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Historical Context Of The Incorporation Of Africa In International Politics

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ABSTRACT

The African continent, like several other less developed entities have come under colonial siege several decades ago with attendant deprivation, exploitation and domination by the colonial masters. The multiplier effect of this relationship finds expression in the unequal trade relations either in form of slave trade or legitimate trade to the current trend of globalization and globalism. This research argues that the due of imperialist world and backward nation-states have existed poles apart in the socio-economic scheme of things. The paper adopts an empirical survey method based on information documented over the years on the subject matter. The position of this paper is to say that inequality at any level of analysis characterizes an ensuing synergy between western powers and Africa as is seen in the levels of trade, investment, colonialism and neo-colonialism, respectively.

Keywords: Colonialism, Slave Trade, Legitimate Trade, Neo-Colonialism

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INTRODUCTION

Africa's incorporation into international politics did not come as a surprise. This is more so that the imperial powers had sets of design to keep the African continent in perpetual domination, colonization and alienation (Ihonvebere, 1989). It therefore goes without saying that the African contact with the forces of western imperialism can best be adjudged from the context of politics and economics. The two are mutually, but independently reinforcing. Consequently, the account of imperialism as captured by Hobson in his book *Imperialism: A Study* published in 1902 best explains Africa's dramatic integration into the realm of international politics. Hobson therefore considers the dominant motives for African/imperialist contract as been those of the quest for markets as well as opportunities for higher returns and investments. As stated earlier these needs did not occur in a vacuum. According to Hobson, the need for this quest arose partly because of the development of capitalism in the west (Fundamentally due to industrial revolution and the emphasis on the use of machine for massive production). The emerging capitalist system in Europe at that time was more productive and needed greater imports of raw materials, more food for the urban population growing in response to industrialization and products to meet the rising standard of living (Ake, 1981:21). Hobson further stressed that a more important cause of imperialism was the tendency for production to outgrow consumption, a tendency towards over-saving and overinvestment and under-consumption. Basically, capitalism was looking for where to get cheap raw materials. Therefore, Hobson sees capital as supra-national because it goes above the productive level and includes the political level.

The notion has been corroborated by several scholars including Claude Ake and Julius Ihonvbere. For example, Ihonvbere (1989) wrote that Africa's contact with the capitalist system was rooted in a structure that was readily available to facilitate the expropriation of the African continent. To him, this process of incorporation is the reason for Africa's underdevelopment. And the incorporation varies with the kind of institutions and structures available to facilitate exploitation. Thus, the process was achieved through monetization, imperialism of trade (unequal exchange), metropolitan directed investment and the creation of indigenous institutions to facilitate the attainment of imperialist objectives. Ake (1981) criticized this state of affairs of subjugation of Africa by capital when he asserts that:

> *What needs to be noted is the nature of the colonial monetary system as a cause as well as an effect, of the integration of African economies into western capitalism. The process of monetization went hand in hand with the spread of capitalist relations of production, particularly because it led to the polarization of African peasants as well as some African entrepreneurs… the monetary system not only helped to create a capitalist economy, but also a capitalist economy structurally dependent on foreign economies (1981:16).*

Arising from above explanations, Ihonvbere further argues that there are retinues of consequences of the incorporation of Africa into global politics. They include the creation of an unstable and unhegemonic state, dependence of African states on the production and exportation of narrow range of cash crops for foreign exchange earnings, domination of African economies by vertically integrated and profit-seeking capitalist entities, peripheralization in the world capitalist system, infinitesimal contribution to world production and near total irrelevance in world politics. It was the Marxist economist, Bill Warren who argued that imperialism with its many phases did encourage capitalism acting as a powerful engine of progressive change. The forces of capital employed coercion to enforce the introduction of commodity production and wage labour. Structurally, capitalism exercised direct control over labour, deployed arbitrary political authority, adopted indigenous forms of social order such as caste, enforced laws restricting the free movement of workers including bonded labour, created official markets or trading centres (Marketing Boards) to reduce its costs. Conversely, Smith, (2003) argued that taxation, forced labour, the creation of official markets or trading centres, and the compulsory crop production were widely used to ensure the supply of labour and export commodities. Therefore, it can be said that the regulations of relations of production were increasingly assumed by forces of capital, rather than being left to unpredictable market forces. This paper is divided into four sections. Section one takes a look at the structures put in place by the whites to facilitate slave trade. Section two x-rays the dynamics of trade and investment including the role of the Bretton Wood system in the trade relations between the North and South. Section three examines colonialism and its edifices in Africa and section four examines the structures of neocolonialism and the various avenues to perpetually entrench underdevelopment in Third world countries.

