

Colonialism and the African Contemporary Developmental Challenges

Simon Odion Ehiabhi, Ph.D*

Abstract: *Whenever Africa is mentioned in the international arena, the name seems to conjure pity, poverty, diseases, corruption, conflicts, maladministration, abuse of human rights and other trappings of vices associated with underdevelopment. This thinking may have influenced Tony Blair's (former British Prime Minister) comments that Africa is a "scar on the conscience of the world". This paper therefore argues that the various degrees of developmental challenges confronting contemporary African states were created in the era of colonial administration of the continent. Using the concepts of fundamentalist structuralism to critically analyse the contemporary African developmental challenges, the paper concludes that Africa appears to lack the capacity to deconstruct the philosophical foundation on which colonial structures were erected, and without a radical overture, the African continent may remain in its crawling developmental posture even in the 21st century.*

Keywords: Fundamentals, Structuralism, Colonialism, Development, Africa

Introduction

Africa is naturally endowed with abundant human and natural resources. Unfortunately, the continent is unable to develop these resources to create wealth. In terms of statistics, Africa runs high in its deficiency ratio to adequately take care of its citizens. What could be responsible for the continent's inability to develop and successfully execute its own developmental plans? Could it be as a result of the consequences of colonial rule? Frederick Cooper argues that to appreciate the contemporary history of any colonized society is to first understand its colonial past since "... the very categories by which we understand the colonies' past and the ex-colonies future were shaped by the process of colonization"¹. Likewise, the reality of the challenges facing contemporary societies that have gone through

* **Simon Odion EHIABHI** is a senior lecturer in the Department of History and International Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. His scope of research is on African socio-political history with broader international dimension. E-mail address: simonoehiabhi@yahoo.com.

¹ F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2005, p. 3.

colonization such as those of Africa is in consonance with Cooper's submission. These developmental challenges Cooper argues "reveal the hypocrisy of Europe's claims to provide models of democratic politics, efficient economic systems, and a rational approach to understanding and changing the world"².

From the historical viewpoint, the structure of imperialism has not been dismantled by any economic standard; rather the structures remain in the new form of neo-imperialism. The burden of this discussion is to continue and also provoke further debate that Africa's developmental woes and the seemingly incapacity of the continent to invent its own developmental paradigm within the context of international politics is attributable to the fundamental structure of colonialism. For the purpose of analysis, our discussion will demonstrate the relationship between fundamentalist structuralism and colonial deformation of the African continent. It therefore becomes germane to first explain the functionality of some of the key terms deployed in the discourse.

Colonialism, Fundamentalism and Colonial Methods

George Orwell has noted that if the use of language is "an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought", then "let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about"³. Orwell's worry is that definitions of terms most often do not properly capture the phenomenon or event the term is intended to explain. So, any attempt to define colonialism without first taking into consideration the historical impact of colonial rule on the colonized would make such definition deficient in explaining the essentials of colonialism. Various scholars have shared their views on colonialism. A.S. Hornby defines it as "the practice by which a powerful country controls another country or countries"⁴. This definition is too simplistic to explain the structure of colonialism. H. Magdoff sees colonialism "as the direct application of military and political force [which] was essential to reshape the social and economic institutions of many of the dependent countries to the needs of the metropolitan centers"⁵. The definition captures the essence of colonialism to the extent of identifying its motives. It however does not

² Ibid.

³ G. Orwell, "Politics and the English Language", quoted in F. Cooper, 2005, p 59.

⁴ A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 747.

⁵ H. Magdoff, *Imperialism: From the Colonial to Present*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1978, p. 139.

encapsulate the primary institution that must give way for effective colonization to take place.

G. Balandier explains colonialism as a system whereby a foreign country takes over the political control of another country and subsequently changes the colonized society⁶. Balandier's explanation, though indicated that the overthrow of the political institution was essential for colonial imposition, it however did not point out the method by which the colonizing power takes over political control from the colonized. E.E.G. Iweriebor's conception of colonialism perhaps captures the realistic understanding of colonialism. He defines it as the

imposition of alien rule by use of superior military power and the conclusion of treaties of dubious legal validity by the Europeans, on the one hand, and the loss of political sovereignty by the [colonized] African, on the other. The seizure of African political sovereignty was the minimum condition and requirement for the fulfilment by the colonialists of their imperialists aims which was pre-eminently economic⁷.

