



Master program in African Studies

The Dynamics of African Societies

Portfolio

Colonialism, Independence and Underdevelopment in Africa

The Pre-eminence and Blame Game

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1. Introduction

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Africa as a continent cannot be overemphasized even as the available literatures today cannot contain and agree on all parts of her history. Although classic scholars such as John Illife, Walter Rodney, Fanon Frantz and Mahmood Mamdani have written about Africa's historical events from different perspectives, but speculations of other schools of thought still call for discussion. Africa being the second largest and most populous continent in the world is about 12 million square miles which harbours 1.1 billion people and covers six percent of the Earth's total area (Sayre, 1999). This massive continent currently consists of 54 countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Somalia, and Tanzania etc.

The colonization of Africa spanned for decades of years (1800-1960) after which independence prevailed in the continent. Today, after over fifty years of independence for some African countries, poverty, hunger, disease and corruption have become their next door neighbours. As an African, it is sad to see how the global image of Africa today depicts starvation, epidemic and underdevelopment even as most countries in the continent are barely managing to exist and at the verge of collapsing. Given all these plights on the continent of Africa, some scholars such as Rodney (1972) and Fanon (1961) argue that these are the effects of colonialism, whereas other Eurocentric scholars such as (Gann and Duignan, 1975) think it is a result of Africa's lack of political, economic and organizational abilities to transform the continent.

The aim of this portfolio is to discuss three critical issues of present day Africa. These issues are colonialism, independence, and underdevelopment. Most sources of arguments in this portfolio will be based on the compilation of discussions from numerous lectures and seminars, literatures and past thesis works in the 2014-2015 academic session of African Studies program. It is my intention to discuss reason for the scramble of Africa, the arguable benefits and improvement it brought to the African people and the continent at large. Finally I will deliberate and argue on how the African scholars have chosen to hide behind the blame game of the colonist being totally responsible for Africa's underdevelopment even after over fifty years of independence.

The disposition of this portfolio from chapter one will be about Africa in the pre-colonial and colonial era. Chapter two will discuss independence in Africa and chapter three will discuss underdevelopment and the way forward in Africa.

1.1. The Invention of Africa and Africans

The term 'Africa', one would wonder when and how it originated and became popular as being used to refer to a continent dominated by black people known today as Africans. Given the conceptual and definitive complexity of the term 'Africa', disagreements and criticisms was raised when Mudimbe (1988) used the term 'invention' in his book "The Invention of Africa" and Ranger (1983) in his influential essay "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa", because the term 'development' was a more acceptable alternative. According to Mudimbe (1988) Africa and Africans were invented, defined or conceptualized by non-Africans which of course are Westerners who stroke the favourable differences between Africa and Europe to remain dominant. More emphasis was laid by Said (2003) who argues that the Westerners' understanding and portrait of Africa is nothing near pleasant but rather of decadent, exotic and corrupt referring to Africa as monolithic region just like a country. The arguments against scholar such as Mbiti (1991) who views Africans as a people with one religion was well established by Said (2003) who thinks the cultural diversity and religions of the African people must be acknowledged.

With reference to the lecture by Lars Berge (2014, Sept. 2), I learned that although not all historians will agree on one common 'original' meaning of Africa but it is certain to most that the term 'Africa' became popularly used from the Roman era to refer to North Africa. It is pertinent to know that in the Roman era North Africa was synonymous with the Greek or Egyptian word "Libya" located in the South of the Mediterranean with Europe in the North-West and Asia in the East. Again, after the end of the first century Africa was being used as a collective term for the whole continent. Furthermore, it will be correct to say that Africa is a European imperial construct because overtime as the term was used and embraced; it gradually gained recognition in the world map as 'Sub-Saharan Africa'.

There may have been possibilities of the initial separation of North Africa by the Arabs who instigated invasions in the seventeenth century, but it is also important to notice as well that in almost every literature today, there are evidences of the ideology that Africa being widely recognized was following the rise of modern Europe also known as Eurocentrism. The development of Eurocentrism of course for Africans spelt doom of the Atlantic slave trade which was the means through which millions of Africans were forcefully migrated to Europe and America; and the formation of African diasporas that made the name 'Africa' very popular especially to the Portuguese while they were unspeakably racialized and dehumanized. This is the reason why Mudimbe (1988, p. 17) stated that the discovery of Africa in the fifteenth century "meant and still means the primary violence signified by the word. The slave trade narrated itself accordingly, and

the same movement of reduction progressively guaranteed the gradual invasion of the continent". However, my argument against Mudimbe's statement is whether he had bluntly refused to acknowledge the substantial recorded events of cross-cultural business, slave trade and Africans in diaspora which have been in existence before the Atlantic trade initiated from Africa to the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.

In the mind of Said (2003), there is no possibility of the Orient or Africa to have existed outside Western imagination. In relation, Mudimbe (1988) bears his thoughts of the invention of Africa as a prophecy of self-fulfilment. Well whatever that might mean in Mudimbe's context, what I could deduce from both writers is that they are on the same page of telling the African history themselves. They think that Africans are the only people who can really tell their story without bias; hence they try to re-invent African history in their own ways. So far, I think Said and Mudimbe have really put lots of calculated efforts in attempt to expose the disguise and deceitful alliance of Western enlightenment and colonialism. According to Illife (1995), Said and Mudimbe went too far in stereotyping the West as unjust invaders of Africa, avoiding critiques of Africa's weaknesses because they (Africans) to some extents were also partakers of Western colonisation

The invention of Africa is not far from complex, knowing that there is no such thing as a straight forward history of any event or thing. Following some numbers of literatures and lectures, I think Africa could be defined as the interaction with eternal civilization as a result of its trace to the Berber origin and Greco-Roman ancestry. The origin of the term 'Africa' has been quite uncertain whether it came from the Berber or Semite/Phoenician language of Greek lexicon. However it would be interesting to know if the Romans referred to the whole African continent with the Latin word '*Aprica*' which was interpreted as 'Sunny' or the possibility of the Greeks and Romans using same word '*Aphrike*' which meant 'without cold'; and considering the Arabian word contribution of '*Ifriqiya*' given that the Arabs were very active in the invention of slave trade. In the lecture by Lars Berge (2014, Sept. 2) there was discussion of how black slaves and their descendants in North America became the first people or slave diasporas to recognise Africa as a whole which in the nineteenth century led to the formation of several One-Africa entities such as Pan-African Association, Pan-African Federation and so on around Europe and American.

