

---

# Impacts Of Neo-colonialism On Africa: A Case Study Of Nigeria

It is no lie, that most white people, and some people, believe sincerely, that the black man is far more inferior in intelligence to the white man, I personally was even a staunch proponent of such myths and ludicrous tales. There was even a time I believed that the white man is God, and Devil is the black man. Yes, I am ashamed to say that I once used to think in that direction.

Although, African states are today independent of colonialism, they remain heavily dependent and exploited under the effects of internal political failures, neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism. This dependency and exploitation particularly through the activities of Transnational Corporation, adversely affects the living condition of millions of people in Africa, creating economic hardship and in some cases encouraging political repression. These problems can be linked to the crisis of under-development in Africa and the attendant refugee problem.

One of the foremost proponents of Neo-Colonialism was the former Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah who described neo-colonialism as the worse form of imperialism and capitalist exploitation.

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state that is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. But in reality its economic system and thus, its political is directed from outside.

Neo colonialism is defined as the continuation of the economic model of colonialism even after a colonized territory has achieved formal political independence. It is expedient to note that this concept was applied most commonly to Africa in the latter half of the twentieth century. European countries had colonized most of the continent in the late nineteenth century, instituting a system of economic exploitation in which African raw materials, particularly cash crops and minerals, were expropriated and exported to the sole benefit of the colonizing power. The idea of Neo-colonialism, however, suggests that when European Powers granted nominal political independence to colonies in the decades after world war II, they continued to control the Economic of the Newly independent African Countries,

More than 45 years after most countries in Africa became independent, there is no unanimous agreement on the impact of colonialism. With most African countries barely managing to exist and others close to collapse, some scholars ask whether the problem with Africa is due to Africa "Colonial experience or inherent inadequacies of the African? For Eurocentric Scholars, the answer is clear; that whatever may be the disadvantages of colonialism, the overall impact was positive for Africa. True, the colonial powers exploited Africa's natural resources but colonialism reduced the economic gap between Africa and the west, the Eurocentric Scholars argued, colonialism laid the foundation of the intellectual and material development of Africans. People who hitherto had limited knowledge or control of their physical environment were introduced to formal education and modern medicine.

Neo-colonialism is constituted by the evolution and perpetuation of a process whereby the existence of international diplomacy and protocols of state relations through an entrenched

---

constitutional government and emerging political leadership of independence provides for a market structure cum capital and investment of the new state and the agenda for national development working in favor of the former colonizer. This is enhanced through continuously trying to approve strings of the former colonizer in determining the current and future roles and relationship of the former colony, in world politics and economy.

In identifying neo-colonial tendencies, it is imperative to assert that the option left for the new states that gained independence from his colonizer in veering out or venture to other scales of relation is limited. This is due to the traditions and culture embedded in their existing relationship and confines as former colony arising from the language barriers, lack of expertise and technological transfer, existing industrial and trade complete and contending ideas to transform the society and engage in the agenda for national development. With the pressures of finding a path for national survival and growth guided by international forces and partners.

On the other hand, the characteristics and development of neo-political economy in Nigeria like some other African states translates the scale of economic growth and development process into a substituted imports of consumer goods. This consolidates rather than undermine dependence on foreign suppliers, since production as well as consumption, now depends on foreign imports.

Walter Rodney evaluated the colonial economy and the emergence of neo-colonialism in Africa as a consequence of economic subjugation and underdevelopment of Africa after independence and then asserted thus.

African economies are integrated into the very structure of the developed capitalist economies; and they are integrated in a manner that is unfavorable to Africa and ensues that Africa is dependent on the big capitalist countries. Indeed structural dependence is one of the characteristic of under-development. The underdeveloped countries are dependencies of the metropolitan capitalist economics. It is also true that metro poles are dependent of the wealth of the exploited portions of the world. This is a source of their strength and a potential weakness within the capitalist/imperialist system.

The capitalist countries are technologically more advanced and are therefore the sector of the imperialist system which determined the direction of change. It is for this reason that a formerly colonized nation has no hope of developing until it breaks effectively with the vicious circle of dependence and exploitation.

