DECOLONIZATION OR RECOLONIZATION: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF POST-INDEPENDENCE ECONOMIC POLICIES IN AFRICA

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Abstract
Six decades have come and gone, after African countries secured political independence, yet they have not been able to boast of economic independence. Western-dictated economic policies, which the dictators said would put Africa on the path of economic development and eventual decolonization, have failed to do so. African economies are still precariously tied to the economies of the West, and the centre-periphery linkage has gained sustenance rather than severance, leading to the impoverishment and under-development of Africa by the West. This deleterious situation has attracted the attention of scholars, who have taken it upon themselves to find out why economic emancipation has been long in coming. Two schools of thought have emerged- the Neo-liberal School and the Neo-Marxist School of thought. While the former believes that African economies are being gradually decolonized despite the sorry state of affairs, and that decolonization process, though has been slow, has already started with the adoption of western-tailored economic policies, the neo-marxist scholars believe that the contrary is the case. They believe that Africa is not yet on the path of de-colonization, but is going through the process of re-colonization, as it faithfully implements dictated economic policies, and that this explains why Africa has not yet secured economic independence. This paper assesses the economic policies of post-Independent Africa in the light of these two schools of thought, to find out which of the schools' argument is relevant for understanding and addressing the economic challenges of contemporary Africa. Secondary sources which are analyzed quantitatively utilizing a discursive approach, are used for the study. It shows, based on the evidence examined, that the continent is going through the process of re-colonization. and offers suggestions on how to put the African economies on the path of de-colonization.
Keywords Decolonization, Recolonization, Post-Independence, Economic Policies, Africa

Introduction

Colonialism gave the European powers a firm hold and control of African economies. The nationalists who fought for political independence believed that economic independence would automatically follow once political independence was obtained. Such a belief was couched in statements like 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and every other thing (economic freedom) will be added unto you.'[1] It was however discovered, quite to the contrary, immediately after political independence was obtained, that economic emancipation was not going to be automatic as earlier believed, as the economic situation remained discouraging. African leaders started initiating and implementing certain economic policies to fast-rack the pace of change. Without doubt, effective strategies for the economic decolonization of Africa became a necessary condition for achieving high rates of growth and diversification and an increasing measure of self-reliance and self-sustenance.[2]

However, for nearly all of Africa and for the majority of its teeming citizens, the rapid economic transformation which had been hoped for still turned out to be a mirage. Many years have come and gone, and economic liberty is yet to be achieved. Revolutionary changes in the structure of African economies have apparently not occurred. African economies still suffer a high degree of dependence. The African economy has moved from one crisis to another; rising expectations have given way to rising frustrations, with military revolts and political upheavals in different parts of the continent turning out as the consequence. In short, economic independence has not seen the light of day. Why has

Africa failed to achieve the economic emancipation it has always dreamed of since the advent of political independence? Finding the answer to this question is very crucial to Africa.

Given the fact that political independence or what some have called flag independence, if not followed by economic emancipation, does not bring real freedom and fulfillment, African leaders realized that something had to be done to secure Africa's future. However, not much progress has been made in this direction. Scholars too have been concerned over the matter. They are, however, not agreed over the real cause of continuous dependence of African economies on the Western economies. Their conclusions have taken two dimensions, naturally dividing them into two major schools of thought – the Neo-liberal and the Neo-marxist Schools.

The former school, composed mainly of Eurocentric scholars, believes that the economic policies adopted so far by Africa, which were recommended by the West, will lead to decolonization no matter how slow the process may appear to be; they do not constitute a barrier to it. They believe that the only barriers to decolonization are the internal issues in Africa, and resistance to the western economic models. The second school believes that Africa's economic policies so far adopted have proven to be instruments of recolonization rather than decolonization. As far as the Neo-marxists are concerned, Africa's continued economic dependence is traceable to her economic policies, which are structured to perpetuate colonial economic features. Africa's continued economic dependence since the advent of political independence, in the very words of one of the Neo-marxist scholars is "largely the cumulative result of the continued operation of the African economies within the framework of the inherited colonial economic legacy."[3] There has not been any serious departure from western economic policies, almost all policies have tended towards the perpetuation of the colonial economic ideals which the western policies tend to sustain. To them, Africa is not moving towards decolonization, but re-colonization.

To approach the issue in any scientific manner, we must first and foremost begin with an analysis of the economic policies pursued by independent African countries since independence. It is against this background that this study is undertaken, to comparatively analyse the colonial economic policies *vis a viz* the post-colonial economic policies in Africa in order to ascertain whether these Neo-Marxist scholars were wrong or right in their assessment of post independent African economic policies.

The nature of the colonial economy is first considered. An assessment of Africa's post-independent economic policies is done to show whether they tend to decolonize or recolonize Africa economically. In the next section, we show that post-colonial African economy, as a product of the post-colonial policies is still dependent, and has not lost its colonial economic features. This is done to buttress the fact that the results of the post-colonial economic policies also reveal how they have enhanced the re-colonization of the post-colonial era. These are followed by summary and conclusions. Some concepts relevant to the paper are, however, clarified before the first section.

Conceptual Clarification

Economic Decolonization is the dismantling of colonial economic structures, so that the economy loses the features of the colonial economy.

Re-colonization: The term re-colonization, as used by neo-marxist scholars, and as used in the context of this paper, does not suggest the end of a process and its resumption, but the commencement of the new phase of a continuing process. Neo-marxist scholars believe that Western colonization has not ended but only changed gear in the 1960s when most African countries got politically independent.

Independent Economy**:** Professor Green has noted that an independent economy may be defined as one which exhibits the following characteristics: (1) a basic orientation of production towards meeting national demand; (2) a large capacity for the satisfaction of that demand, quantitatively and qualitatively; (3) predominant staffing at all levels by its own citizenry, and (4) the ability to engage in international economic relations on terms of relative equality.[7]

Dependent Econom**y**: This is an economy which draws all its capacity for development from abroad, and develops only those branches of production whose output is wholly exported.[8] It is an export based economy; an economy that catches cold once the international market sneezes.