Following the effects of slave trade and colonisation, there have been a lot of arguments amongst scholars till these current days about the best way to tell the history of Africa along with the description of the African people. Given the massive number of Black Africans who were taken to the West during slave trade and are now citizens, and also Europeans who have naturalized in some

countries in Africa during the colonial periods, one would want to ask...who are the African people?

1.2. Who are the African People?

The arguments and debates between historians and scientists about the originality and definition of African people as a result of Western colonization have indeed been quite heated and complex. According to Cooper (1940), only the sub-Saharan region/South of the Sahara has a distinctive representation of African history and not the North, contrary to Iliffe (1995) who recognized and included both the North and south of the Sahara in his book. However, what caught my attention was that Iliffe assigned a separate chapter about South Africa in his book, why? Could it be that he did not fully recognise South Africa as part of Africa given the number and rate of white settlers and industrialization in that region? One similarity I noticed from both authors is that they included the Massive Indian Ocean Island of Madagascar as part of Africa, although they did not talk so much about it.

Further arguments have been raised by scholars who think that Africans in diaspora should be included in the history of Africa given the huge migration of Africans to the West (Europe and America) during slave trade. I am of the opinion that African people are the Blacks who existed and was first recognized by the Arabs before slavery, but today given the Eurocentric construct of the continent everyone who is born in Africa whether North, East, West, and South coast is an African. More importantly Africans in diaspora must be recognized and counted as part of African history. With reference to the class lecture on this topic by Lars Berge (2014, Sept. 2), history has it that most of the slaves that were traded to the West from Africa were Blacks.

That being said, would it be right to assume that all Blacks in the U.S.A. are Africans or African-American? As a result of the wide spread of slavery, there are people in diaspora who go by the term Afro-Latino, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-European, and so on; are they also recognized as Africans? I have read about some Blacks in the U.S.A. who traced their ancestry to France, how can one address them...African-American or French-American? Again some people who are born into Caucasian family in the U.S.A., but whose parents were born in Africa, would it be right to say they are African-American? Matters become even more complicated these days where there are cases of two black couples procreating a pure white baby (not albino); well that may be a rare biological case of genetic disorder some people would argue.

My opinion to the above observation and questions for debate is that the effect of slavery and colonization may theoretically prove that people can no longer be judged by the colour of their skin,

but is that the case in reality? Well, I still think that African-Americans are the descendant of the victims of slave trade who were born in the U.S.A., even if it would have been better to prefix a country instead of a continent, e.g. Nigerian-American. But come to think of it, what was the possibility to achieve that clarity when the slave masters intentionally abolished all ancestral lineage of tribe, language and family to demoralize their slaves against any possible revolt (Lars Berge's lecture, 2014 Sept. 2). Furthermore, during the slave era there was strict prohibitions and in some cases death penalty to anyone who dares to educate these slaves on how to read and write let alone lecture them about their history; hence the history of the descendants was destroyed before they were born into slavery (Schwarz, 1831).

1.3. The scramble for Africa

The scramble for Africa which is also known as the partition or conquest of Africa is a term used to connote the invasion, occupation and subsequent colonization of the African territory and people by European imperial powers between 1876 and 1914. History has it that the scramble for Africa started with the interest of King Leopold II of Belgium to gain absolute pre-eminence over Congo and eventually other countries in Africa following a report he read in 1879 about the rich mineral resources in the Congo Basin which is presently known as Democratic Republic of Congo (Bourne, 1903). As an entrepreneur, he envisaged great business opportunity with substantial profits big enough to foster future economic development for Belgium. The King over some years secretly sent one of his officials called Henry Morton Stanley to go and explore the Congo basin and sign treaties with their Chiefs in the Congo River to gain sufficient grounds and form the Congo Free State in 1882. Following Stanley's feedback, King Leopold II formed an association under his jurisdiction known as International African Association to assume control over Congo basin in 1885 confiscating resources such as ivory and rubber (Peter, 1977).

According to the lecture by Lars Berge (2014 Sept. 12), I understood further that the 1884 Berlin Conference also occurred as a result of the request made by King Leopold II for international recognition of his personal property in the Congo. King Leopold II who was known for his brutality of the Congolese after much political power tussle in the conference won the case and was given recognition with further decree to other European powers to have effective occupation (economic development) of any country before international recognition will be issued (Bourne, 1903). As a result of the victory of King Leopold II and in order to avoid war among the European super powers in their quest to create wealth and further develop their economy, the full blown invasion of Africa began (Robinson, et. al. 1965, p. 175). In that era, having colonies were huge assets in terms of international exchange negotiations and balance of power and a source of increase in military

soldiers in colonies where there is massive native population, hence rivalry amongst the European powers was inevitable.

