

COLONIALISM NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR AFRICA'S FAILURE

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ABSTRACT

It is a well-known fact that Africa went through a rough patch during colonization, during which indigenous people suffered greatly. Restrictive laws were enacted to curtail human rights and to deprive indigenous people from all political activities. With the attainment of political independence, Africans held high expectations of better things to come, but alas, that was not to be. The economic benefits which people had expected, the civil liberties and the robust economic and political developments came to naught as corruption took its toll at the expense of the generality of the people. What appeared to be promising times for people, most of whose who had suffered under colonization, turned out to be more disappointing than during colonial times, especially given that neo-colonialism and oppression were being perpetrated by one of their own- a fellow African. This unpleasant post-colonial scenario has brought intense debate on Africa's propensity to hail itself from the ravages of colonization which it was thrown into by the colonial masters. Indications are that the continent is going deeper into oblivion, especially with the emergence of dictators who can kill for anything to retain power. Africa seems to have been failed not by colonization, but by African leaders themselves. This paper provides vivid examples of how Africans have short-changed themselves while continuing to blame colonization for their failures.

Keywords: development, economic, conflict, colonization, Africa, deprivation, independence

INTRODUCTION

In an editorial preview of Issaka K Souare's book entitled *Governance, Not Culture, to Blame for Underdevelopment*, Louw-Vaudran (2010) of the Institute of Security Studies of Africa, propels the Afro-centric view that despite Africa's nostalgic memories of the at independence, the current economic, political and social situation is disheartening. The political and civil liberties that citizens had envisaged have come to nothing. The economic benefits that African citizens had been deprived by colonialism have continued to be elusive as the African political elites have squarely got into the shoes of the former colonial masters and continue to shortchange fellow Africans, most of whom bore the brunt of protracted liberation struggles.

Colonialism had its roots in the greed which European countries exhibited towards Africa's untapped natural resources. Subsequently, Germany became the bedrock on which the modalities of parceling out parts of Africa among European powers were deliberated. As a result, the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 was convened during which the Scramble for Africa by various European powers was planned leading to the partition of the continent. They administered Africa as a series of occupied territories, relying on help from Africans, who were able to accept the world the slavers had made as a

reasonable world and eager to integrate into it for pay (Armah,2006). Immediately thereafter, the process of parceling out Africa among European nations ensued with the principal purpose being the expropriation of Africa's natural resources, during which indigenous population groups were ill-treated and taken as second grade human beings. Indigenous people were deprived of their basic rights and freedoms with limited access to resources in their respective countries. Much of the deprivation and ill-treatment was commonplace in the provision of cheap labor. This translated into high poverty levels as colonial masters were contented with enforcing perpetual provision of labor on the backdrop of meager remuneration that would make Africa mortgaged on the mines and fields were they were tasked to work. This inability to make ends meet further impoverished Africans, who in most countries waged a liberation struggle to "free" themselves from the yoke of colonialism, with Ghana having been the first African country to attain political independence in 1957 with other countries following suit in subsequent years.

A ready example of the cruelty and expropriation of Africa's natural is that of the extraction of rubber in the Congo where unimaginable degree of cruelty was exerted on Africans as they were forced to produce specified quotas of rubber. It was the uranium that was mined in the Congo through forced labour that ended up in the hands of Americans and eventually at Hiroshima and Nagasaki where the atomic bomb that brought the Second World War to an end was exploded. With this entire suffering one would have thought that the attainment of political independence to African states would bring joy, political freedom, universal suffrage and most importantly economic prosperity, especially given that the continent is endowed with abundant natural resources unique only to the continent. But alas that was not to be as most of the suffering due to civil wars, human rights violations, dictatorships and above all high poverty levels are a common sight on the world's richest continent-Africa. Despite the setting in of globalization and its propensity to influence economic, political and social development for the better, that has not been the case. The question that remains to be addressed is how the continent could be riling under such extreme poverty with all the natural resources or under political uncertainty on the backdrop of all the high literacy levels and scholars that the continent is endowed with.

THE COLONIAL LEGACY

Blame has been leveled against the colonial legacy and hang-over which according to Afro-centric scholars, have continued to haunt the continent. The year 2010 goes down in history as 17 African countries, including 15 Francophone states, as well as Nigeria and Somalia, are celebrating five decades of independence. Such festivities have been characterized by grand military parades and lavish official ceremonies attended by visiting heads of state. These are occasions to look back at the historic events that led to independence, and conduct a critical examination of the post-colonial political and economic choices of African leaders and policy-makers. The 1960s were indeed an era of great hope and idealism on a continent emerging from decades of degrading colonial rule. Across Africa, bitter colonial wars and uprisings like the Algerian War of Independence, the Mau-Mau in Kenya, the Maji Maji and later liberation struggles in Tanzania, the Chimurenga (uprising) in Zimbabwe and the social movements in Nigeria were coming to an end with the promise of elections and self-rule. In the former French colonies, independence was more or less handed to states on a plate, with the proviso of not really cutting the umbilical cord that linked each of these states to France. The key question here seems to be: what form did this independence take? A lot is written about the deficit of governance and the economic decline that seem to mark these past five decades. But there is certainly merit in delving deeper into the character of post-colonial rule and asking how many regimes merely adopted the same repressive system as their colonial predecessors, making use of the military or other brutal ways to stay in power. Equally, there is also a lot to be said about