Before the advent of European explorers into the soils of the black race, Africa had a more or less organized form of familial and kinship systems, organized communal living based on African brotherhood and a sustained socio-economic and political system peculiar to its environment, existence and harmonious relationships. The level of homogeneity in the context of African brotherhood reinforces itself in various aspects of African societal values, norms, tradition and customs, over and above which all individuals in societies co-exist. Circumvention of sacred traditions was seen as an offence and those found liable or culpable were assigned appropriate sanctions to serve as a form of deterrence to prospective criminals. The African system supposedly witnessed absolute peace (except for local wars which mostly was stimulated by rival groups competing for space in the kingdom or fighting for injustices committed), acrimony and mutual co-existence. Several of these kingdoms including the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana, Buganda in Uganda, Benin and Oyo kingdoms in Nigeria, Kikuyu in Kenya to mention but a few (Huberman, 1942; du Bois, 1958; Curtin, 1960). Africa's pre-colonial systems knew no troubles as such, hence its traditional values and morals were enough templates for members to follow and guiding rules were adequately upheld. Instances abound in, for example Nigeria's pre-colonial societies of the North, West and East with centralized authority system, except for the East which was more or less acephalous, amorphous and therefore ruled like a Republic (Robin, 1997; Lall, 1975). However, the perceived harmony enjoyed by the people of Africa was soon to be short-lived in the event of the Berlin West African Conference initiated by foreign ministers of the then European powers and the United States of America; chaired by the then German Chancellor, Otto Von Bismarck in 1884. The tone of that meeting was set for African exploitation, and the "dark continent" (Metaphoric word for Africa) was not duely represented (Webster, 1912).

Thus, Davidson (1902) wrote that in the second half of the 19th century, after more than four centuries of contact, the European powers finally laid claims to virtually all parts of Africa.

Rodney (1972) agreed to this claims when he opine that parts of the continent had been "explored" but now representatives of European governments and rulers arrived to create or expand African spheres of influence for their patrons. Competition was intense just as spheres of influence began to crowd each other. It was time for negotiation and in late 1884, a conference was convened in Berlin to sort out things. This conference laid the ground work for the now familiar politico-geographical map of Africa. Curtin (1960) further claimed that:

> *The Berlin conference was Africa's undoing in more ways than one. The colonial powers superimposed their domains on the African continent. By the time Africa gained its independence in the late 50s and 60s, the realm had acquired a legacy of political fragmentation in that could neither be eliminated nor made to operate satisfactorily. The African politico-geographical map is thus a permanent liability that resulted from the three months of ignorance, greedy acquisitiveness during a period when Europe's search for minerals and markets had become insatiable (1960:112).*

From the above excerpts therefore, it becomes clear to say that Africa and Europe and America now co-exists in a relationship that is already patted with supremacy, inequality and domination. Thus the French dominated most of West Africa, just as the Germans, Portuguese, Belgians, Italians and British did in most of West, and North African territories, respectively. Expressing dismay over the consequences of any potential resistance by the blacks in attempt to dislocate African territories, Jordan (1928) wrote that:

In scarcely half a generation during the late 1800s, six European powers sliced up Africa like a cake. The pieces went to Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Belgium; among them, they acquired 30 new colonies and 110 million subjects. Although, African rulers resisted, many battles were one-sided massacres. In 1904, the heroes, a tribe of southwest, if not a country named Africa revolted against Germany and its rule. Their punishment was genocide – 24,000 *driven into the desert to starve; those who surrendered were sent to forced labour camps to be worked to death (1928:39).*

THEORETICAL ISSUES

The theoretical underpinning suitable for this piece of work is the dependency school of thought. This theory has grown over the years in social science scholarsticism and is general ascribed African scholars as a weapon to criticize the spate of underdevelopment supposedly facilitated by the west. The thesis of dependency presupposes the incorporation of backward nations into the web of international capitalist processes either as a result of slave trade, foreign direct investment, colonialism and neo-colonialism (Ihonvbere, 1985). Thus, the tendency to superimpose the whims of one person or groups on the other becomes the order of which societal goals are striven for so that they could be achieved. This level of struggles generates an unequal relationship between the parties involved in the struggle, with one part trading off its rights as the case may be in exchange for any stuff that is available. Ihonvbere (1989) argue that Marx's system of the thought was very attractive for the colonized and the exploited countries of the periphery. The centerpiece of Marx's system was the problem of oppression by capital and every principles that it stood for. In the *Thesis on Feuerbach*, Marx had noted that other philosophers including, among others, Aristotle, Socrates, Hobbes, Easton, etc, have interpreted the world of capital in a rather superficial manner. The only thing remaining however is to initiate a change that could reverse the trend of inequality in favour of the common man. Change therefore becomes the necessary index for societal harmony and peace. The concept of change to Marx meant liberating man entirely from monumental savagery, slavery, domination and oppression (Lefwitch, 2000; Kay 1975; Nkrumah, 1963). The central concern of Marx's thesis was epitomized in the concept of proletariat, a concept which allows Marx to bridge the traditional dichotomy "is" and "ought". For Marx, the proletariat expressed the most salient reality of existence but this reality was at once the wild show of man's inhumanity to man in the scheme of socio-economic and political relations around the world.

Dependency theory is relevant in this paper considering the inner essence of the concept itself. By the concept of dependency, one finds a condition and situation in which the economies of one group of countries are so perpetually conditioned by the development and expansion of others. To support this assertion, Obikeze (2004) wrote that:

A relationships of interdependence between two or more economies or between such economies and the world trading system becomes a dependent relationship when some countries of the world can expand through self-impulsion while others, being in a dependent position, can expand as a reflection of the expansion of the dominant countries which may have positive or negative effects on their immediate development (2004:11).