During 1914 following the footsteps of the Belgian King and within forty years, African territory was finally invaded and divided amongst the European powers with Britain capturing Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa and the Gold Coast. Quite a vast area of West Africa was seized and occupied by France including, Tunisia, Ivory Coast and Senegal (Pakenham, 1991). On the other hand, East African countries such as Tanzania and Namibia were controlled by the Germans, whereas Mozambique and Angola were subjugated by Portuguese. During and after the scramble for Africa, only Liberia and Ethiopia were left out as independent states. This was made possible because America had preoccupied Liberia at that time and Menelik II who was the Emperor of Ethiopia was smart enough to negotiate for weapons with his encroaching invaders such as the Italians, French and British in 1870 with the motive to instil confusion and rivalry against themselves as Italy ended up protecting Ethiopia when the war was imminent in 1889.

The scramble for Africa subsequently led to colonization that came with a lot of anomalies against the African tradition which prompted provocative and classic authors such as Rodney (1974) and Fanon (1961) with different perspectives of what really transpired during that era of colonization and what could be done to salvage Africa towards freedom or decolonization. Again colonization was made possible from the scramble for Africa because in the Berlin Conference, there was agreement amongst the European powers not to sell weapons and ammunition to any potential colonial regions in Africa in order to have the technological artillery advantage in terms of wars and demoralize Africans against any revolt or rebellion. The determination of the Europeans to extinct any rebellious African during the partitioning of Africa was well emphasized by Iliffe (1995, p.193) in his book 'Africans: A history of a continent'.

My opinion to these historical events that obviously occurred before I was born would apply as an African and a scholar. First as an African I feel terrible knowing what was and has presently become of Africa. Africa may not have been technologically and economically developed compared to the intruding European nations, but they had their ways of governance, cultural practices and religions; and also to a large extent socio-political stability and peace. Perhaps if the Europeans did not invade Africa, there would not have been such word as 'underdeveloped' because there would be no country or continent to compare Africa with and Africans would continue to leave their lives in contentment and isolation. However on the flip side of things, does that mean Africa did not benefit anything from the European invasion and colonization? My argument is whether Africans did not at least gain something they could re-build upon after independence regardless of what they

might have undergone and lost during colonial era. At this point, I disagree with these scholars who have written tones of books just to sulk over past events and completely blame Europeans for invading and rubbing Africa naked claiming they are the cause of Africa's underdevelopment today. They have so far laid less emphasis on what and why Africans have failed to accomplish after independence which I think is partly a result of the behavioural and cultural problems of the African people.

On the other hand, as a scholar having undergone rigorous trainings on principles of economics, world commerce and international business marketing, I totally understand the reasons and disguised motives of Europeans for invading Africa and what I can say to that is 'ceteris paribus' which means all things being equal (Marshall, 1890). Taking that economic principle 'ceteris paribus' a step further, it explains that regardless of the cost or effect on a dependent thing, state or variable in relation to the other, there is still some degree of satisfaction or justification one can derive from the situation and build upon it to be happy; moreover one can determine his state of isolation and create change by assuming that other external influences are absent (Marshall, 1890). Therefore, applying this principle to the post-independent and present predicament of Africa I would ask, why has Africa failed to assume the absence of external influence after independence of over fifty years and work with what they have to equalize what they have lost?

1.4. Reasons for the scramble for Africa

An idea of the possible reasons for the European initial interests in Africa is indeed pivotal to the historical events of the scramble and colonization of Africa. According to Henriksen (1973, p. 406) a scholar of Portuguese imperial history, he is of the view that the Portuguese were motivated by their desire for "Guinea gold, the quest for [the mythical Christian kingdom of] Prester John, and the search of spices." However Mazrui (1969) in his book "European Exploration and Africa's Self-Discovery", stated three significant reasons why Europe was interested to explore Africa. These reasons include...

Need to gather scientific knowledge of the unknown: According to Mazrui (1969), Africa being called the "Dark Continent" spelt mystery to the Europeans and sparked curiosity to explore and know what the place is really all about. The inquisitiveness and excitement spread among geographers and scientist such as John Speke, Richard Burton Samuel Baker and Joseph Thompson who travelled to observe and record their discoveries of mountains, lakes, and rivers to show to their people back home. This brought about even more interested European explorers who went to Africa in the nineteenth century. Following the inflow of Europeans into Africa, the study and

writings about the African people started. Mazrui also discussed the special interest of Prince Henry at that period which was the collection of geographical knowledge and boundaries of that region of which he compensated his captain handsomely for their efforts.

European ethnocentrism: Mazrui stated that the reason of ethnocentrism must have come about the evaluation of African culture against the preconception and standards of European culture, or possibly racism. He emphasized that this reason can also be traced down to Western Christianity gospel where a new convert is obliged to spread the gospel to win more converts to the religion. The Europeans figured out that it would be difficult for them to penetrate the African people if they were left to continue to follow their own tradition religious beliefs; therefore they saw the need to convert as much Africans as possible to Christianity. Again the Europeans implemented other forms of persuasion to convert Africans to Christianity, from evangelizing with military campaigns to setting up health clinics and social service centres.

Amadiume (1987) agrees with Mazrui (1969) when she argued about Christianity being used as an instrument of colonization by the British in Nnobi a town in the south eastern part of Nigeria. Amadiume discussed the effects of colonialism on women emphasizing on the British violent imposition and implementation of their laws, making African indigenous practices and values punishable. Mazrui and Amadiume argue that the colonial settlers tactically broke down and condemned the tradition and culture of Africans by imposing and teaching them European languages which really helped them to publicize Christian doctrine as the native could translate the gospel in African languages.