Nature of Colonial Economic Policies in Africa

In the British colonies, different approaches were adopted for the administration of the colonies. Perhaps, due to the diverse cultures and different backgrounds, it was difficult for the British imperialist to adopt unified economic policies in their African colonies. In the absence of a clear theory, however, a critical examination of colonial relations brings to light some fundamental assumptions which seem to have acted as guidelines for both the framers and implementers of British colonial economic policies. First, the colonies were expected to provide raw materials (agricultural products and minerals) to feed the machines of the industrial imperial power. Second, the colonies had to import manufactured goods from the imperial power. These two assumptions divided the empire into two distinct economic camps – the colonies and the metropolis.[9] This kind of economic relationship that existed between Britain and her colonies was highly detrimental to the development of the colonies, as Britain ultimately determined the destination of imported and exported products. African colonies were made to consider Britain before other buyers, even when other buyers could pay higher than Britain. On the other hand, Britain had no obligation to import from any of her colonies as she bought from whoever sold at low prices. There was little reciprocity in the relationship. This is certainly one of the root causes of economic dependency and underdevelopment of the colonies as Neo-Marxist scholars such as Walter Rodney rightly believe. Third, the colonies had to be self-supporting. The colonised peoples had to raise revenue for the general administration and for whatever limited development projects that were undertaken.[10] Right from the early days of British effective occupation of Africa, the British government recognized the potential and importance of the economic forces of their new colonies in the promotion of British interests overseas. In 1895 the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, revealed this awareness to Parliament quite clearly:

> *It is our business in all these new countries to make smooth the path for British commerce, British enterprise, the application of British capital, at a time when other paths, other outlets for the commercial energies of our race are being gradually closed by the commercial principles which are gaining more and more adhesion . . . In a few years it will be our people that will be masters, it will be our commerce that will prevail, it will be our capital that will rule . .. My Lords, this is a tremendous power, but it requires one condition. You must enable it to get to the country where its work is to be done. You must open the path.*[11]

In respect to ownership of means of production (Land), British attitudes and policies varied from region to region, and even, in each region, from colony to colony. It can be stated in general terms, however, that whereas Africans remained in practice in control of their lands in British West Africa, many of them were deprived of theirs in British East and Central Africa. There were, however, some important variations from colony to colony in each region. [10] Whatever the variations were, the Colonists adopted land policies that mainly benefited the home government to the detriment of the African colonies. When it comes to production, the colonial economies were characterized by two major sectors - one producing mainly for the subsistence of the producers and for the home market, and the other producing essentially primary products for export. Again, the policy adopted in this area did not favour the colonies as it legalized forced labour, encouraged high taxation and ultimately restricted the colonies to primary production.

Many African territories under British colonial administration had variety of mineral deposits, but unfortunately, laws were made to reduce benefits that the colonies could get. The policies that guided mining of natural resources in the colonies were made to encourage British monopoly to the detriment of the economic growth and development of the colonies. Kaniki put it this way:

> *With the exception of a few cases, mineral resources were exploited with foreign capital. T w o main reasons accounted for this feature. First, there were cases where capital on a scale beyond the ability of Africans was required, for example in copper mining in Northern Rhodesia and iron-ore mining in Sierra Leone. Second, and this had a wider applicability, the colonial administrations deliberately and systematically excluded Africans from benefiting from the mineral resources of their country. Soon after mineral deposits were found a series of legislative measures was introduced to give monopolies to imperialist interests. Even where Africans had been working minerals for generations, it became illegal for the African to be found in possession of minerals without a licence.*[11]

In a move to encourage production and export cash crops with ease, the British imperialists like other major European powers introduced modern currencies to replace traditional system of barter and other currencies such as gold dust, cowries etc. The British gradually and systematically replaced local currencies with modern currencies by insisting on taxes in cash rather than in kind. They also made sure that Africans were paid in European coin for their labour. One important consequence of the increasing use of currencies was the introduction of banking institutions in British Africa. In West Africa the first bank to start operations was said to be the Bank of British West Africa in 1894, followed in 1926 by Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas). These two banks completely dominated banking activities in British West Africa throughout the colonial period.[12]

In commerce, the attitudes of the administrators of British West Africa scarcely encouraged indigenous participation, but all efforts were primarily geared towards the achievements of the interests of the imperialists. The case was not different where the imperialists needed to establish infrastructure. The roads, railways, harbours that were established served mainly for the exportation of goods. All these moves were taken by the British imperialists to integrate African economies into the world capitalist economy.

In the French, Belgian and Portuguese colonies, colonial economic policies were similar. In respect to funding of capital equipment, Coquery-Vidrovitch notes "the colonies were poor from the financial point of view. Despite the increase in customs revenue associated with the rise in foreign trade, and particularly the increase in head tax, they were in no position to take on the financing of expansion by themselves. Development of capital equipment went hand in hand with an intensive policy of borrowing from the metropolitan countries."[13] Perhaps, this introduced the history of borrowing which caused the colonies much devastation and underdevelopment after independence. In the colonies of these European powers, there were shortage of labour; hence, the policies that were adopted encouraged the use of coercion. The use of unpaid labour was said to be common, and recruitment was highly controlled by the imperialists. In the Belgian Congo, recruiting was limited to 25% of the 'able-bodied adult males'. The limit was reduced to 10% in the middle of the decade because of the drying-up of the labour pool; but in general the official quota was very considerably exceeded.[14]

In trying to run the colonies efficiently with little support from home governments, the imperialists imposed heavy taxation. Despite the progress achieved, the undeniable improvement in the economy had little effect on the living standards of Africans. To be sure, wage earning became standard practice; the number of workers in the Congo increased tenfold within a decade, from 47000 in 1917 to 427000 in 1927, a figure only exceeded in 1937 after the great depression had waned.[15] For easier exportation of primary products from the colonies, and the importation of European manufactures, payment in kind was substituted with payment in cash.

