

THE NEW SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA: HOW LARGE-SCALE ACQUISITION OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA'S LAND BY MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND RICH COUNTRIES THREATENS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Beleaguered and belabored by legacies of slavery, colonial rule, and unequal trade by Europeans and devastating neoliberalism, including structural adjustment programs that brought serious poverty and misery to the people, Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is facing a new offensive in form of acquisition of its land from richer multinational corporations and countries from outside and with in the continent. This paper reports an aetiological analysis of this challenge that threatens sustainable development in Africa. We show that SSA's current weakness in maintaining its economic, social and environmental systems results from several factors some of which deserve mention below. Africa was coerced into centuries of contrived integration of Africa into series of unequal relationships, with others regions that are operating advanced capitalist system that employs a combination of forces (military, economic, political, organizational etc) to subdue and alienate Africa -and Third World from decision-making and determination of its preferred role in the globalized, but unequal, capitalist system. Consequently, Africa's previous and current weakness makes its constituent states unable to negotiate neither their socio-economic, political and environmental affairs nor their primary resources bases for existence. This is especially the case with Africa's land. The claim that Africa has surplus land for agriculture and other uses in an attempt to rationalize the new scramble for land resources, hosting some of the worlds poorest people is disputed using data on land resources available to all other regions (compared to the region), in addition to its high demographic rhythm.

Keywords: Land acquisition, sub-Saharan Africa, sustainable development, surplus, MNCs.

INTRODUCTION

Multiple challenges are threatening the achievement of sustainable development at global, national, and local-regional levels. Two of the several challenges that are most related to the problem discussed in this paper include the recent global food shortages that led to increases in food prices between 2007 and 2009, and the global

financial and economic crises of 2007-2008, which have been linked to the security problem. As the world continues to record increases in the human population, these and other challenges threaten the achievement of sustainable development. This is due to the way these problems lead or add to others, such as increases in the population of poor people, degradation of the environment and ecosystems, and increase in competition for limited natural and cultural resources (land and so forth) translating into conflicts, wars, and terror. The worsening of these problems warrant solutions, which could be implemented through policies that are informed by evidence in form of information derived from research. The global problems of land acquisition and climate change made the Technical Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CTA) to jointly organize discussions aimed at creating codes of conduct for land acquisition as one of the solutions during the European Development Days from October 22-24, 2009 in Stockholm, Sweden (CTA, 2009a).

Background

Multinational corporations (MNCs) have responded to the foregoing challenges by increasingly purchasing land in developing countries where the social and economic circumstances, especially low cost price of land and inadequacy of capital, are favorable to their profit motive. MNCs, from some countries that possess more capital and who are seeking new investment, have been searching for and buying up large tracts of land in developing countries (DCs). It has been reported that MNCs involved in the new wave of land purchases have originated from China, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Egypt, and India (GRAIN, 2009). In August 2009, it was estimated that about 20 million hectares (ha) of land in SSA had most recently (i.e. after global financial crisis and economic recession of the 2008) been transferred to investors from outside the poverty-stricken region: Africa (CTA, 2009a). The recent investment by foreign nations and (multinational corporations (MNCs) in Africa's land is valued between €15 billion and €21 billion. Other nations that are involved in the scramble for Africa's land include: Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE) (CTA, 2009a). It has been suggested that China, India, and South Korea are acquiring land due to shortage of land in their countries (CTA, 2009a, b). Some attempts to explain the motives and forces driving these MNCs to grab land IN DCs have presented two major agenda thought to be behind their quest. The first agenda has been linked to food security problems in their home countries. It has been posited that due to the dependence of the populations of such countries, on food imported from abroad and the tightening of the global food markets, they have been forced to embark upon a new programme of outsourcing their national food production to others countries where MNCs provide a suitable platform for implementing the food production projects. Some of the countries that have been listed under this category are: Saudi Arabia, Japan, China, India, Korea, Libya, and Egypt.

The second agenda is linked to profit making potential or favorable financial returns that the MNCs have overseen in the outsourcing of food production. It is argued that under the context of the ongoing global financial meltdown

and economic recession, MNCs think that land acquisition presents a good strategy for making higher and reliable profit. Two strategic thoughts or considerations have emerged in the debate on land grabbing in developing countries (DCs). Some attribute the new scramble for Africa to the collapse of derivatives markets that were involved in the management of investments, private equity funds, investment houses, and so forth before the global financial and economic crisis of 2008. Therefore, the new thinking by investors in land is that food production constitutes a business sector that guarantees fast and stable turnover. Second, the investors in land in DCs, think that land serves multiple purposes of profit making, including its other uses (e.g. for the production of either food or bio-fuels and so forth).

The countries being “conquered” are located in developing world. Those countries that have been named as having received MNCs and/or high-level officials seeking to buy land include: Uganda, Madagascar, Brazil, Cambodia, Sudan, and Pakistan. However, the case of Madagascar, which has become well known globally as “the Daewoo Affair”, is, recently, one of the most outstanding. This case is outstanding because the Daewoo Conglomerate of South Korea announced their acquisition of 1.3 million hectares of land, an area estimated to be half of Madagascar’s total arable land, for producing maize for an export to Daewoo’s home country: South Korea (GRAIN, 2009). Moreover, the announcement by officials of Daewoo on November 17, 2008 of their land acquisition in Madagascar led to public outcry by Madagascar parliamentarians, private organizations, and international NGOs. Most of those who protested that land deal demanded explanations on the matter from the top echelon of the Malagasy government that was led by ex-president Ravalomanana. The people of Madagascar were so seriously aggrieved by the land deal that one of the measures that was undertaken to prevent the adverse consequences of the deal on the country and the people’s welfare was the ousting of former President Ravalomanana, who was leading the government at the time of the sale of the country’s land. Moreover, the contract for the sale of the land was denounced or revoked by the country’s new head of state immediately after he seized power and took office. That matter also attracted attention of economic and political geographers. For example, some of the issues that were raised include: lack of transparency by the Malagasy government, exclusion of Malagasy “publics” including (small-holders, fairness, and so forth. Additionally, it was recommended that land tenure for Madagascan people (and by extension, vulnerable small holder farmers in DCs) should be eased in order to prevent the recurrence of such as problems in future (Teyssier, 2009). Agriculturists have also raised issues by arguing that the new land grabbing by MNCs will cause several people (local communities, small holder farmers, and workers) to lose access to land for food production. It threatens food sovereignty of the countries whose land is being bought up. It will lead to human degradation arising from transformation of existing farmers into other less decent states (GRAIN, 2009).