Imperialism: This is the European motive of claiming lands in all parts of Africa for the reason of being giving to them by God. This land possession was done with all manner of force and violence using more sophisticated weapon of mass destruction. The imperial European powers sent their representatives to help pave the way for their respective countries in Africa. For instance, King Leopold sent his officer Henry Morton Stanley to go before him and paved the way for his acquisition of the Congo of which he named “The Congo free state”; Karl Peter of Germany secured Tanganyika for his Kaiser. Prince Henry and followers discovered an “early Portuguese empire in the Indian Ocean, Estado da India, “the first Portuguese global empire upon which the sun never set” (Henriksen, 1973 p. 406).

Thomas Henriksen finalized by discussing how interrelated these three reasons are and how strategic the decision and sponsorship for land speculation and claim is carried out by the European government. For instance claiming lands in Africa was strictly based on the evaluation of

information collected by geographers who will determine the prospects, profitability and worth of an area before the government comes out to finance the possessing of the area or region in Africa. The analysis of the areas must suggest evidence of natural resources, nice climate and lucrative business prospects.

1.5. South Africa and the scramble for Africa

South Africa also was not spared during the scramble for Africa and her story was not the nicest either because of her unjust experience of apartheid. Just like most other African countries that were invaded by the Europeans, South Africa even though was not the target of the Europeans was well known for her abundant natural and mineral resources including precious stones, gems and even fertile farmlands for agriculture. According to the lecture by Lars Berge (2014, Sept. 19), during the 1500s, there were two groups of people known to be occupying the South African region known as the San and Khoikhoi people. The San were primitive and nomads whereas the Khoikhoi people were hunters and cattle rearers and they were also many in numbers compared to the San people. After some time passed, a new group of people who spoke Bantu language and were said to have migrated also occupied the land. The Bantu people outnumbered the San and Khoikhoi people and were quite diverse yet similar, having almost two hundred different tribes but yet shared similar cultures and language.

The European journey for South African exploration was initiated by the Portuguese visionary Prince Henry ‘the Navigator’ when he was in search of a water route to Calicut which was located in the South side of India. The motive of Prince Henry was of course to dominate, seize and establish highly profitable trade and permanent base in Goa on the Coast of the Indian Ocean. Although Prince Henry died in 1460 before his vision could be realized; but with the help of Bartholomew Dias twenty eight years after, Africa was circumnavigated to India. During this many years of voyage to India of which the Dutch and British were active participants, in 1776 and 1886 mineral resources such as diamond and gold was respectively discovered in Johannesburg. This new development spelt profitable opportunity to the Europeans and resulted to notable political development and industrialization in a pre-capitalist and precolonial economy such as South Africa (Iliffe 1995, pp. 273-289). During a seminar by Lars Berge (2014, Sept. 12), I noted that one of the most critical reasons why South Africa attracted so much exploitation and earlier industrial development compared to other African countries was because “there was an industrial western capitalist economy right next door to an African pre-capitalist and pre-colonial economy.

In my opinion, I have come to realize that the motive behind this whole scramble for South Africa and colonization of Africa as a continent was a state calculated action. This was a result of the decisions made by the official minds of imperialism. This indeed was not a private venture or any sort of industrial, capitalists or lobbyists motive but rather that of top level holders of state power such as ministers, officials and sovereigns in the major European countries that took part in the partitioning of Africa. The European quest for the scramble of Africa was more about securing economic and socio-political preeminence over Africa by invasion, dominance and subsequent colonization of Africa.

Colonization in the case of South Africa was terrible as it did not only result to the enslavement of the San and the KhoiKhoi by the Dutch in 1652 when they ran short of labour and the subjugation and confiscation of Cape town and the Cape of good hope by the British in 1795, but it also begot apartheid. Apartheid is the racial superiority of white over black people in South Africa and this was one of the biggest and pathetic issues that sprouted from colonization. The KhoiKhoi people were taken into captivity as a result of their war against the expansion of Dutch settlement. The KhoiKhoi could not effectively revolt against the Dutch expansion during the war because they had no guns or horses. Also they encountered health problems caused by smallpox epidemic in the Cape and due to their lack of immunity against the disease; they died in their thousands during 1713.

1.6. Effects of the scramble for Africa

Quite a significant number of works have been done in the African historiography regarding the scramble for Africa and colonization. Unlike scholars such as Fanon (1961) and Rodney (1972) who wrote more on the effects of colonization and how it has destabilized and rendered Africa underdeveloped; others such as Asiwaju (1985), Dowden (2008), and Wesseling (1996) argue that the Europeans did not only gain influence in Africa through colonization per se but by the inappropriate border design. Herbst (2000) further emphasizes that “....*the boundaries were, in many ways, the most consequential part of the colonial state*”. According to Horowitz (1985), the ethnic partitioning of Africa led to irredentism and fostered the ideology of secession and nationalism. However, I think that as much as the scramble led to colonization, both events brought about equal consequences upon the African people. On a flip side of discussing these consequences in the light of effects, one can point out a few positive outcomes of the whole scramble and colonization saga. According to Lars Berge’s seminar (2014, Sept. 21), we discussed the views of Fanon (1961) and Rodney (1972) with regards to the immediate effects of the scramble for Africa of which I will highlight a few factors briefly in this section. The effects of the scramble for Africa could be categorised in two parts being positive and negative as enlisted below.

Positive effect

Improvement in Education: There was provision and immediate improvement in the education sector as a result of the scramble for Africa, even if according to Rodney (1972, 208) was not the true motive of Europeans when they scrambled for Africa, but at least Rodney acknowledged the improvement. I understand that the scramble profited the Europeans more significantly and brought about abuse, violence, poverty and slavery on the African people but education was arranged for and even better clothing from Europe was brought to the African people as well.