Though there were lots of similarities in the economic policies in these colonies, the differences were also there. For instance, it was in the Portuguese colonies that the burden of the head tax remained consistently heaviest, since it corresponded officially to three months' labour, the tax being payable in labour. The corresponding daily wage was estimated as being 1 to 1.5% of its total.[16]

The period leading to the end of the great economic depression in the late 1920s was indeed marked by the rise of powerful firms which had only just been founded at the turn of that century. The Belgian Congo was said to be at the forefront of this development. Just before the depression, the country numbered 278 industrial and commercial concerns, and agencies for thirty-six foreign companies - not counting a scattering of privately owned local businesses. In all, the number of establishments had increased by more than a third in three years, rising from 4500 in 1926 to 6000 in 1929.[17] The impact of the economic policies on the colonies was not favourable. In short, the economic balance sheet at the end of the inter-war period was a negative one, both from the colonizers' standpoint — with production slumping and insufficiently diversified - and from the African angle - with the populations poverty-stricken and distraught. Nevertheless, despite appearances, the available infrastructure and production facilities had profoundly altered the structure of the economy.[18]

On a general note, colonial economic policies in Africa were sustained by forced labour, heavy taxation and strict control of natural resources and other agricultural products by the imperialists. This was done to the detriment of the colonies in respect to their economic growth and subsequent development. For this reason, the Neo-Marxists believe that these colonial economic policies tied the colonies to the world capitalist market, and ultimately caused the underdevelopment of the colonies after their political independence. For the Neo-Marxists, independence only meant political independence but economic dependence continued. According to Rodney, “metropolitan states and their colonial counterparts in Africa had to continue state coercion for economic exploitation, because the colonial economy had constantly been hewn out in the face of opposition from Africans. In many places, African land had first to be seized before the settler-type socio-economic formations could flourish. The necessary infrastructure of roads and railways could be laid down only by government assistance, one aspect of which was the requisitioning of African labour”[19] On taxation, he emphasizes thus; taxation undoubtedly provided the major constraint driving Africans initially into wage labour or cash crop production; and subsequent increases in taxation deepened African involvement. Tax defaulters were at times used by private capital, but more usually by the state for the building and maintenance of administrative centres, roads and bridges. [20]

We now turn to an essential section of this paper, the section in which the assessment of economic policies of post-colonial Africa is done.

Assessment of Post-Independence Economic Policies in Africa

Many years have passed after the independence of most countries in Africa, but the economic situation seems to have gone from bad to worse. The winning of independence, which was expected to have rung the death knell for colonial economic ideologies, only had them re-packaged. The out-going colonial administrators only had to hand the baton of colonialism over to the new African leaders to hold the fort and continue the economic exploitation on their behalf and remain accountable to them. Thus, nothing significant really changed, the colonizers’ influence in the erstwhile colonies remained alive even after political power was relinquished. This was not a coincidence, but a well-planned course of action that the erstwhile colonial masters set for themselves. Perhaps no European scholar has so succinctly and unequivocally admitted this truth as Colin Legum did in his *Must We Lose Africa*? He wrote:

> *Any restatement of colonial policy made to reflect Britain’s new*
> *Relationship with its dependent territories must focus attention*
> *Chiefly on the importance of providing for the maintenance and*
> *Extension of British influence at the same time as political control*
> *is relinquished*.[21]

This *influence*, which is largely economic, has been maintained in Africa, through the imposition of economic policies, which are faithfully followed by loyal African leaders.

For the Neo-Marxists, contemporary African leaders rather than implement policies that will re-orient African economies inward, and make them lose the features and fetters of the colonial economy, they have collaborated with advanced nations to continue the colonial mission through the adoption of imperialistic policies dictated by organizations such as International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.)/World Bank and World Trade Organisation (W.T.O.) to perfect their control over African economies. Such neo-liberal policies aimed at the ‘modernization’ of African economies to be attuned with western economic policies, helps to consolidate and perpetuate undue dependence. In line with this, Boateng rightly observed:

> *owing to the greatly superior economic and technological advantages which the developed nations enjoy, they are still in a position to determine or even to dictate to a large extent, the economic fortunes of the developing nations which depend on them for the very things, such as Capital goods, technical know-how and entrepreneurial skills, which they need in order to modernise and upgrade their fragile economies.*[22]

Let us now assess some of the economic policies adopted in Africa since the 1960s when most African countries got independent, in order to find out whether they tend to sustain or weaken the colonial economic logic, i.e. whether they are Eurocentric or Afrocentric. We need to find out whether the post-colonial economic policies marked a clear departure from the colonial system or not. We look beyond the names of the institutions and systems put in place, and pay close attention to how the systems were run, and the final impact they had on the economy in general. We will not be able to cover all the African countries and all the economic policies they have adopted and implemented since after independence because of time and space limitation. We will rather focus on some of the major African countries, and their major economic policies. It will be seen that African economic policies after independence were seriously influenced by the West; and that the major features of economic policies in Africa after political independence entails an ironic recasting of the structural features of dependence of the periphery on the metropole. These policies will reveal to us whether Africa is going through de-colonization or re-colonization.

