

THE QUEST FOR THE END: ASSESSING ECONOMIC DECOLONIALITY IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the trajectories of extricating (ex) - colonized people from economic coloniality. It argues that imperialism and colonial matrices of power continue to exist way after decolonization. This position is reinforced by the Sankarist theory. Succinctly, the theory is based on the endogenous approach to development, a process of economic, social, cultural, scientific and political transformation based on the mobilization of internal social forces and resources and using accumulated knowledge of a country. Thus, it is within the premise of economic decolonization that as a concept it hangs precariously void of foreseeable solutions in the status quo of the 21st century world order hence this enquiry to rethink the economic models of development. Political personalization, corruption and conflicts have undisputable bearing on the African economic growth. Suggestions have been made on how Africa can enhance economic growth since it is the leading resource-wealth continent on earth compared to Asia, America and Europe. Industrialization, Pan-Africanism, Sankarism and skills development have been brought to the fore as solutions to the African economic problems though not wholesome. Also, Decoloniality, a diverse position of theoretical schools which share a view of coloniality as the fundamental problem in the modern age will also hold the center of this discussion on Africa's strides towards economic growth and emancipation.

Key words: *Pan-Africanism, Africa, Economic Decolonization, Decoloniality*

“What Africans must be vigilant against is the trap of ending up normalizing and universalizing coloniality as a natural state of the world. It must be unmasked, resisted and destroyed because it produced a world order that can only be sustained through a combination of violence, deceit, hypocrisy and lies.” **Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni**

Introduction

Countries of the global south have been bedeviled with economic entanglements and continue to reel within economic regression. A host of reasons to this rotational challenge has been given in the name of corruption, conflicts and poor-governance. Decoloniality which is barely explained in imperialism is to be considered strongly for the economic flows in Africa. This line of paradigm shift is anchored among others by the founder of Africa Decolonial Research Network at University of South Africa, Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni. Decoloniality is distinguished from an imperial version of history through its push of shifting geography of reason from the West as the epistemic locale from which the world is described, conceptualized and ranked to the ex- colonized epistemic sites as the legitimate point's departure in describing the construction of modern world order (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni(2013), to fully understand and appreciate Decoloniality as a liberatory option, it is important to clearly distinguish it from colonialism, decolonization and coloniality.

Colonialism:

Colonialism is a historical process that culminated in the invasion, conquest and direct administration of Africa by states like Spain, Portugal, Britain and France for purposes of enhancing their prestige as empires, for the exploitation of natural and human resources and export of excess population for the benefit of the empire.

Decolonization:

Decolonization was a term that was used to describe the withdrawal of direct colonialism from the colonies as well as well as the struggles ranged against those empires that were reluctant to do so.

Coloniality:

Coloniality is the long standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that defines culture, labor, inter-subjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Coloniality is the name of the ‘darker side’ of modernity that need to be unmasked because it exists as ‘an embedded logic that enforces control, domination and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization, and being good for everyone (Mignolo, 2007).

A closer scrutiny into the African economies today indicates that the leaders were from the onset reluctant and of most scared to face the political reality of economic emancipation which is a bigger desire of the states in the 21st century. There is an Afrocentric ideology which has further ruined the African economies, the white color. What is at issue here is pertinent question on how whiteness gained ontological density far above blackness. The coloniality of being is very important because it assists in investigating how African humanity was questioned as well as processes that contributed towards ‘objectification’/‘thingification’/‘commodification’ of Africans (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Lack of common cooperation was a jeopardy to the idea of building the African economies as the African leaders with their governance inexperience had adopted a concept of a winner takes all after the independence elections as Samora Machel’s Mozambique did to the Portuguese. Thus, it is necessary to point out that African nationalists eagerly developed their governments on faulty foundations in a quest for self-governance during the decolonization interlude.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is driven and motivated by the Sankarist theory which was propounded by Thomas Sankara and developed by Demba Moussa Dembele. The Sankarist theory is based on the endogenous approach to development which means being self-centered in development. Dembele (2013) described the concept of endogenous or self-centered development to referring to the process of economic, social, cultural, scientific and political transformation based on the mobilization of internal social forces and resources and using the accumulated knowledge of a country. The Sankarist theory advocates for the citizens to be active in the transformation of their societies, thereby discouraging foreign aid. It is in this observation that citizens of a country are expected to develop themselves as Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo was quoted by Dembele (2013) saying that ‘We do not develop. We develop ourselves.’ Endogenous approach to development is considered as a novel experience of deep economic transformation for a country since people can take responsibility of their own communities making the approach incompatible with foreign aid

In this theory, Thomas Sankara said that development cannot be fully realized without the inclusion of women in all the sectors of production and women should be totally emancipated. The liberation of women has led to the creation of what Dembele called parity laws in the United Nations and the creation of UN Women Board to support them. Interesting with this theory is the aspect of doing away with corruption which made the neighboring states to treat Sankara with suspicion and sometimes denied entrance into their capitals (Jaffre, 2013). Hence the refusal to adopt foreign models to be initiated in solving African problems has inspired this paper.