Taking the few definitions of colonialism into consideration, colonialism should therefore be understood as the forceful overthrow of the political institution of other countries in order to effectively manipulate the colonized through political action to achieve economic gains. The observable 'positive' social impact of colonialism is either as a result of deliberate policy to serve economic ends or as a result of accidental by-product of colonial activities. The essence of colonization was to consolidate imperial gains; this would therefore show that colonialism resulted from imperialism. V.I. Lenin argues that "the more capitalism is developed, the more the need for raw materials is felt [...] the more desperate becomes the struggle for the acquisition of colonies⁸. Lenin's incisive position on the connection between imperialism and colonialism is clearly demonstrated in the relationship between Europe and African territories. It is this observable chain-like connection that may have influenced R. Robinson, et al's view that expansion (imperial) was "inevitable" due to industrial successes⁹.

⁶ G. Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa: Social Dynamics in Central Africa*, Andre and Deutsch, London, 1970, p. 31.

⁷ E.E.G. Iweriebor, "The Impact of Colonialism in Africa: A Critique of the Historiography", pp. 7-8. This is the revised version first presented at the Staff/Postgraduate Seminar, Department of History, University of Ilorin on 15th May, 1980.

⁸ V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, International Publishers, New York, 1939, pp. 82-84.

⁹ R. Robinson, J. Gallagher, A. Denny, *Africa and the Victorians. The Official Mind of Imperialism*, Macmillan & Co., London, 1970, p. 3.

It was the European imperialist trade that began after the abolition of the slave trade in the early 19th century that essentially produced colonialism. The over three centuries of the triangular trade in slave led to the industrial revolution in Europe. The revolution came with its own demands. Raw materials and extensive markets were required to complement and sustain the industrial boom. Initially, imperialist traders were content at waiting at the coast for middlemen to supply the required goods. With time (in the case of Africa), imperialist merchants began to interfere with the internal politics of their host polity because of the need to break the monopoly of their host potentates.

Magdoff has rightly noted, “this shift in trading pattern entailed, in the long, changes [...] and practices as well as in the nature of colonial acquisitions”¹⁰. This position is in agreement with Robinson’s assertion that though wealth could be obtained through any means, “the best mode of preserving wealth is power”¹¹. From the foregoing, it is clear that imperial trade inevitably produced colonialism. If trade was the instrument of imperialism, it was clear that for colonialism to survive there was the strategic need to adopt its own fundamental methods. The nature of the application of the methods can better be appreciated when we take into consideration an understanding of what fundamentalism represent.

The usage of the term fundamentalism is often associated with religious actions because the word emanated from Christian religious ideology. From historical perspective, fundamentalism is the practice of strictly adhering to a set of Christian theological principles published in twelve volumes entitled *The Fundamentals*. Those adherents were therefore called fundamentalist because they stoutly defended their belief and also avoided interaction with those that differed from them in thought and action¹². In other words, the key element in the concept of fundamentalism is that it is intolerant of any belief, idea or structure that is not compatible with its set objective. This element, Karen Armstrong, has rightly discussed in the article “Intolerance and Fundamentalism”¹³.

From the foregoing, fundamentalism would simply mean a dictatorial, unbending and uncompromising position on all matters. Therefore, any threat or real opposition to fundamentalist establishment must be removed or exterminated. So, when the concept of fundamentalism and colonialism are juxtaposed, a correlation of method is observed. As we have already explained, colonialism was

¹⁰ H. Magdoff, 1978, p.18.

¹¹ R. Robinson, J. Gallagher, A. Denny, *op.cit.*, p.4.

¹² Wikipedia, retrieved on January 14, 2013.

¹³ K. Armstrong, “Intolerance and Fundamentalism”, retrieved on January 14, 2013 from www.2.ise.ac.uk/publicevents/pdf/200.

the forceful imposition of one value system over another value system without considering the impact of the imposition on the imposed. In this instance, we refer to the introduction of European practices into Africa. Colonization tempered with all aspects of African cultural values because colonialism was inherently intolerant of the way of life of the colonized, since the colonized values were incompatible with colonial objectives. As such the life style that did not meet up with the requirements of colonial demands was fundamentally deconstructed and reconstructed through colonial methods in line with the cultural values of the colonizing powers.

