NEO-COLONIALISM AND THE SCANDAL OF AFRICAN POVERTY: A REVIEW

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Abstract

This paper argues that Neo-colonialism is an essential factor for the survival of Western capitalist countries since it demonstrates permanent exploitative relationship between the rich industrialized nations of Europe and North America and the poor dependent Third World countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It rejects the views of liberal economists who are of the opinion that global economic policies based on trade liberalization and price control system have been fair to all nations of the world both rich and poor since it is predicated on comparative cost advantage. This paper submits that the dependency syndrome occasioned by unequal trading relationship that exists between the industrialized countries of the world and non-industrialized countries of Africa results in economic stagnation and inflation thus paving the way for poverty across the continent. Finally, it suggest that Africa's economic transformation must be a function of internal dynamics through sustained political stability, exemplary and visionary leadership, adequate mobilization of abundant natural and human resources as well as marked improvement in indigenous technology.

Key words: Neo-colonialism, African Poverty, Economic Development.

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is currently been plagued by abject poverty and poor living standard. Different schools of thought namely the 'internalist school' and the 'Externalist school' have always tried to excavate the root cause of African poverty. The internalist school, with its Eurocentric background, argues that 'continental poverty' now plaguing the black world should be traced to the poverty of African leadership. They postulated that African leaders blindfolded by greed and squandermania have failed to optimally utilize Africa's abundant human, ecological and mineral resources which are potentials for greatness.

There is no gain saying the fact that the leadership of many African countries seem ab initio to have been hijacked by elites who captured political power as mere protégés of the colonialists. This crop of inglorious leaders who became dictators in their respective home countries perpetuated the economic strangulation of their nation states by the metropolitan powers through their tacit support of such agencies like Trans National Companies (TNC) and monolithic capitalist institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Contrarily, the 'externalist school' whose ideological frame work appears 'Afrocentric' in nature blame Africa's economic woes on such external historical undercurrents like the slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Of all these historical antecedents, it seems that the 'neo-colonial agenda' of Europe established a phenomenon of 'uneven development' between the More Developed Countries (MDC) of Europe and the least developed countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Neo-Colonialism through its imperialist network grafted many economically weak independent African countries into the international global market. This global market served as an instrument through which the neo-colonialists teleguided the economies of sub-saharan African countries leaving them at best as dumping grounds for manufactured goods from Europe. Thus, the unequal trading relationship between African countries and the European world resulted into import oriented economies that are characterized by low export prices and unfavourable balance of payments. This syndrome, paved the way for an unending economic malaise which culminated into an unimaginable debt crisis and the vicious cycle of poverty now ravaging the entire continent.

There is a general feeling that capitalism and neo-colonial exploitation have conspiratorially brutalized African economies leaving a gloomy legacy of abject poverty. In support of this view, Gorbachev (2006:59) argues that 'Capitalism has brought economic relations with Asia, Africa and Latin America to a point where entire nations are doomed to economic stagnation, unable to meet their own essential needs and bogged down in monstrous debts".

Meaning of Neo-Colonialism

Contextually, Neo-colonialism does not share the same meaning with imperialism. However, Neo-Colonialism in post-independent African countries seems to be the practical reality of Lenin's theory of imperialism Lenin's views cited in Echezona (1989:309) affirms that "imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism". In the same vein, Neo-Colonialism can be seen as the highest stage of imperialism. This analogy becomes plausible since both concepts, imperialism and Neo-Colonialism share similar qualitative features which include: the growth of the power of monopolies and finance capital, vast growth in the export of capital and foreign cultural values, the formation of international monopolies and the economic division of the world between the capitalist nations of Europe and the under developed economies of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Since colonialism appears to be the last stage of imperialism, it becomes factual to assert, that the afore-stated aphorism that Neo-Colonialism is the highest stage of imperialism is true, since it periodically came into lime light after the colonial era.

Nodari (1981:9-8) sees neo-colonialism as "indirect methods of rule and control by economic exploitation through monopolizing the channels of international trade and through unequal exchange". As the imperialist forces used military and political monopoly of imperialism to actualize colonialism, Neo-colonialism itself was achieved through the exercise of financial-economic monopoly imperialism. Both colonialism and Neo-colonialism share similar historical antecedents having sprung up from a common source, the exploitative nature of capitalism and imperialism.

Nkrumah (1965) defined Neo-colonialism as "the process of handing over political sovereignty to the African people with one hand, and only to take it away with the other hand". He sees Neo-colonialism as "clientele sovereignty or fake independence". The case of "clientele sovereignty' according to Nkrumah suggests the practice whereby metropolitan powers grants a sort of flag independence to a peripheral nation with the concealed intention of making the liberated country a 'client state' and controlling it effectively by means other than political domination. Nkrumah suggests the need for pan-African unity as the only panacea to neo-colonialism. To Nkrumah, pan-Africanism would ensure a united foreign policy for a common defence and a fully integrated economic policy for the development of the African continent.