Industrialization in Africa: The abundance of natural resources, cheap raw materials and labour force according to Iliffe (1995, pp. 273-289) attracted the Europeans and as a result led to industries being built in South Africa and the whole of Africa. The West and central Europe was in high competition with each other at the peak of industrialization which created wealth and enhanced technology but as their markets got oversaturated and raw materials exhausted, they became motivated towards outsourcing to Africa. In their quest for dominance and pre-eminence over the African continent, they brought along all their technology and multipurpose machines which Africa immediately benefited from as they began to develop new businesses and build industries.

Infrastructure in Africa: This is another sector that improved in Africa during the scramble and colonization. As a result of the foreign ideas, expertise and technology by the invading Europeans, infrastructures such as railroads, sewage systems and mail delivery system was made possible. I must say it is sad but true that after over sixty years of independence, in most countries in Africa today these infrastructures are almost non-existent or functional; why? I will discuss that in the chapter of underdevelopment in Africa. Iliffe (1995) also acknowledged that following the scramble for Africa, general infrastructure improved in the region; although this sector may not have immediately developed, but at the long-run it was noticeably improved.

Negative effect

Scarcity of land and food: This is the repercussions of absolute domination of Europeans taking over most fertile land areas, cattle and trade. At this point since the agriculture sector of food production and even employment is in the control of the Europeans they manipulated food prices to be very high even as they regulate the purchasing power of every African in terms of employment. The farms and cattle were taken away from and yet sold back to Africans at exuberant prices, even if the natives spared any crops to sell in the market, they get way less in exchange. I suppose this was the situation of things that aggravated Fanon (1960) towards his advocacy for violence as he depicted how Europeans have made Africans “the wretched of the earth” and Rodney (1974) who showed how “Europeans underdeveloped Africa”.

High taxes: Africans were mandated to pay very high taxes during this period. According to Dodds (1998), in his work about “*The Zulus and Matabele Warrior Nations*” he discussed how the European government placed taxes on almost everything they could possibly find including owning dogs. Africans own practically nothing as almost everything they worked for went back in taxes because they were forced to contribute more money. More recently, Berge (2013, p. 105), in his work about “*Divided Loyalties in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*” concurs with Dodds on the exorbitant taxes that extended to being taxed for marrying more than one wife. Although Berge argues that it was a strategy used by the Europeans to “solve the white farmers’ “labour problem” but also to hold back the higher competitiveness of black peasants”; since the numerous wives of the natives were separated in different huts therefore had to pay taxes for each hut they occupied.

Civil War in Africa: Africa has suffered and is still suffering violence and unending civil wars of which most are related to border, ethnic and political disputes after independence. During the artificial border design, the Europeans failed to acknowledge Africa’s local political, geographic, ethnic and multicultural diversities. This brought about great confusion in Africa fostering political violence, rebel groups and militias, change of territorial control and violence against civilians. A relative example could be cited from our Methodology seminar by Lars Berge (2014, Sept. 15), we discussed a thesis on border conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and how the author suggested the conflict resolution method of Nigeria-Cameroon regarding the Bakassi Peninsula. That case was that of border dispute which can be traced to the biased border design by colonialist; otherwise if there was no border division Ethiopia would not have wanted to incorporate Eritrea as fourteenth province of its nation.

The groups with the highest number of civil wars from 1970-2005 are the Afar and the Esa groups with about five civil war experiences. The Afar was partitioned between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti, whereas the Esa was split between Ethiopia and Somalia. Haile Selassie’s contention of Eritrea having a lot of norms together with Ethiopia such as history, culture and religion, therefore naturally must be part of his nation was clearly that of the total ethnic and cultural negligence of Europeans during the border design.

Apartheid: The segregated condition whereby the white race was made to feel and be superior to the black race was inevitable after the European invasion of Africa. Of course with their artilleries, soldiers and technologies, they were able to subject Africans derogatorily to servants with virtually no rights, labourers and eventual slaves. South Africa is a relative example of a country where white supremacy abounds even after Britain handed over power in South Africa in 1947, the possibility of the blacks leading the white people in South Africa was a huge struggle. Instead of the white

settlers who were about 15% of the population to let down their ego and give black leaders the chance to lead, they rather created an oligarchy system of government in which only the few white people possessed the power to lead and control the people. This intolerable abuse and brutality treatment of black people in most countries in Africa during the scramble and colonization era brought about inferiority complex amongst black people. This gruesome historical event of slavery hitherto has socially constructed the world to make the black race feel and be inferior to the white race.

2. Colonization in Africa

Africa before colonization was and to a large extent still known for its abundant natural and human capital resources. There were farmers, sculptors and fishermen with rare skills and time discipline that was passed on by ancestors to younger generations. The arbitrage of colonization sprouted from when the West and Europe saw Africa as a land littered with clueless people who were failing to manage and maximally utilize their unlimited resource. Thereafter, the European colonist ploughed on the African soil using religion, politics and technological prowess as a means to cease the opportunity to colonise the land and further develop Europe. They promised better education, governance, civilization and economic development to Africans on arrival but according to Rodney (1972, p. 208), the promise of building schools and provide better education for Africans was far from the true motive, but rather that of exploitation of human capital resources.

There have been debates from classic scholars such as Iliffe, Rodney and Fanon who through their works have out-rightly blamed the appalling present situation of Africa on colonialism. However, I find Iliffe's perspective more realistic as he was not totally biased in blaming the colonial powers. Iliffe also laid emphasis on the collaborative part Africans played during the colonial era, in other words "Africans were also agents in their own history", Berge (2013, p.105). On the other hand, as much as Gann and Duignan (1975) took a direct opposite turn to this debate towards the direction of my arguments describing Africa's predicament as a case of their total lack of economic and socio-political and organizational abilities to transform the continent; I may have to slightly disagree with them.