Nigeria

Looking at Nigeria, we find economic policies helping to reconsolidate the dependent nature of the economy. After political independence, the nationalist leaders began to look for a way of eliminating economic dependence. It was the launching of the *Second National Development Plan, 1970-1974*, that spelt out their clear strategy for achieving that objective.[23] The plan argued that it was necessary to localize ownership and control of the economy. The essential strategy for securing Nigeria's economic independence was proclaimed as:

> *The government will seek to acquire by law if necessary, Equity participation in a number of industries that will be specified from time to time. In order to ensure that the economic destiny of Nigeria is determined by Nigerians themselves, the government will seek to widen and intensify its position in industrial development.*[24]

The Nigerian Enterprises Decree of 28 February, 1972 was the first initiative for putting this strategy for independence into practice. The decree instituted a Nigerian Enterprise Promotion Board to develop enterprises in which Nigerians shall participate fully and play a dominant role.[25] The decree classified all enterprises into two broad schedules and reserved the first exclusively for Nigerians, while foreigners were permited to participate in the second schedule as long as Nigerian government was allowed participation by having a share- holding acquisition of 40% among other criteria.[26] Enterprises in the said first schedule, that is, those reserved for Nigerians were actually enterprises that required low technology while those open to aliens were more technology intensive.

The strategy of localizing ownership and control as an approach to economic independence in Nigeria has a lot of flaws. Localising control and ownership hardly solves the problem of dependence in its essentials. First, localizing ownership does not tackle the major factor in Nigeria's dependence – technology. This strategy still makes Nigeria technologically dependent on foreigners, and if they withhold their technology, then Nigeria's economy suffers. The holders of technology are the real holders of control. This strategy only makes Nigeria to hold the shadow of ownership tightly, while foreigners hold on to the substance. Viewed from another angle, the localization of ownership does not automatically ensure independence, but can lead to deeper dependence. As colonialism and capitalism are localized, freedom from one capitalist group leads to slavery to another capitalist group, this time home-based capitalists, thus decolonization turns out to be re-colonization.

Again, the case against this strategy is that it does not address the major causes of dependence. It concentrates on the redistribution of ownership of wealth generated in a company and not on how the wealth is generated; it does nothing about the widening of the resource base, nor on changing the pattern and relations of productions; it does nothing about the pattern of international exchange which has continued to cripple African economies.

Finally, it provided the opportunity for Nigerian enterprises and foreign ones to co-exist, foreign capitalists still had a place, and the transfer of accumulated capital could still be easily carried out from the periphery to the centre. In fact, the clear demarcation of areas reserved for foreign firms and those for indigenous firms merely reduced friction between the two, while simultaneously creating more space and freedom for foreign capital, thereby reinforcing foreign domination. Foreigners even practically owned the technology-based enterprises, having 60% share of the ownership of those enterprises. So there was practically nothing new about the economy, save that dependence was renovated and cemented.

The leaders took the path of rapid large-scale 'industrialization' at the expense of the agricultural sector.[27] Bulk of investment capital was directed to what western advisers captioned 'industrial take-off,' and agriculture was abandoned to a reasonable extent. This was a plunge from the known to the unknown. The implications were that first, Nigeria had to depend on foreign human and financial capital for that 'giant' stride; and second, Nigeria's neglect of the agricultural sector aggravated already nauseating food shortage and led to the importation of food from foreign countries.

Palm oil was imported from Malaysia, rice from the United States and others. Nigeria thus maintained a heavily dependent economy. The strategies used to address this problem of food dependence in the late 1970s and 80s need some elucidation. Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and the succeeding Shagari's Green Revolution, which encouraged the growing of more food were all run by loan from the World Bank.[28] World Bank loans have over time proven to be an effective dependence-perpetuating weapon, a strong rein with which African economies are pulled in the desired direction by the Western powers.

The oil wealth that accrued to Nigeria in the 1980s and 90s, apart from further draining the manpower needed in the agricultural sector also brought more dependence as foreign oil companies and investors flocked into the country to represent both their interests and that of their home countries. Stagnant or declining output, large increases in food price inflation, the virtual disappearance of agricultural exports and the rapid increase in food imports, and massive external debts are considered a few of the many problems that characterized the economy. But, while these problems may be attributed to inefficient government policies, it is necessary to interpret them in terms of the various domestic and international pressures that reduced the capacity of government to implement an independent development plan. The most dominant of these forces, it can be argued, are the multinational oil conglomerates that have the financial and technological means to invest in the economy's oil sector. The dominant influence of these firms in Nigerian development and fiscal economic policies can hardly be accurately quantified.

Ibrahim Babangida, with the aim of re-scheduling Nigeria's external debts with the World Bank, was forced to embark on the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) to diversify the economy away from oil. But SAP increased Nigeria's debt overhang to about US$30 billion.[30] It encouraged large scale privatization and strengthened corruption in the country. Obasanjo's civilian administration continued the spirit of SAP by embarking on serious privatization. Privatization has not translated to economic independence, but rather has deepened dependence, most companies formerly owned by Nigerians have been bartered to foreign investors who possess the technological requirement to run those companies. Crave for foreign investors to come and invest in Africa has grown very strong, as if Africa cannot survive without foreign investors. Privatization has led to a situation where a handful of the Nigerian middle class in collusion with powerful foreign interests increasingly gained control of the government apparatus for the promotion of their joint interests to the detriment of the poor masses. Thus we see that most economic policies have been used to recast the order of dependence.

Tanzania

Taking a look at Tanzania, we see almost the same trend, although Tanzanian's strategy addressed itself more fundamentally to the problem of dependence than did the Nigerian strategy, we will see whether the implementation process eliminated or perpetuated dependence. True enough, immediately after independence in 1961, Tanzania, adopted the liberal/western development strategy like other African countries, however, with some adjustments in nomenclature. It emphasized production for export like every other liberal economy. It actively searched for foreign factor inputs, particularly foreign aid, and concentrated on the rapid expansion of infrastructure. But Tanzania, seeing the shortcomings of the approach began to work on the ideology of self-reliance. They took the path of "radicalism."