those who led the attempts at African Unity – and how committed they really were. One country with a particularly tumultuous history in the immediate post-independence era is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which celebrated its independence on 30 June this year (2010). What would the country be like today had Patrice Lumumba been allowed to rule for more than a couple of months? Would it be peaceful and prosperous, or would it have disintegrated without the strong centralist dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko? And what if the Thomas Sankaras and Modibo Keitas had not been overthrown in coups? It must be said, though, that some of the first political actions of the continent's most revered leaders of independence, like Leopold Sedar Senghor, were to put their political opponents in prison. There are also difficult questions about the young new rulers who took over in 1960. The late Ahmedou Kourouma touched on something of this in his fictional work *Le Soleil des Independences* (1997), which looks at traditional indigenous beliefs and cultures in a context of a bloody and authoritarian post-colonial rule. What lessons are there to be learnt from the successes and the mistakes of five decades of "Postcolony," as the Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe (2001) calls it? Striking, when one visits our African capitals, is how little attention is paid to the memories of the struggle for independence. Here and there are monuments or airports named after the nations' founding fathers, but a lot remains unsaid. Memory is elusive, as Ghania Mouffok (1999) writes in her article on the Algerian war of Independence. Perhaps instead of erecting hugely controversial monuments depicting anonymous figures pointing skywards, like in Dakar, Africa's independence should be celebrated, and its heroes remembered, in a more profound way such as honouring the goals and objectives of the liberation wars and dispensing equitable distribution of resources to citizens..

COLONIZATION AND THE EUROCENTRIC/AFROCENTRIC DICHOTOMY: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The way Africa has been portrayed in the five decades since independence has provoked an endless debate and rich literature on the subject. Issaka K. Souare (2007) delves into the intricacies reflections given for Africa's underdevelopment. Souare (2007) notes that Africa of the 21st century is not only the poorest and the most miserable region on the planet it is also the only region in the world that is getting poorer, especially with evident and indisputable marginalisation on the face of globalisation. Souare (2007) further asserts that its share in international trade transactions is said to be less than 3 per cent with Africans suffering most from some of the worst killer diseases on earth, including the trilogy of Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Turning to conflicts, Souare (2007) points out that conflicts too are claiming thousands of victims across the continent, with the youngsters, who are the future of the continent, fleeing their countries for outside "eldorados". Other scholars who have bemoaned the advent of colonization process include Afrocentric historians like Richard Elphick,(1985) blamed the Dutch for the decimation of the Khoi Khoi, from the then Cape colony of South Africa. The historian even goes to blame the Dutch of having caused the diminishing to Khoi herds of cattle through theft by the Dutch led by Jan Van Riebeck of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) upon their arrival from Holland in 1652. The disease outbreak amongst the Khoi Khoi that occurred during the 17th century has also been blamed on the Dutch. Hermann Giliomee in his book *"The Afrikaners: Biography of a People,"*(1985) expressed the notion that Africans' economic challenges were engineered from Europe. Giliomee maintains that as far back as 1825, Britain lowered the tariffs on continental wines, causing the wine industry and the entire Cape economy to sink into a deep depression. With the value of Western Cape slaves dropping sharply, investment in slaves suddenly became much less profitable, highlighting the profit-orientation of European dealings in Africa.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, King Leopold who was the ruler of the country in the 19th century has been blamed for having employed cheap labor for the extraction of rubber, using the most cruelty humanity has seen. But

today the same natural resources of the country are not benefiting the local population groups in a country that has been characterized by suffering worse than that propelled by Leopold. As a result of this blame game, political scientists have geared up the debate by aligning themselves into two camps: the Afro-centrists and the Euro-centrists. As a result, conflicting schools of thought have come to the forefront in connection with Africa's development. There are those of the Afro-centric school, such as Ali Mazrui (1980,1999) and Issaka Souare (2007), point out that the economic (and in some cases political) woes bedeviling Africa can be attributed to colonization. Then there are those of the Euro-centric school who take issue with the Afro-centric argument and attribute Africa's underdevelopment to failure by African political leadership to dispense good governance and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Fifty years after most African countries regained independence, today Africa is being considered the poorest continent in the world, contributing less than 3% to international trade. This is in addition to the numerous violent conflicts that have afflicted the continent over the last few decades. Opinions abound about this rather gloomy record of the desperate continent and who is to blame for its dire economic situation in so many African countries. Mazrui (1999) attributes Africa's miserable condition and poor economic performance partly to "the nature of the economic change which Western colonialism fostered in Africa." However, Mazrui hastens to express his acknowledgement that African leaders need to change their dependence mindset in order to overcome the situation. However in contrast to the Afrocentric approach, Landes (1988) the American historian of the Eurocentric persuasion claims that the problem lies in the African culture, as well as, their stagnant political and economic practices. In *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are Rich and Some So Poor*,(1998) Landes claims that geography and culture have played an important and integral role in determining which societies and nations have progressed and which ones have lagged behind. He further purports that the cultural characteristics of a society's history are key to explaining success, particularly economic success, in today's global world (Landes, 1998). In support of Landes, Samuel Huntington (1999) tried to justify the development gaps between various countries by some cultural characteristics and values of their respective peoples. Huntington(1999) identifies economic data on South Korea from 1960 where he argues that at that time the two countries had almost identical economic profiles in terms of per capita GNP, relative importance of their primary manufacturing and service sectors, nature of their exports, and amounts of foreign aid. Huntington observed that thirty years later South Korea had become an industrial giant, with high per capita income, multinational corporations, and a major exporter of cars and electronic equipment.

