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Neo-Colonialism

Neo-Colonialism is a term that is commonly used in a variety of academic literature, dealing with the history of the capitalist system, its expansion, and contemporary world affairs. The term is originally derived from a contrast made by V.I. Lenin in a pamphlet entitled "Imperialism", which was originally published in 1939. His contrast was between direct political domination through force of arms and "domination by extra political means". Early colonialism characterized the period from the beginning of the age of European exploration and expansion to the gaining of granting independence to former colonies. It essentially involved the imposition of the centralised political rule upon non-western peoples, using various means of direct political compulsion (Lenin, 1965).

Neo-colonialism signifies the control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means. The term *neo-colonialism* was first used after World War II to refer to the continuing dependence of former colonies on foreign countries, but its meaning soon broadened to apply, more generally, to places where the power of developed countries was used to produce colonial-like exploitation—for instance, in Latin America, where direct foreign rule had ended in the early 19th century (Chikendu, 2004). The term is now an unambiguously negative one that is widely used to refer to a form of global power in which transnational corporations and global and multilateral institutions combine to perpetuate colonial forms of exploitation of developing countries. Neo-colonialism has been broadly understood as a further development of capitalism that enables capitalist powers (both nations and corporations) to dominate subject nations through the operations of international capitalism rather than employing direct rule (Aja, 1998).

The term *neo-colonialism* was originally applied to European policies that were seen as schemes to maintain control of African and other dependencies. The event that marked the beginning of this usage was a meeting of European heads of government in Paris in 1957, where six European leaders agreed to include their overseas territories within the European Common Market under trade arrangements that were seen by some national leaders and groups as representing a new form of economic domination over French-occupied Africa and the colonial territories of Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The agreement reached at Paris was codified in the Treaty of Rome (1957), which established the European Economic Community (EEC), or Common Market. Neo-colonialism refers to the continued domination of former colonies using extra political or commercial means. In other words, though is a continuation of the same process of exploitation and assimilation, it operates not through the application of military might or legislative power, but through economic compulsion. On the other hand, neo-colonialism (which means new colonialism), does not only rely on the continued domination of former colonies, it is also within the colonies (Dennis & John, 1981). This is to say that, some Africans (precisely high officials) impose or enforce powers over their fellow Africans, by controlling the political and economic sector of the country.

Critics adherent to neo-colonialism contend that multi-national corporations continue to exploit the resources of post-colonial states, and that this economic control inherent to neo-colonialism is akin to the classical, European colonialism practiced from the 16th to the 20th centuries. In this sense, neo-colonialism implies a form of contemporary economic imperialism, that powerful nations behave like colonial powers of imperialism, and that this behavior is likened to colonialism in a post colonial world. As opined by Aja (1998), the activities of multinational corporations as agent of neo-colonialism in third world countries have been mark by exploitations base on the fact that multinational corporations are very jealous of their technology as an instrument of reproducing capital and global economic influence.

Neo-colonialism first saw widespread use, particularly in reference to Africa, soon after the process of decolonization, which followed a struggle by many national independence movements in the colonies. Upon gaining independence, some national leaders and opposition groups argued that their countries were being subjected to a new form of colonialism, waged by the former colonial powers and other developed nations, and even amongst the dictatorial leaders in the colonies (Nkrumah, 1968). Kwame Nkrumah, who in 1957 became leader of newly independent Ghana, was one of the most notable figures to use the term. A classical definition of neo-colonialism is given in his, *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*. In the book, Nkrumah says: "the neo-colonialism of today represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage" (Nkrumah, 1965). He goes further to say that development of the less developed parts of the world and investment under neo-colonialism increases rather than decreasing the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world. The struggle against neo-colonialism is not aimed at excluding the capital of the developed countries operating in less developed countries, it is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries, being used in such a way as to impoverish the less developed. This can be further stressed by the activities of international monetary institutions with their conditionality's of loan to third world countries, the rich member of the IMF is structurally stable in their economies hence, the loan conditionalities of the institution are no grave concerns. For the majority of less developed countries, the IMF loan conditionalities are too high and harsh to effect sustainable economic growth and development (Onimode, 1983).

In a Marxist point of view, one can buttress the fact that the activities of neo-colonialism through the IMF are insensitive to the development crisis of the needy countries. Its loan conditionalities represent an imperialist design and expand the greater flow of capital, labour and technology from the industrialized countries to the less developed countries (Joe, 2008).

Nevertheless, empirical data and historical facts had shown that the emigration of Europeans to Africa and the domination of the continent's economy – trade and capital by Europeans and their local collaborators and partners were designed to further prosecute the European agenda which Frederick Lugard (First Governor-General of Nigeria) stated in his book titled - *the Dual Mandate* thus:

"The Partition of Africa was, as we all recognize, due primarily to the economic necessity of increasing the supplies of raw materials and food to meet the needs of the industrialised nations of Europe...For two or three generations, we can show the Negro what we are: Then we shall be asked to go away. Then we shall leave the land to those it belongs to, with the feeling that they have better business friends is us than in other whitemen" (Pakenham, 1991:11).

A good point of reference to validate the motives of European colonisation of Africa lies in the reasons for the British bombardment and annexation of Lagos in 1861, the British unilateral occupation of Egypt in 1882, and the French retaliatory Blockade and claim over the mouth of Congo, among others (Candice, Charles & Linda, 1998).