Methodological application to any situation depends on the peculiarity of the issue under interrogation. The core motive of colonialism wherever it existed in the globe was for economic exploitation. This was carried out by stimulating the economy of the colonized to produce goods required by the metropolitan country¹⁴. So, since colonization was not a friendly tea party, we therefore share in the opinion of Aime Cesaire that the primary and sole motive for colonization was “neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance,... nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God,... [but] to admit once for all, to extend to a world scale the competition of its antagonistic economics”¹⁵. Given, therefore, the motive of colonialism, its method was realistically violent to the colonized. Some of the methods were military conquest, the overthrow of existing political institutions, the introduction of alien administrative structures and legislation.

Most societies, confronted with colonial military forces, responded with force to defend their sovereignty until they were defeated by superior European war machine. Military conquest could be regarded as the swiftest means of ensuring that colonial rule was imposed and sustained¹⁶. In the case of West Africa, which experienced high level of resistance to colonial invasion, the recourse to military option brought it to submission. A.F. Afrigbo has mentioned some of the societies that suffered such fate: Lagos in 1851 before its annexation in 1861, Opobo in 1887, Ijebu in 1892, Itsekiri and Dahomey in 1894, Bida, Benin and Ilorin in 1897¹⁷. As soon as a society was conquered, the head of the existing political structure was deposed and a collaborative replacement installed. The idea

¹⁴ J. F.A Ajayi, M. Crowder, “West Africa 1919-1939: The Colonial Situation”, J. F.A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, Vol. Two, Longman Group Limited, London, 1974, p. 524.

¹⁵ A. Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1955, pp. 10-11.

¹⁶ A. F. Afrigbo, “The Establishment of Colonial Rule: 1900-1918”, J. F.A Ajayi, M. Crowder (eds.), *op.cit.*, 1974, p. 425.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

was to create a vacuum as a necessary condition for colonial manipulation. Since politics is the struggle for political power to control human and material resources, interested parties with political ambition that wished to belong to the class of ruling elite became available instruments in the hands of colonial authorities to truncate concerted efforts of restoring the overthrown potentate. Therefore, the traditional chieftaincy institution was manipulated to serve colonial interest.

Balandier also noted that “political control could only be effected through the intermediary of the ‘chiefs’ and, to some extent, through that of native institutions”¹⁸. Chieftaincies were abolished or created depending on the discretion of the colonial authority. For example, in 1917 about 6,095 chieftaincy positions had existed in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) before it was reduced to 1,212 in 1938 by the colonial authority¹⁹. The manipulation of the chieftaincies was a prominent feature in the whole of colonial Africa²⁰. In some instances, men unfit to be addressed as chiefs were made chiefs by warrant and such method inevitably weakened the stability of the traditional institution to dictate social norms. This method, Balandier considered as a factor that seriously undermined the “political equilibrium within the colonized societies”²¹.

Structural Colonialism and the African Developmental Challenges

For colonialism to sustain its primary objective, which of course was economic, a structural link was established between the colonial and colonized economies. We have adopted J.T. Rourke’s definition of structuralism which holds that “the conduct of world politics is based on the way the world is organized economically. With the belief that the world is divided into have and have-not countries, the developed countries work to keep the less developed countries weak or poor in order to exploit them”²². The strongest instrument of structuralism is the “economic penetration of weaker countries with the eventual objective of exerting pressure upon the government of the society being penetrated”²³. Given our line of

¹⁸ G. Balandier, 1970, p.31.

¹⁹ R.F. Betts, “Methods and Institution of European Domination”, A.A. Boahen (ed.), *General History of Africa*, vol. VII, “Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935”, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1985, pp. 321-323.

²⁰ Ibid., p.323.

²¹ G. Balandier, 1970, pp. 31-32.

²² J.T. Rourke, *International Politics on the World Stage*, McGraw. Hill Inc., Dushkin, 1997, p. 417.

²³ W.C. Olson (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of International Relations*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1991, p.167.

discussion so far, it is a lot easier to show the link between structuralism and colonialism. The various policies introduced through colonization were meant to adjust the economy of the colonized for colonial enterprise, and such policies have become in post-colonial Africa, the horizontal unproductive relationship between the West and Africa.