In explaining this paradoxical change, Huntington acknowledged that "many factors were responsible," but culture was a large part of the explanation. How? According to him "South Koreans valued thrift, savings, and investment, hard work, discipline, and education", while Ghana "had different values," Huntington (1999). But if a Korean culture was at play here, why is it that Seoul is more advanced than Pyongyang? Were they not the same Korea before the 1950s, or did North Koreans develop new genes after the separation? Given this, it has to be admitted that the current state of affairs in Africa is due to a multitude of factors, both historical and current. There is no denying the fact that colonialism did have a profound impact on Africa. The same goes for neo-colonial activities that former colonial powers engaged in after independence. But fifty years of self-government should have greatly reduced, if not eliminated, the effects of these systems. Ayi Kwei Armah (2006) pointed out that Africa was "divided into colonies, territories owned by European states, and from which European corporations took out whatever resources they wanted for their own prosperity, leaving practically all Africans in the deliberate poverty and neglect now euphemistically called *underdevelopment*" (p. 39).

With the first African country, Ghana, having attained political independence in 1957 and the rest coming hard on its heels, none of the African countries has enjoyed less than 15 years of political independence. Given that scenario, colonialism can no longer be an excuse for Africa's economic stagnation and bad governance. There may be cases where the former colonizing power has fuelled violence, but that has been done from a lesser position of strength which could have been prevented if the new African "democratic dispensation" had desired. In this article, examples of post-colonial developments in different countries will be cited, especially those countries endowed with rich natural resources, such as the DRC, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, South Africa and other champions of democracy on the African continent which have degenerated into autocratic regimes, such as those in Ethiopia and Liberia where close to 15% of the population's voices of dissent have been incarcerated.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

In the most basic terms, globalization of the world economy is the integration of economies throughout the world through trade, financial flows, the exchange of technology and information, and the movement of people. Globalization has become a major topic of discussion and concern in economic circles since the mid-1990s. It is clear that the trend toward more integrated world markets has opened a wide potential for greater growth and presents an unparalleled opportunity for developing countries to raise their living standards. At the same time, however, the Mexican crisis has focused attention on the downside risks of this trend, and concerns have arisen about the risks of marginalization of countries. This has given caused a sense of misgiving, particularly among developing countries.

Globalization has been known to hold both potential benefits and risks for the economic and political development of states. The extent of integration is clearly reflected in the rising importance of world trade and capital flows in the world economy. An increasingly large share of world GDP is generated in activities linked directly or indirectly to international trade. And there has been a phenomenal growth in cross-border financial flows, particularly in the form of private equity and portfolio investment, compared with the past. In addition, the revolution in communication and transportation technology, and the much improved availability of information has allowed individuals and firms to base their economic choices more on the quality of the economic environment in a country. As a result, economic success in today's world is less a question of relative resource endowments or geographical location, than in the past. Consequently it has become a question of market perception, orientation and predictability of economic policy.

Globalization is first and foremost a result of expansion, diversification and deepening of trade and financial links between countries, especially over the last ten years. Also, economic thought itself has evolved over time, toward the general acceptance of the fact that outward- oriented and open economies are more successful than closed, inward-looking ones. Consequently, individual countries in all parts of the world are liberalizing their exchange and trade regimes in the conviction that this is the best approach for growth and development. Moreover, there is a deeper commitment of national authorities throughout the world to embark on sound macroeconomic policies so as to create a more stable environment for investment and expansion of economic activity.

The benefits of these developments are easily recognizable- increasing trade where consumers and producers get a wider choice of low-cost goods, often incorporating more advanced technologies, and more efficient use of global resources.

Greater access to world markets has allowed countries to exploit their comparative advantages more intensively, while opening their economies to the benefits of increased international competition. The rapid increase in capital and private investment flows have also increased the resources available to countries, and accelerated the pace of their development beyond what they could otherwise have achieved.

