

MKIRU Seminar

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*Relocating Skill in an Information age-
an African experience*

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The Structure

■ **The Context**

- *Globalisation in a Post-cold War environment*

■ **The Models**

- *Looking at the literature*

■ **The Tools**

- *The Odyssey Group*
- *The Virtual journey*
- *Working with the available infrastructure*
- *Sharing Skills*

■ **The Links**

- *URLs*

Three aspects of the current situation

- **The characteristics of an emerging global production system, and its relationship to a global market which is still subject to strong local variations,**
- **The related problem of balanced development within national and regional economies**
- **The current and potential role of information and communication technologies in the effective development and diffusion of new technologies within this global system.**

Realignments in a Global System

- **Post-Cold War Era,**
 - *growing global economic integration*
 - *disparate national and regional cultures increasingly interacting within networked and globalised organisations.*
 - *facilitation through information technologies*
- **Three dominant super-regions, NE Asia, North America and Western Europe**
 - *the 'triad' described by Ohmae (1990)*
- **Unevenness of development threatens prospects for sustainability**
 - *complex layering of labour markets,*
 - *internal and external to the developed economies driving this process.*

Dynamics of Globalisation

■ **Newly industrialising countries**

- *catching up*
- *development and growth synonymous.*
- *sceptical of higher standards than applied by established economies at the equivalent stage*

■ **Excluded economies**

- *difficulty maintaining modest economic objectives.*
- *excluded from policy making processes*
- *no influence over the emerging global information system*
- *reducing ability to negotiate sustainable exploitation of their own resources*

Textures of Globalisation

- **Differences within individual national states**
 - *as significant that those between developed and developing states.*
- **Differences between centre and periphery, between large and small scale economic activity**
 - *central to an understanding of the impact of globalisation and its supporting technologies.*
- **In the post-cold war era difference and diversity are resources**

(Delamaide; 1994, Ohmae; 1995).

The Literature: Globalisation

- **Global Production Chains replaced by Global Production Networks**
 - *linkages among members of the Triad account for the majority of global trade (Dicken, 1998)*
 - *internal trade still dominates many major industrial countries (Krugman, 1996)*
 - *substantial areas and populations are excluded from the global cycle of technical innovation and improvement*
- **Network Organisations**
 - *flexible coalitions*
 - *within and between existing corporations (Castells, 1996)*
 - *between independent partners (Inoue, 1998)*

Repositioning Across the Web

■ **Creative Milieu (Castells ,1996)**

- *captures the complex web of relationships necessary to the support of genuine innovation*
- *complementary regional associations versus national boundaries (Ohmae, 1995; Delamaide, 1994)*

■ **Moving along the Value Chain**

- *higher value-added activities sought*
- *distinction between products & services is eroding*
 - *closer adjustment to cultural variation among users & customers is needed*

■ **Electronic Adjacency**

Taipei Observations



Geography is History is Geography

- **Organisation and Cultural Segmentation**
 - *cultural dimension to technical standards*
 - *key innovations in ICTs have succeeded where mapped on to existing cultural frameworks (Kaye & Little; 1996)*
- **Language an additional challenge**
 - *English as a global language (Crystal; 1997)*
- **Organisational Learning**
 - *Information versus automating (Zuboff; 1988)*
 - *technical and social learning (Sproull & Kiesler; 1991)*
 - *Social & cultural interoperability (Kaye & Little; 1996)*

Perils of Prediction

- **Every major US city will have a telephone**
 - *quoted Marlin 1988*
 - **John Brunner *Shockwave Rider* 1975**
 - *Internet confined within US national boundaries*
- BUT**
- **Speculative fiction offers insight through imaginative scenarios**
 - *1984 William Gibson *Neuromancer**
 - Cyberspace
 - *1988 Bruce Sterling *Islands in the Net**
 - offshore data warehousing - legal and extra-legal
 - *1995 Neal Stephenson “*Snow Crash*”*
 - sovereign suburbs

Community, Place and Network

- **"city as communications system"**
 - *(Webber; 1964, p.84).*
- **(Planners) "share a conviction that the physical and locational variables are key determinants of social and economic behaviour and of social welfare" (Webber; 1964, p.85).**
- **"dynamic, locational patterns of human communication that occur through space but transcend any given place" (Webber; 1964, p.90).**

Non-place Community

- **Accessibility, rather than the propinquity aspect of "place" is the necessary condition for this form of community (p.109).**
- **Current conditions allow access to be non-physical**