The Arusha Declaration of 1967 was the first clear statement of Tanzania's strategy for achieving self-reliance and development.[31] It placed emphasis on land, the people and good government, a kind of socialist approach (people-centred), rather than capitalist approach (capital-centred). The *Development Plan , 1969-74,* and other documents[32] also enunciated the ideals of the Tanzanian decolonization strategy. These documents argue that money and wealth are the effects and not the basis of development. This strategy also recognizes that one of the major causes of dependence is under-development, the strategy was therefore fashioned to achieve development as a means to removing economic dependence.

Agriculture formed one of the bases of the Tanzanian strategy. To encourage agriculturization, the *Ujamaa Villages*, a system of village communities engaged in group farming was established. This villagisation programme had the objective of farming the village land collectively and share the proceeds according to the work contributed, it was based on the principle of collectivization.[33]

The *Ujamaa* villages were to be supplemented by a system of state farms. The state farms were to be involved in certain lines of production that need more complex organization and mechanization than the village farms could handle. In addition, the state farms were also to serve as models for the diffusion of innovation, for experiment and training.

The demerits of the Tanzanian agricultural strategy of villagisation, was the extreme emphasis placed on cash crop production as opposed to food crop production. This made the economy to retain an export-oriented feature, a feature characteristic of a dependent economy. Also, lack of sufficient food production led to increased food importation, another mark of dependence.

Again, although the Tanzania's official publications, elaborating the idea of villagisation, discouraged the use of too much mechanization, the opposite became the situation.[34] In particular, there were too many tractors, which were of course imported; this did not help the actualization of the goal of self-reliance. Also, it has been noted that "villagisation failed because of the vestiges of class exploitation, having been carried out with authoritarianism by a political class which demanded every sacrifice from others and little from itself."[35] The leaders became estranged from the people due to too much demand from them, and could no longer carry them along. Capitalist interest eroded socialist ideals. What the people suffered under British colonialism, undue oppression and exploitation of their labour power resurfaced again even after political independence. Do we call this decolonization or recolonization?

Looking at the industrial sector of the economy, the strategy used to reduce decolonization was to change the structure of ownership of enterprises. The main weapon used to do this was nationalization of assets and setting up of parastatals. The public sector became too dominant in the economy. Extensive nationalization and localization of the ownership of the productive asset assets gave a false impression that the economy was independent, but the economy was critically dependent. Foreign capital (both financial and technical), still played a vital role in the economy, even though a strategy of diversification of sources of foreign capital was adopted. UK was formerly the dominant supplier of foreign finance. But by the end of 1969, official UK transfer had fallen considerably, following the event of strain in Tanzania-British relations. Though not envisaged, when this happened, it was quickly improvised as a decolonization weapon. Tanzania turned to World Bank Group, China, Germany, Sweden, USA, Denmark, Italy, Canada, Japan, Netherlands and the United Nations and a host others.[36] Although this helps to avoid overdependence on one foreign country whose unilateral action could mean enormous economic consequences, it in no way solves the problem of dependence, but rather increases its spread.

This is another dimension to the issue of dependence in post-colonial Africa. A new form of dependence emerged, that is, the **scattered or spread dependence.** The strategy of obtaining support from multiple source, that is, from different countries instead of one, only reduced the **depth** of decolonization, but increased its **width** or spread. Spread dependence, despite its advantages, is as dangerous as depending on one nation. Apart from that, it does not solve the problem of dependence.

Although Tanzanian strategy of decolonization has a lot of demerits including inability to diversify the economy, and inability to bridge the yawing income gap between the top political leaders and the average people, 'Citizenization' strategy is commendable, a strategy used to increase its manpower, and to reduce and eventually retire foreign labour. Also its reliance on foreign finance as secondary, and the resources available and within the control of the government as the primary source of resources for development is also commendable.

However, dependence on foreign source of finance entails significant foreign influence over the articulation and implementation of development strategy. This was for example evidenced when some years ago, in a meeting with her numerous creditors in Paris, Tanzania had to present her economic policies for scrutiny and ratification. This is the situation in many African countries.

Foreign capitalist interests have refused to let Africa go, and through the power of aid, have continued to exercise control over African economies. During the first phase of colonialism, force was used to enable exploitation, now in a neo-colonial era, finance has proved an effective weapon. Indeed, Africa is being re-colonised. In spite of its so-called radicalism, Tanzania has remained as dependent on foreign assistance for financing its development as ever. Economic decolonization has continued to elude it. Self-reliance has become a willo'-the-wisp. In the end, Tanzania's radicalism or "socialism" did not succed in alienating dominant minor interests. Tanzania has remained dependent and has been classified by the United Nations as among the least-developed of the developing countries (LDCs).[37]

Côte d'Ivoire

Cote d'Ivoire for example, in her first post-independence development plan, which covered the period 1960 to 1970, favoured the increasing inflow of foreign factor inputs on the ground of insufficient national investment resources and the lack of know-how. This strengthened foreign hold on the economy. Also, one of the major objectives of the plan was the diversification of agricultural production mainly for export, thereby intensifying the external dependence of the economy.[38]

Algeria

In Algeria's case massive nationalization of the economy was embarked upon immediately after independence. this choice was imposed on post -independence Algeria as the country was faced with a void caused by the mass exodus of the European population who abandoned farms, factories and real estate. The abandoned property was taken over spontaneously by Algerian farmers, workers and managers. The occupation was soon legalized by the policy of nationalization which covered practically all the former European farms. The nationalization process was progressively extended to the manufacturing, mining and petroleum sectors.

Again, the capitalist spirit crept into the whole nationalization affair, and nationalization became a weapon used by the bourgeoisies against the poor masses, land owners against those who were landless. Where was then economic independence? It must be emphasized that independence is not limited to the control of firms or economic sectors by Africans, but the bottom line is the group for whom the control is done. It must be for the African interest, whoever does the control, Africans or foreigners, the whole essence of the control must be for the interest of the generality of the people of Africa. In the Algerian case, there was no true economic independence. Apart from this, production for the market came to characterize Algerian economy.

