

Imperialism and the Relevance of Constructivist Approach to the Analysis of International Relations

By
Chediel Nyirenda

Centre for Foreign Relations, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

E-mail: captnyirenda2@gmail.com

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Abstract

In international relations analysis, rationalism has remained the dominant approach for a long time. In recent years, however, new approaches have challenged the hegemony of rationalist empiricism in the analysis of international relations. One of these alternative approaches is the constructivist approach. Constructivism argues for the importance of ideational units of analysis such as history, knowledge, and identity in the making of individual and state interests which lead to actions and policy. This paper applies discourse analysis in reviewing two major texts on how the history of capitalist imperialism shaped the relations between the North and the South. The paper shows the weakness of rationalist approaches to international relations research. Rationalism presents states as atomistic actors pursuing their military and economic power interests in a historically given space without regard for the ideational and historical factors deciding the nature of this space. The paper concludes that the relevance of the constructivist approach to international relations research, which is sometimes vehemently criticized, is seen in its ability to identify and apply important historical units of analysis that are normally overlooked and even deliberately discarded in rationalist international relations analysis.

Keywords:

Constructivism, imperialism, history, north-south relations, underdevelopment.

1. Introduction

Rationalism in the study of international relations overlooks many important variables that inform the nature of relations among nations. Rationalist approaches to international relations have mainly focused on military and economic power and have presented states as atomistic actors that competitively seek to promote their interests and dominate other actors. These approaches take the condition of nations for granted. Nations are analyzed as given without consideration for other factors that may have led to the type of nations we have today and their relative positions internationally in terms of military and economic power. The analytical starting point of these rationalist theories is the actions of states. Ideational historical factors are not given priority. Nevertheless, ideational variables are important factors that inform the nature of international relations (Reus-Smit, 2005; Doty, 1996). In addition, Doty (ibid.) argues:

The question of representation has historically been excluded from the academic study of international relations...Representations of economic and military power differences, however, take place within political and social circumstances in which other kinds of differences are explicitly or implicitly presumed...the

historical construction and consequences of these differences have not been considered legitimate realms of inquiry. This exclusion has in many instances resulted in the complicity of international relations scholarship with particular constructions of the South and of the "reality" of the South's place in international relations (pp. 4 – 5).

Alternative theoretical thinking and analytical frameworks in international relations research arise as researchers discover new (or overlooked) parameters and variables. Sometimes these variables and parameters are deliberately left out of scholarly discussions as rationalist researchers consider them less important or unscientific. In some extreme cases scholars are deliberately biased towards certain world views, cultural orientations and even political stances. For many years, theories of international relations have particularly leaned towards Western epistemological order denying views and histories of people from other societies the chance to feature in international relations discussions (Doty, 1996; Reus-Smit, 2005). Theories like Realism (Donnelly, 2005), Liberalism (Burchill, 2005) and the English School (Linklater, 2005) are all based on Western rationalist understanding of international relations. They all have dominated the study of international relations but none of them considers factors such as representational practices and imperialism to be important units of analysis.

Epistemological order decides the nature of a theory. In general, all theories develop their assumptions informed by specific and particular social-cultural parameters or 'frameworks' (Brohman, 1995). This is what we refer to when we talk of the epistemological order of a theoretical perspective. Western epistemology therefore refers to the method of knowledge creation, development, promotion, and dissemination which presupposes the adequacy or usefulness (sometimes exclusively) of European and American cultural settings and historical experiences. When this stance is used to suggest the superiority of the European way and method of looking at, analyzing and describing social reality, the term Eurocentrism is commonly used (Amin, 2009; Willis, 2005). It is the emergence of views from parts of the world other than Europe and America that has labeled this western epistemology as Eurocentric.

Nsamenang (2005) has argued that mainstream Euro-American ethnocentrism is clearly reflected in development views that are presented as being applicable to all of human diversity. Nasr el-Din (2003) has called Western understanding of the world as the 'western mind' and has (dis)qualified it as having a duality as it is both exclusionary and hegemonic. As Pieterse (2010) has indicated "in social science it is now widely assumed that realities are socially constructed. The way people think and talk about social realities affects agendas, policies, laws and the ways laws are made and interpreted. Just as perception does not merely register but shape reality, knowledge does not simply reflect but constructs reality. Knowledge is political, shaping perceptions, agendas, policies" (p.2). This argument supports the position that international relations theory cannot be complete without acknowledging that international policies are a result of particularities and specifics of knowledge creation and human perceptions of reality.