In the same vien, Gorbachev (1987), Ojukwu (1989), Nwabughuogu (1995), Frank (1969) see Neo-colonialism as an inequitable, exploitative relations that has put third world countries at the receiving end of poverty. These scholars are also of the view that developed Western capitalism cannot survive without the resources of third world economics in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The afore-listed scholars are also in agreement that neo-colonialism came about as a result of the incorporation of the peripheral regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America into the international capitalist economy which is strictly under the monopolistic control of the core-nations.

Neo-colonialism involves subtle control of political, economic, social and cultural fortunes of third world countries that had attained flag or political independence by the metropolitan nations of Europe and North America. It also involves a covert manner through which capitalist countries in Europe like Britain, France and Portugal use Trans National companies, various forms of investment and economic aid packages, advanced military technology and various global organizations including the United Nations Organization (UNO) to ensure a sustained economic, political and socio-cultural domination of emergent nation states in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Put differently, neo colonialism can also be seen as a modernized form of economic imperialism where the global economy is structured to the advantage of core-nations. In other words, the neo-colonial economic structure shortchanged the peripheral economies of African countries such that majority of the neo-colonized countries are highly dependent on a monolithic economy, (that is an economy that is exclusively based on raw material production) which in turn help to boost the industrial growth of developed economies in Europe and North America. Thus, a neo-colonial economy that is dependent on cash crop production discourages industrial growth and results in under development.

A neo-colonial state in principle has all the outward characteristics of sovereignty but in practice its economic system and political policies are controlled from outside by its former colonialists. In a nut shell, a nation state in the web of neo-colonialism is not a master of its own destiny.

Features of Neo-colonialism in Africa

Presently, the global economy is dominated by capitalist nations thereby resulting in a metropolis satellite relationship which carts away economic surplus from the satellite nations of Africa and transfers this surplus to metropolitan countries of Europe and North America. In so far as the metropolitan countries operate an export oriented economy as a result of increase in industrial productivity while the satellite nations run an import oriented economy that is based on primary products, it becomes difficult to maintain a dynamic equilibrium in the international market.

Although classical economists like Adam Smith and Rostow (1960) see economic prosperity as a feat that is traceable to increased specialization and free trade. This school of thought also supports the view that the creation of competitive markets like the international capitalist market engenders economic growth and development. These views of classical theorists were faulted by Marx who argued that although the extension of markets was important for economic development, the mode of production is the sum of the material productive forces of society. These productive forces include climate and geography as well as existing technology (see Grabowski, & Sheild, 1996:3). So long as industrial productivity remains the key to development, there is no way impoverished and industrially backward countries of Africa can compete favourably with the highly industrialized countries of Europe and North America in the international market.

However marxists and neo-marxist scholars like Baran (1957), Frank (1966), Amin (1974), Nwoke (1988:5) argue that the underdevelopment of Africa, Asia and Latin America has been a product of the same forces that have led to development in Europe and North America. This school of thought believe that the opening of the underdeveloped economics of Africa to foreign capital penetration, along with its specialization in the exploitation of a few primary resources will always generate a form of international economic relations among unequal economic units.

In short, rural poverty in Africa can be traced to many neo-colonial forces which include the monopoly of technological and capital goods by western governments, an unending economic war waged by imperialist states against the developing countries through Trans National Corporations, the neo-colonial strategy of "development aid" as well as the exploitative tendencies of multilateral financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank etc.

Thus, these indicative features of neo-colonialism have culminated into serious disequilibrium in the international market where in the metropoles maintain buoyant economies at the expense of dependent peripheral nations of Africa.

Certain features of Neo-colonialism are vividly discussed below:

(1) Trade or Economic Dominance

Neo-colonization depicts exploitation of nation by another nation through international trade. The internationally market encourages free trade policies between the centre and its periphery thereby leading to the development of an economic system that is based upon the export of primary products and the importation of finished goods. Many critics of trade liberalization have argued that free market breeds serious unequal economic exchange since it gives the central economies undue monopoly of technological and capital goods at the expenses of the developing economies of Africa that depend mainly on these industrialized products. Although, protagonists of trade liberalization have argued that it engenders positive economic growth amongst participating nations. This view seems defective since this trading relationship is factored on an unequal exchange to the benefit of the centre who sell their manufactured goods at exorbitant prices only to buy primary products from poor African countries at reduced prices. By this means, the metropolitan nations dominate the major sectors of the economy of many African countries.

Khor (2005:19) in his considered opinion feels that trade liberalization can never promote sustainable economic growth for sub-Saharan African countries. Khor's views in this respect are quoted extensively in the context below:

> The world trading system has been favouring the exporters of manufactured goods, while proving to be disadvantageous to the many developing countries whose main participation in global trade has consisted in the export of raw materials and commodities and the import of finished products. Many southern countries have lost their self-reliance in terms of producing their own food, as lands were converted to farm exports that in many cases yielded unsatisfactory results in terms of instability of price and demand.