However, it is also important to state that the structure of colonialism was influenced by the forces responsible for the intellectual justification of colonization. The likes of Margery Perham, Hugh Trevor Roper, H.H. Johnson, Lord Lugard, Lord Loverhulme and H.R. Palmer represent some of the popular proponents of the benefits of colonial rule on the colonised. Their views need not be repeated here because they have enjoyed much scholarly attention. However, the comments of Oliver Davies, P. Dingnan and L.H. Gann deserve some space. Davies in his *West Africa before the Europeans* argued that the West African sub-region would have remained a backward society in all its ramifications were it not for the coming of the Europeans. He described the West African geography as dull and violent, having animals of hermitic origin with uncontrolled human activities, difficulty in accessing quality nutrition, crude agricultural practices, no viable industries and a low level of state development and civilization. He further posited that it was the opened sea-ways of West Africa by the efforts of Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal in the mid 15th century that brought civilization into the sub-region. For Davies, the activities of the Portuguese were devoid of territorial acquisition “as colonialism was hardly in the minds of the early explorers. They had no desire to settle in West Africa...”²⁴.

Davies also expressed the opinion that Europeans introduced innovations that made life easier for the people, such as quality crops that promoted healthy population growth, metal and cloth industries, etc. Davies ended his 332 paged-book with the conclusion: “but if it had not been for European navigators, Africa would have remained introvert, the impassable and unhealthy coastal forest would have still been backward and under populated...”²⁵. Dingnan and Gann submitted that when the likes of Rhodes, Ferry, Chamberlain and Leopold of Europe thought of modern civilization, most Africans were still locked up in their hamlets, armed with hoes, axes and digging tools produced from simple technology. They argued that pre-colonial economy was backward and underdeveloped because of poor farming technology, poor transportation system, and inability to harness and utilize solar, hydro and wind energies, relied more on human strength for labour and

²⁴ O. Davies, *West Africa before the Europeans*, Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1967, p. 319.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.319-320.

defenceless against diseases. They posit: “Africans also had to contend with a wide variety of political difficulties. The forces of production might be shackled, for instance, by the absence of a wide spread pax, local wars, civil wars, slave raiding and various forms of servitude were endemic over wide areas before the imposition of European rule”²⁶.

It is important to comment that the perspective of Davies, Dingnan and Gann reflects lack of sufficient knowledge of the dynamic nature of the West African economic society or out of pure racism, or perhaps a combination of both. The pace and quality of technological advancement in any society is often determined by the challenges of the time. African farming tools were sufficient enough to produce abundant crops to meet the food needs of the people. The transport system was such that villages and people were connected through the network of well developed land and water ways. It is surprising to note as late as 1975, scholars would still deny the contributions of African human labour to the development of western capitalism. The obnoxious trans-Atlantic slave trade between 15th and 19th century resulted out of the need for the African human labour. Europeans could not face the rigors of hard agricultural activities that required the strength of human muscle. If the African political situation was that terrible, it would have been difficult for European traders to engage in business unmolested. The justification of colonial rule is a continuation of the defence of European dislocation of Africa’s socio-political and economic equilibrium.

However, it is an established fact that no society is static whether small or big. The imposing accounts of the sophistication of African pre-colonial societies are enough to substantiate the dynamism of the society. The histories of Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Ife and Benin are a few examples of societies that had high levels of civilization before European contact. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that modern agricultural technology, improved transport network, health services, schools and other social infrastructure were some of the positive impact of colonial rule. But, this position should not be unduly stressed, because it did not result as a deliberate policy to develop the continent. Rather, those developments were necessary tools in the strategic structural exploitation of the African continent.

The structural tools of colonialism are still the instrument still being used to grow the economies of the west to the detriment of post-colonial Africa. Since the early period of political independence in Africa, almost all attempts to internally and independently generate economic growth in Africa have often ended in

²⁶ P. Duignan, L.H. Gann, *The Economics of Colonialism, Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960*, Vol. 4, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975, pp. 1-3.

abysmal failure. It would appear that Africa is infested with the virus of corruption, poverty, poor political leadership, infrastructural decay, breakdown of cultural values, diseases of all kinds (preventable and controlled) and the hopelessness of a reversal in Africa's plight. The reality of the African situation perhaps made Tony Blair, a former British Prime Minister to describe Africa as a "scar on the conscience of the world"²⁷. An interpretative response to Blair's comment is that Africa is an embarrassment to the comity of progressive nations in the international system. This interpretation is justified in the sense that a scar on the human skin or object is regarded as a dent that must be addressed in a manner to minimize or eliminate any discomfort associated with the scar.