One important unit of analysis that has significantly contributed to the construction of the nature of relations between the North and the South is the concept of imperialism. Yet, the concept of imperialism has received unfair treatment in most of the Eurocentric

major theories of international relations like Realism, Liberalism and the English school. At the same time, imperialism is a historical reality that informs the political and economic position of the South. Constructivism has taken an approach that unearths and analyzes such important but omitted (sometimes deliberately) parameters and relates them to normativism and materialism in international relations. This article aims to review major arguments on imperialism as presented in two major works that have employed the methodological approach of constructivism – a work by Roxanne Doty titled *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North South Relations* and another by Walter Rodney titled *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Imperialism is used as an example of a crucial determinant of the structure of international relations which has been obscured through empiricism that overlooks ideational historical factors.

2. The constructivist method

Recent debates in the study of International Relations have involved constructivists against rationalists and constructivists against critical theorists. Relative to all the parties involved, constructivism seems to be the youngest incomer that draws its essence from both normativism and materialism. It is therefore worthy re thinking its contribution to the method and approach to International Relations research. As Reus-Smit (2005) has put it:

Constructivism is characterized by an emphasis on the importance of normative as well as material structures, on the role of identity in shaping political action and on the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures (p. 188).

This statement summarizes and qualifies the ontological and epistemological bases of both Doty (1996) and Rodney (1973). While both authors describe and analyze the role of history in shaping North South relations, Doty puts normative considerations (particularly the construction of identity through representational practices) on the fore front of her research on the causes of the relatively weaker position of southern nations in relation to the northern nations. On the other hand, Rodney uses Marxist analysis of material and production relations in deriving the cause of this political and economic reality. For both authors, agents are colonialists and their forerunners, large international corporations, biased scholars as well as religion. In addition, to both authors, imperialism is at the center of the discussion.

Major propositions of constructivism include the following: First, both material and ideational or normative structures (ideas, beliefs, and other cultural values) are equally important in shaping the behavior and actions of political actors. Economic and Military power do not have any other meaning than that they derive from structures of shared meanings in a given society (Viotti & Kaupi, 2012). Second, political action depends on the choice of interests, and the choice of interests derives from identity. People act according to their interests and their interests are formed through how they identify themselves in relation to others. In turn, identity formation depends on ideas of what is right and what is wrong. Third, just as Marxists, constructivists are structuralists (Linklater, 2005). They believe that ideas shape interests and actions and knowledgeable action leads to structures. Hence agents and structures are both results of shared ideas. It is therefore a continuum of ideas, identities, interests, actions, and structures. In

addition, the unit of analysis for constructivists is widened to include the agency of individuals in shaping international relations (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999).

While recognizing the role of materialism in informing the structure and relative position of nations in international relations, constructivism takes a backward contemplative step. It asks the important question: what makes people develop certain specific beliefs about themselves and about others and how does this inform the actions we observe in empirical studies? While empirical positivist methods stop at observing action to explain international relations phenomena, constructivism includes in its analysis the role of social processes in determining the nature of international relations. The actual reality of relations among nations is a construction of historical social processes heavily informed by interests developed from people's perceptions of themselves vis a vis other people.

3. Defining imperialism

Imperialism was first broadly defined as 'the highest stage of capitalism' (Lenin, 1968). In Lenin's analysis, the possibilities and means for further expansion of capitalism had been exhausted in Europe and more space was sought beyond the borders. An elaboration of this definition is given in Amin (1976). According to him:

Imperialism, in Lenin's sense of the word, made its appearance when the possibilities of capitalist development on the old basis had been exhausted, through the completion of the first Industrial Revolution in Europe and North America. A fresh geographical extension of capitalism's domain then became necessary (p. 187).

This definition has its basis on the Marxist analysis of capitalism and the evolution of economic modes of production. It presupposes historical and material metamorphosis of the capitalist mode of production particularly in Europe in the 19th century. Yet, imperialism is not only a historical concept. It is as much a behavioral concept entailing human agency. The same policies that may have been accepted and used in transforming human society, may change and become imperialistic and unacceptable. This is when these policies start to have notable and practical negative effects on the cause of development and well-being of people of other societies.