The economies of many independent African states have been under perpetual dominance by the Metropolitan countries of Europe due to the syndrome of narrow economic base. This issue of narrow economic base brings about cases of an undiversified economy whereby African countries operate mono-cultural export economics that force them to rely for their foreign exchange earnings on a few primary commodities which served as the mainstay of their economies during the colonial days (Ake, 1981:97). Thus, the dependence of African economies on imported manufactured goods perpetuates an import-oriented economy. This import based economy has always benefited the centre since it consigns African economies to primary production which retards the pace of industrialization (Ake, 1981:136). Ake, equally argues that the oil boom era in Nigeria was illustrative of the tendency of disarticulation and dependence since it encouraged fiscal and technological dependence of Nigeria on the metropolitan countries. The oil boom era diverted attention of the Nigerian government away from other sectors of the economy particularly, agriculture.

Again, most indigenous industries springing up in Africa have always withered away due to their inability to survive crippling competition posed by the monolithic conglomerates and supra-natural corporations. These Trans-National Corporations enjoy the dual advantage of superior technology and huge capital out lay. The exploitative nature of western multi-National Companies has so much stifled African economics bequeathing nothing but legacies of economic dependency on wobbling Third World Economics. Thus, the dependency syndrome of most Third World Economics has serious negative impacts on their respective National Income (NI) Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P) and low per capita income. For instance, Onoh (1983:45) observes that the presence of Multi-National Corporations has caused the Nigerian economy more harm than good as these corporations have persistently exploited Nigeria's oil fields and the proceed arising from the exploitation are transferred to the metropolitan homes of these companies in Europe and North America.

Many conservative scholars in the field of political economy have spuriously posited that TNCs like UAC, UTC, John Holt, CFAO, Shell BP etc have contributed in no small measure towards the economic development of sub-saharan African. Its positive impacts on the economies of many Third World countries range from investments in extractive, distributive and productive industries. Some critics of the conservative school think that TNCs have not encouraged the economic growth of many Third World countries. In support of this viewpoint, Chukwu (1998:287) argues that the present developing countries in which sub-saharan Africa belongs has consistently recorded stagnation and slumber in their development strategies due to the obnoxious activities of the TNCs in these countries. TNCs can be defined as business firms or corporations in which the ownership, management, production and marketing of a particular type of product/service or of products extend beyond one political and economic community. TNC's financial policy is profit maximization. TNC's has also brought a vicious circle of poverty in Africa. The Western imperialist nations using their TNC's as the bugbear of exploitation put Africa on the threshold of poverty. This was achieved through appropriation of the wealth of Africa which was sent back to Europe (Chukwu, 1998:295).

(2) Poor Financial base for capital formation

The under-developed nature of the economies of most African countries has serious impact on the acquisition of indigenous long term capital for investment. Since the balance of payment in the international market remains unfavourable to African countries who operate an import-oriented economy, there is always the problem of poor per capital income which causes widespread poverty.

Most scholars of Development Economics think that the colonial era left the economics of the colonized territories very dependent on foreign demand and consequently very sensitive to the business cycle of expansion for the developed countries and a depressive economic outlook for under developed economies. The colonial economy which hinged mainly on cash crop economy resulted in serious fluctuations in terms of balance of payment. Even, in the neo-colonial era, the economics of many African countries are not export-based and most times depend mainly on foreign investments. This trend in international trade made most metropolitan countries of Europe and North America to experience buoyant economics leading to the acquisition of huge capital outlay due to excessive profits accruable from foreign investments. Since many of the metropoles operates export-oriented economy there is always constant desire to find new markets in Third World countries for goods and capital exports.

Foreign investments in Third World economies of Africa, Asia and Latin America have constantly dwindled economic growth due to the fact that it has never encouraged industrialization. The presence of MNCs affects the acquisition of indigenous long term capital for investment purposes. This economic trend results in vicious circle of poverty in most third world economies. Nurkse (1999:115) sees “vicious circle of poverty” to imply a constellation of forces tending to act and react upon one another in such a way as to keep a poor country in a state of poverty”. This circular relationship which exists between the core and peripheral countries structure the economies of African countries to become dependent on the exportation of primary commodities at cheap rates in exchange for highly priced manufactured goods. Thus, the imbalance in trading relationship which is now compounded by the internationalization of capitalism inhibits the accumulation of capital in economically backward countries.

Both Nurkse (1971) and Petch (1961:100) believe that low per capital income affects the rate of investment of any country. To them, the supply of capital in any economy is always governed by the ability and willingness to save. In the same manner, the demand for capital is governed by the incentive to invest. Both authors affirm that poverty ridden countries always have problem of poor capital formation and balanced economic growth due to the syndrome of small capacity to save arising from low level of real income which impedes the zeal for investment.