Neo-colonialism represents the capitalist domination of Africa in the post-colonial historical experience, a period generally characterized as the early stages of political experience of the independent African States after decolonization. It is the advanced stage of imperialism which manifest through the exploit of unequal and dominant economic process and structures to superimpose the former colonisers on their liberated colonies as dependent states.

The tendency of neo-colonial experience in Africa has been largely directed at international conspiracy and transnational trading domination by multinational and transnational corporations of the expenses of the local entrepreneurs. This was highlighted by the existence of expatriate domination of investment opportunities, their superior access to credit, supplies, and the technology and managerial skills necessary to industrial production, which inhibits the accumulation and investment of capital by indigenous entrepreneurs who lack the resources

---

necessary to compete with vertically integrated multinational corporations.

Though, the independence of most African nations were celebrated with the physical handing over of powers to the modern African States, the continued role of the foreign powers as evident in the interference with her political, economic and social life particularly in countries colonized by France and Belgium left much in doubt. This is what has turned Africa into a blood-letting zone for wars, civil wars, genocides and political instability arising from the evils of colonialism and the unequal arrangements and structuring of the African States to leave it perpetually under the control and intervention of the Europeans.

In an attempt to explore the effect of neo-colonialism in Africa, it has been well stated that foreign faces have withdrawn after appropriate nature of local faces have been governed and installed to perpetuate the continued influence of the former colonies. This is why it was asserted that the degree of economic exploitation failed to change after independence though the corresponding political responsibility and international stigma had been removed from the neck of the former colonies through a grant of independence and tactical withdrawal to the home bases in the West from where it still operates correctly, exploiting nations maneuvering men and government but this home by remote control.

Neo-colonial experience in Africa also gave birth to class creation and widened class dominance and manipulation in perpetuation of power and access to capital and development opportunities.

The context of government leadership, political administration and state bureaucracy inherited from the colonial era is the first pointer to the largesse of class differentiation between the ruling elites, educated senior public servant and other leaders of state employees. It created a wide gap leading to class differentiation, hero worship and the craze for money at the expense of good government and disciplined public life.

In fact, the economic structure inherited from the colonial era has a class structure that created gaps between senior and junior workers, with the salaries and nature of benefits derived from government. This resulted in the existence of "highly inegalitarian colonial administration, salary and tax structure, with its complex nature of fringe benefits (car and child allowances, health facilities and housing subsidies), available to the earners of high salaries. The matter was worsened by the regime of salary structure and allowance imposed on various categories of government employees this was highly criticized by a leading Nigerian Nationalist and Political leader, Obafemi Awolowo, in 1970 when he stated thus. One of the evil things we inherit from is a colonial salary structure, in the early stages of colonialism. All senior posts in government and mercantile services were exclusively reserved for and held by Europeans. The salaries paid, were fixed.

In the Nigerian experience, attempts by 1971 Adebayo Commission and 1974 Udoji commission to reverse the trends in salary and wages region failed to achieve any change in class differentiation, but to widen the existing gaps regardless of the improvements introduced at the lower base. The same has remained in place over the years till date, the higher a salary becomes, the better the state of life and comfort and even opportunities to make money.

## **The refugee question**

---

Although many people may not readily see it there is an obvious link between neo-colonialism in Africa and the refugee question which currently confronts many western states and affects the lives of so many displaced Africans. Historically, the wave of refugee migration has always been associated with political and economic difficulties. People have also moved to other seemingly friendly lifestyles when confronted by economic hardship and political persecution.

The economic hardship and persecution induced by the working of neo-colonialism has been one of the reasons for the influx of refugees from developing countries in Africa to the west. But as I have pointed out, these migrations are not unique to Nigeria alone or historically UN presented.

They only reflect the present global economic and political realities.

In Nigeria today, thousands of immigrants are scattered around, who, presumably seek greener pastures and will do anything to stay away from harsh conditions put in place by economic hardship and political.