Moreover, greater openness and participation in competitive international trade has increased employment, primarily of skilled labor, in tradable goods sectors. With the expansion of these sectors, unskilled labor has found increased employment opportunities in the non-tradable sectors, such as construction and transportation. The expansion of merchandise trade may also have lessened migratory pressures. On the other hand, the movement of labor across national boundaries has lessened production bottlenecks, raising the supply response of recipient economies, and increasing income in the supplying countries through worker remittances. Openness to foreign expertise and management techniques has also greatly improved production efficiency in many developing countries. But do not forget the many risks to globalization, i.e. the ability of investment capital to seek out the most efficient markets, and for producers and consumers to access the most competitive source, exposes and intensifies existing structural weaknesses in individual economies. Also, with the speedy flow of information, the margin of maneuver for domestic policy is much reduced, and policy mistakes are quickly punished. Indeed, increased capital mobility carries the risk of destabilizing flows and heightened exchange rate volatility, in cases where domestic macroeconomic policies are inappropriate. And finally, it is clear that countries that fail to participate in this trend toward integration are most likely to be left behind.

THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION FOR AFRICA

Despite a number of benefits drawn from globalization, the major challenge for Africa has been that of governance. Financial institutions have even begun demanding accountability, transparency and the observance of human rights from prospective recipients of donor funding for projects. With the characteristic poverty-stricken economies of many African states, it is obvious that many of the African states are candidates for donor funding. But the challenge has been that of the criteria of good governance which should be complied before donor funding can be disbursed. Many African states have been found wanting on the issue of good governance. Many African states have their political situations in disarray, with disputed electoral processes a common trend, usually behind the formation of Governments of National Unity (GNUs). GNUs have been viewed as fraudulent formations intended to short-change the electorate, and at the same time legitimizing the losers, who in most cases demand and proceed to hold influential positions in the new collective dispensation.

AFRICA SHOULD BLAME SELF FOR THE WOES

In recent years, especially after the era of liberation struggle icons like Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and even the recently celebrated Nelson Mandela, a breed of dictators have held Africa's democracy at ransom. In Uganda, the invincible Idi Amin ruled the East African country with an iron fist and with brutality never seen on the continent, whose excesses overshadowed the colonial atrocities on the African continent. In Liberia, one of the countries on the African continent which had not experienced the excesses of colonialism, experienced a civil war that resulted in the loss of many lives and displaced many more people. The Liberian Civil War did not confine itself within the boundaries of Liberia, but over spilt into Sierra Leone, further fuelling unrest in that part of Africa. The suffering was so intensive that the international community had to intervene, resulting in the deportation and subsequent hauling out of Charles Taylor

before the International Criminal Court at The Hague. Diamonds were the currency that fueled civil war, not only in Sierra Leone, but in many other African Countries, including the DRC.

The disregard of democratic institutions has also been prevalent on the continent where the constitution has been prone to manipulation by those entrusted to make laws by the people. Elections, if ever they are held, have been characterized by disputed electoral results, vote rigging and vote buying and in many cases, politically-motivated violence perpetrated on those perceived to belong to opposition politics. Manipulation of election results on the face of imminent defeat have seen the creation of Governments of National Unity (GNUs) in a number of countries, with those in Kenya and Zimbabwe having attracted international attention. Electoral irregularities (and in some cases, electoral fraud) have emerged in other African countries such as in, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, and Madagascar, where GNUs have mushroomed on the backdrop of disease, unemployment, civil war lawlessness (rape and murder), expropriation of natural (mineral resources), corruption, poverty, HIV/AIDS cases, and informal settlements. These man-made irregularities have been a result of bad governance and failed policies.

Politically, Africa has witnessed coups, civil wars, electoral fraud, violence and an increased emergence of dictatorships. Economically; even though Africa's GDP is expected to grow from 5.5-6% in 2010, there are millions of people living in extreme poverty and as it stands there is a chance that Africa is going to miss the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people living on less than US\$1 a day (Africa-The Good News,2010). Africa is still struggling to cope with the burden of the HIV/Aids pandemic, which in developed countries is no longer regarded as a killer disease, yet in Africa millions die annually. These are manifestations of over-dependence at a macrocosmic level. It may be known that Africans can blame the West for colonialism, and can even accuse the US for destabilizing Africa through its regime-change policies that claimed the lives of people like Patrice Lumumba and plunged DR Congo into the crisis where it finds itself today, but where would those allegations take the continent? Africans can froth on their mouth blaming whites for apartheid and colonialism, but the question people ought to ask is: Assuming that colonialism had not taken place, would Africans as a people been any different today? Afro-centric and Euro-centric scholars have endlessly tussled and hassled each other on this question.

People may want to look at Ethiopia as an example of an underdeveloped country that did not have anything to do with colonization, save for five years under Mussolini, Ethiopia was largely un-colonized. Under Haile Selassie, the distribution of wealth was skewed towards the ruling elite, the landowners and elements of the clergy. The plight of the peasants is well documented. Upon the deposition of the emperor, the Dergue adopted Marxism and communism as their working ideology. Hundreds of thousands were killed due to red terror, forced deportations, or from using hunger as a weapon. Despite the egalitarian rhetoric of the Dergu, high-ranking government officials retained privileged economic positions. Even today under Meles Zenawi government officials and a few high-ranking professionals control the country's mode of production.