Critically, the views of Nurkse and Petch with regard to poor financial base for capital formation and its spiral effect on the rate of investment in Third World countries have been faulted by many scholars who think that it was very silent on those factors that increase or reduce the potential economic surplus of any country. Baran (1957) argues that the spread of capitalism into less developed nations resulted in a political amalgam combining the worst features of both capitalism and feudalism which, in a number of ways, effectively blocked all possibilities of economic growth. Grabowski and Shields (1996:4-5) supports Baran's views by x-raying those factors that can enhance or impede rapid economic growth for any country. In their considered opinion, a country's potential economic surplus is the difference between the output that could be produced and essential consumption. A country's actual economic surplus is identical with its current savings or capital accumulation and is the difference between actual output and actual current consumption. When a country's out put is greater than its actual consumption rate, that particular country enjoys rapid economic growth as is the case with advanced economics of Europe and North America.

In the case of under developed economics of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the actual surplus is far below the potential economic surplus. This is due to the fact that actual output is low while actual consumption rate is high. This trend leads to economic decline. The dwindling economic posture of many Third World economics is traceable to certain eruptions that were associated with the advent of capitalism in these less developed nations. When capitalism penetrated into least Developed Countries (LDCs), feudalism and its dominant class was not destroyed as Marx predicted, instead, an alliance among the foreign capitalists, native capitalists, and feudal overlords is established. Within the context of this alliance, much of the potential economic surplus is transferred out of the country by dominant foreign capitalists. In addition, the native capitalist class and the feudal overlords use much of the potential surplus for luxurious consumptions. As a result, the actual economic surplus is meager and the growth rate of these countries are relatively low (Grabowski and Shield,1996).

Thus, the poverty of capital for investment has made it grossly impossible for poor countries in Africa to mobilize capital for domestic resources. Poor accumulation of capital and lack of net profits in international trading relations with the More Developed Countries (MDC) has always affected the attainment of Rostow's take-off stage for sustained economic growth.

(3) Aid Contacts

African contact with Western capitalist countries in the area of 'aid packages' also encourages the 'dependency theory'. Neo-colonial government in Europe and North America tele-guided modern African economics through economics aid packages under the auspices of two prominent Bretton Woods Institutions - World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These global financial institutions whose establishments were anchored on western financial interests have strategically strangulated the economics of many Third World countries whose citizens operate below the poverty datum line. The two major multi-lateral financial institutions, the World Bank and IMF were established in 1944 in New Hampshire, USA to give aid to European countries inorder to enable them come out from the ruins of the First and Second World Wars. The primary objective of the Bretton Woods Institution was to re-structure the economies of Western European countries considering the negative impacts of the two World war on these economies. To strengthen the international financial system, the World Bank and IMF established both special facility for sub-saharan Africa and the structural Adjustment facility. The extension of the Bretton Woods institutional loans was a bogus attempts to address the poverty issue in Africa. For instance, the World Bank since its inception had funded large infrastructural projects in many Third World countries which primarily benefited the opulent class at the expense of the impoverished majority.

The World Bank facilitated economic growth in many European countries through capital investments in the spheres of agriculture, rural development, energy development, health, industry, mining, population, planning, technical assistance, transportation, telecommunication, urban development. With time, its activities were extended to Third World countries in Africa, Asia and Latin-America through its anti-poverty loans to the provision of structural Adjustment Loans (Onimode, 1988:279). In spite of its lofty objectives in terms of international cooperation and encouraging the movement of capital from the more developed countries to the least developed countries, the World Bank has promoted the interests of capitalists and international capitalism to the disadvantage of the underdeveloped economies in Africa.

In the views of Ndoh and Ngoka (1998:153), the World Bank should be seen as another important instrument used by developed countries to snatch the control of national wealth and independent development strategies from the third world countries which normally would regulate the influence and survival of capitalism in their various countries. So long as the World Bank's developmental model for third world nations is capitalist-oriented and always skewed towards the sustenance of profit-oriented multi-national corporations, it can never enhance the over-all social, economic and material well being of the peasant population in Africa. The World Bank with its imperialistic manipulations can never propel any third World country towards the attainment of self-reliant economy.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was established to ensure balance of payment equilibrium of member states. Since 1979, IMF has been offering economic assistance to Third World Countries in the form of Structural Adjustment loans with harsh conditionalities; such as trade liberalization, monetary anti-inflationary control of wage increase, anti-inflationary programme, anti-inflationary dismantling of price control and minimum wages, open door policy on foreign investment and multi-national corporations, reduction of spending on social services and privatization of public enterprises (Onimode, I988: 284-285)

It is worth-noting at this juncture that the economic initiative of the IMF in Third World economics has been counter-productive. Rather, than revamping the economics of Third World countries through reduction of high inflationary trends as well as ensuring stable exchange rates for their respective currencies, the IMF has worsened the debt crisis in Africa. Thus, IMF loans have plunged the sub-saharan region of Africa into a dangerous debt crisis since it is difficult for a poor nation with depressed economy to justify interest payments to foreign bankers while its indigenes slide into untold misery and social upheaval. This situation leads to debt re-scheduling or debt re-cycling and debt servicing.