The impending and looming threat of imperialism is always there whenever there is an issue that brings the North and the South face to face. Imperialism has a long history but it is never a thing of the past. It an element of reality to be considered every time the South enters into any form of dialogue with the North. The danger lingers heavily in the air of any agreements, dialogues or contracts between the two major parts of the globe because of the possibility that policies with seemingly good intentions may eventually turn imperialistic. The following passage by Tandon (2009) succinctly summarizes this argument in saying that:

...under the title 'Food Investment, not Imperialism', an editorial in the London Financial Times of 13 May 2008 advocated foreign investments as a solution to the problem of food crisis. However, having expounded on the virtue of what it called 'cross-border farm investment'... it goes on with what we cannot but agree. It says: The only exception is if investment in agriculture turns into imperialism. That is a practice with a long and unpleasant history, from the

plantation agriculture of the European empires to the 1954 coup in Guatemala, assisted by the US Central Intelligence Agency, at least in part for the benefit of the United Fruit Company. A developing country can suffer if capital-intensive cash crops are produced at the expense of labor-intensive food. Sadly, history is often forgotten by those who are in a hurry to sign free trade agreements, economic partnership agreements, donor aid loans and grants, and bilateral investment treaties (p.99).

The use of the term 'imperialism' is common in Marxist analysis but rare in other approaches to the analysis of international relations. Actually, the term has been outcasted as an unscientific term. In most discourses the term imperialism has been replaced with other terms that are accepted as being more scientific and objective. Purely economic terms like "international capital" or "transnational capital" have been used in the place of imperialism. This use of purely technical terms obscures the agential role of states and state politics, diplomacy and armies. But in any practical sense of the word, 'imperialism is precisely an amalgamation of the requirements and laws for the reproduction of capital; the social, national, and international alliances that underlie them; and the political strategies employed by these alliances' (Amin. 2009, pp.209-210). According to Rodney (1973), The "penetration of foreign capitalism on a world-wide scale from the late 19th century onwards is what we call 'imperialism'" (p. 208).

Imperialism has been described as a pioneer of capitalism (Warren, 1980). Imperialism is born when capitalism refuses to admit its obvious practical limitations and seeks expansion to other societies, not through negotiation but through the use of violent force or manipulation. Once introduced to other societies, imperialism has proven to be an evil hunting dog for capitalism, set out to devastate other societies on behalf of the capitalist expansionist projects around the world. The result has been the underdevelopment of these imperialized societies (Gunder, 1969). To Frank, underdevelopment is another word for 'dependent development'. Actually, dependency is the major terminology describing relations between the poorer South and the richer North in Southern neo-Marxist analyses. This terminology describes the condition that imperialism has created in the former colonies, a condition that makes the economies of the Southern nations subordinated to the needs of the North.

This expansion of capitalism towards the South led to serious negative results in Southern economies. It caused underdevelopment and dependency in the South while benefiting the North. One of the major elements that brought together the nations of the South in Bandung in 1955 was a common history of denied rights. These rights to full self-determination and agency in international relations were denied through the exploitative system of European, Japanese, and American imperialism. Despite their many differences in culture and historical trajectories, these countries were united into what has been referred to as the Non-Aligned Movement – unanimously rejecting Western globalization and its attendant policies (Amin, 2015). Amin had argued earlier that 'capitalism was not destined to be only a European phenomenon. However, Europe, having invented it first, subsequently began interfering with the normal evolution of other continents (Amin, 2009, p.222).

Both Underdevelopment and dependency have remained as the realities of the Southern nations. The economies of these southern nations were underdeveloped through imperial conquests, slave trade and colonialism. Leys and Saul (2006) have argued, dependency has not been resolved. It has remained a reality of contemporary relations between the North and the South. In this unequal relationship, the South continues to pay a high price for the historical impact of Northern imperialism. The current structure of international relations reflects the original reason why these Southern nations were colonized: 'the production of primary commodities for export, and the creation of an infrastructure of railways, roads, ports and telecommunications orientated to exports (to Europe), not the promotion of an integrated national economy...' (ibid. p. 2006).

It is worth noting here that most of these Southern neo-Marxists belong to the Dependency School and have made several critical arguments supporting dependency Theory – which is a counter-theory to the Northern Modernization Theory. The arguments of dependency Theory are very similar to the positions of both Rodney and Doty. About North-South relations, the Dependency theory argues that:

Euro-North America and those other regions sowed the seeds of underdevelopment by siphoning off natural and human resources. This is what has created coloniality, a global power structure sustained by asymmetrical power relations, hegemonic epistemology, racial hierarchization of human species, and an exploitative world economy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017, p.35).