My disagreement is hereby backed-up with the seventh chapter of Christopher Clapham's book "Africa and the international system" where he discussed the topic "the international politics of economic failure". Having read through this chapter, I understood the "political kabuki" displayed by colonial powers using the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and Forex to implement their dependency theory in disguise, manipulating Africa's economic growth and

continuously limiting most African colonies to quasi-states. In reference to that chapter I also deduced that colonial powers still have a strong hold on their African colonies in ways Clapham (1996) described as neocolonialism; even when Africa is still struggling to recover from all she lost to the colonial powers during colonialism (Mamdani 1996). According to Clapham (1996), the achievement of national sovereignty might be undermined by the continued dependence of their economies on the structure of production and exchange associated with the colonial power.

As a result of the Berlin conference in 1884-1885 where Africa was partitioned, quite a number of European powers such as Britain, France, Germany and Portugal stormed Africa using intense imperialism to colonize the continent. It is important to note that each colonial power had its respective administrative style. The British employed indirect rule of administration whereby they operated through the already existing local power structure involving Kings, Chiefs and other elders in their colony. This indirect rule of administration was formulated and implemented by the British colonial governor Lord Frederick Lugard as governor-general of Nigeria. In the lecture on “Yoruba-speaking Nigeria” this indirect style of administration was used as British worked with the “Obas” who were the traditional leader of the Yoruba people to govern the Yoruba people.

The direct rule of administration in which the state is controlled by a central government is associated with the French, Germans, Belgians and Portuguese colonists. This direct style of administration was explained in details in the thesis on “Hauka Possession” where the French practically removed and replaced local power structure with officers who are obedient and answerable to their jurisdiction.

Between the periods of mid-1800s to the early 1900s imperialism was at its peak as France and Britain stood out to be the largest colonial powers in Africa controlling two-thirds of Africa before World War 1 and more than 70 percent after the war. Following the League of Nations mandate system, Germany having lost the World War 1 was also deprived of all her colonies as it was shared among other victorious allies. The German East Africa which consisted of Rwanda, Tanganyika and Burundi were given to Britain. Cameroon was divided between France and Britain, in the same light Togoland. For a country small as Belgium to subdue and take over DRC that is about ninety times her size and Britain conquering an area that is more than forty times her size is a thing of power and pride that brought about psychological satisfaction in all colonial nations.

Candidly, after the numerous lectures and seminars on this course I am now able to understand the motives of the scramble and colonialism event from different perspectives and also respond to certain questions differently. I am not implying that colonization was the best thing that happened to

Africa but frankly given the kind of natural resources found in Africa with the lack of knowledge the natives had about the worth of where or what they occupy, invasion was almost inevitable. I mean in the world today every production company still opt to produce in any country where materials, labour and cost of production is cheaper so they can make more profits and China, India and Bangladesh tend to be their destination and market. However I still think that the Europeans could have neo-colonized Africa then the way they are going about it today without slavery, killings and brutality. In as much as the Europeans enslaved and rubbed Africa from a lot of resources and even their dignity, I reason in line with Iliffe (1995) who said Africans were partakers of their own history; however I think “nothing can ever justify the enslavement of African people and the colonization of Africa”.

Africans I presume were not united enough against their self-hatred and love for material things and the greedy and selfish Europeans also took advantage of that weakness. The overwhelming economic benefits the Europeans envisaged brought along imperialism that kept Africa under bondage for centuries. Africans suffered from unfair taxation, cultural confusion, and expropriation of land, exploitation of labour and the loss of their mineral wealth to Europeans. However, I really do not know whether it was poverty that made Africans assist the Europeans in capturing and selling off their own people for mirrors and alcohol or perhaps they did it under duress of European fire power. Were the African people poor before the scramble and colonization? I mean if they could sell off their own people for that little, what if they were offered helicopters, Rolls-Royces and Lamborghinis of today? Or what if they knew the value and worth of the resources hidden beneath the ground? I guess they would have liaised with the Europeans and given up their entire municipality anyways. I mean what is the difference between what African leaders and government are doing to their people today with the knowledge of the same resources these authors are blaming the Europeans to have absconded with; and what the Europeans did to Africa during the scramble and colonization? In my opinion, apart from the evil of slavery by the European and West which is absolutely unacceptable, I really do not see much difference because the African people currently are still living in poverty and squalor despite the abundant resources.

2.1. Decolonization and Independence in Africa

Decolonization according to David (1995) is the period when the colonized people of Africa began great protest movement for nationalism and independence from the Europeans colonial powers. This movement began after World War II during the early decades of the twentieth century. Given the provision for healthcare and vaccines against epidemic diseases by the colonial masters, the death rate reduced while birth rate multiplied which in turn increased the population in Africa;

according to Iliffe (1995, p. 251) the increase in African population was a significant driving force towards decolonization and the quest for independence. Furthermore, the new generation of young African leaders who got their education in the United States, England, and France intensified the African negotiations with the European government to transfer political authorities to Africans and be granted autonomy to run an independent state.

Involved in the struggle for independence were Pan-Africanists who emphasised on the need for unity among African in diaspora; people such as William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, who schooled at Harvard University, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana also schooled in the United States and Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican who lived at Harlem in New York City. Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya was also a strong freedom activist who argued that the British invasion and administration was detrimental to the culture and tradition of the African people; therefore they should be given the right and freedom to practice it. In line with that argument, Marcus Garvey in 1920 issued a "Declaration of Human Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World," which boosted the morals of all Africans in the struggle for independence. Kwame Nkrumah was very resilient in his pursuit of independence for Ghana as he was the founder of Convention's People's Party (CPP) which was the first political party in Black Africa; and through which Ghana became the first African country to finally gain her independence in 1957.