Economic historians and political scientists are of the opinion that IMF has seriously disrupted global economy considering the current problems of volatility of exchange rates and the imbalance in international payments to the disadvantages of Third World economies. For instance, Don Mc Gulliray cited in Miller (1986:161) argues that “the IMF, in its attempts to clamp austerity on nations, is the present day equivalent of debtor's prison. Mofid (2002:37), in his analysis of the negative impacts of the financial policies of the World Bank and IMF on Third World under-developed economies has this to say:

> Today, many parts of Africa although rich in human as well as natural resources remain among the poorest regions of the World with the highest debt burdens in the world. Half of Africa's peoples live in abject poverty and are subjected to occasional famine. Economic conditions for the majority despite the so-called deregulated free trade globalization have been increasingly worse over the last twenty-five years.

Thus, structural adjustment loans given by the World Bank and IMF have never promoted mutual economic and financial inter-dependence among the 'Donor' and 'Debtor nations' but has plunged many fragile democratic regimes into the economic trap of full debt-servicing with its attendant extra-austerity measures. For instance, in 1996, sub-saharan Africa paid $2.5 billion more in debt servicing than it received in new long term loans and credit. The IMF alone has taken more than $3billion out of Africa since the mid 1980's. In 1997, for instance, the IMF received $600million more than it put in (Ogbunwezeh, 2005:187). The implication of this unquantifiable leakage of resources from the poor countries to the rich ones results in widespread hunger, disease and poverty for the over burdened blacks.

Ogbunwezeh (2005:176) and Kukah (2003:70) in their analyses of Nigeria's macro-economic policies in the 1980's observe that the Nigerian economy became prostrate when she opted for the IMF/World Bank's harsh therapy of economic Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, sequel to the near collapse of the oil prices in 1985. To them, SAP's economic policy became a serious albatross when it promoted the twin economic ills of spiral inflation and stagnation. These ills were worsened by massive currency devaluation that tended to wipe out the purchasing power of the vast majority of Nigerians.

Also, the huge debilitating debt burden occasioned by the IMF/World Bank has resulted in the problem of 'capital flight' in many underdeveloped economies. Capital flight accounts for an unquanitifable leakage from the debtor countries and constitutes a large percentage of the reverse transfer of resources from the poor countries to the rich ones Other contributory factors to capital flight include policy mistakes and weak administrative and legal controls in debtor countries as well as over-valuation of the currency (Miller, I986: 76).

Momoh & Hundeyin (1999:49) opine that the net-effect of the activities of the World Bank and IMF has been that the control of the commanding heights of most Third World economics are in the hand of these multilateral financial institution and Multi National Corporations (MNCS). The nitty-gritty of the matter, is that policies whether economics, social and political in most Third World countries are no longer autonomous, they are externally packaged and closely monitored by the west.

The structural adjustment programme of 1986-1992 increased the dependence of the Nigerian economy on the petroleum sector and the neglect of other sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. Worst hit, was the manufacturing sector whose percentage of the gross Domestic product declined from 9.5 to 6.1% thereby plunging it into a deep recession characterized by low private sector investment, low capacity utilization and high structural unemployment (Ofuebe, 1998:97-98). SAP also resulted in heavy indebtedness and unspeakable debt burden. Instead of enhancing private capital inflows expected to be fall-outs of liberalization, it made Nigeria to become a capital deficit country. This was due to the intensification of export of capital as both private and public sector operators abused the freedom which financial liberalization encouraged (see Umoren, 2001:5-6).

From these analyses, aid packages and odious debts contracted or incurred by many roguish regimes in Africa with the active collaboration of Western imperialist governments, Banks and Trans-National Companies combine effectively to undermine the economies of many African countries leaving a gloomy picture of high inflationary trends, malnutrition, infant mortality and mass poverty (Ugorji, 2005:150.153).

(4) Political Subordination

During the colonial period, political subordination was direct because the colonialists were at the helm of affairs. After independence, imperialist nations of Europe perpetuated political and economic instability in Africa by sponsoring coups and counter-coups through the support of local political elites and Multi-National Companies. A case in point was Ghana where Nkrumah's political rivals plotted with a C.I.A. station in Ghana for his overthrow due to 'Ghana's communist ties.