4. Imperialism and the Effect of Imperial Encounters in Rodney (1973)

According to Rodney (1973) each time two societies of different levels of development come into contact with each other, entirely new patterns are created in the rate and character of change in each of them. From this general observation, the author proposes two general rules. The first rule is that the society experiencing lower levels of development will be adversely affected. This adverse effect is directly related to the gap in development between the two societies. Sometimes this contact may lead to the complete extinction of the economically weaker society as was the case when Europeans came into contact with America and the Caribbean. The second rule applies when the extinction does not occur but the two societies continue to exist side by side. In this case, the general rule is that the economically weaker society can resume its independent development only when it advances to an economic level which is higher compared to the economic level of the economy that had dominated it previously. If it proceeds to a level higher than that of the economy that had previously dominated it. Such instances of this second rule can be traced to the history of Russia and China.

Africa's position in international relations is presented in Rodney (ibid.) as having been constructed through a historical process of underdevelopment. Africa was forcefully put at this position through colonialism and the slave trade. The imperial coming of Europeans to Africa caused Africa's underdevelopment. When the Europeans arrived in Africa, they found that African societies were prosperous and with much potential for further development. In some cases, African societies were found to be even better developed than many other parts of the world at that time. Nevertheless, the inability of Africans to resist domination, gave the Europeans an upper hand and they established political, economic, military, and cultural hegemony over this part of the world. The contact was imperial in that these Europeans used this opportunity to forcefully expand

capitalism to Africa through political and economic domination using exploitative policies. The underdeveloped position of Africa in international relations has never been resolved ever since.

A typical underdeveloped economy is not allowed to direct its economic efforts to sectors that will generate economic growth. Its economy is also not internally integrated between one sector and another. The links between such basic sectors as agriculture and industry are deliberately severed to disallow meaningful growth. This is why any nation with a history of being colonized lacks any 'hope of developing until it breaks effectively with the vicious circle of dependence (p. 39)'. Political freedom has not been able to resolve this economic quagmire. Nations that suffered the perils of imperialism still carry a heavy burden on their shoulders. Their economies are still linked perversely to the economies of the North through aid, unequal terms of trade, and other means of capitalist neo colonialism.

The agents of imperils capitalism are also known. In Africa, for example, imperialism penetrated through religious and educational institutions. Culturally, these institutions were used to foster imperialism and keep 'underdeveloped countries integrated into the capitalist system'. Both the Christian Church and universities in Africa have been used as means of cultural domination to pave the way for capitalist imperialism. Particularly, education institutions have been infiltrated in ways that result in the production of 'Africans to service the capitalist system and to subscribe to its values' (p.39). The mindsets of colonized people are yet to free themselves of the shackles of the complex of inferiority imposed on them forcefully through imperial deculturalization.

Rodney argues that, the important question that should be answered as we discuss or analyse relations between the North and the South is the question of 'who and what is responsible for African underdevelopment'. According to Rodney, this question can be answered in two levels. In level one the answer is found on the historical operations of the capitalist-imperialist system. The system 'bears major responsibility for African economic retardation by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly' (p.42). In the second level, any analysis of this situation must focus of the agents of imperialism. These are the ones who manipulate the system and are accomplices to it.

The current economic, military and political features of the relatively poorer and weaker South are 'ramifications of underdevelopment and of the exploitation of the imperialist system'. Yet, 'in most analyses' of the contemporary situation of international relations between the North and the South, these ramifications 'are either left out entirely or the whole concept of imperialism and neo-colonialism is dismissed as mere rhetoric, especially by 'academics' who claim to be removed from 'politics' (p. 41). In addition to the regard for the importance of history, Rodney emphasizes the importance of recognizing cultural differences in the analysis of international relational relations. He asserts that one of the results of colonialism and cultural imperialism is that people 'lacked due regard for the unique features of African culture' which have their own value that cannot be eclipsed by European culture 'because they are not really comparable phenomena' (p.48). When Europeans arrived in Africa, they constructed the image of Africans as uncivilized people that needed to be civilized (by force and manipulation).

This perception of Africans led to the kind of policies that were thereafter applied on colonized societies. Just as it has been argued earlier, knowledge and perceptions constructed a social reality for the dominated Africans.

Imperialism has always been a hypocritical process of expanding the influence of exploitative capitalism. When anti-slavery was held and promoted as the reason for the overthrow of some of African rulers in West, Central, North and South Africa, the real political motivation was deliberately obscured. The real reason for their overthrow 'was that they stood in the way of Europe's imperial needs. It was the only factor that mattered, with anti-slaving sentiments being at best superfluous and at worst calculated hypocrisy' (p.210). Rodney has correctly argued that 'Europe's power increased with imperialism because imperialism meant investments, and investment (which) gave European capitalists control over production within each continent' (p.222).