Senegal

Senegal provides another example of the use "African Socialism" to attempt decloniation. Again, like in the case of Tanzania, we find how the whole thing as eventually muddled up with the liberal ideology, and how after all said and done, Senegal has remained underdeveloped and seriously dependent. In Senegal, the African socialism formulated by prime minister M a m a d o u Dia (1957-62) and Leopold Senghor stressed building a "socialist society based on traditional communitarian values and through the development of the co-operative movement and the regrouping of Senegalese villages into self-governing rural communes." [39] Thus, both Dia and Senghor, like Nyere, envisaged that village-based multifunctional groups would form the basic economic unit of an agrarian socialist society. But Senghor believed, unlike Nyere, at least overtly, that co-operation with the West was necessary. The Senegalese economy thus came to depend on foreign aid to some extent for the running of the economy. But unlike Tanzania that spread its dependence, Senegal was heavily dependent on majorly France.

Today, Senegal is still a dependent economy, and most of its foreign trade is still with France, which for years has also been its major supplier of public development capital and nearly all its foreign technical and financial assistance needs. French investors still play a dominant role in the country's private capital. Although Senegal's African socialism has had very significant impacts, like discouraging the emergence of large-scale capitalist enterprises in the countryside, thereby fostering the development of rural co-operative structures, it has some eccentricities which also rendered it a dependence- perpetuating tool. In the first place, Senegalese African socialism has been used to justify massive state intervention in regulating and controlling key sectors of the Senegalese economy. Also, Senegalese socialism welcomed foreign capital and private capital. It was therefore easy for his socialist government to collaborate with foreign capital and the Senegalese private sector. The private sector actually had significant influence in the economy. The economy has remained dependent.

Generally, economic policies pursued by African states since after political independence have been classified into nine broad themes,[40] into which policy instruments like indigenization, nationalization and others fall. The first is **national self- reliance**. This has ideological undertones. Open economy is overtly opposed, and attempt is made to create an ideology that is 'African' in nature. But most of the time, under the skin of the said independent ideology we find the western ideology still given a place, and self-reliance ends up not being truly achieved.

The second is **manpower development.** The most common policy instrument under this theme is the policy of indigenization, which sees to the replacement of foreigners with Africans in the administrative cadres. The third is **rural development** in a broader context, which apart from providing local input for agro-based industries, ensures cultivation and production of large bulk of local consumable food to avoid food dependence which has become very rampant in Africa evidenced by massive food importation. The fourth theme deals with those policies aimed at **altering the economic structure** through array of home and foreign market-oriented lines of production. Emphasis is placed on industrialization. It is believed that Africa can only alter the present centre-periphery relationship by becoming industrialized. The approaches in the various African countries have varied. But the industrialization policies have been pursued in a way that is competitive to agriculture. The dichotomy created between the two has led to the dependence on imported inputs for the local industries. Also, the exposure of Africa's relatively infant industries to extreme competition with the western industries has rendered them less effective, and thwarted the goal of altering the economic structures. The fifth theme centres on **control over economic activities** Under this policy, private investors are allowed to operate, but are subjected to government control. Sometimes however, the control measures are weak and create widespread opportunities for corruption. The sixth has to do with **public sector involvement in productive activities**, through the acquisition of shares of companies involved in the productive sectors.

The seventh has to do with **national mobilization**; mobilizing and utilizing the resources available in a nation for development purpose. The eighth involves **attempt to alter income distribution** to avoid the situation where a few interest groups become too dominant and become empowered to hijack the economy. The ninth theme is the **diversification of external economic links**, with emphasis on regional economic co-operation. This is an approach leverages on the synergy of neighbouring African states to tackle the problem of dependence.

It is important to note that economic policies pursued by Africa aimed at achieving economic independence have tended towards increasing opportunities for the elites to advance, giving the appearance of economic independence without running the risk of alienating any genuinely powerful interest. Powerful interests in this context include both external and internal. Looking closely at the policies, this truth becomes more obvious. Irrespective of the names and labels used, the underlying factor is that these policies have either overtly or covertly glossed over the issue of powerful interests, and have tended to perpetuate the colonial economic structure. The result is that these policies have led to the re-colonization rather than the de-colonization of the African economy.

Negative Impact of Africa's post-colonial economic policies

A tree is known by its fruit. So the nature of Africa's post-colonial economic policies will be better understood by their result or fruit seen in the light of the reality of things in contemporary Africa. It will be seen that Africa's post-colonial or contemporary economic condition is not a serious departure from the colonial economic one. And the reason is not far-fetched: economic policies in contemporary Africa are still largely operated within the frameworks of the colonial system, the colonial economic logic has been seriously respected and preserved despite the proclaimed 'radicalism' of some African states. One of the characteristics of the colonial economy as we have earlier noted is its subjection to the ills of the international market. While it bears the brunt of its failings, it is deprived of its wealth and progress. Even in the post-colonial era, Africa's crisis of development has been compounded by falling prices of primary products in the international market.

The increase or decrease in the price of these products at international market has resulted to disturbances in African economies.[41] This was especially so in the early 1980s, late 1990s, and from 2008-2010.[42] The concomitant effect has been large fiscal deficits, high rates of inflation, declining investment, especially in the productive sectors. Poverty, illiteracy, high infant mortality, inadequate housing, and collapsed infrastructure have consequently remained prominent features of Africa's development in the post- independence period. By all standards of measurement, Africa's record of economic development for more than half a century following independence in 1960 has been gloomy.[43]

Africa has also experienced wide disparities in income distribution across the continent. This is a character of any dependent economy. The widespread poverty leads to the struggle for the survival of the fittest, thereby increasing income gap among the citizens. People who live in the rural areas are generally poorer as they engage mainly in subsistence agriculture and petty trading. The inhabitants of urban areas of most African states are therefore generally more prosperous than the rural areas even though there are many poor people in urban areas as well, many of whom live in slums. The ratio of income is estimated at about 4:1 in favor of urban centers. In addition, it is in the urban centers that the little infrastructure that exists is concentrated. It is for this reason that the phenomenon of rural-urban migration has been wide-ranging; and this is a notable feature of colonial Africa.