Africa and Africans may decide to pacify themselves or give excuses that they had limited access to basic education thus their failure to engage in meaningful economic activity largely due to colonialism and apartheid. One may look at a country like Zimbabwe which has the highest literacy rate in Africa of 92%. If educating an African was such a factor why does one find such levels of poverty and oppression in Zimbabwe? Why don't we see Africans in Zimbabwe sitting

down in true African spirit to discuss amongst them how to lift each other out of poverty? Is it really that WE AFRICANS are victims of history or have inherent characteristics that predispose us to poverty? We as Africans lack the drive for scientific adventure, neither are we inclined towards innovation. Have we ever asked ourselves why it is almost everyone's dream to be a medical doctor? It is because of job security. We are more worried about failing to get employment than our ability to be our own employers. No one wishes to study natural sciences like physics in Zimbabwe because all of us are afraid of ending up as secondary school teachers somewhere in the deserted lands of Binga or Dotito (both remote parts of Zimbabwe). None of us ever think that we could be the Isaac Newton of our time. In contrast, the level of research in the science fields in Asia and the West is so advanced, that we sometimes feel that they major on minor issues. What we fail to realize is that we are the ones who drive these researches, as we are the ones who end up buying products from them, feeding the inventors with royalties from their patents.

Maybe this also has to do with our lack of vision and our acute inclination towards consumerism-without-production. How many of us look into the future and plan for it? We seek instant rewards without investment. It is our expectation that one can miraculously wake up with a bank account full of money without working for it. These few thoughts are by no means exhaustive. Hopefully, we can build upon the rich history we have; use it as a pool of knowledge that can inspire us into a more successful people without marginalizing each other. Africa can do better with less rhetoric and more action!

SO WHAT DOES GOVERNANCE TO DO WITH IT?

Post colonial Africa has been characterized by a mode of governance that is a fusion of dictatorship veiled in traditional hereditary systems where incumbent political leaders treat their polities as personal fiefdoms. In countries like Swaziland, political leaders have hidden behind traditional institutions which allow leaders to pass on leadership of the polity to their kith and kin. In some cases, political leaders do not hide their intentions of passing power to those close to them, like case in the DRC where upon the death of the father, decisions were made to install the son of the late leader, Joseph Kabila (even in Cuba, though out of Africa, Fidel Castro has been able to "install" his brother) to preside over the affairs of the country. In Libya, word has it that Field Marshall Muammar Gaddafi is busy grooming one of his sons to take over for him upon his departure. Egocentrism has also gripped some of African leaders who harbor grand plans of having an United States of Africa (USA), in which he would be the president in ventures of insurmountable proportions. Muammar Gaddafi has been making noise about the need for a United State of Africa, and hastens to indicate his preparedness to lead the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural formation. This is a grand plan which smacks of no patriotism, but greed. In some cases, close allies of political leaders are hand-picked to continue on the legacy of their respective political parties. This skewed form of governance where the political leaders do not have to undergo the rigors of the electoral process is not only fraudulent and a chicanery, but goes against the tenets of democracy, where political leaders come from the people through a free and fair electoral process. This trend has been exacerbated by the curtailment of civil society activity in such despotic regimes, where all voices of dissent are brutally silenced. Citizen participation in the choice of political leaders forms the core of democratic processes that are characterized by good governance practices.

It is common knowledge that colonialism left a negative legacy and impact on Africa's economic development which no known African country has been able to improve on except to further plunder natural resources, thereby further exposing

fellow citizens into more poverty. However, looking at the revival of African economies, one realizes that there are several forms of countries that existed during colonialism. There are those that suffered extensive physical damage, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo; those that benefited from colonialism, such as South Africa; those that has a short stint with colonialism, such as Ethiopia; and those that did not really experience colonialism such as Liberia. Given the different historical background of these countries, one would be shocked at the similarity of poverty and civil war that exist or have existed in these countries. Consequently, one is forced to consider whether the former colonial masters have anything to do with the high level of poverty, gross human rights violations and refusal by those in power to relinquish to anybody who wins in any elections. This has given rise to the conduct of flawed electoral processes and the subsequent formation of Governments of National Unity (GNUs) in many African states.