Women on the other hand were not left out during various protests against the oppression of colonialism and struggle for independence as they were disregarded during colonial administration. There was a significant case of a feminist and anti-colonial protest during the British colonial history in Nigeria known as the "Aba Women Riot". This riot was led by thousands of women in the provinces of Owerri and Calabar in South-Eastern Nigeria between November and December 1929 against the British imposed high taxes for doing business in the markets. The British administration stood their ground on the market tax law killing over 50 women to end the riot (Allen, 1972). The Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya is another similar feminist anti-colonial revolution. According to Ann (2003, pp. 295-319) not all the kikuyu women were involved in direct confrontation with the colonial authorities as they were split into groups so some will be involved in logistic roles such as gathering information, smuggling arms, food and medical supplies to their men who fighting against the colonial powers.

Throughout the administration of this course "The Dynamics of African Societies", even if I already have a background of Africa being an African, I now know better and feel more enlightened as to thinking critically. I am pleased to have been taught and read through many emphases on the diversity of the Africa culture, customs and tradition which was one of the problems the British

encountered in Nigeria. Maybe they knew about the culture diversity but just did not care to respect it because of economic reasons. As Wole Soyinka argues that the British established some laws that went against Nigerian customs and traditions; e.g. in 1946 when the King's Horseman died in "Oya" a city in Yoruba land, Nigeria; It was customary for the King's main horseman to sacrifice his life when his king dies to escort the king to "the great beyond", but the British stopped the ritual proceedings which brought about serious conflict between the native and the British authorities.

I think culture encompasses all, including values and norms that determines the behaviour of a group of people. A community should have that freedom to experience certain external culture with a choice to adoption for the development of that community. I quite agree with (Boukary 2003) when he argues that "development should be anchored in a people's culture and cannot be brought to them from the outside because that would be someone else's idea of development". Of course others scholars would also argue that development can be introduced from outside to set the trend and yardstick for others to adapt to it. However, I think education played a vital role towards the African independence. If it was not for the highly educated few individuals who had studied abroad, fighting with the sword would not have been the solution just like they had tried with aggressive protest to no avail. The part of education in the black struggle reveals further that the pen is indeed mightier than the sword as Africans could fight for their right of independence legally and constitutionally.

3. Underdevelopment in Africa

This section to me is the most important because it reflects the current situation of Africa and the title of my portfolio. The idea of underdevelopment can be deduced from a reflective explanation and possible definition of development. According to Todaro & Smith (2003), before a definition for development can be agreed upon it must consider and encapsulate some criteria. Traditionally development overtime has been equated with growth of per capita income by World Bank and the meeting of basic needs such as even distribution of income and creation of employment opportunities. Therefore Todaro & Smith (2003) argue that "development must be understood as a multidimensional process that involves major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, rapid economic growth, and the reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty" Following the above guide and criteria of development, I can say that any African country that does not possess and portray these criteria is faced with underdevelopment.

Great regards to Rodney, Fanon, Iliffe, Mamdoni and other scholars following the immense works they have done and their efforts in telling the African history the best way they could, but I still

have some issues to discuss about the present underdevelopment in Africa. Following the indebt knowledge I now have about the scramble and colonization of Africa as a result of my study in the “Dynamics of African Society” course, I must say that was a pitiable, sad, unfortunate but understandable historical event about Africa. My argument is that since independence it is obvious and evident that not so much have been done or achieved with regards to development in Africa. Why is Africa still this much underdeveloped? In the works of Rodney (1974) and Fanon (1961), they have out-rightly blasted the colonial masters for stealing from Africa and blamed the present underdevelopment dilemma of Africa on colonialism.

To me as a business man, I am not totally against colonialism because it has to do with business (making money) and economics, but I would most definitely frown at the extreme case of slavery. However it seems to me that virtually everything that has gone wrong in Africa since the advent of independence has been blamed on the legacies of colonialism (Mamdani, 1996). Is that fair enough? What have African leaders been doing for over 60 years after independence? Whatever they have been doing, is it the way forward towards development in Africa? Did any good come out of the African “colonial experience”?

In attempt to explain the development gap between the underdeveloped African countries and the developed colonial powers I will apply three theories that are not mutually exclusive but relative. These theories include development theory which according to Pieterse (2009) offers broad explanatory frameworks on a country’s development. However in a nutshell it depicts problems such as factors mentioned in the second theory that lead to underdevelopment in a country. Modernization theory which argues that a country can attain development when it embraces the importation of new technology which results to other political and social changes; e.g. increase in the levels of schooling and the development of mass media that promote political and democratic institution, increase in accessible and sophisticated communication and transportation systems. Finally, dependency theory which according to Greig, et. al. (2007) explains development and underdevelopment in the light of a “situation whereby some countries have their economy conditioned by the development and expansion of another”. In a relative manner when a country lacks most of the factors mentioned in modernization theory, underdevelopment is imminent as it will be detected by the development theory; and when underdevelopment strikes, that country will have to depend on the other nations that possess theses development factors as detected by the dependency theory.

Hypothetically, if I could personify this present day Africa and make her stand before modernization theory to answer yes or no to the acquisition of factors mentioned in the theory, then

we will know for sure that mother Africa will be found guilty as charged by today's world media. Having said all that, these are still physical factors that if not present in a country leads to underdevelopment and what Rodney, Fanon and others are tried hard to convince me with is that all these factors were robbed off Africa through colonialism leading to Africa's present poverty and underdevelopment. I understand that colonialism is connected to Africa underdevelopment from the perspective of exploitation of natural resources used to boost the economy of the imperial powers; e.g. the British exploitation of gold, diamond, timber from Ghana. But if I may ask, what about Ethiopia that was not colonized and is still underdeveloped? Given the amount of aids the country receives from World Bank and assistance from UNESCO, Ethiopia tends to be more underdeveloped than other African countries that were colonised. Now that fact brings me to another question, is colonialism really responsible for underdevelopment in Africa? Well I would answer 'Yes' but to a lesser extent and obviously not to the extent Rodney, Fanon and others are blowing it. I personally think that there are more important and bigger causes of underdevelopment in Africa and these are enlisted below...

