amina Lawal while glamorizing and promoting the Miss World Beauty Contest and by extension "globalization of feminism".

The immediate reaction to this remark within Nigeria was the "violent protests in Kaduna and Abuja, which left more than 250 people dead, 500 wounded, according to Red Cross Officials,"(*Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:2-3*). In addition, Muslim protesters and Zamfara State government passed a *fatwa* (death sentence) on Nduka Obaigbena, publisher of *This Day*, Eniola Bello, the editor of the Daily, and Isioma Daniel, the author of the offending article. Isioma Daniel then escaped to the United States of America when asked to report to the SSS office in Abuja (*Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:8*). All these events led to the cancellation of the Miss World Beauty Contest in Nigeria and the hasty decision by Julia Morley, president of *Miss World,* to change its venue to London, England.

What, in general, is the relevance of the Miss World Beauty Contest to globalization, "globalization of feminism", and the global liberation of women? The Miss World Beauty Contest combines values and ideals essential to both globalization and "globalization of feminism". Its globalization dimension is embedded in and highlighted by its capitalist component and appeal as well as the involvement of nations around the globe. First of all, it is designed for different nations to compete to host the event. This competition is sometimes fierce, involving the media, politics, and the promotion of feminism's agenda as demonstrated by the Nigerian case of 2002. Nigerian officials said that after Nigeria successfully bid for the hosting of Miss World pageant, the Western media made Amina Lawal the main issue and kept up the chant that the contest be boycotted. "They relentlessly went about trying to sabotage our bid," said a senior Nigerian official (*Frontline Volume, 19, Issue 25, December 7-20, 2002:4*). Secondly, the competition is driven by the potential for capital investment and the potential economic or financial benefit.

The nation that wins the competition to host the event profits from the influx of foreign currency and foreign capital investment as evidenced by Nigerian President Obasanjo's apology to the Muslim community for the offensive article in the daily *This Day* and his remark that the events in Kaduna and Abuja following the publication of the offensive article had dampened the government's efforts to attract foreign investments (*Frontline Volume, 19, Issue 25, December 7-20, 2002:4*). Participants bring in millions of dollars into the host country which help boost the economic growth of the host nation. Foreign companies, especially hotel chains and food service industries, extend their operations to the host nation to accommodate the needs of contestants and participants. Local businesses expand to provide services needed by contestants and participants in food service areas and hotel accommodation. In general, local businesses experience substantive increases in sales and revenue and the contestants themselves are motivated by global recognition for both themselves and their nation and the financial rewards that are associated with the competition. With regard to the host nation, it gains international recognition and appeal and its global status within the capitalist global system is elevated. It is exposed to international capital investment and its political status within the "Global Political Class System" is also elevated. It is recognized as a member of the international community, a community which, in essence, has become a capitalist global society.

For instance, the Nigerian government, like the governments in many other developing countries, thinks that the hosting of the contest would give it added credibility in the global marketplace (*Frontline Volume, 19, Issue 25, December 7-20, 2002:4*). However, it must be pointed out that many Nigerians, especially those of the Muslim religious faith, do not necessarily share this same positive, optimistic view of globalization as demonstrated by the remarks of Lateef Adegbite, secretary-general of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. He dismissed the idea that the cancellation of the contest has negative economic implications for Nigeria. According to him "Islam is a very serious religion. Our religion is stronger and more important than economy. I mean Allah provides everything. What do we gain inside, I'm happy, prosperous and I lose my soul and paradise. Those things are more important to us than even becoming richer than America. So I don't think investment and economic issue should come into this," *(Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:13).*

With respect to the globalization of feminism, the Miss World Beauty Contest brings beautiful women from around the globe together to freely and openly express their beauty, autonomy, and "womanness" or what it really means to be a woman. It provides a unique forum and opportunity for feminism to showcase some of its basic tenets and principles globally. It demonstrates global solidarity and commonness among women. It provides and presents models and advantages of women's freedom and liberty. Most important, it is implicitly an indirect attack on local indigenous cultures in general and patriarchy in particular at the global level. For instance, its organizers and proponents fail to take into serious consideration cultural and religious sensitivities around the globe as illustrated and demonstrated by the following discussion of specific events, individual comments, protests and riots associated with the *Miss World Beauty Contest* of 2002.The decision to hold the 2002 *Miss World Beauty Contest* in the Northern Nigerian City of Kaduna, the heart of the Muslim religion in Nigeria and in November, the month of the Ramadan, clearly demonstrates the indirect attack and assault on the religious beliefs, customs and cultural traditions of the predominantly Muslim population of this region.