For the sake of emphasizing Africa's plight, we would quote a comment to demonstrate how Africa is viewed in the arena of international politics and diplomacy. M. Meredith's has this to say about Africa in the following pathetic words "the fortunes of Africa have changed dramatically in the fifty years since the independence era began [...] Today, Africa is spoken of only in pessimistic terms [...] no other area of the world arouses such a sense of foreboding"²⁸.

In an attempt to unravel the circumstances that may have created this sad African situation, Meredith rested his thesis on the argument that Africa's biggest developmental challenge was its inability to cultivate patriotic and visionary political leadership²⁹. While we do not contest that obvious fact, that political leadership is one of the problems of Africa, it is, however, important to state that African political elites are themselves product of structural colonialism. That is why political activities in Africa are always reflective of colonial antecedent, which are not in harmony with African pre-colonial administrative governance. Thabo Mbeki, former South African President, expressed the opinion that Africa had come of the age of 'neo-colonialism' and that Africans should take the bull by the horn in initiating policies and taking responsibility for its socio-political and economic developments³⁰. Mbeki's opinion could be understood as stating that it was high time Africans stopped blaming colonial rule as the continued source of the continent's underdevelopment. As thought provoking as the comments of Mbeki may be, it should however, be said that the reality of the African situation is that successes or failure of Africa's developmental strategies are still determined by the forces of former colonial powers in contemporary times.

²⁷ Quoted in the inside cover page of Martin Meredith's, *The State of Africa*, Free Press, London, 2006.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ That is the thesis of Meredith in his book.

³⁰ Stated in M. Meredith, 2006, pp. 676-677.

Be that as it may, a perusal of the tools of colonialism would suffice to demonstrate how structural colonialism has become one of the biggest challenges to Africa's development in world politics. Colonialism was a deliberate economic policy of exploitation of human and natural resources. To maximally derive the benefits of colonialism, various tools were developed to achieve colonial ends. The major challenge here is the inability of post-colonial Africa to sustain the functionality of the tool to develop the continent because they are incompatible with the core values of traditional system of administration and governance. This is why K. Wiredu views structural colonialism as "minds that think about and expound their own culture in term of categories of a colonial origin, without any qualms as to any possible conceptual incongruities"³¹. These incompatibilities are observable in the inability of Africa to fully reconcile or blend European and African ways of perceiving reality to developing the right paradigm for development. Some of the tools of structural colonialism are administrative structure, force labour, transportation, currency, religion, education, racism and the institution of the armed forces. Each of these will be expounded below.

Pre-colonial political administrative structure was holistic in nature. The separation of functions in administration was negligible or non existence in most cases because the elders were able to combine the socio-political and economic functions into a compact unit. It was therefore easier for the African community to maintain a sense of balance in the administration of every sector of the society. The pre-colonial African administrative resourcefulness engendered peace as the political actors were still the same forces that determined moral and economic matters. But those ambiguities were limited or eliminated in presiding over issues.

The administrative political structure introduced by colonialism reversed the African status quo. Africans witnessed the hijack and separation of powers and duties from the traditional authorities. The alien political administrative structure introduced was designed to have the capacity to effectively initiate and enforce policies directed at colonial objectives without any regard for the African situation. The British introduced the indirect rule in Northern Nigeria, and the native authorities and native courts in West African territories of southern Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia³². The indirect system and native courts were similar in political administrative structure. They were headed by the local chiefs for the sole purpose of collecting taxes under the supervision of the colonial

³¹ Quoted in S.O. Ehiabhi, "Afro-centric Decolonization of the Interpretation and Practice of International Relation: A Post-Westphalian Fallacy", *IRORO: A Journal of Arts*, 10 (1& 2), June 2005, p. 101.

³² J. F.A Ajayi, M. Crowder, 1974, p. 516 and 517.

District Officer. The function of the native count was to administer justice and impose fines. The French introduced the Quatre Communes in their colonized territories with functions similar in nature to those of the British administrative models³³. The Portuguese also developed the practice of grouping communities together under the administrative system called ‘circumscription’ to serve the administrative goals of colonialism³⁴.

The implication for Africa is that the colonial political administrative structure was not designed with the interest of internally developing the continent. Rather, it has structurally tied African administrative practices to European models. As such, the vagaries of administrative ideology in Europe are felt in Africa. For example, Africa suffered at the era of the Cold War as the polarization of political ideas between capitalism and communism shook the fabrics of administration in the African continent. The continent has not fully recovered from the impact of the Cold War, yet it is now grappling with the demand of democracy. The challenge of western democracy may still remain an issue in Africa until the continent develops its own African type of democracy as done by Japan and China.