The crux of the aforementioned is a reinforcement of the forces of socio-economic integration long after the era of the abolition of slave trade across to the so-called legitimate trade and of course, the current trend of globalization and globalization. In any case however, the basin thesis of dependency speaks volume of the socio-economic conditions of the exploited (Naipal, 1985; Magdof, 1982; Hoogvelt, 1982). In the same vane, Onimode (2000) and Onimode (1989) agree that dominant countries are endowed with technological, commercial, capital and socio-political pre-dominance over backward countries of Africa, Asia, middle – East and the Caribbean and Latin American regions. However, the form of this predominance varies according to the particular historical moment. But Africa as we shall see subsequently in this paper has been badly and colossally exploited, and hence, the scar of exploitation lives on as demonstrated around the continent today. Africa of the 21st century still basks in the euphoria of social ills including, among others, excruciating poverty, disease pandemic, hunger and malnutrition, unemployment, child mortality, low life expectancy, illiteracy, war, desertification, unequal trade exchange; lack of initiatives and poverty of ideas, either on the path of the leadership or followership. The African woes traverses those of self-defeats, inferiority complex, excessive craze for foreign made items, goods and services; continuous over-dependence and over-reliance on medications abroad; over-dependence on borrowed concepts and ideologies, etc. In Nigeria, for example, the federal government under the leadership of President Goodluck Jonathan seems to be helpless and hence, have lost directions in terms of checkmating security concerns (the Boko Haram Saga) only with the aid of foreign expatriate. Several bomb blasts that have ripped across the length and breadth of Nigeria of late depicts a weak leadership system incapable of turning things around out of its own volition. This tendency therefore negates the earlier notion to Marx and his apostles of faith who abhor foreign domination as largely dependent acronyms. The Nigerian scenario seems to be a replication of issues in the entire African continent. And the only panacea is to fall back on our supposed "enemies" who are in themselves savers of the "sinking ship". It only takes a right-thinking direction by way of adequate policy option and determination to completely break away from the servitude of the imperial powers thereby re-defining and re-tracing Africa's steps backward towards self-determination, freedom, equality and prosperity in the 21st century and beyond.

TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

As earlier stated in this discourse, the dire need and quest for markets arising from excess production in the Europe led to the invasion of African soil with a new ideology. Thus, slavery and the tendency to trade in human cargo was overtaken by events that unfolded later on. It must however be noted here that the deliberate abolition of slave trade in Africa and of course, in other part of the world was not a demonstration of the "love" of the Europeans on these entities. It was rather to change the pattern of business from the unfovourable human trades to the disguised legitimate trade, which was not legitimate afterall (Rodney, 1972). Conversely, however, it must be stated that Britain particularly wanted Africa to collect palm produce and rubber and to grow agricultural crops for export in place of slaves; and it was clear that slave raiding was violently conflicting with that objective in western, Eastern and Central Africa. For example, in the 17th century, the Portuguese and Dutch actually discouraged slave trade on the Gold Coast recognizing that it was incompatible with gold trade (Rodney, 1972:113). As part of the strategies to plunder Africa's human resources into slavery, the Europeans set up structures and institutions at various locations in Africa. Thus African natives and intermediary merchants and mercenaries were used to facilitate the shipping of African slaves (Curtin, 1960).

Slave ports were created especially around the major Delta region and the Lagos water ways. Minor feeder roads and later railways, were created into the interior hinterlands to facilitate the movement of young slaves to the various ports. The style or methods of catching slaves was through an aggressive raiding, kidnapping, outright war and in most cases, killings of those slaves who may want to resist attacks (Kirk-Green, 1961). Of particular interest to this paper is the manner in which African slaves were shipped to the new world. The process of moving the slaves was rather too congested. Several thousands of slaves were unable to make it to the new world because of the rigors of having to travel by sea (Voyage) for months. In the event of deaths, such victims were merely thrown over board into the sea as feeds for wild sharks and other sea animals (Kirkgreen, 1961).

However, the notion of slave trade found its pride of place around the seventeenth century where human trading was prominent between Europe and Africa. Europe's conquest and colonization of North and South America and the Caribbean islands from the 15th century onward created an insatiable demand for African labourers who were deemed fit to work in the tropical conditions of the New World. The number of slaves imported across the Atlantic Ocean steadily increased from approximately 5,000 slaves a year in the sixteenth century to over 100,000 slaves a year by the end of the eighteenth century (Langton, 2008; Lamb, 1994; Boyinga, 1975). However, Hoselitz (1964) wrote that the institution of slavery existed in Africa long before the arrival of Europeans and widespread at the period of economic contact. Private land ownership was largely absent from the pre-colonial African societies, and slaves were one of the few forms of wealth – producing property an individual could possess. Additionally, rulers often maintain corps of loyal, foreign-born slaves to guarantee their political security, and would encourage political centralization by appointing slaves from the imperial hinterland to positions within the royal capital. Slaves were also exported across to North Africa and to western Africa, Arabia and India (Jordan 1928).