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Virtual Co-location

■ **Example: Texas Instruments**

- *Taipei and Austin*

- *corporate systems replicated at both ends of a broadband link*

■ **Place-based community as a limiting case**

- *Webber's Non-place realm (2 1964)*

- *Castells' Informational city of flows (1989)*

- *material and information*

■ **Knowledge Flows imply Physical Flows**

- *Virtual flows of intellectual capital create physical flows*

- *material*

- *technology*

- *labour*

Access from the Margins

- **Divisions in both developed and developing countries present the less advantaged actors with a major problem**
 - *accessing or utilising technologies which have been shaped by other players towards the support of different priorities.*
- **Existing inequalities will be reinforced unless access to these technologies can be achieved.**
 - *Next Generation Mobile Communications*
 - *Switching from geostationary Earth orbits (GEOs) to medium Earth orbit (MEO) and low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites*

Windows of Opportunity

- **How can “small” players influence an emerging new "techno-economic paradigm" (Perez, 1985) ?**
- **A window paradigm for globalising information systems**
 - *using available technologies without regard for their underlying assumptions*
- **“Windows of opportunity” may be inadvertently closed by the momentum of mainstream technical development.**

Tanami Network

- **Supporting the Aboriginal outstation movement.**
 - *traditional community decision-making without the need for physical proximity facilitated by domestic satellite communication systems*
 - *broader rural community benefits from the same technology*
 - remote provision of specialist support for local expertise, for example, in medicine and health care
- **Window of Opportunity**
 - *government desire to promote a technological paradigm*

ODN: Outback Digital Network

- **Same objectives pursued through existing infrastructure**
 - *existing telecoms only*
 - *affordable PCs*
 - *sustainability a key objective*



- **<http://www.odn.net.au>**

Greenstar Ghana - Patriensah

- **State of the Art Infrastructure in village community**
 - *Solar powered satellite linkage*
 - *Support for local craft industries*
- **Window of Opportunity**
 - *International charitable promoter*
 - *Local politician*
 - *Sustainability requires self-generated income flows*
- **<http://www.e-greenstar.com/Ghana/>**

Tools

The Odyssey Group

- **Exploring the emerging social potential of new modes of electronically-mediated communication**
 - *particularly in respect of alternative forms of organising and managing and the promotion of greater social inclusion*
- **Members work together in physical locations and through the internet and world wide web.**
 - *between events, members work together in varying partnerships to develop their ideas and present these in papers for publication and in other forms*
- **http://www.geocities.com/the_odyssey_group/**

Tools: Virtual Journeys

- **Use of free web sites**
 - *<http://www.geocities.com>*
- **Minimum set of HTML instructions**
 - *Use of on-line editor/Notepad*
 - *half-day skilling*
- **Simple use of images**
 - *leavening of text*
- **Micro-portal approach**
 - *harnessing available web resources*
- **http://www.geocities.com/stephen_e_little/vjourney.html**

Ghana

- **First sub-Saharan Country to gain independence**
 - *1957 developmental national state*
 - *Pan-Africanism*



- **Major aid recipient**

Principal Ghanaian Partner

■ **Centre for Social Policy Studies**

- *University of Ghana - Legon*
- *partly sponsored by UNICEF*
- *aims*
 - to create greater awareness on social welfare policy issues in Ghana
 - to promote participatory development of policies and social service programmes of action,
- *focus*
 - interdisciplinary projects that emerge from its own programmes as well as those of cognate departments, agencies, organisations and institutes.

■ **http://www.geocities.com/csps_ghana/**

Other Ghanaian Partners

- **Department of Social Work University of Ghana**
- **Ghana Red Cross Society**
- **RESPONSE**
 - *Charity dealing with street children*
- **Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, Accra**
- **Community and Water Sanitation Agency**
- **Ghana Federation of the Disabled**
- **Department of Planning and Housing Research,
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and
Technology, Kumasi**

Sharing Skills

- **Work with local partners**
- **Use of available infrastructure**
 - *affordable internet cafés*
 - *slow connectivity*
- **Unreliable utilities:**
 - *electricity, water, transport*
- **Unreliable presence**
 - *endemic malaria and related diseases*

Sharing Practice



<http://www.geocities.com/odysseygroup2001/sharing/index.html>

Continuing Projects

- **North East England Action on Transport**
 - *real-time monitoring of transport services using web and gps technologies*

- **<http://www.newnet.org.uk/neat/>**

- **<http://monitor.goneat.org.uk>**

- **<http://www.geocities.com/moorparkexploreclub/moving/index.html>**

Starting Points

- http://www.geocities.com/the_odyssey_group
- http://www.geocities.com/csps_ghana/
- http://www.geocities.com/knowledge_links
- <http://www.newnet.org.uk/neat/>
- <http://www.geocities.com/moorparkexploreclub>
- http://www.geocities.com/stephen_e_little/vjourney.html
- <http://www.geocities.com/odysseygroup2001/sharing/index.html>
- <http://www.geocities.com>