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Africa in the Global Capitalism: An Era of Development or Exploitation?

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ABSTRACT During the past twentieth century, African researchers and loyal leaders have been on alert and yearned for notable development concerning Africa's political economy via the so-called New International Economic Order. In addition, during the first decade of the new millennium, a myriad of African citizens enthusiastically awaited optimistic and promising development in the effective policy of the international development bodies like the International Labor Organization (ILO) and World Trade Organization (WTO). Minimal objectives have been achieved in those years, and therefore, one can be curious to know, what reflection these glitzy modifications have shown on African economic prosperities that were placed in the bottom-most rank of the capitalist world? Does the advancement of Indonesia, China and Malaysia from being developing countries to developed nations echo substantial changes to the capitalist system's operation? The only option to illuminate whether advanced countries of the north have eliminated their operational flaws, which deprived Africa equal benefits from capitalism is to examine the fundamental issues and main features, which are still in existence in African communities, which necessitates this study.

INTRODUCTION

Undeniably, African communities have been attributed to some progress in some areas, yet, real development has not occurred in most of the countries in Africa when compared to their positions about forty years ago (Brady 2001). Regardless their disciplines, it is very certain that no researcher can conduct a study on African political economy without taking into cognizance that critical moment of Africa's and global capitalist system integration. This is because for several years, the development route in the African continent has been determined by that remarkable occurrence.

Both the economic development and socio-political progress analysis of African states can only be done with an intense reference to historical occurrences. While seeking to illuminate the key issues aroused in the process of incorporating the African continent into the capitalist system, this study considered the examination of historical refurbishment first, and then enumerated leading problems around the continent. Other relevancies in this study would include concluding debates and proposition for exclusive consideration.

AMALGAMATION OF AFRICA AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM BEGAN

In their study, Lorrian (1989) and Walter (1990) summarily stressed that bringing Africa into the capitalist system is a means of deliberately entrapping African citizens by the White capitalists. The process emanated back in the sixteenth century following the discovery of the steam engine, which empowered the Europeans to travel over the Atlantic Ocean and acquire large industrial resources. That was the very first period ever when the White capitalists travelled for several million killometers from Europe to Africa by waterway through Atlantic coast and entering from the northern part of Africa (Walter 1990).

Discovering that mineral resources like silver and gold are not as enormous as believed to be by the Europeans fostered their diversification into slave trade. Customarily, enormous industrial progress as well as new technology innovation sees the slave trade as unworkable. Due to massive production, there was need for external consumption of such European products and increased need for sources of raw material for more production. Therefore, in the 19^{th} century, clergy persons from the Europe (pastors) and colonial masters initiated a new strategy to build relationships with African communities. The veracity of expansionism geared was what considered the interest of White Europeans, namely, to explore beyond their own communities seeking for production materials and suitable markets (Ajayi 2011).

To be precise, the period of colonialism in Africa instigated from Berlin (Germany) during

1895 and continued until the quarter of twentieth century after the dissolution of the apartheid era in South Africa in 1994 (Ajayi 2011). With several intentions, colonization and direct suppression of all African nations that came from the colonial masters symbolized a critical integration of hopeful Africa into the world's capitalist group. Portentously, the latter adopted system called neo-colonialism (which is the same as the former) actually extended to the post-colonial period to continue with the exploitation of Africa's natural resources in order to maintain the sustainability of European industries as well as the lucrative lives they lived as the colonial masters despite African countries waving their independence flag.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE INCOPORATION

Limited and Inaccurate Development

Azarkar (2001) confirmed that no social management and development superiority ever emerged in human history before the fifteenth century. Many scholars have indicated in their works that several socioeconomic development initiatives have been in existence throughout the African communities prior to the arrival of colonial masters. The continent was progressing in terms of trading, food production, culture, political administration and technology (Azarkar, 2001). Additionally, Africa was not lagging behind in growing vineyards, weaving (cloths and hair-dos), water transportation and weaponry. Nevertheless, the major concern here is that since Africa has been initiated into the European circle of a capitalist system, the continent continued to experience misrepresentation, disarticulation shrinking and restriction in her route to development, which consequently obstructed and jeopardized Africa's independent development.

Until today, the problems still persist due to Africa's attempt to attain likes of the developing world of Europeans and emulating the latter. This can be seen as the replication of what Adam and Eve (the first people) did by daring to resemble their creator (New World Translation bible, 1984). The actual predicament resulting from this is that whoever transfers development transmits it with the same concepts, same specific skills and same mode of thinking, which every adopter of foreign development system is indebted to observe accordingly (Pisiani 1999).