It would appear that governance, both political and economic, account for more. Violent conflicts and poor economic performance, despite the abundance of material and human resources, are generally due to bad political and economic governance, and African leaders shoulder a big responsibility in this regard. In June 2007, the World Bank and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published a report on stolen assets, which estimated that 25 percent of the GDP of African states are lost to corruption every year, amounting to around US\$148 billion. By the same token, a 2004 report of the global corruption watchdog Transparency International, considered Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled the then Zaire from 1965 to 1997, and General Sani Abacha, the kleptocratic ruler of Nigeria between 1993 and 1998, to be the top looters of public funds from Africa. The stolen funds of Mobutu Sese Seko were estimated at US\$5 billion, while Abacha is said to have pillaged between US\$2 billion and US\$5 billion. Neither colonialism nor neo-colonialism can be blamed for these scandalous actions. But there is cause for hope, governance is improving on the continent. Whereas democratic systems were rare in Africa prior to 1990, a majority of countries today adhere to principles of good governance. Violations of these principles here are done in a context of more societal resistance almost everywhere on the continent. Clearly, with better governance and strategies of self-reliance and inter-African collaboration, the continent is likely to overcome the bad image of “rich Africa, poor Africans.”

REINCARNATION OF COLONIALISM

The emergence of dictators on the continent can not only be attributed to greed for power, but to the nostalgic memories by some African leaders of the colonial days when the colonial master used to enjoy unlimited power. As a result, dictators have taken to emulating the very colonial masters they dislodged, in most cases through the barrel of a gun. In some countries, the situation seems to have been better during colonialism than in the postcolonial period, when the colonial master was accused to have been inconsiderate to African’s rights. While indigenous population groups justify their involvement in the liberation struggle dislodging the colonial administration and its restrictive laws, the post colonial “democratic dispensation” has proved to be more oppressive than the colonial masters. In Zimbabwe, the colonial legislation that was used to oppress Africans and deny them various human rights, freedoms and participatory spaces, have manifested through a reincarnation of the same laws readjusted to suit new dispensation. In post-colonial Zimbabwe, the most notorious piece of legislation to oppress fellow Africans, has been the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), through which much of civil society members and those of opposition political parties have been detained, arrested, and rights curtailed. POSA is a reincarnation of the colonial Law and Order Security Act (LOMA) which the colonial regime used to deny Africans participatory spaces within the political realm. LOMA was also used to deny Africans equal treatment as whites, especially in economic activities, as well as, depriving them of the right to freedoms

of expression, movement, assembly and association. Indigenous laws existing in Zimbabwe and the skewed land redistribution exercise were undertaken ostensibly to empower locals, have been used as a facade to further dis-empower the indigenous people.

In many African countries, poverty and the rule of law have been worse than during the colonialism era. There was peace and stability in Zimbabwe, especially on the dawn of political independence but got worse in the 1990s as it became evident that politicians were more concerned with their political survival than the welfare of the generality of the population. Consequently, three decades after the attainment of political independence, high levels of poverty in Zimbabwe cannot be attributed to the effects of colonialism, especially given the colonial regime administered a far better economy than the post-colonial administration, which at one time boasted of the highest hyper-inflation in the world. Although the dollar was considered to be among the highest valued currency units when it was first introduced in 1980 to replace the Rhodesian dollar at a ratio of 1:1, political turmoil and hyper-inflation rapidly eroded the value of the Zimbabwe dollar to eventually become one of the least valued currency units in the world.

Skewed policies and priorities have also been behind the economic and political crises bedeviling the continent. In Zimbabwe, the Land Redistribution Programme, with its noble objective to economically empower landless blacks, was carried out in such a chaotic matter that very few landless blacks ever benefited. The result of the once vibrant agro-based Zimbabwean economy was dealt a heavy blow and devastated to near starvation as land remained fallow after those resettled on the farms abandoned it due to among other things, lack of inputs and limited knowledge of commercial farming, leading to the deterioration of the economy and exacerbating unemployment levels to 95%, the highest in the history of the country.

Economic indicators in South Africa show poverty levels have surpassed where they were during apartheid. While it could be acknowledged that the apartheid ideology encouraged separate development with state-of-the-art facilities (residential, job opportunities and other amenities) reserved for white population groups, but at least there was a reason for Africans to fight for majority rule. Incidentally, majority rule has inherently been characterized by the emergence of “overnight” millionaires who have used their political connections to acquire riches within a short amount of time. There is also glaring evidence to show that there are more millionaires in South Africa today, than there were during the apartheid period, proof of high levels of corruption. Emerging African business people manipulated the post-apartheid legislation meant to empower the “previously disadvantaged” people using the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) legislation. As a result, more informal settlements like *Khayelitsha*, established in the 1980s (Xhosa for “our new home” is a crime infested and poverty stricken informal settlement within the Cape Town Metropolitan) and many others have characterized South Africa’s economic development. In schools, high failure rates and high unemployment levels have portrayed a post-apartheid country failing to better the economic, social and political conditions of its people, especially on the backdrop of the People’s Charter which contemplated a “*better life for all*” maxim for all South Africans. It is almost 16 years after the collapse of apartheid in South Africa, and yet children still conduct classes from underneath trees, and a below standard form of education is still being dispensed to innocent children. Informal settlements have become the accepted form of shelter, and poor service delivery has become the catchword in most townships. Frustrated by lack of employment opportunities and appropriate employment skills, many of the able-bodied have developed a xenophobic attitude as a way of embracing their political leaders by getting rid of foreign nationals. Crime has also been on an upsurge as citizens try to make a point to their political leaders to be responsive, and for those unable to find