For the colonial society to survive, the key sectors of the economy had to be developed. The two key sectors were agriculture and transportation. The colonial economy transformed the traditionally based economy into a cash crop oriented agricultural economy. Colonies were forced to cultivate the goods needed in Europe and other parts of the world. To meet the demands, more labour was required. Able bodied young men and women were compelled by the colonial authorities to provide free or in few cases underpaid agricultural labour. J.O. Ahazuem and T. Falola have discussed the role of forced labour in the colonial Nigerian agricultural sector³⁵. The French even created labour camps known as “village de liberte” in her West African territories to recruit cheap labour³⁶. The colonial forced labour practice was exploitative, dehumanising and was hostile to the African. The condition has not changed in post-colonial Africa as majority of working adults are under paid. This situation has made it difficult for most families to meet up with the minimum standard of living. It is longer news that most Africans live on less than one dollar per day. The reality of the African worker in the mines of southern Africa, or the field worker in the savannah remains pathetic

³³ Ibid., p.516.

³⁴ Ibid., p.527.

³⁵ J.O. Ahazuem, T. Falola, “Production for the Metropolis: Agriculture and Forest Products”, T. Falola (ed.), *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development?*, Zed Books Ltd., London, 1987, pp. 80-87.

³⁶ M. Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, Ethiope Publishing Corporation, Benin City, 1976, p. 184.

as long as labour policies are not worker friendly. Forced labour was most massively utilized in the development of the transport system.

The development of the colonial transport system was influenced by the need to evacuate goods from the hinterland. In Nigeria for example, the colonial authorities selectively developed the transport sector based on their agricultural needs. The inland water ways, interconnecting roads and the railway system took centre stage. The sector was not developed to provide fast and easy means of transporting goods and services for the colonized but to serve colonial interest³⁷. Apart from South Africa that has massively improved on its transport system, the rest of Africa is still maintaining colonial roads and rails. The inadequacy of transport infrastructure is telling on the pace of economic activities as only few Africans know the technology to construct and maintain roads. The deficiency of skilled man power due to the nature of colonial education has resulted in the continuous failure of road network in Africa. To remedy the situation, European companies are always contracted and paid in European currency, which is still part of structural colonialism.

As J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder have noted, the introduction of colonial currency was meant to integrate the colonial society with the metropole³⁸. That had to be done to facilitate trade. Before the introduction of European currency, Africans for example had their own currency in the form of manillas, brass rods, cowries and copper wires³⁹. Crowder argues that the African currency was only serviceable within the pre-colonial economy and useless in the colonial economy because it lacked universal acceptance, except the cowries, and that created the need to introduce “a uniformly accepted portable currency [...] for large-scale commercial transactions”⁴⁰. With time, because of its cumbersome nature, the cowries had to give way to coin and paper-money⁴¹. The impact of the currency regime is felt in African post-colonial economy whenever there is any slight in depreciation in the British pound or American dollar. African economy is tied to the vagaries of foreign currencies.

Contemporary Africa is berserk with religious conflicts because of how religion was put to use in colonial times. The conflict between Christianity and traditional religion in colonial era divided traditional rulers into factions in the

³⁷ S.A. Olanrewaju, “The Infrastructure of Exploitation: Transport. Monetary Changes, Banking, etc.”, T. Falola (ed.), *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development?*, pp. 66-71.

³⁸ J. F.A Ajayi, M. Crowder, 1974, p. 529.

³⁹ S.A. Olanrewaju, *op.cit.*, pp. 71-72.

⁴⁰ M. Crowder, 1976, p. 278.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.279.

Nigerian towns of Abeokuta, Ado, Badagry and Lagos⁴². It also undermined the traditional political authorities in Brass, New Calabar, Bonny, Opobo, and Okrika⁴³. Today, Africa is talked of in the religious gab as Moslem north and Christian south. Even within African states, we have noticed a divide on religious lines as it is happening among the people of Nigeria, Egypt and Sudan.