According to Ajayi (2011), African ecnomies were incorporated in the twenty-first century's world capitalism as subordinates, not having an equal percentage of decision-making as the European capitalists. This integration hijacked the authenticity of Africa's indigenous development.

A Non-stop Displacement in the Economies of Africa

Displacement continues to take its position in all aspects of the African economy due to the obstruction caused by Europeans on the authentic trajectory that Africans were following to attain their own development. The obstruction and displacement occurred concurrently to ruin national Africa's transformation. This practice began in the colonial age when African economies, namely, cash crops and food crops were shipped to European countries. This exploitation was prevalent to the extent that the development process was structured in such a way that during and after colonial era, Africa's economy would benefit Europeans more than its African communities.

Furthermore, it also placed Africa as a whole, in a periphery position, that is, the continent remained the providers of primary or raw materials and finished goods consumers. Therefore, the main concern at this point is that even with her established economic prestige, Africa is not capable from the point of an independent development. It is fifteen solid years now away from the beginning of the new millennium, yet this continent is still incapable of achieving economic diversification or totally discarding the European system and replacing it with the production of local need for African consumption.

Exchange Imbalance

The unjust process of commodity exchange that continues to manifest itself in a two-folded level of trade relationships between Africa and Europe is very exasperating. Seasonally produced raw materials are purchased by the European communities at a particular price fixed by themselves, and after processing and transformation into finished goods, products are sold back to Africa (the original producers of primary goods) at a certain price as stipulated by the same Europeans. This iniquitous method was set to impact both, manipulation and discrimination against the workforce (Ajayi 2011). Despite the existence of trade associations and unions to solicit for better prices, the supremacy of advanced technology and government that is inexorable seems to have reduced the effects of achievements expected from these unions. In a very honest manner, the European capitalists, while sustaining high prices for finished goods, placed both mineral resources and agricultural products under a constant price reduction process.

Multinational Corporations' Manipulation and Abuse

Exercising shameless ascendancy and terrifying political connectivity of the Multinational Corporation (MNC) is a noticeable and regular attitude of the European capitalists to Africa (Ajayi 2011). Although the MNC existed before 1945 and started to gain sudden popularity and enormous expansion after World War II, it served as a vehicle for capital transfer and technology for war refurbishment. Due to its majestic control, the corporation set days to prey on Africa's cheap labor, raw materials as well as market and then send profits back home.

According to Walter (1990), sufficient evidence was gathered between 1960 and the 1990s to implicate MNC in political massacres discovered from State leaders' assassinations, political disruption, setting up marionette administration for easy manipulation, introduction and payment for gold-digging activities in the south, east and central Africa. The incessant implication of MNC can also be traced to the Rwanda disaster, the unsettled matters of Patrice Lumumba, Milton Obote versus Idi Amin, Jonas Sayimbi, Kwame Nkrumah, and the Liberian dark years by wicked leaders like Charles Taylor and Samuel Doe.

Evidently, it has been firmly established that MNC possessed strong political and economic faces in Africa, and each face was fashioned for preying on Africa's resources and nullifying political choices of African States. The MNC and Bretton Woods' industry have been collectively working during the last twenty-four years in order to make their manipulation and suppression on the economies of Africa a continuous action with provision of aids, loans, debt control and elevating rascality in African leadership.

Foreign Monetary Institutions and their Intimidating Strength

There is no single country in the whole of Africa that is in possession of reasonable liberty without the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, International Development Agency (IDA), and International Finance Corporation (IFC). The majority of finance ministries and central banks across African countries currently are dominated and controlled by these global agencies (Ajayi 2011). The supremacy of these Bretton Woods monetary institutions has become an issue of concern because they appear to be the only means for African countries to attain development. These dictators are not content with simply providing procedures for monetary aids and debt recovery, but are interested in monitoring how such loans should be used by dictating to the African borrowers the priority areas for development.

Presently, African communities are facing huge debt catastrophe because the dictators of the developed north have plotted a means through which they siphon more money to Europe from African states. For example, in 2006, sixty-five percent of both Ethiopia and Kenya's GDP was remitted to Europe as debt service and on the foreign trade desks of both countries' central bank are offices of IMF officials. This shows that IMF currently does more than impose tough and anti-self-reliant procedures on Africa, as the institution now carries out physical activities of strangling the neck of African economies.