Although the target of ongoing land grabbing is the developing world, generally, it is reasonable to expect that the most vulnerable countries, within the developing world, would be the hardest hit by the phenomenon. The examination of the way the new scramble for Africa (or new wave of recolonisation of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), through land grabbing, poses threats to the sustainable development of the region) could be justified based on the following reasons. Africa was one of the regions of the world that was the most scrambled for by European Colonialists during and after the Berlin Colonial Conference of 1884-1885, that orchestrated and contrived the partitioning of Africa. The resulting colonialism led to the worsening economic, social, and environmental conditions on the African continent, following prolonged neoliberalism, imperialism, and indigenous misrule by African “Colonialists” (Oketh-Ogendo, 2008). These processes make Africa, especially SSA, one of the most vulnerable regions of the world that would likely be targeted by the land grabbing MNCs and rich governments.

The problem of large-scale land acquisition in sub-Saharan Africa is multidimensional and, therefore, attracts the interest of multiple disciplinary fragments. Owing to the fact that land is a natural resource, the land acquisition problem draws the attention of subjects concerned with natural resources and management, including geography, ecology, economics, and so on. The acquisition of African’s land, since the first scramble by European Colonialists for territories in Africa, has been of great concern to historians, economists, political scientists, geographers, and so forth. The way entities involved in ongoing acquisition of sub-Saharan African’s land exhibit international characteristics and draws the attention of scholars in political economy, international relations, as well as political and social sciences. These multidimensional and multidisciplinary characteristics of the problem should determine the methods that would be considered appropriate for describing, presenting, and analyzing the issues involved. These multidimensional issues are captured under the concept of sustainable development, which includes the society, environment, and economic aspects of progress.

The Problem

Despite the vulnerability of sub-Saharan Africa to invasion by land buying MNCs and their facilitators and collaborators and the enormity of the consequences that will arise from these processes for sustainable development, academic research is yet to explore these issues. Specifically, the large scale buying up of land will pose adverse consequences on issues in the nexus of sustainable development, such as poverty, availability of land for small holder farmers, access of small holder farmers to scarce land, current high population density leading to increasing competition and contest for declining quantities of arable land, the method of using land for farming (i.e. application of sustainable land management practices), and so forth.

Moreover, the response of public analysis to the matter of land grabbing has been restricted to general or global discussion. Specific analysis of the way the problem will affect sub-Saharan Africa at a regional-ambit scale is yet

to be undertaken under the context of the prevailing social, economic, and environmental circumstances. What is the context pertaining to sustainable development indicators in sub-Saharan Africa? That is, what levels of poverty environmental resource availability, conflicts, etc. have prevailed recently? To what extent might ongoing buying up of large tracts of sub-Saharan Africa's land exacerbate existing sustaining development problems, including food security, availability of land to farmers, and related issues?

Objectives

The objective of this paper is to show how ongoing buying up of large tracts of land by MNCs will threaten the achievement of sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. The specific objective is to highlight the way land grabbing by MNCs will lead to intensification of the existing problem of poverty of peasant farmers, further fragmentation of land, and reduction farm productivity, worsen food security problems and aggravate unsound environmental resources management practices and worsen social disorder via conflicts over environmental (e.g. land) resources.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

The paper is organized in sections. We complete this first section by presenting the setting of the study area: sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In the second section, we present the theoretical framework or model of the centre-periphery model. And in the third section, we present the method. In the fourth section, we present the extent of land grabbing by MNCs and governments of rich countries and the adverse consequences on Africa.

Centre- Periphery Theory of Political Economy

This theory is concerned with analyzing the structural relationships between the economically developed Western countries, which operate the capitalist system, and the politically younger nation states of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, which gained political independence from their colonial masters around the 1950s or more recently. The major criteria for classifying a nation state as constituting either the center or periphery, is the level of development of the country in global capitalist system, which was created around the 16th century and spread world-wide afterwards. Since its pioneering formulation in economic geography to explain the principles underlying the location of industries in the early 20th Century (Weber, 1929), the main idea of the theory has become influential in several disciplinary fragments including political geography, political sociology, labour economics, political economy among others. Using the world as the unit of analysis, sociologists have used the theory for explaining underdevelopment and dependency of the Third World (periphery) following the contrivances of the advanced capitalist (or core) countries. The basic foundation of its analysis is that underdevelopment can be best explained using the theory of imperialism. The development of the capitalist system, involving the growth and reproduction of capital, and its propagation worldwide requires the contrivance

of underdevelopment and the exploitation of some countries, exploitation of labour and resources of other people. The theory has been presented as comprising three major parts. The first part of this theory presents the Western capitalist countries as occupying the center of the capitalist spectrum because of the dense organic composition of capital in their territories thereby enabling them to offer relatively higher wage levels. From their central position, they exercise enormous powers (politically, socio-culturally, and economically) over the neocolonial Third World States (which are characterized by a thin organic composition of capital. These make the latter to be incapable of meeting the cost of reproduction of labour thus the prevalence of low wages in the “periphery”. The needs of workers in the periphery have been met by their resort to subsidies of the deficient capitalist system from non-capitalist sectors such as rural economic activities e.g. agriculture, non-market forces such as kinship, patron-client interactions, and so forth. The profit made in the capitalists system is made possible through the extraction of subsidies from the non-capitalist sectors and non-market forces. The unjust and unequal relationship is maintained by capitalists’ application of brute military force, and other powers (politics and trade) to coerce the periphery and its people. Irrespective of the increasing hosting or location of capitalist business establishments in the periphery, this exploitative relationship ensures that the status quo remains unchanged. Owing the way the core-periphery analyses the relationship between two diametrically opposite regions at a global scale, it has been described as a part or variety of the world-systems theory (Scott and Marshall, 2005). The weak operation of the periphery within the worldwide economic and political system is attributed to their historical and persistent process of domination, and exploitation and consignment to the state of politico-economic dependency and peripherality by their Western capitalist powers, which have been at the center (core) of the global politico-economic structure. One of the biggest achievements of the peripheral states is their functioning as historical service providers in offering raw materials to their counterparts in the center. The defunct socialist state (USSR) along with China, and so forth have responded to the unequal global division of labor by advocating for the withdrawal of the peripheral states from the unjust global capitalist system, which ensures that the latter experience “development of underdevelopment” (Bulpitt, 2003, Frank 1966, 1979, 1984, Amin 1974, 1976).