"Even before the contestants for the beauty contest had started arriving in Abuja, there were loud protests against the holding of the pageant, especially in the northern part of the country. The Kaduna State chapter of the Council of *Ulamas* had asked the Federal Nigerian government before the cancellation of the Contest "to call off the pageant in the interest of peace," arguing "that the pageant offends Muslims' sensitivities", (*Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:5*). Government officials privately admitted that the timing of the contest and choice of the venue constituted "a political blunder", (*Frontline, Volume 19, Issue 25, December 7-20, 2002:2*).

Most government officials openly condemned the publication of the offensive article in *This Day.* According to Ufot Ekaette, Secretary to the Federal Government, "Government will not condone such deliberate provocation and offending of the sensitivities of any faith," *(Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:9).* According to Datti Ahmed, spokesperson for the Supreme Council of Sharia, the Muslims protested "young women parading themselves half naked" and the Muslim community would have been happy if the "beauty queens" had not come to Nigeria *(Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:13).* Babatunde John, a graduate of economics from the University of Lagos said the timing of the event was wrong, and blamed "the organisers for being insensitive to the sensibilities of the Muslims", *(Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:13).* Obviously, many Muslims were upset that the pageant coincided with the holy month of Ramadan as expressed by Ahmed Makarfi, governor of Kaduna State, "We regretted the nature of the article coming during Ramadan, but we accept the apology of the publishers,"*(Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:6).* As reported in *Newswatch* "Muslims say Nigeria has no business hosting the contest, especially during the Ramadan" *(Newswatch Volume 36 No. 23, December 9, 2002:12).*

This case study clearly identifies some of the limitations and challenges that the "globalization of feminism" must take into serious consideration. Our discussion in the next section is intended to identify and critically examine the limitations of and challenges to globalization and "globalization of feminism" and to propose a realistic framework for any attempts to liberate women at the global level.

Globalization, "Globalization of Feminism" and the Reality of Women's Liberation at the Global Level

There is no doubt and many do not dispute the fact that women's liberation globally is desirable and a lofty goal. There is also no doubt that many efforts have been and are still currently being made by various women's organizations and different social movements toward achieving this goal.

However, what is in question and dispute is whether this goal is attainable at the global level. Can this goal be

realistically achieved globally? What role, if any, do globalization and "globalization of feminism" play in the struggle for women's liberation globally? What are the challenges for and limitations of this struggle? For the purpose and in the context of this paper, answers to these questions are derived from a critical assessment of whether and to what extent globalization and "globalization of feminism" are empirical realities. This approach to these questions is based on the basic premise stated from the outset that women's liberation at the global level is a process driven by and contingent upon globalization and "globalization of feminism" whose success is contingent upon intellectual and scholarly legitimation and justification. With this basic premise in mind, we now turn our attention to a critical discussion of the literature on globalization and "globalization of feminism", a discussion aimed at highlighting their empirical successes, difficulties, limitations and challenges.

Globalization, as pointed out earlier, has, to some extent, become a global capitalist economic reality that is, however, not the only reality. To the extent that globalization is a capitalist economic reality, it has liberated some women through its acceleration of individualism and its erosion of ancient relational patterns like patriarchy as Marianne Weber noted in the case of German women (Thomas 1985; Ritzer 2004). However, it is worthwhile pointing out that globalization is an unrepresentative globalist capitalist economic regime whose impact, although limited in terms of the population it includes, is very extensive since states have coercively been absorbed into the regime (McMichael 1996). If it is unrepresentative and able to coerce states, it seems logical to conclude that women, as a group and as individuals, would experience much more of the unrepresentativeness and coercion first from globalization and secondly from the " globalization of feminism", which incidentally is led by a very small privileged group of only about 2% of professional women who represent only the standpoint of the spokespersons for the women's movement. In the case of German women, Marianne Weber argued that " it is absurd to speak from this standpoint about the reforms needed in all women's home and work lives," (Ritzer, 2004:300).