It would be impossible to argue, however, that Atlantic trade did not have major effect on the development and scale of slavery in Africa. As the demand for slaves increased with European expansion in the new world, rising prices made the slave trade increasingly lucrative. African states eager to argument their treasuries in some instances even preyed upon their own peoples by manipulating their own judicial systems and condemning their families to slavery in order to reap the rewards of their sale to European traders. Slave exports were responsible for the emergence of a number of large and powerful kingdoms that relied on a militaristic culture of constant warfare to generate the number of captives required for trade with the Europeans. The Yoruba kingdom of Oyo on the Guinea Coast, founded sometime before 1500, expanded rapidly in the eighteenth century as a result of this commerce. Its formidable army, aided by advanced iron technology, captured immense number of slaves that were profitably sold to slave traders. History also has it that the aggressive pursuit of slaves through war-fare and raiding aided by sophisticated weapons of the capitalists led to the ascent of the kingdom of Dahomey, in what is now the Republic of Benin, and prompted the emergence of the Chokwe chiefdoms from under the shadow of their Lunda overloads in the present day Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Davidson, 1902). Ultimately, the international slave trade had lasting effect upon the African cultural landscape. Areas that were hit hardest by endemic warfare and slave raids suffered from general population decline and it is believed that the shortage of men in particular may have changed the structure of many societies by thrusting women into roles previously occupied by their husbands and brothers (Curtin, 1960; Jordan, 1928).

Buttressing the above assertion on the multiplier effect of the increased impact of slave trade on the African human resources, Rodney (1972) argued that:

The mass loss to the African labour force was made more critical because it was composed of able-bodied men and young women. Slave buyers preferred their victims between the ages of 15 and 35… Europeans often accepted African children but rarely any other person. They shipped the most healthy wherever possible, taking the trouble to get those who had already survived and attack of small-pox and who were therefore immuned from further attacks of that disease… (1972:110).

Additionally, scholars in political history have argued that images stemming from this era of constant violence and banditry have survived to the present day in form of metaphysical fears and beliefs concerning witchcraft. In many cultures of west and central Africa, witches are thought to kidnap solitary individuals to enslave or consume them. Finally, the increased exchange with Europeans and the fabulous wealth it brought enabled many entities to cultivate sophisticated artistic traditions employing expensive and luxurious materials – from the fine silver and gold work of Dahomey and the Ashante Court to the Virtuoso woodcarving of the Chokwe kingdoms. These treasures were void testimonies of African socioeconomic and political integration in history. However, with the turn of events and the subsequent declaration of freedom as well as the abolition of slave trade, trans-Atlantic slave trade was changed to what was known as "legitimate trade". Dickson wrote that:

During the early nineteenth century, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was declared illegal and eventually eliminated, being surpassed in western Africa by a legitimate trade (i.e, non-slave) mostly in vegetable products such as palm oil and groundnuts. Dahomey, Yoruba land, the Slave Coast and the Gold Coast areas significantly involved in the slave trade in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also made changes to non-slaves exports by the mid 19th century (1973:32).

However, the transition occurred among the various societies at different times within the nineteenth century, but the commercial shift affected both coastal and inferior peoples and kingdoms to varying degrees. The important historiogeographical debate centres on the question of whether the commercial change constituted a crisis of adaptation for African rulers and merchants alike. Dickson (1973) argued that the sudden swap caused tremendous economic and political upheaval and dislocation, provoking European intervention and colonization. He further argued that this period of transition was the beginning of modern African history, from the revolutionary change to evolutionary one. Davidson and Law (1902) argued further that the changes in nomenclature brought about massive change in prices of slaves, unequal trade exchange, comparative profitability; and that this tendency enhanced small-scale and large scale enterprises, slavery and gender, and thereby fostered a one-way connection about the relative advantages of large and small-scale enterprises and about the roles of the state in relation to the private sector. Issues of labour, gender, extended credit and currency instability also figure into the debate.

TRADE AND INVESTMENTS

Trade relations between African and Europe is not new. It had existed in form of slave trade, legitimate trade, colonialism (though with a taint of forceful extortions and dominations of African resource base), imperialism and neo-colonialism which for obvious reasons have manifested into liberalization, deregulation, privatization and globalization to date. Rodney (1972) once again argued that:

Western Europe and Africa had a relationship which ensured the transfer of wealth from Africa to Europe. The transfer was possible only after trade became truly international; and that dates back to the late 15th century when Africa and Europe were drawn into common relations for the first time along with Asia and the Americas. The developed and underdeveloped parts of the world have been in continuous contact for one and a half centuries. The confrontation here is that Africa helped to develop Western Europe in the same proportion as Western Europe to underdeveloped Africa (1972:87).