In terms of taking responsibility for the construction of knowledge, Rodney argues that many African writers are involved in reporting on recent pre-colonial period, particularly the history of nationalist struggles. Nevertheless, the coming of imperialism has not yet been seriously pursued from an African viewpoint' (p. 224). Rodney argues that the reason studies on early African history are lacking is first, that colonialists regarded African history as of no value worthy of reconstruction and second, 'that studies of Africa were mainly carried out by European bourgeois anthropologists, whose philosophical outlook on 'primitive societies' caused them to separate African society from its historical context (p.108). It is this methodological gap that necessitates studies that focus on ideational factors like history and culture to analyse and explain relations between the North and the South.

Another major negative effect of imperialism in the South is that of deliberate de-industrialization of the southern societies. Imperialism blocked the possibility of growth for African industries. In the words of Rodney: 'European industrialists did not welcome even the simple stage of processing groundnuts into oil on African soil'. The result was that, throughout colonial Africa, irrational contradictions arose regarding the general economic logic. Countries like Sudan and Uganda, which grew cotton, were subjected to the necessity of importing manufactured cotton goods instead of processing their own cotton. Likewise, countries that grew cocoa could not process the cocoa but had to import tinned cocoa and chocolate (p.335).

Not only that imperialism blocked industrial development in the South, but imperialism was also a serious interruption on the process of development for the South in general. Although Westerners imposed colonial administration in many nations of the South, such important steps as technology transfer were not given priority. According to Rodney, it would be logical for the colonial administration to compensate the colonized nations for that imperial interruption through the provision of modern industrial techniques... 'however, those techniques were debarred from Africa, based on the international division of labour under imperialism' (p.360). This was a deliberate effort to deny Africa the potential to compete against European industries.

5. Imperialism and the Effect of Imperial Encounters in Doty (1996)

While Rodney uses the term 'contact' Doty uses the term 'encounter' but the logic is the same. It implies the coming into contact between the Northern agents of capitalism and the Southern societies through imperialism. She explains the coming into contact of the two 'societies' i.e., the North and the South in the following terms:

...the term encounter implies the presence of two entities (i.e., the North and the South), the term imperial encounters is meant to convey the idea of asymmetrical encounters in which one entity has been able to construct "realities" that were taken seriously and acted upon and the other entity has been denied equal degrees or kinds of agency (p.3).

In *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North South Relations* Roxanne Doty examined the labels and categorizations that have been – perhaps unnecessarily – accepted as standard or even legitimated as a mode of identifying different peoples of the world. She endeavored to review the historical events that characterized 'encounters' between the United States and Philippines on one side and between Great Britain and Kenya on the other. She uses various historical records that show how the North South relations were a factor that led to a particular type of social construction and foundation for developing particular kinds of policies. She borrows insight from poststructuralists like Edward Said and Michel Foucault among others. Using discourse analysis, the author arrives at a critical commentary of the role of such representational practices in shaping identities for both the South and the North through such division as developed/underdeveloped, civilized/uncivilized, modern/traditional or first world/third world. These resultant identities are then said to critically affect the North – South relations – which is one of the major areas of study in International Relations.

According to Doty, the practice of representation is done by politicians, journalists, and scholars/researchers. Doty shows that the resulting policies are shaped by these identities. The whole practice of labelling is presented as an issue of power relations. There is power asymmetry in that the North is able to actually create this reality as it wishes. The discourse that matters in this power relationship is that of the North. The northern views about civilization and human rights, for example, are used to define, permanently, the identities of 'others'. By using insights from Edward Said and others, Doty suggests that this representation practice defines discourses in social sciences and that there is need to expand the repository of analytical tools as well as theoretical tools used by students of global politics to include these emerging alternatives.

The use of interpretive methods is an important addition to the empirical positivist method. The inclusion of historical facts in the study and interpretation of relations among nations is also crucial. Doty and other constructivists have shown that there is a need to regard and include in our analysis of international relations the fact that there are cultural variations and distinctiveness in each society. These ideational and normative factors are an important starting point in international relations research. They help in telling us about the initial or original or start of the interests of actors. The relationship between analysis based on objectivity and the one that is based on subjective interpretation could be likened to a wrestling bout. The fighters will normally start their wrestling match with a process of labeling – both themselves and their opponents. This

is the psychological part of the fight but the final decision of the judges will be based on actual, physical muscular performance.

Labeling leads to policy and policy leads to political action and political action to relative position in international power relations. The South is where it is economically and socially because of what Southerners accepted as their relative identity vis a vis the other societies of the world. In most cases, this accepted identity was imposed through the consequences of imperial encounters such as colonialism, slave trade and neo-colonialism.