Fraudulent, Unpatriotic and Corrupted Rulers Emerge

The utmost setback of African communities that became noticeable after its incorporation into capitalism may also be as a result of promoting self-governance by political leaders around Africa. Throughout the continent, the traditional ruler-ship, which emanated after independence appeared to be reigning among the descendants of African leaders that teamed up with the then colonial masters. For example, the likes of traditional kings and chiefs (kabeyesis, Igwes, as they were called) in Nigeria are the offspring of African forefathers who were human instruments (warrant chiefs) used by the European oppressors to forcefully bring people of Africa to submissiveness.

Fraudulent, corrupted and unfaithful leaders began to appear in Africa to take the place of expatriates, and this group of leaders conceded national interest for their own greedy and self-interest and conspired with the foreign nationals to ruin and ravish the whole of African economies. Political rulers in Africa have failed and are guilty of greed, ill discipline and are uncourageous to rightfully paddle the African canoe to actual development.

Deformation of the Labor Movement

According to Osuntokun (1998), the predicaments of African Labor Organization (ALO) appeared more wretched than ever in 1989, following the failure of its strength and confidence to combat injustices in a capitalist system. Even before the century passed on, the deformity in ALO's weakness to eloquently defend workers' interest in Africa was noticed. Workers tended to became salary increament protesters but failed to realize the misconducts and exploitation of African labor. Consequently, during the new millennium, the globalization process snatched away integrity and visibility from labor unions. Therefore, crises between labor, media and other public groups became aggravated and confusion was placed everywhere. It is sad to realize that as Africa is suffering from mass faulty leadership and massive poverty, the wisdom of Ivory Towers and revolutionary power of labor are at large (Osuntokun 1998).

Foreign Investment Appeal

It is very sickening that the present Africa continues to pull down her dignity by yearning for foreign investment. The appeal for foreign investment has been spread throughout Africa today, which is a direct call for the return of Europeans into the continent. There is failure in the area of technology transfer, other unbearable strategies like the Structural Adjustment Program, import substitution and deregulation of currency has brought about fantasies. African leaders continue to navigate their development ships backward and pay huge incentives to re-invite expatriates back to Africa. In the colonial era, countrymen of the north cunningly entered Africa holding their Bible and later infused the continent with innumerable injuries, but now it is African leaders themselves who are enthusiastically welcoming the European autocrats with drums and horns (Ajayi 2011). Africa has slept and failed to realize that the return of the oppressors will definitely cause more harm than ever.

Africa only benefited a very low percentage from the enormous hopes of the 1990s' new international economic order as well as the so-called reworked trading since the beginning of twenty-first century. Africa remains disadvantaged since her inclusion in the global capitalism. Similarly, the system has permanently subjugated the continent and retained her into a state of agrarian and mineral resource producers and suppliers for the continuous functioning of European factories at ridiculously low prices. This strategy, in its full coverage, forced the continent into a dependent position and assured non-diversification on the base of African economies. The global recession, which put those African countries with weak economies in a tormented dilemma, worsened the matter.

The previous colonial burdens and impermeable political process of the multinational corporation in Africa partnered with the monetary institutions of Bretton Woods to bestow African political governance that is orphaned of concepts, lacking discipline, wisdom and understanding, which made them failures in the governance duty. The whole African geography has been scattered by the military and their dictatorship systems, which caused weaknesses in the hope of political competency to the tune of the military exhaustion. The academic sector, police, human rights activists, the media, among other sectors that are supposed to act on behalf of people, are no longer active and are, thus, engaged in battling for relevance.

The new era of democracy and the thirst for modernization in Africa have caused weird competition among African countries while lobbying for foreign investments from both aged and newly developed nations of the globe. Enticing and favorable arrangements are acknowledged towards prospective foreign investors to bring them back to the continent. Probably due to their comparative stability and security, Kenya and Ghana took the lead on the ranking position regarding the competition. Moreover, more than fifteen African countries have already placed the activities of their central banks in the unclean hand of the European capitalists. This free and unobstructed foreign investment invitation could, at the end, lead Africa to another era of physical slavery. The main concern is that the greedy and selfish leadership from the north pursues several questionable and uncomfortable strategies and is supported by their various foreign partners in Paris (France), London (England) and Lisbon (Portugal), to mention few, with the motive of enslaving Black people of Africa.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly from the above debate, the political economy of Africa still falls under the supremacy of the Europeans even in this new millennium. There is no conflict in saying that the continent of Africa is endangered following her initiation into the global capitalism, capturing by exploiters, being mutually molested by both local and foreign capitalists, and harmed and weakened by inchoate democracy. Sadly, Africa was swiftly left behind by other continents along the journey towards development. Nevertheless, historical findings like Pharoani civilization by Egyptians and Aztek civilization by Red Indians through archaeologists have placed the continent in a comfort zone that Africa's era will emerge from.

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