employment to irk out a living through criminal proceeds. Service delivery protests, which have come to dominate citizens' expression of displeasure at the non-responsiveness of political leaders and poor living standards, have been on the rise. And the apartheid cannot be attributed to any form of service delivery, 16 years after it was dislodged.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) is a country endowed with the richest mineral worth the world has ever seen. It is to be expected that the colonial powers were interested in this country primarily for these mineral resources. One might think that the attainment of independence for the DRC in 1960 would be the beginning of the end for the country's political problems and a time for prosperity to prevail, but alas, this was not meant to be. In fact, it was the beginning of the DRC's problems, as the country became synonymous with civil war that at one time brought in six countries namely Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Libya, Sudan and Chad.

The rape and plunder of the DRC remains one of history's greatest crimes. Under King Leopold II, Africans were captured and forced to go and work, unpaid, in order to enrich Europeans (Armah, 2006). Debate about the exploitation of Africans has further reignited debate over the legacy of colonialism in Africa and whether, even half a century later, all the continent's current ills can still be hung around its neck. Under King Leopold's brutal regime, as many as 10 million Africans were killed, according to some estimates. An outcry over the mass slaughter forced him to surrender the country in 1908 to the Belgian Government. When independence finally came in 1960, the country entered a new nightmare. Not unlike other former colonial masters, Belgium continued to meddle in the country's politics and was blamed, along with the CIA, for the 1961 assassination of Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first democratically elected prime minister. Both Belgium and the US then supported the 32-year dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko, a pro-Western leader seen as a bulwark against communism. He robbed his people of an estimated \$5 billion and made corruption a political way of life (UNODC,2007).

Mobutu was finally overthrown in 1997, but a civil war started that sucked in six neighboring countries and left at least four million dead, mainly from strife-driven hunger and disease. The world's biggest UN peacekeeping force has been in Congo for more than a decade, but some 45,000 people are still dying each month, according to the International Rescue Committee, mainly from hunger and disease (UNODC,2007). Mwahila Tshiyembe, director of the Pan-African Institute for Geopolitics in Nancy, France, said Belgians were not solely to blame for Congo's woes (UNODC,2007). Congo's leaders since independence have been marked by corruption and bad governance and have needlessly sought to blame their former colonizer, he told Associated Press. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Congo's foreign minister, now seems ready to end the blame game. "Fifty years later, we cannot say that if things are not going well in Congo, it's the fault of Belgium or of Leopold II."(UNODC,2007). Not everyone is ready to draw a line under the past.

In Zimbabwe, war veterans of the 1970s liberation war have bemoaned the impact of poor economic performance in the country and they exhorted the political leaders "to stop hiding behind sanctions as the cause of the country's economic woes and take responsibility for the ruin that has been caused by factionalism, racism, tribalism greed, failed monetary and fiscal policies and lack of accountability; and corruption"(Kwaramba,2010). This is a thinly veiled indication of the causes of economic meltdown that has characterized the country's economic landscape during the last two decades. This applies to a number of other countries whose economic performance has not been all that rosy on the backdrop of ailing democratic institutions.

The war veterans further lamented that, "The [political] leadership should stop using sanctions as the only cause for the economic collapse. There are other causes which are corruption, failed monetary and fiscal policies and lack of accountability."(Kwaramba,2010) They also said while a few individuals were enjoying the fruits of the liberation struggle which led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, most war veterans were living in abject poverty, and those who had been injured in line of duty had been totally forgotten (Kwaramba,2010). This is just a case study which can be replicated in other African states where protracted liberation struggles formed the basis of liberation in the countries. The fact that those who fought against colonialism are living in abject poverty years after what they fought for was accomplished, does not have anything to do with the colonial masters, but a manifestation of failed policies and bad governance.