Consequently, some newly independent Third World countries resorted to the South-South cooperation as an alternative to the global capitalist system, which has been unprofitable to the Third World. While others remained connected to the capitalist structure, Obasi Igwe (2005) suggests that while China, Russia, and others socialist states in Asia and Latin America have coped well with the formulation and implementation of theories and policies designed to effect the delinking of peripheral countries from the unequal capitalist system, Africa has yet to make any appreciable progress, until the recent transformation of the ineffective Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) into the Africa Union (AU) in July 2001- a shift which was perceived as providing a new platform to initiate progressive actions (Igwe, 2005). Dominant centers have been known to exist within the core, such as Britain in the 19th century and the USA in the 20th Century (Bulpitt, 2003).

The second part of this Center- Periphery Theory of Political Economy is concerned with internal colonialism within a single core or peripheral state characterized or defined on the basis of the unequal division of labor, exploitation, and dependence, elaborated in the first type. It is distinguished and identified by the existence of patterns of territorial inequality in economic, political, social, environmental, and other perspectives within the domestic (local) confines of the country, contrasted to that found in the international (global) scale. Therefore, in a country exhibiting internal colonialism, a core region will emerge and be involved in exploitation, domination, and control of their peripheral region or regions.

The third aspect of the center-periphery theoretical frame work is the analytical approach for understanding centre-local relations, thereby providing an alternative in the traditional literature that is biased towards intergovernmentalism. The various mechanisms used by the political center to control, manage, or avoid relation with the remainder of national territory (the periphery or peripheries) are emphasized in this aspect. This aspect offers a useful way of studying center-local relations with special focus on the center. However, its failure to show precisely the principal actor in the relationship within the periphery represents a deficiency of the model (Bulpitt, 2003).

The core-periphery theoretical frame is relevant for this study for several reasons. Owing to the use of the global capitalist system as the framework for analysis, the theory provides a means of examining the acquisition of sub-Saharan Africa's land by various entities (be they states or corporations from all over the world). The internal colonialism perspective of the theory provides a framework for examining the way some African countries are reportedly engaged in the acquisition of land in some countries with the local-regions (sub-Saharan Africa). However, the second aspect of internal colonialism does present some historical conflicts since, at the time these models were formulated, the African and Asian states that are currently involved in land acquisition may not have achieved the requisite financial means to undertake investments, generally, and in land, in particular, outside their states. Generally, the theory is relevant to this study despite the slight problems identified here.

METHODS AND DATA

We used the method of aetiology in this study. This method is similar to origination and causation (which have been used and described in the literature of several disciplines) because it involves creating the nature of the principles and laws (both logical and empirical) that govern outcomes (in this study, the adverse consequences of neoliberal globalization on the accessibility of Africa's poor small holders, and other vulnerable groups to scarce land resources). Causal explanation (or causation) in scientific and philosophical contexts is concerned with the application of analytical rigour in explaining issues. In response to empiricists' insistence that experimentation is a compulsory undertaking to qualify for causation, social scientists have resorted to the analysis of statistical

relationships among sets of events (say event A, and event B) as appropriate substitutes for experimentation. Despite the immense empiricist rhetoric that criticize and discredit causality, their acknowledgement of the significance and potency of material and formal causes has made it to remain popular in scientific inquiry and explanations (Scott and Marshall, 2005: 58-9). Aetiology studies causation of outcomes of phenomena and things systematically and scientifically. Its origin was traced to medical sciences, where the method was used to produce robust results. It comprises some major activities as follows: preliminary description of the study's object to provide a foundation for subsequent analyses of issues involved; determination of the fundamental constituents of the phenomena of interest in the study as well as the nature and principles governing inter-relationships among aspects of the phenomena. Interconnections among the origin, history and evolution of the subject matter are established based on the consideration that their consequences are not discrete but developmental, not final but dialectical. Owing to the robustness of results obtained from the application of aetiology to medical science studies, the method was increasingly adopted for analyzing numerous issues in social sciences (e.g. sociology, and criminology). Under the latter, aetiology was applied to study phenomena such as gangsterism, mafia, cultism, delinquency, etc. (Igwe, 2005). Dialectical characteristics of most issues referring to the way two aspects of situations make them to affect each other (Hornby, Wehmeier, McIntosh, Turnbull, and Ashby, 2005) make them amenable to analysis using aetiology. Data from multiple secondary but reliable sources especially reports of international development organizations were used. Data analysis involved qualitative interpretation of data and information reported by development organizations (Ingwe, Ikeji and Ojong, 2010).

Some key features of land acquisition by foreign investors

The Daewoo Affair, (earlier mentioned) in Madagascar provides insight into the phenomenon of large-scale land transfer or land grabbing generally (described here the new scramble for Africa). The large-scale acquisition of land in Third World countries takes forms, which presents difficulties to summarize. However, some features are common to it. It involves transfers of large tracts of land in the Third World or developing country (1.3 million ha in Madagascar's Daewoo case). It excludes original users of the land transferred. These users are usually poor peasants who do not have official titles to the land, but operate under community's traditional land tenure systems. It involves the elite, usually in government/bureaucracy, military, or similar power brokers, as the sellers of land. The transaction is commonly shrouded in secrecy, especially withholding of information about the unjust transfers from the poor peasants and other patriotic individuals and groups who are sensitive to such senseless transfers. Others features of land grabbing in DCs include foreign entities (governments, corporations, organizations, etc.) as buyers, elite (people controlling national judicial departments in the transfer and exclusion of patriotic, socio-economically and environmentally sensitive organizations, such as civil society) from the transactions and discussion. It is associated with adverse consequences, as buyers' occupation and use of the transferred land is usually accompanied by protests, conflicts, (legal and/or physical) combats, and confrontations.