Unfortunately, studies which have focused on the limited and isolated empirical success cases of globalization have failed to recognize this coercive aspect involved in these isolated empirical success cases. These studies have implicitly tended to either underestimate the role of the state or unquestionably subordinated the state to the economy (Constance and Heffernan 1991; Friedland 1994; Harvey 1990; Heffernan 1989; Heffernan and Constance 1994; Koc 1994; Llambi 1993; Lipietz 1992; and Robertson 1992). Robertson (1992:60), for instance, argued that " there is a general autonomy and 'logic' to the globalization process which operates in *relative* independence of strictly societal and other conventionally studied sociocultural processes."

In keeping with this paper's main premise, we argue that the state's subordination to the economy by these studies is for reasons other than those provided by Karl Marx and that the overriding reason is to provide an intellectual underpinning, justification, and legitimation for the expansion of capitalism to the 80% of the five billion people, women included, who still live outside global consumer networks in very much the same way the ideas of Adam Smith and Herbert Spencer provided the intellectual justification for capitalism in Britain and the ideas of Karl Marx provided the intellectual justification for the establishment of the communist system in the former Soviet Union, China, and Cuba.

The idea that globalization, driven by capitalism, provides the unifying forces for women's liberation within the so-called "global capitalist society" is unrealistic and misleading. Even in advanced capitalist societies such as the United States, capitalism has not succeeded in creating a unifying feminism. It is therefore unwise, misleading, and dangerous to use feminism, the product of capitalism, as the basic framework and catalyst for the "globalization of feminism". Studies of feminism as the framework for women's liberation in advanced industrial societies identify a variety of factors, especially race and social class produced by capitalism itself, which pose major challenges to feminism in its battle to unify women in the struggle for liberation and fight against male dominance as demonstrated by the works of Anderson and Collins (2004); Collins (1990, 1998); Harding (2000); Hooks (1981, 1984); Lotz 2003; and Whelehan (1995). Hooks (1981, 1984) argued that white feminism is fundamentally racist in two important ways: 1) it draws endless analogies between "women" and "blacks"; and 2) it assumes that the word woman is synonymous with white women, since women of other races are always perceived as others and as dehumanized beings who do not fall under the heading "women".

Some have argued that although white feminists tactically assume that identifying oneself as oppressed frees one from being an oppressor, such women still retain racist assumptions which weaken their notion of a universal sisterhood, since women of color are already erased (Code 1991; Hooks 1981, 1984). According to Whelehan (1995), black feminist writers are uncomfortable with the term "feminism" because it tends to connote a white middle-class world

view.

Some are concerned that feminism is not only creating divisions among white and African-American women, but that it also tends to create a rift between black women and black men. Alice Walker coined the epithet "womanist" to signal many black women's concern that feminist politics might potentially create divisions between black women and black men (Whelehan 1995). Even organized African-American feminist movements, such as the National Black Feminist Organization, are doomed to failure from the start because they are consciously set up in relation to white feminist negation of black women's experience, and therefore primarily readjusting feminism's scope (Whelehan 1995). The challenge to feminism's struggle for women's liberation is complicated further by the intersection and interplay of social class, race, and gender (Collins 1990, 1998).

At a global cultural level, the existence of which is questionable and debatable as demonstrated by our Case Study above, the "globalization of feminism" fails to consider cultural forces at the local level, assuming that what is good for one culture is good for all others. We argue that for the "globalization of feminism" to realistically become a global empirical reality, value consensus has to be achieved at the global cultural level, which at this point appears to be a wish, a desire or even an illusion rather than a reality. Due to the existence of cultural diversity and powerful anti-capitalist political regimes world-wide, it is inconceivable that capitalist economic globalization and the "globalization of feminism" will flourish world-wide. McMichael (1996) comes closest to realistically analyzing globalization. He argued that globalization is an empirical reality which must be understood in terms of how it relates to the local level. The interaction between the local and the national and between the national and international levels helps in making globalization an empirical reality. However, this reality must be understood as an analysis of economic relationships at the national and international levels not as an analysis of a global economy and society since: 1) more than 80% of the world's population still live outside consumer networks; 2) obstacles such as powerful authoritarian regimes, cultural, religious, racial, ethnic, tribal, political and class differences still exist; and 3) there is no global political unit capable of coordinating economic and political activities in this global economy and society the same way nation-states have been able to within different nations.