Apart from the urban-rural dimension, the distribution of income across Africa has been skewed. Taken together, income inequalities range from the richest 2 percent of the population earning about the same share of the total income as the poorest 50 percent, to the richest 2 percent earning as much as the poorest 30 percent.[44] In some African countries where income disparity has been extreme, analysts have noted that the rate of economic growth has been as important as the pattern of growth. In other words, mere economic growth is not enough if it is not reasonably and fairly distributed.

The issue of income distribution is an important factor that has influenced enduring and sustainable development because it has actually occurred that some African countries have recorded growth without development in the real sense because growth was not accompanied by social transformation. This again illustrates the social dimension of Africa's economic development.[45] Apart from this, income disparity perpetuates dependence, as people rush to the urban areas for white collar jobs, thereby reducing the food producers at the rural area, which then leads to the importation of food, hence dependence.

Another major character of a dependent economy is its gross indebtedness. In the opinion of Nyikal, the African debt problem is the biggest hindrance to any possible solutions to the overall economic crisis. This is ironic because the purpose of the loans in the first place was to help alleviate economic hardships in the receiving countries. Most African countries were in debt almost as soon as they gained political independence. As the colonialists uprooted their flags, they planted their funds. While flag independence was given, they entrenched financial dependence. Pretending to help Africa, aids have been used to perpetuate underdevelopment and dependence. Also, the policies imposed on poor African countries through the agents of the colonialists (e.g IMF, World Bank etc) or who neo-marxists have called post-independence "viceroys of imperialism,"[44] have chained Africa to continued dependence on western economies, by preventing self-help approach to the continent's economic problems. All these have contributed to the debt crises that African economies are deeply involved in. Nyikal notes thus:

> *Basic infrastructure in most African countries is dilapidated, economic growth is minimal, access to the basics like food, health and education is sparse and expensive, arid areas are encroaching into previously arable land, and so on and so forth. The list is enormous. All this while the continent is deeply entrenched in debt to the developed Western countries, much of which was acquired to fight the economic hardships, but have obviously failed to make any marked improvement in the situation.*[45]

The amount of debt has been constantly rising since then. Currently African governments spend huge chunks of their annual revenue just to service loans, money that could go quite a long way in developing their economies.[46] The chart below shows how external debt in Africa has grown between 1971 and 1998.

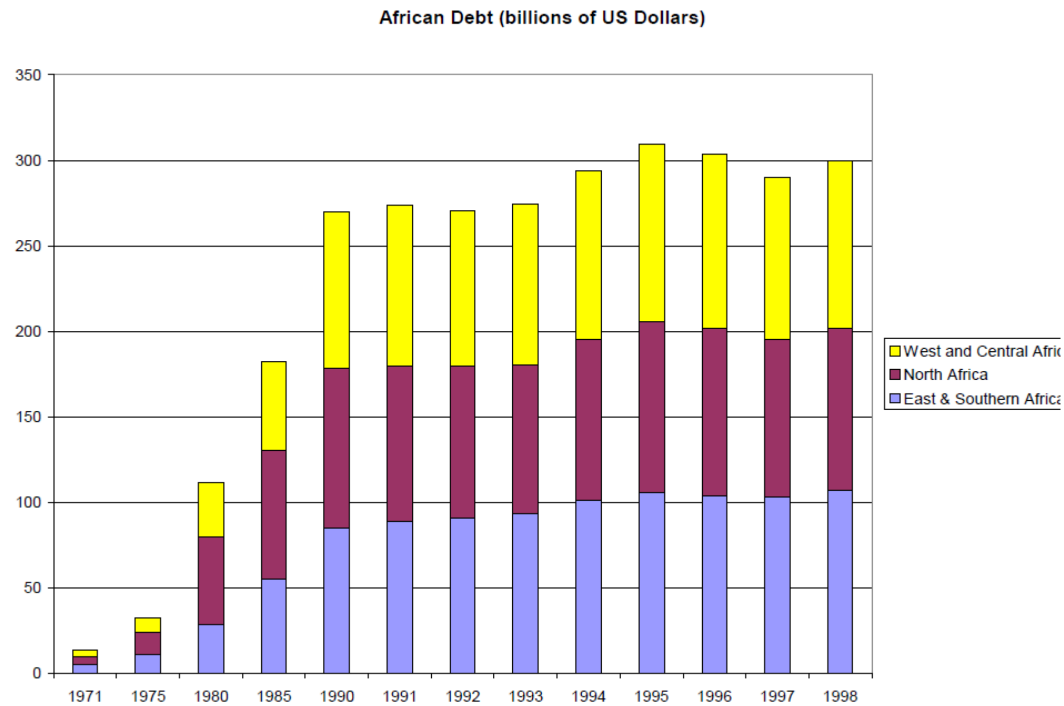

Fig 1. Growth of Debt In African countries (source: Based on World bank Global Development Finance', 2000)

Compared to other developing countries Africa actually holds a small chunk of the total world debt. However the problem lies in its inability to service this debt. African countries are unable to service the huge debts and at the same time build their economies and fight poverty. The servicing of the external debt consumes national income thus hindering both public and private investments. Additionally, having a large debt overhang erodes the confidence of both foreign and domestic private investors who are usually sensitive to uncertainty. There has been a declining trend of private investment in most African countries from the late 1970s onwards, and this can partly be attributed to this factor. [47] Hence, Africa's wealth is being repatriated to the richer countries in the west, just like it was in the colonial days, but masked under "debt servicing", hence, the Neo-Marxists notion of economic colonialism.