The Bretton Wood system constitutes a major institutional framework for trade relations between Europe and America and the rest of the world (Bolaji, 1989). The Bretton Wood is a framework put in place by United States, Britain and the French government to oversee world monetary order between developed and underdeveloped economies. As a post-war institution, the plan of those who met at that time was to have a structure which could respond to the immediate needs of the countries involved and provide them with a much needed institution to monitor and control the flow of money and general transactions among such states. However, world currencies were fixed in relation to U.S dollars and the many woes of IMF/World Bank had generated a lot of friction in international trade relations with the rest of the world. It must be emphasized here that the Bretton Wood system as part of its agreement, stipulated in the article a fixed exchange rate over and above the concerns of less developed countries. All countries were expected to establish the parity of their currencies in terms of gold and in relation to the dollar and they were expected to make nothing less or more than one percent of parity (Bolaji, 1989:152). The emphasis of the Bretton Woods system was on national and market sales to monetary systems. It was expected that the IMF credits would be able to help in making sure that the poorer countries do not run into balance of payment problems. However, as a result of the weakness and eventual collapse of the Bretton Wood institutions, the various countries, with the aid of the United Nations, opted for a new world trade order generally known as North – South Dialogue. Toyin, (1997) wrote that the various countries having realized that many of the committees or groups established were created to encourage monetary stability and economic expansion of the North – the North in this context implying the industrially more developed countries of the world, to the disadvantage of the South which comprises of the nations of the Third World. Moreover, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which was established as part of the outgrowth of the Bretton Woods system set up international commercial codes on the assumption that it was an international agreement; but in effect, it was an agreement among the industrially developed countries of the North. Constant problems were faced by the countries of the South, especially since their agricultural products and raw materials continued to be moved to the North without actually having a fair exchange. This factor brought about the creation of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1961 by the UN General Assembly Resolution 1707 (xvi). The continuous institutional weaknesses in bringing about good results snowballed into more agitations for change and more equal representation of the South in the socio-economic scheme of things. Thus, the demands for new international economic order took the form of demands by the arrow heads of the South for national control, economic sovereignty, retribution and redistribution of the world's resources. The calls were also for greater market access in the industrial countries for the manufactured products of the South's goods, stable and higher prices for their agricultural and other commodities, greater access at less cost to existing technologies; also, restraints on the activities of the multinationals and the re-negotiations of their growing external obligations. They also wanted adjustments and restructuring of existing international decision-making procedures. Nonetheless, in all of the trade relations that existed between Europe and Africa, just like Europe and Asia including China, India, etc; the relationship was more or less unequal as terms of trade were unduly unfavourable to the Africans in particular. Onimode (2000) has argued that since the signing of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) by the United States of America in year 2000, U.S. investment in Africa has further spiraled downwards. U.S.

investments in Sub-Saharan Africa are a very small percent of worldwide U.S. total investment. Thus, at year-end 2006 the stock of U.S direct investment in Africa was $13.75 billion or less than 1% of the $2,384 billion in total U.S direct investment. Again, subtitle A of AGOA authorized the U.S president to designate Sub-Saharan African countries as beneficiary countries eligible to receive duty-free treatment for certain articles that are the growth, product and manufacture of that country. Side by side this argument is that this condition favours countries who have religiously observed market-driven economies. It also affects those countries of SSA whose policies does not conflict with those of U.S.A. It is also worthy of mention that when President Bill Clinton recognized the first AGOA beneficiary countries, only 34 out of 48 Sub-Saharan African countries were eligible. U.S Department of states noted that SSA countries like Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Somalia, Sudan, etc, were not qualified for this privilege. However, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria, etc, were classified under what is known as eligibility under Apparel Provisions and Special Rules (http://dataweb.usitc.gov). Rodney (1972) asserted that:

What was called international trade was nothing but the extension of European interests – they owned and diverted the great majority of the world's see-going vessels, and they controlled the financing of trade between four continents. Africans had little clue as to the tri-continental links between Africa, Europe and the Americans. Europe had a monopoly of knowledge about the international exchange system seen as a whole, for Western Europe was the only sector capable of viewing the system as a whole (1972:87).

Conversely, Europe exported to Africa goods which were directly being produced and used in Europe itself – Dutch linen, Spanish iron, English pewter, Portuguese wines, French brandy, etc. Europeans were also able to unload on African continent goods which had become unsalable in Europe. Thus, items like old sheets, cast-off uniforms, technologically outdated firearms and lots of odds and ends found guaranteed markets in Africa. On matters of investment, Africa's investment experiences started coming to limelight around eth 19th to 20th century. The industrial revolution that took place in the 16th – 18th century had placed so much emphasis on shipment of goods and services to less developed countries for easy access to markets where these goods, though exorbitant, could be purchased by Africans who were primarily the target audience (O'Connor, 1970; Smith, 1996; Khor, 2000). In Nigeria, for example, the early period of 1908 saw the emergence of Shell D'Archy, an American oil company that came for prospecting of bitumen around the Niger Delta region. Thus, subsequent discovery of oil in commercial quantity at a small village called Oloibiri (in the present Bayelsa) in 1958 marked the beginning of aggressive presence of other giant multinationals and transnational corporations seeking for greener pasture in Nigeria (Hall, 1995; Dollar, 2000). Unarguably, however, it can be said that the post world war II period, especially in the 1950s when U.S.A and other advanced economies decided to introduce a new science of administration to less developed entities. These initiatives were aimed at alleviating the comatose economies of the world who after the war, had virtually no financial capabilities to absorb the shock of wars. Part of this stride was also intended to allow Third World economies assert their independence, and hence, live as self-determined political entities. However, it is also essential to mention that Foreign Direct Investment in Less Developed Countries (LCDs) have assumed wider dimension around the 1990s. Martin Khor (2000) argues that:

There has been a significant increase in foreign investment to developing countries in recent years. Since the early 1990s, FDI flows to developing countries have risen relatively, averaging 32 per cent of the total in 1991 – 1995 compared with 17 percent in 1981 – 1990 (2000:72).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as perceived by social science scholars are business conglomerates oversees with massive tentacles in their host countries mostly in a bid to get cheap labour. In Nigeria for example several multinational business conglomerates are discernible viz: the Exxon of America, Julius Berger of Germany, Toyota of Japan, Peugeot of France, etc. These giant companies find expression in either petroleum, construction, automobile and general merchandise in their host countries (Krasmer, 1995). Contending arguments have however erupted over the years about the perceived costs and benefits of these foreign companies to African economies. On the one hand, the apologists to these firms agree that FDI is a sure bait for economic development, employment generation, increased capital flow into economies of backward nations, etc. On the other hand, those on the realist school of thought have maintained that FDI inflicts more pains than gains. Their submissions are that the presence of FDI is a threat to national sovereignty, political instability; it breeds another form of colonization, etc. Instances also abound where multinationals, represented by FDI, evade tax, destroys the ecosystem through gas flaring and, are therefore the source of unending terrorism (as in the Niger-Delta region). Experts from Europe under the auspices of the United Nations environmental impact assessment of the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria have alleged that Shell Petroleum Development company's environmental damages in Nigeria accounts for over 900 percent compared to what obtains in other countries where they operate (Aljazeera, 2011). Side by side these lofty arguments, Khor (2000) opined that:

The study on multinational enclaves found that FDI has a negative effect on domestic savings, as it gives room for the recipient country to increase its consumption on the financial side, FDI brings in capital but also leads to a stream of outflows of profit and other investment income… Thus FDI has a tendency to lead to "decapitalization". Comparing aid, debt and FDI, the study finds that because of the much higher rate of return of FDI compared to the rate of interest paid on aid or debt, the "decapitalizaiton" effect of FDI is greater than that of aid or debt (2000:73).

COLONIALISM

The concept of colonialism which is used to depict the domination of African natives by foreign bodies namely; Germany, Britain, Portuguese, Spain, Italy, etc, has assumed higher scholarly debates in recent times. As noted earlier in this paper, the beginning of the invasion of the colonialists to less developed countries of the world was primarily for economic domination, expropriation and exploitation (Hirst, 1999; Ake, 1989; Rodney, 1972). To facilitate the process of expropriation, colonialism adopted several methods to achieve its goals. In Nigeria, for example, the colonial masters invaded Lagos, uprooted the domains of the traditional institutions through war of conquest (as in the case of Kosoko of Lagos), raided the communities, sent many into exile and then, established their own authorities (Green, 1961). The mismatch between the use of superior weapons by the whites and the adoption of local den guns by the African natives was a clear indication that capitalism and colonialism was being imposed on a helpless entity doomed for continuous domination. Besides, the established order of traditional system of government in most African states (Nigeria inclusive) facilitated the smooth running of colonialism. In Nigeria, for example, these were centralized system of government in the North and West; but the East was a little bit difficult largely because of the acephalous nature of the system of government there. In order to ensure smooth administration of government, the colonial masters opted for the indirect rule system (Crowder, 1980). This system uses traditional rulers in the administration of the regions, thereby serving as a veritable link between the imperial overloads and the people. As part of the structures to fast-track African exploitation, roads and railways linking the hinterlands were vigorously constructed to siphon mineral deposits including coal, iron ore, tin, rubber, etc, to the various ports for shipment abroad (Tunde, 1983).

Colonialism is therefore a symbol of capitalism. Both of these concepts are mutually reinforcing and helps a great deal in the understanding of the whole gamut of imperialist penetration and subjugation. The Lasswelian politics of who gets, what, and how is depicted in the presence and activities of colonialism. The colonialists came, they saw and they conquered. Thus, several Third world countries (Africa inclusive) fall under the sledge hammer of the colonialists until agitation for political independence facilitated by several factors were rife to try to liberate the acquiesced societies from the vestiges of colonialism. Several academic discourses on the incidence of colonialism are rather harsh and the debate rages on. The variation in the forms taken by colonial penetration and the different activities engaged in by the Europeans, combined with different circumstances encountered by them, led to a debate among historians and social scientists about whether colonialism transformed pre-capitalist societies into capitalist societies through incorporation into a network of capitalist relations. In the first instance, the colonialists introduced the tax system which saw the conscientization and integration of Africa into a monetized economic system (Larrain, 1989; Holt, 1966). Others argue that colonialism did encourage the development of capitalism, acting as a powerful engine of progressive social change, a change that has literary transformed African cultures, orientation, attitudes, psychology, etc, into a “whites man’s way of life”. Colonialism changed colonial society in ways that eventually led to the emergence of new social groups and political forces. The spread of urbanization, the gradual opening up of professions and the bureaucracy to local people, the development of an indigenous middle class, and the acquisition of western education by a few privileged local elite all provided a social basis for class structures and class distributions in Africa. It is common place to see Africans behave like the whites with particular disregard for cherished African value system, morality and good neighbourliness. This type of orientation is alien to the entire African societies, and the tendency has the capability of bringing about social disintegration, social coercion and lack of social harmony (Smith 1996; Huntington, 1968).