It is not the result of organized dialogue between among concerned stakeholders, but involves opacity (non-transparent deals). It ignores principles of governance, inclusiveness (participation), and justice and does not consider the livelihoods and well-being of peasants and others poor people, depending on the land transferred (Teyssier, 2009).

The context for the new scramble for Africa and sub-Saharan Africa

Africa, with an area of about 30 million square kilometers, is comprised of 53 countries and about four islands controlled by European powers (UNEP, 2007). The response of African nationalists to the partitioning of the continent for colonial rule by European powers since the Berlin Colonial Conference was the prevalence of Pan-Africanism, involving agitation for political-economic independence in the 1950s-1960s and advocacy for socialism as a means of delinking of the continent from the neoliberal capitalist trap of the North (Igwe, 2005). The continent comprises a variety of ecosystems, including globally significant ones, under the context of increasing global warming and climate change. About 6.4 million square kilometers of Africa's area was covered by forest recently. That includes the Congo forest reserve (the region's largest forest and the world's second largest block of contiguous tropical rain forest), which forms 16 percent of the world's total forest cover (Igwe, 2005); FAO, 2005). Wetlands (a precious variety of ecosystems) occur in virtually all African states and constitute about one percent of Africa's total area (UNEP, 2006). About 43 percent of the total area is described as "susceptible" dry land (UNEP, 1992). Apart from this problematic ecosystem, the continent presents the world's largest desert (the Sahara), covering over nine million square kilometers in Northern Africa and forming parts of the region classified as hyper arid, including about two-thirds of the Sahara desert (Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2003). The Kalahari Desert in southern Africa is reputed to be the world's largest body of sand (Linacre and Geerts, 1998). Most of sub-Saharan Africa is covered by grasslands, which prosper in areas with climatic conditions (especially rainfall) that are in between those suitable for forests to thrive and desert. Only 8.7 million of the region's land is described as suitable for agriculture and possessing potentials for supporting majority of its increasing population (FAO, 2002). Ruefully, Africa has been facing problems of food insecurity. The problem is being aggravated by most recent scramble by transnational corporations and richer states to acquire large tracts of Africa's land for agricultural production as a way of resolving food insecurity problems elsewhere outside the region. The resurgence of this scramble for Africa's land resources has been attributed to the combined legacies of weaknesses resulting from neoliberalism, colonialism, and slavery (Ingwe, Ikeji and Ojong, 2010). The total population estimates and projections, by reliable international organizations for Sub-Saharan Africa (comprising 41 states in 2005), was 732,512,000 people (i.e. 11.4 per cent of the world's population) and expected to be 1,181,279,000 people by 2030 (i.e. 14.5 per cent of the world population). Sub-Saharan Africa is widely regarded as the region of the world presenting the poorest social, economic, and environmental conditions. The region's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2002 was US \$393,001 million (that is

only 1.1% of the world's total, US \$35,065,010 million in 2002). The region's GDP per capita purchasing power parity (PPP) was \$1,779, compared to the world average of \$7,880 in 2002. The poverty level in the region was comparatively serious when the GDP per capita of other regions is considered as follows: \$35,138 for North America; \$21,348 for Oceania; \$18,097 for Europe; \$5,934 for Middle East and North Africa; \$4,684 for Asia (excluding Middle East); \$7,347 for Central America and Caribbean; and \$7,339 for South America. The proportion of the population living on less than \$1/day and \$2/day (based on surveys in 1987 – 2001) were 46.5 per cent and 78.0 per cent, respectively, compared to 2.4 per cent and 29.9 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and WRI, 2005). Food insecurity was high and prevalent in the region: labor (measured in form of the number of workers per hectare of land) in the region was 1.02 workers per hectare, compared to other regions 0.87, and an average of workers per hectare for the world. Africa received the largest quantity of cereals as food aid (3,145,000 metric tons) compared to other regions in 2002.

Unemployment rates are likely to be the highest in the world in the region due to a combination of reasons, including the low absorptive capacities of national economies, poor governance, prevalent injustice, poor employment information, and poor management (including reporting) systems. Although most Sub-Saharan African nations did not report unemployment rates between 2000 and 2002, the only three countries that did presented some of the highest unemployment rates world-wide. For example, while the unemployment rate in Africa's largest economy (South Africa) was 29.5, the unemployment rate of 33.8 in Namibia was only equaled by Macedonia (the former Yugoslav Republic), with 31.9 unemployment rate and Algeria (one of the most prosperous North African nations) with 29.8 unemployment rate. No country elsewhere presented such high unemployment rates in the world (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, and WRI, 2005). It was recently estimated that between 1980 and 2000, urban population in SSA increased by nearly 4.7 percent annually (UN 2004), while the region's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) declined at the rate of 0.8 percent per annum (World Bank, 2003). Moreover, the region's total population has also been increasing at a rate higher than the economic growth rate. The foregoing poor socio-economic conditions make Africa to be vulnerable to the new scramble for its land resources by MNCs and rich countries.

The first scrambles for Africa and the Berlin Colonial Conference

The Berlin Colonial Conference, hosted by the infamous German chancellor: Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815-98) in Berlin, was the consummation of previous prolonged scramble by European Powers for new territories in Africa in order to enlarge their central domestic states. Owing to the way the empire-enlargement program by individual European countries had inevitably led to bitter conflicts among their competing rivals, the Berlin Colonial Conference was organized to provide a "peaceful" means of ensuring that the extension of their "spheres of influence" was accomplished. It was the German bourgeois-capitalist class, which was in need of raw materials and markets for their manufactures, that instigated prince Otto von Bismarck to abandon the national governments

disinterest in the scramble for new territories and join the other European gladiatorial actors (Great Britain, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Turkey), which had penetrated Africa to varying degrees to conquer and acquire new territory. Therefore, the BCC achieved “gentlemen’s agreements” whereby Germany gained some Africa territories that she was to lose later during the first and second World Wars. The present political map of Africa results from the division of a hitherto wholesome Africa among the major European powers. Colonial rule by new “owners” of various African states was enforced after the “gentlemen’s agreement” reached at the Berlin Colonial Conference (BCC) went into force (Igwe, 2005).