Most critics of political developments in African countries are of the opinion that political leadership in Black Africa since after independence has been replete with poor leadership, bribery, corruption and untold squandermania. Fore most amongst these critics, is Achebe who in one of his books, *The Trouble with Nigeria* asserts that "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership". To Achebe, "The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility and the challenge of personal example which are the hall-marks of true leadership" (Achebe, 1983:1). Achebe blames the failure of political leadenly in Africa and particularly in Igboland on the colonialists who out of sheer recklessness destroyed the Igbo leadership structure and replaced it with mushroom kingship. He buttressed his points by affirming that the lack of real leaders in Igbo land goes back, of course to the beginning of colonial administration. Once the white man had crushed Igbo resistance it was relatively easy for him to locate upstarts and ruffians in the community who would uphold his regime at the expense of their own people.

Ugorji (2005:151) while acknowledging that Africa's economic woes are self-inflicted thinks that western powers have continued to exercise an over riding influence over the political governance of many countries in Africa on account of their vested interests in these nations. This have taken the form of behind the scenes manipulative and controlling roles through agencies such as IMF, imposing leaderships favourable to, and working for, the interests of western imperialism. By this means, they overtly or covertly compromise corrupt political elites who misrule their home countries through the tacit support of powerful western nation.

Ogbunwezeh(2000:186), also in support of Achebe and Ugorji opines that it was the destruction of Africa's traditional leadership and governmental structure and its replacement with the exploitative blue prints of the colonialist that paved the way for the emergence of inglorious politicians and an array of military brigands like Mobutu Sesse Seko of Zaire, Emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa of Central African Republic, Hastings Kamuzu Benda of Malawi, Sanni Abacha and Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria, Joseph Kabilla of Zaire as well as Idi Amin Dada of Uganda who consolidated the culture of political kleptocracy that is currently affecting the African continent today.

In his own views, Davidson (2005:246) feels that Neo-colonialism encourages pirates to capture political power in many independent African states. These pirates personified in dictators like Samuel Deo of Liberia and Amilcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau possessed the strength to seize power, but not the wisdom to control it. This calibre of leaders walled themselves round with sycophants and looted the treasuries of their respective nation states through the influencing support of their former colonialists like France, Britain and Portugal. Consequently, European imperial powers promoted neo-colonial 'clientelism', through the establishment of authoritarian bureaucratic structures in Africa who protected their economic interests by making sure that they benefited from an international trading relationship where the client states exported only primary products.

Muhammed As Sadi cited in Ogbunwezeh (2005:168), in support of the view that Neo-colonialism has consolidated the culture of political kleptocracy asserts that the elite in most of the "Third World countries are a part of the "secondtier" West, who has translated the Western cause in their respective domains to perpetuate "Third World Poverty".

5. Socio-Cultural Domination

Colonialism, which mid-wifed neo-colonialism, set in motion the process of cultural diffusion through the introduction of Western Education and Civilization into African nation states. The natives were educated to 'embrace' anything European or Western no matter how decadent and to detest anything that is 'Black' or African. The diffusion of Western culture which clashed with African traditional values affected indigenous social, cultural and political institutions. The superiority complex that characterized Western Cultural values gave rise to 'colonial mentality'. The problem of 'colonial mentality' metamorphosed after independence into neo-colonial mentality and cultural imperialism. Okere (2006:27) bemoaned the imposition of alien languages on African countries by the colonialists which became a frustrating obstacle for the advancement of education and knowledge. To him, both the blacks in the USA and those here in Africa were design reduced to language-less anthropoids. Africa was given English and French for the same reason to make them easy to govern, to deprive them of their independent personality, to make their education downright difficult and its content alien in order perhaps to prove that they are some how inferior human beings.

Cultural imperialism which is a by-product of long period of historical contact with Europe created a problem of 'psychic alienation' which prevented the neo-colonized victims from achieving self-realization. Irele, cited in Munoz (2007:210), recounts the psychological basis of cultural imperialism in this way:

> As far as we (Africans) are concerned, our present experience of alienation stems from our historical encounter with Europe, and from our continuing relationship with a civilization that in its present form was forged in the continent and which therefore holds a special interest for us. We cannot ignore the fact that the transforming values of contact with this civilization have produced the context of our collective life. The necessary effort of understanding our alienation and coming to terms with it, justifies all forms of scholarship devoted to European culture and Western civilization, considered as a totality indeed, we have been so involved in this civilization that to consider it as something set apart from us to set it up as an abstraction.

Cultural imperialism has brought about the erosion and desecration of African Cultural values. Most Africans, particularly the educated ones adopt European style of dressing. There is also an unwholesome acceptance of Western musical culture and style of dancing at the expense of our philosophically based musical culture. Our people's craze for European dishes and textile materials had seriously affected indigenous food and textile industries which fizzle out due to their inability to compete with their foreign counterparts who enjoy dual gains of huge capital and superior technology.