NEO-COLONIALISM

Neo-colonialism is an off-short of colonialism. The concept is used to mean another form of colonialism. Neo-colonialism means the control of the economy of one country by a more powerful one, without the use of open brute force (Barkindo, et al, 1989). Neo-colonialism actually entails nothing but a continuation of those harmful colonial policies which is detrimental to African development agenda. The difference between colonialism and neo-colonialism is that whereas the former operates under direct military and political occupation; the latter operates through indirect methods. A neo-colonial state is, therefore, a state which is said to have common independence in principle, but still romances with the traditions of its imperial overlords. Thus, the Euro-American powers have used a variety of methods and structures to facilitate Africa's domination even after political independence. They take the form of political, economic, socio-cultural and military structures. Some scholars though, have argued that the current wave of information technology sweeping across the world is akin to neo-colonialism. This is so because most economic relations and business transactions today are done on-line, and the tendency of unequal trade relations still subsists in favour of the western powers.

Basically, however, the most conspicuous institution of neo-colonialism finds expression in the very many agents of imperialism namely Multinational Corporations (MNCs), International Monetary Fund (IMF)/ World Bank, activities of domestic comprador elite class and commissioned agents; enforcement and implementation of foreign ideologies, be they economic or political; aids administration, austerity measures – privatization, deregulation, liberalization; to mention but a few. All of these are the many structures and institutions created by the imperialists to enhance the continuous domination of African states inspite of the acclaimed political independence. Smith, (1996) wrote that two decades following the second world war saw the final and most dramatic wave of independence sweep across European empires in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, either as a result of more or less peaceful negotiations between the leaders of the national movements and the European powers, or as the outcome of wars of liberation. This implies that few million of the 780 million people living under the colonial tutelage would have been freed economically, politically and otherwise.

Politically, it was assumed that indigenous governments, representing the interests of the local people rather than alien groups, would have sovereign state power at their disposal. Their relationship with the government of other sovereign states would be those of independent nation-states entering treaties and agreements within the context of international laws. Economically, it was assume that following independence, the process of diffusion would continue as capital, technology and expertise spread. Foreign aid and investment would increase the productive capacity of the less developed economies (Jones, 1979; Mack, et al, 1979). However, a different perception of the relationship between sovereign states is conveyed by the term "neo-colonialism", originally coined by mainly Third world leaders who found that the achievement of constitutional independence and sovereignty did not give total freedom to the government of the newly formed nation-states. Political autonomy was found to be something of a façade behind which lurked the continuing presence of powerful western financial and commercial interests. Thus, the end of colonial government was seen by leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, the first prime minister of Ghana as not ending colonialism as portrayed in his book *Neo-Colonialism: the last stage of imperialism*. The core of the neo-colonialist argument is that a distinction between political and economic freedom misses the point that there can be no real political independence while economic dependency remains. The new rulers of the former colonial entities found that the major proportions of the resources available to them were controlled from metropolitan centers that hitherto had ruled their countries before independence appears largely symbolic. For Nkrumah:

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and all the outward trapping of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside (Nkrumah, 1965:136).

Side by side this argument is the position put forward by Julius Nyerere. According to Nyerere, the first Tanzanian president, his country achieved political independence only in 1960. It attained neither economic power nor economic independence:

We gained the political power to decide what to do; we lacked the economic and administrative power which would have given us freedom in those decisions. A nation's real freedom depends on its capacity to do things, not on the legal rights conferred by its internationally recognized sovereignty (Nyerere, 1973:263).

Several literatures are replete with the socio-economic and political maladies of African states after the supposed independence. By the very nature of Africa as a backward enclave, compared to those of Europe and America, it is only necessary to appreciate the fact that the continent can only contemplate "leaning" on mother nation-states to survive. The continent of Africa is starved of funds, and hence, bedeviled by low capital formation. The bulk of foreign capital in Africa is facilitated by the presence of multinational conglomerates. The rates of investments are determined by foreign firms. Profits arising from business transactions in host countries are grossly repatriated to Europe and America to enhance development there. The current wave of African debt burden is the sad experiences of the imperialist powers who either granted aids in form of cash or kind, with attendant harsh conditionalities and strings attached. These foreign aid assumes a skyrocketing interests rates within few years and African states are pressurized to service these loans to the detriment of infrastructural development at home. Worse still, is the activities of domestic comprador elements who are partners in crime with foreign firms. These native bourgeoisie or what Obasanjo calls "commissioned agents" act brazenly to maintain established order in favour of industrial metropolists. Foreign aids brings about continuous dependency, poverty and frustration. It entrenched capitalist expansion into what is called "centre-periphery" or "metropolitan – satellite" models of relations between the first world and those backward nations that are dependent on them.