Previous capitalist adventures of Europeans in Africa took the major forms and slavery serfdom referring to prolonged inhuman trade in the most creative, virile, and talented young Africa men and women by Europeans and their African collaborators in the ruling class. The infamous Trans Atlantic Slave trade involved sales of Africans in American markets for hundreds of years until the abolition of slavery in the 19th century, when Africa lost about 10 million of her virile young men and women to inhuman slavery. Unlike other crimes committed against other people, Africans affected by slavery are yet to be paid reparations or compensated (Igwe, 2005). The above atrocities were complemented by several other collective and/or unilateral actions, including unjust treaties and string acts of aggression, including genocidal attacks undertaken by the European powers in their vicious bid to expand their territories and enrich their states and economies. European colonialism also extended beyond Africa to cover North and South America, Australasia, Asia, and Oceania (Igwe, 2005). Historians, economic, and others development scholars have demonstrated how Africa lost its place to control and manage its path toward development (Rodney, 1972; Chinweizu, 1975).

Liberalism and Neo-liberalism and Food Security in Africa

Recently, scholars have shown the consequences of neo-liberalism on the economy of Nigeria with regards to the implementation of sustainable energy in urban Nigeria (Ingwe, Inyang, Ering and Adalikwu, 2009). While the impact of neoliberalism on the sustainable energy sector is equally devastating to agriculture and the quest for food security in Africa, we elaborate on the legacy or effects of structural adjustment program (SAP) on the sub-Saharan Africa economy.

Structural Adjustment Program and Food Security in sub-Saharan Africa

Some scholars (e.g. Andrew Hurrell and Laura Gomez-Mera) have been cited as suggesting that structural adjustment is a part of more encompassing package of neoliberalistic policies under the market based neoliberal economic policies that the washing consensus imposed on developing countries (McLean and McMillan, 2005). While that perspective elucidates on the subject matter of this study, the elaboration of SAP separately provides

insight that is capable of increasing understanding plight of peasants who would be adversely affected by the new scramble for Africa's land after prolonged adverse effects of the SAP. The SAP has been defined as conditionalities designated to ensure that Third World, or developing, countries perpetually and permanently subsidizes the Western capitalist economics through policies formally by the IMF and its collaborator. The implementation of SAP leads to enormous governance problems, including disruption of balance of payment system and debt consist, thereby making Third World countries become more and more vulnerable to the manipulation of the IMF and its cohorts. The IMF contrivance of the debt crisis, especially, creates a vicious circle, which involves the entrenchment of dubious leadership comprising corrupt, unpatriotic, and incompetent people in Third World countries by the neocolonialist and neoliberal campaigners, who employ a battery of vicious policies. The consequence is the production of less than the needs of the Third World countries, which simultaneously imports junk and luxury goods more than it can pay for. These policies lead to rapid depletion and exhaustion of national foreign reserves, while the foreign bank accounts of the inept leadership of Third World countries increase. The unpatriotic leadership of affected Third World countries have never responded appropriately to the debt crisis that accrues from such practices by ending the large imports of unnecessary luxury goods, but perpetuate this policy by continuing their consulting with the IMF and receiving the organisation's "advice" and economic restoration "packages" usually by always increasing loans, which attract high interest rates, usually designed and dedicated toward paying for previous imports, while new imports increase. Interestingly, those who export the unnecessary luxury goods and junk to Third World countries are the same colluders and collaborators with the IMF, which grants new loans. The new loans granted by the IMF, are never (or rarely) accompanied by financial transfer to the Third World debtor country. Highly manipulative bookkeeping tactics are used by the IMF to ensure that the latter debits the Third World country being granted a loan to the amount "loaned". No fund (money) is transferred. This policy (and the socio-economic crises arising from the increasing debt within structural adjustment policy) has been associated with odious debt (Adams, 1991).

It involves dubious, spurious debt among nations, international financial institutions, over-pricing, and so forth. The IMF usually emphasizes payment of interest on the loan by debtor Third World country, the repayment of the principal is not considered a priority but ignored. The debt trap is created and reinforced by ensuring that interest on loans increased in such ways that the interest arising from the loans either becomes equal to or greater than the principal. The debt crisis is spread to more countries by the IMF, which describes those economies with great potentials for development as "under borrowed" as a means of entrapping them into indebtedness by incessant urging and manipulation of their leadership. The contrivance of "helplessness" and desperate situation of Third World countries paves the way for the IMF to impose new policies involving loan-financed adjustments of almost all facets of the economy and life of the recipient country; from the human capital development sectors (education and health, to commerce, industries, finance that are usually expected to be liberalized (i.e. opened-up)) to the

aggression of the Western capitalist gladiators. Others (military, security, national currency, and trade, among others) are penetrated and rendered dependent on the international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank Group). These liberalization and privatization schemes have been described under neoliberalism. The subsidization of Western capitalist countries by Third World countries has reportedly occurred for over 500 years, coinciding with the development of capitalism. It (i.e. neoliberal capitalism) became dominant in the last 31 years or thereabout from 1989 (Igwe, 2005; Adams, 1991; Brand and Sekler, 2009).

The implementation of SAP in Nigeria led to the sudden and rapid decline in the position of the country (sub-Saharan Africa's leading economy) to the world's 13th poorest country by 1995. While Western capitalist countries representatives and institutions have used the SAP to pursue the interest of their nations and citizens, Third World representatives are yet to initiate and apply any counteractive strategy, apart from receiving "bribes" from the IMF and its collaborators (Igwe, 2005). One example of the contradictions double standards of the SAP in the field of agriculture pertains to subsidy to farmers. While IMF imposed, SAP expects African government not to subsidize agriculture and other sectors, such as education, health and so forth, their government (of Western capitalist countries) subsidizes agriculture to the tune of several billions of US Dollars annually (UNEP, 2007).

Without the support of sub-Saharan Africa's and Third World countries' governments, peasant farmers have been enormously weakened and driven to the brink of frustration and despair. The peasant in Third World have been forced by circumstances, foisted by forces within the global capitalist system, governments, and domestic governments, led by unpatriotic leadership to be associated with poverty, small land holdings, lack of credit/capital, and other requirements for livelihoods.