Just like Rodney (1973), Doty (1996) describes imperial encounters as involving two different entities. These entities are different in both history and economic levels. Another similarity in how the two authors describe imperial encounters lies in the fact that one of the entities (societies) is dominated and denied agency in international relations. One side (The North) develops and advances while the other (the South) is systematically weakened and underdeveloped. Doty proves that there is no such thing as good imperialism. Some authors, like Halle (1985) distinguish between two types of imperialism, the first type is what he calls rationalized imperialism. This is described as a responsible or unselfish domination. In this case, the conqueror has an obligation to lead the conquered society into civilization. The second type is irrational domination which implies wanton exploitation. But, as is shown in Rodney (1973)'s analysis, imperialism never led to any meaningful development in the South. Exploitation has always been the objective of all known imperial encounters. As we have indicated earlier, good policies can, at some point and for some reason, become imperialistic. Some of those who have opposed imperialism have argued that imperialism uses brute force, is inconsistent with democracy, and is nonprogressive concerning human development as it led to the enslavement of the nations (Jordan 1901).

In addition, Doty argues against the position taken by Halle by noting that:

What cannot be questioned is the right of conquest itself, which must be presumed prior to any other arguments or specifications. The Philippines and the Filipinos are represented alternatively as the prize of conquest, the object to be discovered, the subject without agency to be protected, improved, and rendered happy. The representation of the Philippines as Spain's "discovery" is a rhetorical strategy of negation implying a blank slate to be written on by Western power and knowledge (p. 35).

According to Doty, therefore, imperialism and imperialist policies are products of historical representational practices. She argues that the representational practices she discusses in her book were power practices that played a key role in the creation of the reality of international relations. She continues to argue that '...it is hard to imagine that the phenomenon of imperialism would have been possible in the absence of these kinds of representations' (p.72). To Doty, imperialism involves labeling, conquest, exploitation, and domination of others.

6. Relevance of the Constructivist Approach

We have shown that imperialism has been denied space in the analysis of international relations mostly by Eurocentric, bourgeois, and Western scholars who use rationalism in their analyses. These have tended to discard the constructivist approach as unrealistic

(Zehfuss, 2004). But, how can any honest scholar deny that the history of slavery and colonialism is unrealistic? How can anyone overlook the devastations caused by colonial policies to the economies of the South? Because of this weakness of the Western rationalist studies of international relations, constructivist approaches prove very relevant. The relevance of constructivism is seen in its ability to establish an analytical link between power, history, identity, truth, knowledge, interests, and political action.

In discussing the role of Western scholarship, Rodney (1973) argues that:

...omissions from the list of what bourgeois scholars think relevant are really overwhelming. No mention is made of the exploitation of the majority...of the social relations of production or of classes...of the way that the factors and relations of production combine to form a distinctive system or mode of production, varying from one historical epoch to another. No mention is made of imperialism as a logical phase of capitalism...However, one has at least to recognize the full human, historical and social dimensions of development (p. 18).

Rodney starts by indicating that the focus of the text is the contemporary situation of Africa. The book starts with a declaration of its purpose stating: 'This book derives from a concern with the contemporary African situation. It delves into the past only because otherwise it would be impossible to understand how the present came into being...(p. i)'. This approach of delving into history to understand the present is important because when history is not carefully and honestly consulted, reality is also misrepresented.

Roxanne Doty uses constructivist approach to challenge the established norms and accepted modes describing relations in international politics. To build her arguments, she employs some tools from social constructivists. According to this approach the political, social and economic relations between the countries of the South and the countries of the North is created or constructed through several years of active representational practices. These representational practices are said to have been able to construct enduring identities of both the North and the South. This is the dual result of the practice of representation. As they labelled others the northern colonial powers were able to create a desired identity for themselves. Doty argues that as a result, the North has been able to tell the world more about itself than even about the South that was being labeled in the first place.

Doty puts a lot of emphasis on analysing the process of labelling and its effect on human and state action. She does so because 'Thinking in terms of representational practices calls our attention to an economy of abstract binary oppositions that we routinely draw upon and that frame our thinking'. Dichotomies like 'Developed/ underdeveloped, "first world"/"third world," core/periphery, metropolis/ satellite, advanced industrialized/less developed, modern/traditional, and real states/quasi-states' are not natural but are constantly used to distinguish nations of the world. Thinking in terms of representation helps us to understand North South relations, not only as an area of theory and policy practice but a realm of politics in which 'the very identities of peoples, states, and regions are constructed' (p. 2). This way analysing international relations helps us to answer the difficult question why a civilized, democratic nation will engage in a process to conquer, plunder and enslave people of other nations in contrast to the very basic values of democracy and civilization.