Another tool used by neo-colonialists to alienate the black man from himself is the excessive importation of all sorts of skin and hair oils for bleaching and perming of skin and hair into the African continent. The neo-colonized women folks believe erroneously that light skins are better and that the natural dark skin colour and hair are indicative of primitivity. The indoctrination of most African ladies to bleach their charming black skins shows an ego that is devoid of self-pride and gross acceptance of an inferiority status when compared to other races of the world. This writer thinks that the dumping of these bleaching creams in the African continent and subsequent brainwashing of black ladies to patronize these creams in spite of their health hazards suggests a conspiratorial attempt by the white race to perpetual kill the spirit of black consciousness ab initio set in motion by African nationalists like Leopold Senghor's 'Negritude'. Although, Negritude in essence is not a defense of a skin or colour….not even attachment to a particular race…it is simply the whole complex of civilized values cultural, economic, social and political which characterize the black peoples, more precisely, the Negro-African World (Nwoko, 2006:217).

Okadigbo (1985:81) affirms that 'Negritude' is the most philosophic argument in favour of Blackness, the ultimate and rational expression and explanation for such theoretical and practical phenomena as African personality, African identity, Black is beautiful. To him, Negritude is the song of the African “Cogito ego sum”. Negritude is the only philosophy that can sensitize the Blackman towards believing that his destiny lies in his lands. It also believes that with a sense of communion and doggedness, the black man can re-discover the abandoned Negro-African civilization. A conservative retreat to the exotic cultures of the past as preached by 'Senghor's negritude' without loosing focus of the dynamics of the present can help the already embattled Black world to over come the ravaging cancer of cultural imperialism.

Another instrument of neo-colonialism in the Third World is the mass-media. European businessmen working in collaboration with comprador bourgeoisie in Africa have used the print and Electronic media to advertise foreign products. They have also mounted serious propaganda with the aid of radio and television stations where they have portrayed Africa as a land characterized by war, famine and abject poverty.

The colonialists have effectively used Western films to propagate such European values as monopoly capitalism, globalization, libertarian democracy and Euro-Christianity at the expense of Negritude and pan-Africanism that extol African morality and African brotherhood. Neo-colonial films which constantly preach extreme Europeanism as exemplified in simple Nuclear families with all its attendant selfishness and mindless individualism has almost eroded the spirit of communalism that has sustained the extended family structure in Africa. Thus, Western film shows have helped to export the culture of violence, theft, suicide, as well increased spate of sexual violence. These behavioural attributes which are critically un-African have produced a counter-culture of street-begging, organized criminal activities, gangsterism, homo-sexualism, lesbianism and Advanced Fee Fraud (419).

6. Lack of Indigenous Technological Capacity and Capability

Neo-colonialism encourages technological imperialism which obstructs Africa's desire for genuine transformation and development. Osita (1992:36) sees technology as “a potent force in the process of development and that given the proper socio-economic and political environment, it can make a difference between stagnation and genuine development”. Technological imperialism stemmed from colonial and post-colonial educational curriculum which was liberal in content but bereft of sound technical and industrial education. This liberal curriculum emphasized only reading, writing and arithmetic while its beneficiaries served the colonial bureaucracies in different capacities as clerks, interpreters and messengers. No effort was made at establishing technical schools (Ujam, 1995:142).

The absence of technical education in the colonial and early post-colonial educational curriculum may be part of the secret manoeuvres by capitalist nations of Europe to delay the development of indigenous technological capability and capacity while encouraging undue over-reliance on technological transfer from M.D.Cs of Europe and North America. Thus, the colonial education curriculum which was adopted during the early phases of the neo-colonial period was however problematic due to the challenges posed by the realignment of the African pattern of education, to alien examination councils and languages. Equally, this liberal curriculum whose philosophy was not structured towards Education for technological autonomy and self-reliance bred mainly intellectually inclined African academics and elites who cannot address the stark realities of contemporary African life (Okadigbo 1985:68-69). In short, neo-colonial educational curriculum was not pragmatic enough to equip the black world with the personality resources for meeting and coping with the social, economic and political realities of the African situation.

Most early European writers like David Hume, George Hegel and Trevor Roper had postulated a preposterous assumption that Blacks have inferior minds to whites and as such,

devoid of technological innovation. Writing in 1768, the Scottish philosopher, David Hume cited in Uya (1984:1) had this to say about Africa and its people: “I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No indigenous manufactures amongst them, no arts, no science”.
Also, a nineteenth century great German philosopher, George Hegel wrote about Africa in this derogatory manner:

> It is manifest that want of self control distinguishes the character of the Negroes. This condition is capable of no development or culture and as we have seen then at this day, such have they always been.