An objective assessment of the relationship between colonialism and religion will reveal that both had different goals, but had to collaborate for mutual benefits. Colonial authorities encouraged missionary activities not because of the love for evangelism, but because it was a veritable weapon to weaken the colonised attachment to their traditional belief and practices considered uncivilized in colonial social scale⁴⁴. Where religious activities aided colonial interest, it was encouraged but where it threatened their goals, it was curtailed. The British, for example, regulated the activities of Christian missionaries in the Islamized northern part of Nigeria because of Christian/Moslem religious incompatible ideological differences in order to limit religious altercation.

It should however, be stated that African worldview is greatly influenced by religious perspectives. K.S. Opoku has noted that this religious commonness is part of the totality of the African existence rooted in the culture of the people⁴⁵. African pre-colonial religions had their political and social impact. It politically empowered the elders and traditional authorities to discharge their duties most effectively. Elders were revered as they were regarded as closer to the ancestors, and that awe for them also aided in the control of the community. Pre-colonial religion also created in the people a bound of unity as they worshiped a common culturally accepted spiritual entity. The realization of the presence of spiritual forces compelled the people to behave in manner that would not attract sanctions from the gods of the community⁴⁶. Therefore, religious worship in pre-colonial Africa was not considered a private matter but public. In that wise, spiritual 'salvation' was not personal but communal.

Education is meant to empower individuals with liberal and technical skills to enhance their mental and physical capacities to develop the society. There are three identifiable ways knowledge could be acquired. These are the informal

⁴² E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact On Modern Nigeria 1842-1914 A Political and Social Analysis*, Longman Group Ltd, London, 1966, p.5.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 83,92-93.

⁴⁴ M. Crowder, 1976, p. 365.

⁴⁵ K.S. Opoku, "Religion in Africa during the Colonial Era", A.A. Boahen (ed.), *General History of Africa*, vol. VII, "Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935", Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1985, p. 508.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 509.

(otherwise called indigenous or traditional), non-formal and formal. African pre-colonial educational system was based on the informal and non-formal system. The informal or indigenous education is described by Anibueze as a life-long activity through which individuals acquire knowledge and cultivate cultural values needed for political administration and other endeavours relevant to their immediate environment⁴⁷. The informal and non-formal methods of gaining knowledge are both out of class room activities, non-structured, non-certificated and not strictly compartmentalized, which involved careful observation and imitation.

Informal and non-formal education served the societal needs of the people of Africa until the coming of the Europeans as colonizers and missionaries. The colonial authorities and Christian missionaries introduced western type of formal education with its own methodology. Formal education refers here as the system whereby the acquisition of knowledge is highly structured and segmented over a period of time⁴⁸. Western education came with a philosophy that fundamentally weakened and challenged the structure of African pre-colonial educational methodology.

While the informal and non-formal system is communally oriented, the formal is individualistic and self-centred. As soon as the structure was attacked, people began to question some cultural norms hitherto accepted as normal. The primary objective of western or formal education was to train middle manpower officers to serve in the colonial administration as clerks and interpreters. It was not meant to equip the colonized with quality and technical/science based education relevant to the peculiar needs of the environment. Therefore, western education produced new sets of generational leaders with ideas and values not completely compatible with the indigenous values and function of education. The other lasting effect of western education in Africa is that it has created complex sets of developmental paradigm not suitable to the African way of doing things. For example, the economic policies of the Breton woods institutions in the international system are not working in Africa. Such policies include the Structural Adjustment Programmes, devaluation of national currencies, retrenchment of workers, right or down sizing e.t.c. Despite the presence of a quasi presence of westernized African educated elite, the colonial administrators still discriminated against them.

⁴⁷ P.A. Andrew, "The Neglect of Traditional Education in Nigeria and National Calamity: The Tiv Perspective", *Religious: A Journal for the Study of Religions*, Vol. 20, Dec. 2010, p. 45.

⁴⁸ C.N. Anyanwu, *Developing Adult Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan University Press Limited, Ibadan, 1987, p. 23.

The colonized were treated as second class citizens by the colonial authorities. Given European pre-disposition in the justification of colonialism, it was expected that racial segregation would be noticeable in the colonized society. Albert Sarraut, a French colonial apologist once said, “colonial subjects or natives were no more than unformed clay of primitive multitudes from which colonization’s task was to shape the face of new humanity”⁴⁹. In Cameroon, colonized workers were often called boys despite the fact that they were adults. This displeasure was expressed by the Telephone Operator’s Union in Cameroon when its members petitioned the Resident in a letter dated 4th May, 1925. The petition contained one grievance, the derogatory terms used on them by their colonial bosses. Part of it reads,

We telephone operators want to bring to your front our problem. Since employment sir, they tries (sic) to call us boys all times (sic). In our tradition here we have childrens (sic) who we called boys. How can Oga (sic) be calling us boys. We are not happy and we want that you look into this our complain (sic)⁵⁰.