FAILURE TO CO-EXIST WITH FELLOW AFRICANS-ETHNICITY, TRIBALISM AND XENOPHOBIA

Failure on the African continent has not only reared its ugly head in political and economic terms, but in social term as well. Africans have failed the continent by their intolerance and inability to co-exist with each other. Ethnicity cleansing has emerged in countries like Kenya, on the aftermath of elections in December 2007, which over 1,000 people died at the hands of fellow citizens, nationals and people of the same territorial boundaries. The importance lies in that one is a Kenyan, not whether one is Masai, Kalenjin or Luo. Confirming that such ethnic groups still exist and that a group is superior to another is acknowledgement that what the colonialists put in place cannot be reversed. These are colonial segregation terms which colonialists used to divide and rule people in the same country. In Zimbabwe during the 1980s, a similar episode occurred when the discrimination of Shona and Ndebele tribal groups re-emerged resulting in an unfortunate civil unrest in the northern part of the country. Colonial boundaries seems be the root cause of the problem, because they practically and mentally demarcated one African country from another. Presently, citizens from one African country are viewed in terms of visitors, aliens or asylum seekers depending on the political situation of the country one comes from. Today Zimbabweans across the globe are illegal immigrants, asylum seekers, or even "border-jumpers" in cases where the country of destination is Zimbabwe's neighbor. Other derogatory terms such as "*makwerekwere*" (foreigners) have been coined to distinguish natives from aliens. This failure to co-exist as fellow Africans has resulted in xenophobic tendencies, where people within given territorial boundaries view those from territories as not related to them in anyway, with some even unable to realize that they are from the same continent, let alone region, some cases separated by the colonial master's imaginary boundaries. The xenophobic behavior that gripped South Africa in May 2008 is a sad episode in the history of Africa, during which Mozambican, Malawian, Zambian, Rwandese, and Congolese nationals were harassed, with some burnt to death. What is even more insinuating is that of the 62 casualties of this xenophobic attack by people of South African extraction, about 21 were fellow South Africans from the northern part of the country. This only goes to show the extent to which Africans have failed themselves, although some would argue that this could be the result of the divide-and-rule tactic of the British, or the assimilation policy of the Francophone colonial masters. The failure by Africans in the postcolonial period to reverse colonial policies cannot be blamed on colonization, but on Africans themselves. Xenophobic attacks on fellow Africans irrespective of which part of the continent they come from is dismal and smacks of nothing more than ignorance, informed by barbarism and selfishness. Such behavior would cause Pan-Africanist fathers like Dr Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Dr Joshua Nkomo of Zimbabwe, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Patrice Lumumba of Zaire (DRC), and a host of other to roll in their graves. Liberation icons and statesmen like

Nelson Mandela, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu shudder to think that Africans are practicing segregation, the very essence of apartheid which South Africans fought against.

WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR AFRICA-WAY FORWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The quagmire bedeviling the African continent has been that of regional integration where modalities of good governance and conflict resolution strategies would be discussed. Africa has been characterized by persistent civil wars, ethnic cleansing and authoritarianism. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has tried to promote democratic institutions on the continent but the concept of sovereignty, which some leaders have hidden behind, has enabled dictatorships to get away with murder. The APRM is perhaps the most innovative aspect of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). For the APRM to serve its full potential, it is important that the application of the peer review process meet the criteria of credibility, integrity and professionalism (Hope, 2002). Jinmi Adisa (2002) further reiterates that the APRM is at the heart of the Africa Union's drive for a vision of African rejuvenation and renewal that encompasses peace, security, governance issues, socio-economic development and regional co-operation and reconstruction. This mission impresses upon us the need to put our house in order as a basis for auto-centered development, and as a framework for productive engagement with the rest of the international community. The objective of NEPAD and the APRM can therefore be seen in the light of economic development, but on the backdrop of good governance. Compliance with the desired tenets of democratic institutions would help to promote economic sustainability through practicing democratic governance.

The intervention of the international community's legal obligation through the International Criminal Court has been a welcome development and has seen overtures to bring perpetrators of violence and gross human rights violation being brought to book. The movement of the ICC into Liberia and Kenya (and attempts to do the same in Sudan), has been a good development if good governance is to be enhanced in Africa. In this age of globalization and civilization, it is no longer necessary to hold people at ransom or ascend to political office through the barrel of the gun. The best option in this age is through the ballot box, an avenue for the creation of a democratic dispensation. However, the re-emergence and re-surfacing of deposed ex-dictators as asylum seekers in other countries has also been a cause for concern, given that some of these had been used by colonial masters to perpetuate civil wars with a view to propel the expropriation of natural resources. The precedence set by Liberia in allowing Charles Taylor "access" to The Hague is a positive development, which has the impact of deterring other dictators from dissecting democratic institutions and plundering natural resources. In Sudan, similar overtures are being pursued to have Al Bashir taken to The Hague, not because he is alleged to have killed colonialists, but his own people. Those accused of plundering natural resources should be forced to return the proceeds of such ill-gotten wealth. In all these instances the colonizer is out of the picture and it is African against African-brother against brother. Consequently what is required in Africa is not mudslinging, but a paradigm shift and a recognition that Africans have long taken their destiny into their hands, and as such have taken the responsibility and accountability to their peoples.

What African leaders and other statesmen need at this juncture of its long and turbulent history is to put its act together and desist from egocentrism. The traditional concept of elders should be re-invigorated where these would be employed to settle disputes and to curtail the powers of political leaders, as well as, play a pivotal role in the election and choice of political leaders. Leaving the country to greedy political leaders where the tenets of democracy are applied sparingly or

not at all should also be a thing of the past if Africa is to develop. Elections have been in existence from time immemorial though in a different fashion. Current electoral processes where the electorate is harangued, harassed and intimidated into voting for somebody that they do not want should also be avoided. In any country, people should be afforded to choose one political leader for a specified period of time unlike in many situations in Africa where some political leaders rule for close to four decades or even more. Africa still has a chance to recuperate from the autocratic malaise that had gradually gripped most parts of the continent. Endowed with the most resources on the globe, Africa has the propensity to be the richest continent, only if its resources are used for the benefit of its people.

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