To ensure debt repayment and economic restructuring the IMF/World Bank imposed Structural Adjustment Programs modeled on the Neo-liberal ideology that the optimal economic system is achieved by giving free reign to market participants, privatization, free trade, and the shrinking of government intervention in the economy. The Structural Adjustment Programs were a pre-condition to new loans from the World Bank and renegotiations of current debts. Many African governments were reluctant to adopt the policies prescribed from the onset but obliged just to maintain western support. Over the years it has turned out that the policies have neither alleviated the huge debt burden nor improved the economies of the developing countries. If anything, poverty in African countries has increased as a direct result of these policies.[48]

The SAP, apart from opening the gate to foreign investors, who ultimately repatriate profits back to their home governments instead of re-investing such profits into the economies of their resident governments, encourages trade liberalization, which benefits the Western Capitalist economies to the detriment of the economic growth of less developed countries. Trade liberalization leads to the dumping of cheap products from outside such as clothes, food, and stationery. This undermines the local industries that produce or those that would have started to produce these products.

It is well known that budding industries need nurturing and protection at the early stages. A new fabric manufacturing plant in Tanzania, for example, cannot be expected to be as efficient as established manufacturers in China, and hence cannot compete equally. African infant industries fail to take-off under extensive trade liberalization. This is also very critical with respect to imported food such as rice, wheat, milk, etc. Developed countries which have excess of these food items reduce their price and export them to Africa to get rid of this excess at any price. If such a situation is not controlled, Africa will never be able to produce its own food. In addition, liberalization of export of raw materials robs local industries of raw materials which can fetch higher prices from more efficient external competitors.[49] After over two decades of Structural Adjustment Programs most African countries are suffering from high inflation, lower spending on health, education, housing, sanitation and water. Illiteracy has not declined, unemployment is incredibly high and average income for the ones lucky to be employed barely suffices for subsistence.

Agriculture seems to be yet the major economic sector of post–independence African economies. However, the shift from subsistence into cash crop agriculture has resulted to the birth of mono-crop economy of nations. Cash crop production continued to gain prominence even after political independence. The vertical division of labour between the periphery and the centre, which was the hallmark of the colonial economy has not suffered any serious boot, but rather has witnessed a boost. A scholar has summarized it this way: African countries are "Growing" but not developing. They are producing and selling more but earning less for their commodities. [50] The shift from subsistent agriculture to commercial agriculture in Africa has been extensively studied, and it is a known fact from that study that commercial agriculture has led to increased importation, especially the importation of food.

Summary and Conclusion

It must be noted that economic growth does not necessarily lead to economic independence, but tends sometimes to increase dependence. Africa should not just pursue economic growth as a means to decolonization, as it has often not met expectations. Another discovery we have made is that dependence is highly fluid, and can change its appearance easily to something like **spread dependence, (**borrowing from or depending on more than one country with the aim of reducing vulnerability to the whims and caprices of one major country) and even get worse while appearing to careless observers to be receding.

After a careful analysis of the facts available, it is clear that colonial economic policies adopted by the imperialists in Africa caused a big damage to African economy. Africans were highly restricted to primary production. The raw materials which were collected from their lands were brought back to them as finished goods at very high prices. Infrastructural facilities like the railways, roads, harbours established mainly served for easy export of raw materials to Europe, and import of the finished goods back to Africa. Africa's economy thus became tied to the capitalist economy. Two major principles governed the colonial economy: Africans must play the role of supplying raw materials to the colonialist, and be ready to buy or import the finished products at a far higher price from them. These policies were highly exploitative in all ramifications, and for this reason the Neo-Marxists such as Rodney have insisted that Europe underdeveloped Africa. The relationship was an unequal one as the imperialists determined the course of economic activities and events.

After independence of most African states, the trend seems not to have changed as the activities of the IMF and the World Bank continue to exacerbate the already bad economic situation in the continent. Through aids, loans and neo-liberal policies such as the Structural adjustment Programme, African economies continue to be tied to the World capitalist economy, hence, the over dependence on the latter by the former is being perpetuated. It is true that some of the factors pointed out by the neo-liberal scholars, such as corruption, military intervention, poor economic planning etc as the causes of Africa's woes may not be discarded; the facts presented by the Neo-Marxists seem to be highly instrumental in uncovering the root causes of Africa's underdevelopment decades after independence of most African states.

In the researcher's opinion, decolonization, as pursued in most part of Africa, especially in the early post-colonial era was actually re-colonization, and Africa is still under economic colonization. Economic decolonization is actually a myth in the light of reality in contemporary Africa. The continent must find ways of liberating itself from this economic bondage. Africa must recognize the fact that her victory over colonization is incomplete without economic independence, and that political independence is only a major step to freedom, a means to an end, and not an end in itself. A scholar rang this bell of truth when he wrote:

It is would be a mortal error for the nations of the Tiers Monde, especially for those which have just recovered their national freedom, to believe that they had achieved the end of their struggle when independence was proclaimed.

This is without doubt a major step…but it is only the first which, it is true, makes possible the active embarkation on basic tasks, the facing of vital questions, the application of daring solutions. At least some of the newly emancipated states have understood clearly that sovereignty in this world is an illusion unless it is justified technically and economically.[51]

On a final note, African leaders, and economic policy makers must examine the economic policies being pursued, and dump those that are anti-decolonization especially those that are being operated within colonial economic laws and with foreign loans. The fluid nature of dependence must be understood, and care must be taken to avoid it in all its forms and shades. Apart from the *spread dependence* we have conceptualized in the paper, internal colonialism can lead to *internal dependence* which is another dimension economic colonialism and dependence can assume. As long as the interest of foreign capitalists or internal capitalists, determine the trend of the economy, economic de-colonization will continue to elude Africa.

End Notes

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