Several studies have reported on the pervasiveness of the implementation of the SAP and its adverse consequences on the economies and societies of sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere in the Third World (Adams, 1991).

Legacies of the SAP in Sub-Saharan Africa

Owing to the cumulative impacts of prolonged implementation of the SAP in the Third World, their footprints on human capital development sectors are obvious. The expenditure on health care by governments of the Third World countries is the least worldwide. This applies also to the education sector. For the healthcare expenditure per capital (including total spending and government spending) in 2001 was least in sub-Saharan Africa: international \$85 and \$36, respectively. In Asia (2001) they were: \$230 and \$115, respectively; \$428 and \$202, respectively, in Central America and Caribbean; \$551 and \$264, respectively, in South America; and \$302 and \$174, respectively, in the Middle East and North Africa. Elsewhere, they were higher (similar to our earlier

statement regarding large-scale subsidies granted to farmers in Western capitalist countries): \$1,461 and \$1,089 in Europe, \$4,633 and \$2,161 in North America and \$1,861 and \$1,283 in Oceania in 2001 (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and WRI, 2005).

Poverty in Africa

International poverty rates (i.e. percent of total populations living on less than \$1/day and \$2/day between 1987-2001 in sub-Saharan Africa) were 46.5 and 78.0%, respectively (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and WRI, 2005). The proportion of all Africa people living below the poverty line rose from 47.6% in 1985 to 59% in 2000 (UNECA, 2004, cited by UNEP, 2007). The serious poverty in Africa, especially south of the Maghreb (Sahara) places, limits on the access of the people to food, safe water, minimum health care, and education. The continued use of degraded land, soils of marginal fertility, and crude/primitive systems of agriculture intensifies and perpetuates existing poverty in Africa (UNEP, 2007).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Threats posed by large-scale land acquisition to sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa include exacerbating existing social, environmental, and economic problems, as described below, and food security, food aid, and nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa.

The level of development of the above aspect of regional and national entities could be indicated by the amount of food (usually cereals) received as food aid. The proportion cereals imported as part of the total amount of food consumed, while nutrition is indicated by amount of cereal fed to livestock, calorie supply per capita share of calorie supply from animal products. The available data shows that the conditions were worst in sub-Saharan Africa in 2002 compared to other parts of the world. According to the international food aid of the World Food Program since its creation, the amount of cereals received as food aid worldwide was largest in sub-Saharan Africa in 2002 with 3,145,000 metric tons in South America, 2,002,000 in the Middle East and North Africa, only 96,000 metric tons in Europe and 2,182,000 metric tons in Asia (excluding Middle East) (UNECA, 2004, cited by UNEP, 2007). For poor nutrition, in 2002, Sub-Saharan Africa was indicate by scoring least (worldwide) share of calorie supply from animal products (6.6%) compared to 2.6% North America; 17.1% Central America and Caribbean; 21.2% in South America; 9.9% in the Middle East and North Africa; 27.7% in Europe; and 14.3% in Asia (excluding Middle East). Sub-Saharan Africa recorded the least share (worldwide) of calorie supply per capita (2,262 kilocalories/person/day)) compared to 3,756 kilocalories/person/day in North America; 2,878 kilocalories/person/day in Central America and Caribbean; 2,851 kilocalories/person/day in South America; 3,110 kilocalories/person/day in the Middle East and North Africa; 3,331 kilocalories/person/day in Europe; and 2,682 kilocalories/person/day in Asia (excluding Middle East) in 2002 (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and WRI, 2005).

Food imports cost Africa US \$15-20 billion, annually, to complement US \$2 billion/year of food aid received by the region, which had received US \$12.5 billion (45%) of total investment in intensity of agricultural inputs in sub-Saharan Africa.

The amount of fertilizer in 2001, worldwide, was least in sub-Saharan Africa, with only 11.4kg/ha, compared to 99 kg/ha in North America; 66.9 kg/ha in Central America and Caribbean; 98.7 kg/ha in South America, 59.9 kg/ha in Oceania; 66.8 kg/ha in the Middle East and North Africa; 73.4 kg/ha in Europe, 139 kg/ha in Asia (excluding Middle East) and an average of 90.1 kg/ha for the world.

Available Agricultural Land in sub-Saharan Africa and its use

With only 182,680,000 hectares of agricultural land, sub-Saharan Africa had less of these resources than other continents/regions as follows: 223,951,000 ha in North America; 303,993,000 ha in Europe and 500,878,000 ha in Asia (excluding Middle East) in 2002. Other regions, which had less land (in absolute terms) than sub-Saharan Africa, were: Central America and Caribbean (42,178,000 ha); South America (126,594,000 ha), Oceania (53,664,000 ha); and Middle East and North Africa (100,520,000 ha). The irrigation of cropland was least in sub-Saharan Africa compared to the rest of the world, with only seven per cent and only 3.7 per cent to seven percent total cropland irrigated in the region. The proportion, in percent, of irrigated cropland, as percentage of total cropland in other continents regions in 2002 were higher, as follows: 10.4 per cent North America; 19.3 per cent in Central America and Caribbean; 8.3 per cent in South America; 5.4 per cent in Oceania; 28.7 per cent in Middle East and North Africa; 8.3 per cent in Europe; 34.2 per cent in Asia (excluding Middle East); and 18.1 per cent for the World (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and WRI, 2005; UNEP, 2007 citing from FAOSTAT, 2005). This means that what accounts for increasing land acquisition in sub-Saharan Africa is not abundance of agricultural land, but poverty and helplessness of African peasants. Per capita agricultural production in Africa has been poor: between 2000 and 2004, it declined 0.4 percent (AfDB, 2006 cited by UNEP, 2007).

Population and resource interrelationships in Africa

Rapid population growth (explosion), leading to decline in land available for agriculture, which in turn, leads to food insecurity and countries, is another problem of development that has attracted the attention of scholars recently. Nikos Alexandratos (2005) reports that demographic conditions in 19 countries (16 of them in sub-Saharan Africa), would be characterized by “high” projected population growth rates in the period 2000-2050. “High” describes population growth rates of 1.8 per cent per annum or higher, representing at least twice the average population growth rate of developing countries for the same 50-year period. All the countries studied by Alexandratos, except Mauritania, faced serious problems of food insecurity. The problem manifested in the form of their low per capita apparent food consumption, and high prevalence of undernourishment (Bruinsma, 2003).