3.1. Causes of underdevelopment

Corruption: Corruption among African leaders is indeed a menace in most African countries today and in my opinion is the biggest cause of underdevelopment. According to Ineke (2010) and Transparency International (2006) corruption is defined as the misuse of trusted power for private gain. African leader over many years from politicians to presidents abscond with unspeakable financial resources to foreign banks for their own private businesses without prosecution or jail term. Only if these stolen funds could be infused back into the economy by genuinely executing useful projects that will help to stimulating economic growth, Africa would have been far developed today. There is no regime after independence that is yet to be found free of corruption and these acts have held Africa spell bound to underdevelopment. Corruption in African countries today has far eaten deep into people that it has almost become a cultural phenomenon.

Foreign Aids: Charity they say begins at home which is a popular cliché argues that good leadership and development must be self-implemented first from home before going abroad. The reason for Africa's abject poverty and underdevelopment is not farfetched, given the sad fact that the record of Western aid to Africa between 1960 and 1997 has escalated to more than \$500 billion. Ironically the external stock of capital held by Africans overseas has been envisaged to be as much as \$700 billion to \$800 billion excluding the missing billions in export earnings from oil, gas, diamonds, and other minerals that are not openly accounted for (Mistry, 2005). This in my opinion is anchored on corruption in government of African leaders and politicians which has eventually

stagnated development in the continent. It was almost unbelievable until the Paris daily wrote, *Le Monde* in March 1990, “Every franc we give impoverished Africa comes back to France or is smuggled into Switzerland and even Japan”. Further confirmation was gotten from the World Bank review stating that almost 40% of Africa’s total wealth is stored in foreign bank accounts (Aderinokun, 2003 and Macmillan, 2005). Therefore, until African leaders, politician and business tycoons decide to bring these funds and reinvest it back home, Africa will still be synonymous with underdevelopment.

3.2. The Way Forward for Africa

Honestly it is my wish that someday African countries will be in comparison with other developed countries of the world; but that is just a mere wish because the reality remains that Africa need a total overhauling and reorientation of their mentality. However I have a few suggestions that could help facilitate African development.

Youth Leadership: I suggest that Africa begins to encourage youth leadership. Today in most African countries the leaders they had before and after independence are still the same people in power. Most of them have blatantly refused to pass on the baton to the next and younger generation. Some of African leaders are almost ninety years old who know little or nothing about new technology and still want to lead the country while some die in power. A recent example is the presidential aspirant of Nigeria general Muhammadu Buhari, this man is seventy-two years old who has led the country during military regime and now coming back almost forty years after to lead as a civilian under a democratized government. Really, where are the youths? Robert Mugabe is a ninety years old man who can barely walk strongly as he stumbled and fell in public some months back, but he is still holding on to power. I strongly suggest that the youths both younger men and women with fresh minds and innovative ideas must be encouraged and given the chance to lead African countries.

Stop Foreign Aids: I think and suggest foreign aids must be stopped because over the years it has tended towards incurring more debt for African countries than improving socio-economic development. This could be a long term curse because I foresee a world power conspiracy to promote dependency of African countries on Foreign aids which will make the continents debtors forever. I do not seem to understand the reason why despite the fact that Africa has more than enough financial resources to support, build and develop her countries, they still receive aids from these “benevolent and philanthropic foreign aiders” who give with interior motives of destruction. These foreign aids sadly for Africa’s myopic leaders results to almost total dependency on foreign aids from imperialist countries to run national budgets in African countries.

The conspiracy behind these million dollar aids is that the more aid poured into Africa, the lower her standard of living, debt will increase and there will be need to borrow more money. As a matter of fact Africa could be facing the risk of her national budget and development being drawn by imperialist countries that provide these aids which will lead Africa to an impending modern recolonization. It has never and will never work in a long term because corruption still remains a menace in most African countries and unfortunately development in Africa can only be achieved by Africans themselves with their own financial resources. According to the former Kenyan Member of Parliament David Karanja, “Foreign aid has done more harm to Africa than we care to admit”. I think change and development in Africa can only come from within Africa by truthful, transparent and patriotic governance from African leaders.

3.3. Conclusion

Indeed global history cannot be complete without African history. Throughout the duration of this course I have learned to take African history in a much positive light in the sense that in reality, the world revolves around Africa and not the other way around. Whether good or bad, underdevelopment or not, supreme or quasi-start, the world still tends to turn towards the direction of Africa for one reason or the other from pre-colonial to post-colonial periods. I might not have all the answers to every question about how wealthy yet underdeveloped Africa is but with time I believe the story will change for the better so long as Africans own up to their responsibilities in developing the continent and quit the blame on colonial pre-eminence and work with what they have at hand.

With the use of course and external literatures, seminars and class lectures and past thesis projects of African Studies Programme in Dalarna University, this portfolio has been able to fulfil its aim which is to discuss the three critical issues of present day Africa which are colonialism, independence and underdevelopment. Also this work discussed the causes of underdevelopment in Africa with a stand to critically and scientifically argue with classic authors and also suggest possible solutions of the way forward for Africa. Being a fan of Iliffe who argues that Africans also took part in their own exploitation therefore must take part of the blame; I strongly argue that playing the blame game over events long gone is a sign of irresponsibility and weakness. Finally I believe that Africa will develop only if they learn from the past, run a sincere, transparent and patriotic government.

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