These immigrants do not only become refugees in developed countries, some of them are, in most cases, sold into slavery just in a bid to escape from the perpetual sufferings they experienced at home. A very good example is the slavery in Libya which was majorly precipitated by the large influx of immigrants who seek passage to the west through Libyan water ways.

Nigerians make up the largest numbers of irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who want to enter Europe thousands of them end up being stranded in Libya after failing to cross the Mediterranean from north Africa into Europe human traffickers often sell the stranded Nigerians and other sub-Saharan Africans into slavery where they are held in dire conditions against a background of growing concern over their plight, the international organization for migration has in the last two years repatriated more than 10,000 stranded Nigerians from Libya. Some of the repatriated women returned home with babies concerned following rape by Libyan men.

## **Economic instability**

The main reason for neo-colonization is that developing nations generally do not have the capital available to develop their own natural resources so well-developed countries and wealthy trans-national corporations offer to cultivate these resources in exchange for a high percentage of the profit the core countries/corporations attain the majority of the profit from such ventures due to the low price of labor in most of developed nations.

This one of the most obvious impacts is that corporations and core countries get very rich through utilizing developing countries resources. Wealth in developing countries is also fostered as a result of this development, but often the wealth does not trickle down to the ordinary person/worker.

In Nigeria today, we have over 40 internationally acclaimed companies with high competitor working environment and work force consisting of highly skilled professionals who can be said to be well paid for every service rendered to the progress and development and development of the company, but not the country.

---

One natural advantage that multinational corporations have is the ability to produce goods using the least expensive methods possible worldwide. With few ties to any one political entity their desire to work deeply and efficiently often is at odds with sound environmental practice. With their economic importance to their host countries, they often find themselves in a power position when obeying beneficent environmental regulations that favor profit over nature with profit being the primary goal and the world as their environment multi-national corporations can afford to pick and choose when it comes to finding governments that enact employment laws that benefit their business over the workers. Their head office may be in a country with stringent employment laws but they are free to set up factories in economic deserts where people are eager to work for pennies a day. These workers tend to be low-skilled resulting in a general loss of quality in the product line. Also corporations tend to build in countries without strict health and safety laws adding to the social decline of host countries large corporations tend to draw wealth from small communities and consolidate it in locations where the corporation is head quartered. In extreme cases, this can lead to the impoverishment of less central communities, particularly in developing nations.

## Conclusion

Of course, neocolonial theory has its detractors as well. Opponents argue that the concept is merely an attempt to continue to blame colonialism for Africa's problems rather than confront the major issue hampering independent African governments, such as corruption, inefficiency, and protectionism. They argue that these problems, more than any systematic process of external exploitation, have been responsible for the poor performance of African economies since independence. Others continue to argue that neocolonialism persists, if in slightly different form. Transnational corporations, such as petroleum and mining companies, and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization are responsible for much of the neocolonial influence in African countries in the early 21st century. The activities of these corporations and organizations transcend boundaries and powers of the traditional nation-state, making it difficult to talk about interregional relationships except in terms of such paradigms as united North (Europe, Canada, and the United States) and underdeveloped and desperate South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America). As the understanding of international and intercontinental relations becomes more and more refined, the idea of neocolonialism will continue to be revisited. It is for this reason that neocolonialism has entered the vocabulary of all students of third world affairs and is an important concept in the history of ideas.

## References

1. A. Adu (ed) (1990) UNESCO general History of Africa under colonial Domination 1880- 1935 California
2. Walter Rodney (1981) How Europe under developed Africa, Howard University. P.25
3. C. Achebe (1998) The Trouble with Nigeria Enugu: fourth dimension publishing Co Ltd P.14
4. Davidson (1994) The Search for Africa: a history in the making London: James Cuneo Page 282
5. I. Ojobo "colonialism and politics in Nigeria" new Nigeria Newspaper. July 19 1986 page 28

- 
6. Tuned Obadina “ the Myth of new Colonialism Africa Economic Analysis 2000, Sept 19, 2000
  7. A.E Ndubisi (1991) Nigeria what Hope? Enugu CECTA (Nig) Limited