Within the past four decades, 13 of 19 countries, most of them in SSA, were “high population growth” countries, which never achieved a national average of apparent food consumption exceeding 2500 kilocalories (kcal) per person per day, which is considered to be an adequate and acceptable level to be adjudged and used as a national average (Cohen, 2000). Eight of the presented worse levels never exceeded 2,200 Kcal. The role of agriculture in satisfying the nutritional requirements of the population was compromised in Ethiopia (Lutz, Scherbov, Makinwa-Adebusoye, and Reniers, 2004).

How Increasing Large-scale land acquisition in sub-Saharan Africa Threatens the Region’s Sustainable Development

As a region which has been experiencing high rhythms of population growth resulting from its peculiar demographic and epidemiological transition, sub-Saharan Africa’s population was projected to rise from 732.5 million in 2005 to over 1.2 billion in 2030. The pressure exerted by the rapid population growth heightened by social conflicts (wars, resulting from competition for scarce cropland and arable land suitable for extensive agriculture). Consequently, the region has been recording some of the highest rates of populations, who undertake refuge status in other regions. It was reported that 3,306,000 people from SSA were granted asylum, 346,000 others were repatriated from the other continents that they migrated to in 2003 while those suffering internal displacement within their homelands and national territories have been on the increase due to the problem of climate change (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and WRL, 2005). Although other continents/regions are projected to experience population explosion (e.g. Asia’s population rises from 3.6 billion in 2005, to over 4.4 billion by 2030), sub-Saharan Africa’s population growth poses peculiar problems due to the failure to achieve economic and social development in the region due to its peculiar historical and current political and related circumstances.

The major land uses in Africa include (in percent of the total land): permanent pasture (44 per cent), permanent crops (one per cent), arable land (nine per cent), forests and wood land (18 per cent), and other land (28 per cent). Agriculture has reportedly been the regions dominant land use type and larger employer of labor. However, the proportion of employees in the agriculture sector has been declining over the years as job seekers go into other sectors, such as urban-based employment, as the total urban population increases in Africa and worldwide (UNEP 2007).

Land resources: distribution and uses

With an area of about 30 million square kilometers, Africa comprises of 53 states and various ecosystems, including forests, woodlands, dry lands, grasslands wetlands, arable lands, coastal zones, fresh water, mountain, and urban centers. About 8.7 square kilometers of Africa’s land has been described as possessing the potential to support majority of the region’s population and is perceived to be suitable for agricultural production (UNEP, 2007 citing FAO, 2002). With about 6.4 million km² of forest land, Africa contains 16 per cent of the world’s

total forest cover (UNEP, 2007 citing GEO Data Portal and FAO, 2005). Wet lands form about one per cent of Africa's total land area (UNEP, 2007).

Desertification of Africa

Africa comprises of a disproportionately large part of dry land, about 42% of the total described areas, characterized by prolonged low perception and high evapo-transpiration. Nearly all of North Africa comprises of arid, semi-arid, hyper-arid and dry sub-humid environments, which in their natural states, do not support agriculture. The latter category of environment extends into West Africa. Southern Africa also possesses large portions of the above dry land environmental classes (excluding only the hyper-arid variety) (UNEP, 2007 citing UNEP, 1992).

Major sustainable development problems of Africa: Land degradation was the key environmental issue that affected Africa by 1990 when about five million square kilometers of its land was rendered less useful than it was hither to. The region lost immense livelihoods due to this problem.

This problem was aggravated by poverty of a large proportion of the region's population, who have been compelled by their poverty to ignore principles of sustainable and management in their use of scare land resources. Food and income insecurity was caused by degradation of farmland, which led to poor yields. Since 1981, per capital food production in Africa has declined by as high as 12 percent. The problem of land degradation in Africa has been exacerbated by drought and other climate change impacts. Land degradation in Africa causes several other problems, apart from threatening livelihoods of rural residents who form the dominant population: (66 per cent and 72 per cent in 2000 and 1990, respectively) (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank and WRI, 2005). It affects the region's river catchments, forest, increases desertification, and reduces ecosystem services. Some responses to resolve or reduce land degradation in the region include programs designated to integrate crop production with land management and improvement of yields. The large subsidies that governments of western capitalist countries grant to their farmers have been identified as one of the problems hampering the development of Africa's agricultural sector, generally, and poor yields, in particular (UNEP, 2007).

Increasing conversion of peasant agricultural land into commercial agricultural uses, such as plantations, has made it possible for Africa to emerge as a substantial supplier of the world with a number of products, including coffee, tea, and cocoa. The export of tea from only one sub-Saharan Africa country (Kenya) rose to 324,600 tons in 2004 from 236,290 tons in 2000 (Export processing Zone Authority, 2005). Sub-Saharan Africa's export of herb cultural products exceeded US \$2 billion per year. This level could be improved through better (improved) management (UNEP, 2007, citing UNEP, 2006). It has been demonstrated in the literature that the export of

agricultural raw materials from Africa has contributed toward worsening the food security situation in the region. Recent reports have reported that those entities involved in acquiring land in SSA intend to export or repatriate their harvest from their newly acquired land parcels to their home countries would translate into worsening the current food and income insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa.