Even South Africa before 1992 was racially segregated in all aspects of the society. The South African case was peculiar because of the presence of three major racial groups; the Blacks, Whites and Asians. But, on the social scale, Whites were on top of the ladder, followed by the Asians, and then the Blacks. The end of colonial rule in the international system has not guaranteed an end to discriminating policies and attitudes towards non-indigene in most African communities. Colonial racism was transformed to post-colonial ethnicity. The obnoxious circles of killings between the Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda, the Hausa and Igbo, Ife and Modakeke in Nigeria, xenophobia in South Africa and other places in the continent results from ethnic chauvinism.

The colonial introduced armed forces were established to impose colonial rule. Therefore, force remained the strongest tool used to sustain and enforce colonial policies. Every colonized territory as R.E. Betts has noted, created its own law enforcement agencies as a means of control⁵¹. However, Europe and the rest of the Western hemisphere have subjected their armed forces including the police to civilian control and respect for human rights. The armed forces in post-colonial African states are unable to transform from the colonial objective of setting it up. That is why the armed forces institution in Africa is associated with wickedness,

⁴⁹ Quoted in W.G. Nkwi, “Telephone Operators Resistance to British Colonial Administration in the Cameroon Province, 1913-1931”, *Lagos Historical Review*, Vol. 10, 2010, p. 58.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.63.

⁵¹ R.F. Betts, 1985, pp. 326-329.

aggressiveness, destructiveness, oppressiveness and has become instrument of repressiveness in the hands of the ruling political elites, unlike in pre-colonial Africa, where the armed forces were composed of young men organised into age sets.

The duty of the young men was primarily to enforce the rulings of the elders and to protect the sovereignty and pride of the community. They knew their cultural limitations as they were regulated by customs and traditions. In the pre-colonial community of Uromi in southern part of Nigeria, for example, the age set was divided into three units of *Eghonughele*, *Igene* and *Edion*. Each was assigned a specific responsibility. The *Eghonughele* was made up of male between twelve and thirty-five years responsible for the cleaning the community, while the *Igene* had male between the ages of thirty-six and fifty in charge of the police and military aspect of protection. The *Edion* age set was exclusively reserved for the political actors in the community which provided leadership⁵². The age sets were product of the culture and since it was not super imposed on the people, there was a strong mutual relationship between the armed forces and the community.

Conclusion

The motive of colonization was basically for economic exploitation. Territories that refused to willingly submit their sovereignties to colonial powers, even when treaties were signed, were militarily subdued and colonial rule forcefully imposed on them. That led to the weakening of African traditional political institutions. Colonial policies were fundamentally intolerant of the African way of life; therefore, in the course of solidifying colonial presence, traditional African societies had to be transformed. The takeover of the political institution made it structurally easier for colonial authorities to achieve their economic goals. In the course of colonial rule, the policies introduced have adversely affected some aspects of the social and political institutions of the colonized. The consequences of such structural transformation present some challenges of development in contemporary African body polity.

The political system as reflected in the civil service and other arms of government are deficient to respond to the contemporary needs of the growing population of the African society. The development in the infrastructural sector was meant to ease the evacuation of raw materials and to convey labour and not

⁵² Uromi is one of the thirty two communities that make up Esanland in Edo state, Nigeria. All the communities in Esanland have the same age set formations.

meant for an emerging African economy. The strength of the American dollar at any point in time determines the economic vibrations of all African external purchasing powers. While the armed forces in most African states require modernization to reflect respect for the civil populace, the impact of foreign or non indigenous religions have continued to tear Africa apart. Can Africa ever surmount these structural challenges or put differently, how and when will Africa get its developmental paradigm right? In the final analysis, the impact of structural colonial rule can only be understood when analyzed within the context of its objectives, methods and tools. Generally, structural colonial fundamentalism (also called neo-colonialism) in this sense has continued to create national and international tension in the global system. Achieving national and global peace, therefore, depends on how colonial ideological fundamentalism is deconstructed to reduce the wide polarity between the north and south in the international system.

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