The implication is that colonialism of Africa was designed to aid the survival and extension of Capitalism for the development of the metropole and the strengthening of her industrial complex and markets through the invasion and overrun of weaker territories, particularly Africa where opportunities abound for the creation of new settlements to explore their potential economic resources and commerce. Hence, the justification of the Eurocentric views that European Imperialism in Africa was due to 'being mesmerized by formal empire and maps of the world with regions coloured red. The bulk of British emigration, trade, and capital went to areas outside the formal British Empire (Lous, 1976).

Moreso, inquiries into African history had shown that the colonisation of Africa from the Nile to Congo basin, the West African hinterland and the East and Southern parts of Africa is not farfetched from the multi-facet benefits and resources of virgin Africa which was achievable and bound with colonialism. Since Europe's territorial imperialistic and expansionist motives was to deplete resources of colonial states for her greater economic benefit, the collection of those resources from the colonies required the assumption of military and political control of those territories.

Nkrumah's work is self-defined as an extension of Lenin's imperialism; *The Last Stage of Capitalism* (1916), in which Lenin argues that "19th century imperialism is predicated upon the needs of the capitalist system". Neo-colonialism like colonialism is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries. Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case. Above all, neo-colonialism, like colonialism before it, postpones the facing of the social issues which will have to be faced by the fully developed sector of the world before the danger of world war can be eliminated or the problem of world poverty resolved (Nkrumah, 1965).

Neo-colonialism, like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries. The temporary success of this policy can be seen in the ever widening gap between the richer and the poorer nations of the world. But the internal contradictions and conflicts of neo-colonialism make it certain that it cannot endure as a permanent world policy. How it should be brought to an end is a problem that should be studied, above all, by the developed nations of the world, because it is they who will feel the full impact of the ultimate failure. The longer it continues the more certain it is that its inevitable collapse will destroy the social system of which they have made it a foundation.

Theoretical Postulations of Neo-colonialism

It can be deduced that African countries have not been completely independent from the imperial powers, which is to say that African countries are still under the shackles of neo-colonialism. What it implies is that complete economic freedom in Africa has remained a desire highly pursued but less realizable in Africa, due to the fact that socio-cultural, political and military independence has not been guaranteed. This aspect is therefore, anchored on the "dependency theory". According to Ferraro (1969), dependency theory was developed in the late 1950s under the guidance of the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Raul Prebisch. Prebisch and his colleagues were troubled by the fact that economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries. Mbah & Obiora, (2015), maintained in their book: "State and Economy: A Study in Third World and Dependency", that economic activity in the richer countries often led to serious economic activity in the poorer countries. This partly explains the deepening of the practice of neo-colonialism in Africa. The forward solution for neo-colonialism according to Nkrumah, is for the African states to stand together politically, to have a united foreign policy, a common defense plan, and a fully integrated foreign policy, and economic programmed for the development of the whole continent.

However, it is the ability of these theoretical explanations to properly capture the Nkrumah's thoughts on neocolonialism and its effect on the contemporary Africa that it became appropriate to frame the current on "dependency theory". The theory which attempts to explain the present state of nations in Africa and (other parts of the world), by examining the patterns of interactions and relationships among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of the interactions. Dependency theory explains the effect of neo-colonialism on neo-colonial states and the benefits the imperial powers derive from practicing neo-colonialism and proffers adequate solution in a bid to gain complete and real independence for the continents suffering from neo-colonialism.

Prebisch's initial explanation of the dependency theory was very straight; poor countries exported primary commodities to the rich countries that then manufactured products out of those commodities and sold them back to the poorer countries. In order to maintain this new form of colonialism in Africa, (neo-colonialism), the imperial powers still maintain this relationship of unequal relationship to control Africa both militarily, political, socio culturally, and economically. Moreover, this type of relationship made Africa perpetual producers of what they do not use, and perpetual consumer of what they do not produce. Also, the "value added" by manufacturing useable product costs more than the primary product used to create those products (Mbah & Obiora, 2015).

Therefore, poor countries would never be earning enough from their export earnings to pay for their imports. This theory sincerely explains the implications of neo-colonialism on the neo-colonial states and also, proffers the best solution in reducing to the barest minimum the deepening of this new form of colonialism in Africa by the imperial powers, and to deal with the neo-colonialism and dependency phenomenon confronting the African continent. As earlier stated, Nkrumah says that the greatest danger at present facing Africa is neo-colonialism and its major instrument, balkanization. One of the major features of neo-colonialism is that it creates client state independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power which is supposed to have given them independence the European power forces, the conclusion of pacts with the

balkanized states which give control of their foreign policy to the former. Implication of this is that the state which is subject to neo-colonialism is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. This is neo-colonialism in its actual and practical sense.

Furthermore, Nkrumah said that the conversion of Africa into very small states is leaving some of them with neither the resources nor the manpower to provide for their own integrity and viability. Without the means to establish their own economic growth, they are compelled to continue within the old colonial trading framework. Hence, they are seeking alliances in Europe, which deprived them of an independent foreign policy and perpetuate their economic dependence. But this, he argues, is a solution that can only lead backwards, not forwards. The forward solution is for the African states to stand together politically, to have a united foreign policy, a common defense plan, and a fully integrated foreign policy, and fully integrated economic programme for the development and independence of the whole continent. Only then can neo-colonialism and his handmaid "balkanization" be overcome.

In conclusions one can argue the fact that history affords no examples of countries that successfully depended on external policy prescription for development, and survived. What is in vogue, as the Japanese experience shows, is for the LDCs to look more inwards, trust in their local initiatives and strength in effecting structural economic diversifications. Once monoculture economies are diversified, and public discipline institutionalized, the LDCs would be in a better position to correct balance of payment equilibriums, or at any rate bargain for the imperial powers of exploitations.

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