The impacts of the new scramble for SSA's land are likely to include the creation of more problems that would aggravate existing obstacles of sustainable development. Some of the problems include:

- (i) Dispossessing peasants of their land, which they own, based on communal tenure systems contrasted to official land titles associated with neoliberal capitalist systems controlled by "indigenous colonialists", who have alienated the people of Africa from their lands through various forms of manipulation (Okoth-Ogendo, 2008).
- (ii) The displacement of peasants from land would further worsen their desperate socio-economic condition and, by extension, their application of unsound land exploitation systems in their bid to survive (production for household consumption and limited petty trading). As noted in the literature (UNEP, 2007) this will exacerbate land degradation in Africa.
- (iii) It will increase the conversion of small-scale farmers from land owners, and renters and leasers, on favorable terms, to wage earning laborers in large commercial farms (plantations) to be established by owners of land being bought. The condition of wage earners has been worsening due to low wages, resulting from exploitation employers, increasing food prices arising from global food shortages, specifically in SSA, and declining prices of commodities exported from SSA to western capitalist countries which, in turn, sell manufactured goods and products at exorbitant prices to SSA.
- (iv) Increasing social unrest or youth restiveness will result from the problem of "youth bulge", which has reportedly occurred in SSA due to the rapid natural increase in population, collapse of the formal economic sector, reduction in jobs, unemployment rising rapidly and pervasive problems of conflicts (Borges, Adubra, Medupin and Okunola, 2003; Adedeji and Rowland, 1972), dissenting views of the unemployment of youth with governments, including those involved in selling lands from the national territory under their custody. The Daewoo Affair in Malagasy is an example of how this problem is likely to increasingly spread wherever commonly owned land is sold in Africa. Notice that the Daewoo Affair involved the sale of a very large portion of Malagasy's land and led to the outing of the president who was involved in the matter. Several reports of food riots were associated with recent food crises, and increases in food prices that were reported in most countries in 2003 (Obertan, 2009).

The loss of land in SSA represents serious forfeiture of natural assets that should be used by the youth for achieving economic and social goals. Owing to a combination of adversities in SSA, regular out migration of large numbers of youthful people from the region to the advanced nations in search for better economic opportunities has been presenting a serious refugee problem. It was reported that 3,306,000 people from SSA were granted asylum in 2003 while 345,000 others were repatriated from advanced countries in the same year: 2003 (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, and WRI, 2005: 177). It was recently argued that elitist neoliberal fundamentalism in form of indifference of the ruling class to the problems of unemployment has been perpetrated in most of sub-Saharan Africa since 1960s and 1970s. Heads of governments in SSA have failed to undertake youth employment interventions for curbing wastage of the region's most precious development assets (human and natural resources). One of the best examples of this problem in SSA could be cited in the region's most populous country: Nigeria, where the challenge has been particularly or most serious. The failure to harness enormous human and natural resource endowments (especially large youthful population) to achieve social and economic development in Nigeria since the country attained political independence in 1960 has been documented (Callaway in Lloyd, Mabogunje, and Awe 1966, Stolper, in: Ayida and Onitiri, 1971: 72-80). More recently, prolonged unemployment of the youth culminated in serious youth restiveness and insurgency, crime, social vices in the Niger Delta region and elsewhere in the country. Land provides the natural resource base for implementing several social and economic interventions such as youth-centred agricultural employment and other economic activities. Therefore, the acquisition of land by MNCs and rich countries leaves SSA's youth and people (especially those repatriated from the Global North) less opportunities for social and economic redemption and emancipation.

CONCLUSION

This study involved the use of the conceptual and theoretical frame-work founded on the core-periphery models, neoliberalism, with extension of the structural adjustment program (SAP) to analyze environmental, social, and economic data, focusing on SSA and elsewhere in the world. This has increased the understanding of the ongoing increase in the acquisition of SSA's land for agriculture by entities from outside the region. One of several interesting findings is that contrary to claims that sub-Saharan Africa possesses surplus agricultural land, the land resources of the region are inadequate to meet the demands of peasants, existing commercial farmers, or plantation owners who export produce to the centres and core regions of industrialism and socio-economic abundance in Western capitalist nations.

Moreover, SSA faces land scarcity arising from rapid population growth, natural disasters, and climate change impacts (drought, flood, and other extreme events). Consequently, the increasing acquisition of sub-Saharan Africa's land is bound to complicate the foregoing problems of competition for scarce land thereby leading to

more serious socio-economic and environmental stresses, including increasing conflicts overland, riots against food shortages and food price increases, and protests against dispossession of peasant commonly owned land, among others problems. It is clear that the same attitude of unbridled greed, corruption unscrupulousness reportedly applied by political leaders to Third World countries toward implementation of vicious neoliberalistic and SAP doctrines imposed by the Washington Consensus has been at play manifesting in collusion and connivance with the new seekers of land in sub-Saharan Africa. This was clearly shown by the infamous “Daewoo Affair” in Malagasy (Teysier, 2009).

The phenomenon highlights inherent problems in governance of land and other natural resources in SSA that warrants the application of policy reforms requiring information and knowledge from multiple disciplines: political science, natural resource management, law, geography, sociology, economics, environmental sciences, and so forth. There is need for information on availability and use of land and tenure systems in individual SSA countries as a way of understanding their susceptibility to the invading land buyers. There is need for information on availability of social groups involved in movement against usurpation of commonly owned and managed natural resources (e.g. land). There is need for information on the spatial distribution of natural and cultural resources as a foundation for assessing efforts and programs aimed to improve food and income insecurity in individual SSA countries. There is need for understanding the degree to which communities that are dependent on land and natural resources to have access to information, justice (redress services and facilities), public participation platforms for mobilizing individuals, and groups to address usurpation of commonly owned and managed land by foreign elite in connivance with their local collaborators in government and/or business or military.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To avoid increasing sale of parts of national territories by local colonialists of foreign capitalist “invaders” and the associated dispossession of poor citizens of the use of land and embedded resources, civil society (of peasant farmers, youth, women, natural-resources dependent communities, and so forth) undertake vigorous grassroots mobilization of member organizations in a horizontal manner to create nation-wide movements designed to achieved mutually beneficial objectives of safe guarding commonly owned managed land. Other objectives of the land management systems in Africa should include improving access of citizens, especially the poor, to information systems on land resources, improving justice (redress systems), improving public participation in land and environmental issues as a way of improving good governance of land and environmental resources in individual countries, as well as sub-Saharan African region.

Both the communities using the land before transfer and investors deserve protection from issues and harm by providing mechanization for ensuring that the transfer is transparent and results from dialogue involving stakeholders. Transparency in land tenure, as well as information on available land resources, can be promoted by clear definition of land tenure system, division of land parcels ownership location by means of plans and maps, and so forth. Individual countries must undertake land reforms along the above lines to prevent conflicts and loss of lives and properties (Teyssier, 2009).

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