Tucker (1977) argued that 'the history of the international system is a history of inequality par excellence' and Doty adds that the problem of most analyses has been to take the problem of international inequality as a given state of affairs instead of a problem to be investigated. She continues to show the importance of isolating specific and identifiable historical facts about contacts between the North and the imperialized South and she calls these 'imperial encounters.' She defines these as 'Asymmetrical encounters in which one entity has been able to construct "realities" that were taken seriously and acted upon and the other entity has been denied equal degrees or kinds of agency' (p. 3).

Reading a Marxist analysis along with a constructivist one has the advantage of answering two important epistemological questions. The first is what historical events led to the current nature of relations between the North and the South and the second is why did that happen. Any good analysis of international relations should not stop at describing the nature of these relations. It must go further and unearth the substantive reasons why things are the way they are. The history of imperialism in the South is a major factor explaining the relatively weaker position that the South holds in international relations. This history led to political, economic, military and even psychological ramifications that still haunt the Southern nations.

While Rodney uses economic (historical materialism) in his analysis of the historical relations between Africa and Europe, Doty uses historical representations (labeling) to analyze encounters between the North and the South – particularly drawing examples from Kenya and the Philippines. Nevertheless, both authors bank on historical facts and the detriments of imperialism negatively affecting the South and benefiting the North giving each their current relative positions in the international relations power chain. What is of common relevance for them is their constructivist approach to international relations – particularly relations between the global North and the global South. For Rodney, the analysis is Marxist in nature but the approach is constructivist. They both argue that the structure of relations between the North and the South is a social construction.

Rationalist theories of international relations are mostly mechanical and descriptive. They study reality presuming the presence of states in their current political and economic status without caring enough to ponder the underlying abstract factors that inform policy in international relations. The effects of imperialism are clearly 'material' but most of the major theories of international relations choose to be biased towards praising Western epistemology and degrading post modernism and constructivist approaches. Imperialism cannot be understood if it is not studied and it cannot be studied without regard for the sentiments of those who suffered and continue to suffer from its repercussions and ramifications. In addition, a major puzzle remains in any analysis of international relations how could the nations that boast of being able to define and promote equality, peace, democracy and civilization go ahead and subject the people of other societies to the very opposite of these values? This is what constructivist approaches dare to address.

The importance of reviewing the role and impact of imperialism in contemporary international relations lies in the fact that imperialism is not a thing of the past – as some

have dared to posit. Recent literature shows that imperialism is a significant component of Western foreign policy. For example, Minkinnen (2004) has argued strongly against the human rights and democracy implications of Bush administration's expansionist policies premised and implemented through the pretext of War on Terror. According to this author the Bush administration introduced a new form of imperialism as the policies backing America's advances against perceived sponsors and instigators of terrorism also created a new way of perceiving the so called 'Non-White Others'. Eventually, the war on terror disposition replaces global governance based on relative consent of citizens with a new type of global governance based on the use of force and repression. This stance goes directly in contrast of human, personal and citizen rights. This new Bush Doctrine is said to imply a renovation of (the) imperialist urge on a global scale through the politics of pre-emptive new imperialism (p. 61).

Equally, Harvey (2003) supports the view of Michael Ignatieff, a columnist in the New York Times suggesting that America's entire war on terror is an exercise in imperialism manifested in 'legions of soldiers, spooks and special forces straddling the globe' (p. 3). Major business corporations, particularly those involved in the oil business shape and enforce America's international political and military interests. Harvey provides vivid examples in the interference of America in the affairs of Venezuela and Iraq. In addition, the manifestation of a new form of global capitalistic imperialism is seen in the forced consent of various national governments to align with the wishes of capitalistic imperialism through imposed and coerced political and economic liberalization. Consequently, it can rightly be argued that the project of new imperialism is facilitated by the forces of globalization and granted agency by capitalistic military, economic and governmental institutions. The view that globalization is actually a manifestation of a new form of imperialism is shared by Chilcote (2003) who asserts that 'globalization can only be understood as a manifestation of imperialism and the devastating capitalist order' (p. 83).

Another manifestation of the new form of imperialism is seen in what Lorimer (2002) refers to as imperialist loans and imperialistic flow of international capital into semi colonial states of the third world. Western capitalistic hegemony engenders a kind of new Marshall Plan that pumps capital and aid into relatively poorer nations of the South but this new Marshall Plan does not allow for a meaningful development of a bourgeois class in these societies. Likewise, the imperialistic capital does not support the growth of local industries but forces the economies of the recipient nations to remain underdeveloped and subordinated to the capitalistic economies of the North.