The UNDP in 2001 reported that foreign debts in both Arab states, East Asia, Latin America, etc, were result of contact and infiltration of developed worlds on their economy. The statistics shown below suffices:

Table 1.1: Debt Servicing, 1990-1999

Region	% GDP		% of export of Goods and Services	
	1990	1999	1990	1999
Arab States	5.5	3.6	14.7	11.4
East Asia	3.8	5.2	15.7	15.8
Latin America	4.0	8.1	23.6	41.6
South Asia	2.6	2.8	20.0	16.6
Sub Saharan Africa	3.9	4.6	19.7	14.3
Developing Countries	4.0	5.8	18.7	22.3
Least developed countries	2.7	2.8	15.5	13.0

Source: UNDP (2000:1994).

Table 1.2: Aid as a percentage of Regional GDP (1990 and 2000)

Region	1990	2000
Developing countries	1.4	0.5
East Africa	0.8	0.3
Latin America	0.4	0.2
Mid-East/N. Africa	2.0	0.8
South Africa	1.3	0.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.8	4.1

Source: UNDP (2001:194)

From the tables above it shows that in the mid 1990s international aid requires a new dimension, that of debt relief especially for heavily indebted poor countries. International indebtedness remains on large scale and for some poor countries, particularly in Africa, at an unsustainable level even after a rescheduling agreement. It also shows that the cost for developing countries of servicing debts, both as a percentage of GDP and a percentage of exports rose in most regions of the Third world during the 1990s as shown in figure 1.1 and 1.2, respectively.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND THE WAY FORWARD

The study is an extensive empirical historical survey of the integration of African system in international politics. By and large, the continent of Africa by virtue of its disadvantaged position and as a result of its constraints, both in terms of technological know-how and in terms of its comparative disadvantages. This phenomenon has made the continent a ready prey for consumption by the western metropolitan world in several dimensions. The paper has x-rayed Atlantic slave trade and the so-called legitimate trade which was not so legitimate after all. In terms of trade and investments, the terms of trade were merely carved out in the interest of the developed countries. Thus unequal trade exchange, unbalanced terms of visible trade etc, were the characteristics of such trades. These imbalances gradually brought about what was later known as colonialism and neo-colonialism and the subsequent globalization which is a worldwide trend to date. Colonialism therefore was aggressive, exploitative and domineering in its character and content. After massive agitations for independence, the imperialists decided to change nomenclature from colonialism to neo- colonialism. The latter is another brand of colonialism which it more or less subtle in nature. But the continuous domination, marginalization, expropriation and determination of policies of African states from abroad raises many questions which are yet to be answered.

In today's world, very many policy issues on socio-economic reforms be they trade liberalization, privatization and commercialization, etc, are conceived and delivered to African states by the metropoles, including Europe and America. Africa literally suffers from poverty of ideas, poverty of the mind and even lacks the guts to stand out of forceful intimidations and domination by external forces. Neo-colonialism and its tenets therefore is a way of saying that even though, the colonial masters had gone several years ago "in principles", they are still very much around and their socio-economic influence in the already chequered African economy is continuous and perverse. In today's world, African value system, customs, traditions and morality has been submerged and in its place, neo-colonial tendency is replaced. This attitude traverses the lives and attitudes of the individual, groups, societies, and even the government circle at large. In Nigeria, for example, what is foreign is worshiped and adored in the way of dressing, eating, walking; the brand of music people sing and listen to; the ideas and notions of socio-economic growth, etc. All of these are borrowed concepts from the western capitalist world.

However, from all intent and purposes, Africa seems to have a ray of hope. Africa can and is able to come out of these doldrums and woes. Africa can go the way of the Asian tigers of Singapore, Taiwan, China, Japan, etc. These countries are known to have developed their economies through self-help; and today, they are competing favourably with the western capitalists. Africa can decide to adopt a mercantilist approach to economic development thereby turning her back to every form of importation of foreign goods. The continent may decide to export strictly all goods and services made in Africa abroad while servicing the home base with resources and foreign exchange earnings gotten from these transactions. The continent of Africa can, and should imbibe the culture of what is called local content formula. By this, is meant a situation where human resources and personnel manning the various multinational formations are seen to be African indigenes. This way, the flow of business and monies can be controlled by Africans while the profits are kept back home for meaningful infrastructural development. The 21st century Africa deserves a better deal in her relationship with the outside world. It is high time Africa decided to be or not to be. The time for this challenge is now and Africa must take such challenge headlong. Otherwise, it will become a hug joke in an attempt to ask for adequate representation in the arena of international politics which has been, and is still being dominated by Europe and America to date.

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