Discussion and Conclusion

The role of globalization and the "globalization of feminism" in the process of women's liberation at the global level is not quite clear. On one hand, to the extent that globalization is capitalist and is driven by capitalist economic relations and to the extent that, in many ways as discussed earlier, capitalism facilitated as well as promoted the rise of feminism, it is accurate to conclude that globalization has, in many ways, paved the way for the "globalization of feminism". Additionally, if we take into account the fact that capitalism, the force that drives globalization, has the ability to accelerate individualism and erode ancient relational patterns like patriarchy as Marianne Weber noted in the case of German women (Thomas 1985; Ritzer 2004), then it becomes clear that globalization has certainly played a role, even if limited, in the process of women's liberation by: 1) assisting in accelerating individualism and eroding ancient relational patterns like patriarchy; and 2) providing the basic framework for the "globalization of feminism."

On the other hand, studies demonstrate that capitalism is also capable of creating: 1) oppressive institutions such as the family as Engels (1972) pointed out in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State;* and 2) other obstacles to women's liberation such as those clearly identified in the works of: Cooper in Ritzer 2004 (racial, class, and gender stratification and oppression); Gilman in Ritzer 2004 (sexuo-economic arrangements that produce subordination and disempowerment of women); Marx in Ritzer 2004 (patriarchy and the bourgeois family produced by capitalism); Martineau in Ritzer 2004 (wage labor of working-class women in factories, agriculture, and domestic service which result in "double oppressions of class and gender," (Ritzer 2004:277); Simmel (unfair dominance of women which, in the cultural domain, prevents females from both contributing to common culture and achieving autonomy in their identity (Kandal 1988); Veblen in Ritzer 2004 (exclusion of and discrimination against women); Webb in Ritzer 2004 (poverty amidst riches" and economic inequality); and Marianne Weber (women forced to seek wages by capitalistic and class pressures and are doomed to wage-sector work that is exhausting, onerous, and grossly underpaid which produces meaninglessness and alienation for them (Ritzer, 2004: 300).

The preceding discussion suggests that: 1) globalization, driven by capitalism, may not be all that liberating for women; and 2) "globalization of feminism", driven by globalization which also provides the basic framework for "globalization of feminism", has great potential for liberating women at the global level. However, this liberating potential is seriously threatened, limited and challenged by: 1) the questionable and shaky nature of globalization, the

basic framework for "globalization of feminism", as demonstrated by McMichael (1996) who points to the unrepresentative and coercive nature of this globalist capitalist economic regime; 2) the fact that more than 80% of the world's population still live outside consumer networks; 3) obstacles such as powerful authoritarian regimes, cultural, religious, racial, ethnic, tribal, political and class differences; and 4) the absence of a global political unit capable of coordinating economic and political activities in this global economy and society in the same way nation-states have been able to do within different nations.

Conclusion

Given the limitations of and challenges to globalization and "globalization of feminism" identified and discussed above, we conclude that: 1) in order to achieve meaningful and realistic liberation for women at the global level, this liberation must be conceptualized as a process; 2) this process must be based on and driven by feminist scholarship that focuses on understanding the nature, sources, and causes of the challenges to and limitations of globalization and "globalization of feminism" as catalysts in the process of women's liberation at the global level; 3) this process must be a long one, involving mutual understanding, education and eventually an intellectual revolution based on what Habermas (1985, Vol. II: 139) refers to as communicative action and triggered by feminist scholarship of the type demonstrated in the works of Anderson and Collins (2004); Collins (1990, 1998); Harding (2000); Hooks (1981, 1984); Lotz 2003; and Whelehan (1995); and 4) this process must identify and address specific differences among women which stem primarily from culture, social class, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, customs, tribal origin, social and political systems and the status of different nations within the so-called "global capitalist society,"as well as their status within the "Global Political Class System".

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