7. Conclusion

In international relations, imperialism is a historical fact that can neither be misunderstood nor dismissed. Nor yet can it be praised for the progress of human societies. It is a historical reality forming the basis of contemporary exploitative and unequal relations between the North and the South. It is a perverse tendency not compatible with democracy or civilization. Those who claim its non-importance, do so simply because it is a reproach to the Northern nations which constantly make efforts to display a façade of democracy and civilization. To Southern political analysts, imperialism is an important unit of analysis for explaining the agential inadequacy of the Southern nations in international relations. Imperialism is savage, barbaric, exploitative conquest,

plunder, and domination. It implies the use of unacceptable and undemocratic means of making capitalism achieve its expansionist goals. Historically, imperialism has been the cause of proxy wars, economic raids, looting of resources like minerals and timber, colonialism, and slave trade. Imperialism is never negotiated.

One of the strongest points in Doty's and Rodney's analyses is that of relating the history of nations to the reality of the detriments of imperialism. Some have claimed that imperialism is a mere Marxist jargon that cannot be related to actual historical events, while others have argued that capitalistic imperialism had a positive economic impact on the societies that experienced encounters with more advanced European economies¹. But the historical reality is that imperialism has always been imposed on people. It has never been positive in its consequences. It is imperialism that led to colonialism and the slave trade. Imperialism is about the conquest and subjugation of peoples of the world by those, at the time, militarily and economically more powerful. Not all encounters are imperial but there are, continually, instances of imperial encounters in many forms, and their attendant policies have never been progressive!

It may be logical for the Northern hegemonic epistemological order to suppress the use of imperialism in the analysis of international relations because, historically, imperialism has given their societies the economic and political advantage that they currently enjoy. On the contrary, the Southern scholarship can't overlook imperialism in their analysis of international relations because of the high existential price that their societies have to pay, continually, as a result of the detriments of imperialism.

Critics of the concept of imperialism as a unit of analysis in international relations need to learn that it is imperialism that put the South in its present place of disadvantage in terms of power and influence. In the same vein, critics of constructivist approaches to the analysis of international relations need to see the ability of the approach to bring to light such an important unit of analysis that lay obscure due to deliberate overlooks of mainly Western rationalistic empiricism. Effective and honest analysis of relations between the North and the South must imperatively endeavor to answer the question of why and by which historical agency the nature of these relations came into being.

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¹ Bauer (1981) went as far as arguing that imperialism never did any harm to the colonized economies but rather improved them through connecting them to markets that were necessary for development.

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Global Governance, Energy Policies and Security of Supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas in Tanzania

By

Juma Mabasa Kanuwa & Jensen G Mahavile

Centre for Foreign Relations, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

E-mail: juma_kanuwa@yahoo.co.uk

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Abstract

Energy security is important for human development and welfare. Governance regimes at both global and country levels are crucial for the realization of energy security. This study highlights the role of global governance for security of supply of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in Tanzania. Specifically, the study examines the effect of global governance on the development of the liquefied petroleum gas sector in Tanzania and proposes strategies for improving the development of liquefied petroleum gas energy security in Tanzania. The study adopted the qualitative research design and underpinned by action research approach. Key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions were used to collect primary qualitative data, while review of documents was done to provide secondary data and triangulate findings. A sample of 30 respondents was purposively selected among policy makers as well as other private and public sector actors. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings establish that the low level of LPG supply security in the country is contributed to by both national energy policies and global energy governance. It was further found that global governance affects the LPG energy security in Tanzania due to the selective nature of global energy governance institutions. The study recommends that in order to improve the LPG energy security in Tanzania, clear and implementable policies as well as encouragement of public private partnership should be given priority. The study further recommends that Tanzania should strengthen essential elements such as technology, expertise and infrastructures to attract more investors in LPG.

Key words:

Energy policy, energy security, global governance, Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

1. Introduction

Energy security has become a key subject related to the survival and wellbeing of the people in both developed and developing nations (Alemzero, et al, 2021). Recent natural gas discoveries in Sub-Saharan Africa are creating development opportunities. At the same time, the increased global interest in energy is forcing developing countries to choose policy strategies that either prioritize domestic consumption or export of energy resources. The strategy that a government chooses affects the overall energy security of that country. In addition, enhancing energy security for developing countries is more than securing investment to respond to global energy demand. For example, Hache (2018) has shown how renewable energies improve energy security in developing countries. The author found also that energy security is increasingly becoming a major