In the same vein, Roper made the following racial remarks about the African continent while responding to students demands for mounting of courses in African history,

> Perhaps in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present, there is none, there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness and darkness is not a subject of history (see Uya)

Okafor (1988:366) sees the views of David Hume, George Hegel and Hugh Trevor Roper as an expression of blatant prejudice against the Negro race. Okafor argues that the Western man, both for reason of his survival and for the embellishments there of has used his ingenuity to effectively condition the Black man to accept inferiority. He affirms that the racial views of the three afore-listed philosopher historians were conditioned by the distorted concept of blackness which eminently portrayed the white man as a hero and the Blackman as the villain. In spite of European Cultural Negatism for Black Africa which gave rise to racial segregation and the monster of apartheid, Okafor thinks that Black ancestors in Africa like their counterparts in Europe and Asia evolved indigenous technology that was utilized in their local environments. According to him,

> In historical perspectives, it is clear that Black people, within the proper context of environmental factors and the socio-economic conditions, never lacked in lofty human qualities in terms of high powered intellection, physical power, Civility or metaphysical character. It must be remembered that Black ancestors in Africa have made a timeless impact in the development of aesthetic cultural artifacts. The Genius of (Ife, Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Benin) artifacts and the creativity of Dogan and Banbara predate the originality of modernist from Guagn to Picasso (Okafor, 1988 pp 369 370).

The unequal economic relationship between Africa and Europe from 15th century onwards diverted African creativity to an essentially unproductive enterprise whereby the black man became a commodity of trade.

Thus, it is an obvious historical fact, that the Trans Atlantic Slave trade brought about 'technological arrest' or 'stagnation' due to the fact that many virile youths who would have expanded local industries such as cloth-making and iron-working were shipped to Europe and the New world for the development of agriculture. This dehumanizing trade impacted negatively on the traditional values of the black people thus paving the way for the spiral vices of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Chinweizu (1978) commented on the atrocious desecration of traditional institutions and the immeasurable lull in human creativity during the era of Trans Atlantic Commerce. He buttressed his points in the following ways:

> With the resultant moral decay and communal insecurity, learning declined, and….ignorance and fear became entrenched. For the coming centuries, farm and handicraft techniques stagnated at best and more often declined from the levels of the fifteenth century….with the rise of its slaving states, Africa lost its historical initiative, its economic autonomy, and became a satellite of the West long before outright conquest and colonialism would strip all disquises from that satellization.

The poverty of modern technological achievements in the African continent should be traced to the European slave trade. The triangular trade resulted in an unmitigated stagnation of native crafts and industries as Africans relied heavily on goods from Europe. Technological imperialism caused much of African technology in the fields of agriculture, communication, road construction and urbanization to be imposed from outside through the colonial and neo-colonial processes. Muoghalu (1987) bemoans the negative impact of technological imperialism on African economic development. To him, "whatever technical skills the colonial people brought were not transferred and tailored to reflect the original technology of the pre-colonial Nigeria". Thus, the Trans Atlantic slave trade destroyed the existing social relations, elements and activities embodied in the native mode of production and in their place set up a new set of relation that made the Black man to passively depend on imported technology. The collapsing local mode of production which prevailed in the colonial and post-colonial era was meant to exploit and expropriate the local resource of African countries for the benefit of metropolitan interests (Udoye, 1994:80).

The Trans Atlantic Slave trade impeded technological development and the emergence of a self-reliant society in the African continent. Having lost its vitality for the generation of new thoughts and ideas, Africa was readily subjected to a horrendous imperialism that destroyed the confidence and belief of Africans in themselves, and this situation heralded the demise of aspects of traditional, social, religious and political culture after half a millennium of dehumanizing contact with Europeans (Umuezurike, 1992).

Conclusion

The cancer of neo-colonialism is now ravaging the entire continent of Africa. The cobwebs of neo-colonial relationship now existing between the more advanced nations of the world and the least developed countries of Africa have crippling effects on the economies of these countries. The exploitative operational mechanisms of multi-lateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank had resulted in glaring cases of unemployment, abject poverty and social inequality that are now menacing the continent.

In spite of the over-bearing influences of Trans-National Corporations, on Third World economies, this writer thinks that the already depressed economies of many African countries can improve if they should adopt better economic norms through periodic review of the policy of National income as well as the promotion of "cost accounting". These measures if properly implemented can help to detect certain cracks in any economy which can take different forms like budget deficits, stagnating inflation and chronic unemployment.

The government of African states should take a cue from the dynamic socio-economic and political institutions of the people of South-Eastern Nigeria. The people of South-Eastern Nigeria through their creativity evolved "credit and saving institutions called the "Isusu" which sustained their economy during the colonial and post colonial periods. Thus, the 'Isusu' (a monetary institution) aided capital-formation in Eastern Nigeria and has helped to finance community development projects even after the attainment of independence.

Good leadership and good followership are vital factors that can engender growth and development. A stable political order and exemplary leadership can stimulate economic growth. No nation has witnessed economic boom in an atmosphere of tyranny, anarchy, social instability and cleptomanic squandermania.

Lastly, it is the candid opinion of this writer that the conundrum associated with science, technology and industrialization will be solved if and only if African countries should without delay, harness the scientific and technological exploits of the defunct Republic of Biafra. The lessons of the Nigerian Biafra War Civil can infuse a 'culture of science' into the Nigerian nation.

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