The Sankarist theory is a pan African theory which suggests that African problems need African solution. Thomas Sankara believed that African states should start industrializing and produce local goods to promote local markets. Sankara was of the view that imports are unnecessary in the economic growth of the African continent as the West depended much on the global South for natural resources. Thomas Sankara saw Africa as a market for her own produce especially in the agricultural sector and a united Africa was a further way of achieving economic freedom for the continent. Therefore such views have informed the authorship of this discussion following the concept of Pan-Africanism coupled with Decoloniality.

The Concept of Decolonization

The African continent suffered from the racial manipulation, where black people were forced to accept inferiority and submission highly apprehended by the white minority who proved themselves superior. Because of the tribal divides which were created in the colonies, the African people through nationalism sought to fight this indignity on their mother land. It is during this period of a quest of freedom that economic emancipation eluded especially the powers that be who spent years basking in the glory of political freedom devoid of the means of production. African countries were unable to seek both political and economic independence simultaneously as they had a fear of losing the funding masters of their revolutions. It is this same fear that has strengthened the ties between the colonizer and the colonized despite the disparities between the two in terms of economic benefits. Therefore, independence in African states remained incomplete and the statesman have not fully managed to grasp Kwame Nkrumah's consciousness and the cry for a united Africa through Pan-Africanism to advance the goal of economic independence. Africa is currently under an economic colonialism stratum from both the West

and the Chinese who determine the value of the African raw-materials, dump their sub-standard products which undermine the African industries and regulate the markets in Africa. The golden mistake made by nationalist after gaining independence was the reluctance to get ownership of the land which resultantly presented a draw back in the process of decolonization in Africa. Decolonization according Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2013) became a historical process that was enabled by the emergency of United Nations sovereignty and its global constitutionalism that embraced post-colonial states.

Decolonization Errors

Instead of looking from within in search for economic solutions, Africans embarked on an economy brunt by the civil society and the states were much dependent on foreign aid as a source of the national income. Much of the African states' budgets were based on aid, the aid which was abused and the people enjoyed the pleasures of misuse as they had their mouths shut and their hands tied by the emerging Marxist governments. Taking it from Dambisa Moyo's Dead Aid thesis, trillions of dollars have been poured into African governments accounts and later failed to reach their destiny as they were pocketed by malicious aristocratic maniacs such as Fredric Chiluba of Zambia, Mobuto Sesekoand many more who had no idea of what it entailed running a state economy.

The African governments concentrated much on trade protectionism policies, and building of a friendly international economic platform was a myth during the era of transition. This was the achievement made by the colonizers to leave the economies of the new governments in the hands of the inexperienced administrators as the nationalists had been overwhelmed by the concept of a winner takes all principle in elections. Now a chance has come for Africa to turn to a serving cross of economic cooperation, a chance that they will have to choose the market of their products, the value of their products as well as what to trade in a particular moment so as to sustain their economies. Trebilcock and Prado (2011) cements this perception by alleging that, poor countries simply lack the financial, technical or specialized human capital resources to implement good institutions generally including legal institutions.

Many African states after independence were busy battling with political regimes and ethnic conflicts in the expense of economic development which has led to the channeling of resources into the inappropriate tunnels of economic doom which Africa failed to predict as self-estrangements into being economic serfs. Many states in Africa were preoccupied with a search of the relevant form of governance that can enhance economic growth as Trebilcock and Prado (2011) questioned; “does democracy promote economic development (growth) or vice-versa?” Countries like Libya which concentrated much on industrialization made a very impressive economic freedom though later razed to ashes by NATO in a bid to impress the Rothschild. If the application of the African leadership had been brought in action, Africa would be an independent economy like the west. The battle made by the nationalists educated in the west to comprehend the western styles of leadership and the African ones developed a great commotion of violence and lack of focus on economic emancipation. Though most scholars would prefer to subscribe to the perception that democratic states are more developed, one would prefer to differ and put a lime light in the tunnel and say that the very developed states just transformed into democracies only after becoming economically vibrant as can be observed by transitions in states like France under Napoleon, USA and the slavery era, the monarchical UK and even the Soviets under the ceding aristocracies. Hence the democratic wave brought a new era of colonialism which was invisible for the Africans as can be noted by the loss of the gained wealth in states like Tunisia, Libya and Egypt in the recent democratic waves of the 21st century.

Almost all the African states had to fight a second battle against its people after maneuvering the white colonialists in the post-independence period. In Ghana Kwame Nkrumah had to fight against a coup, in Mozambique Samora Machel had to battle against his own people which he described as dissidents supported by the West, in DR Congo Lumumba was made a savage by his own, Zimbabwe had the popular untold Gukurahundi and in Rwanda the genocide between the Tutsi and Hutus left the country on knees below the capacity of operating as a state. This was brought about by the communist approach to make the African states confined into one-party states which is a hindrance to democracy they fought for during the war. One party state system was perceived to be a way of moderating opposition and culminating the winds of political rivalries amongst the leadership (Gregory, 1986), however this was petroleum poured on glowing fire since it inconvenienced democracy which most nationalists like Robert Mugabe said

was a one man one vote. One party state system was followed by the nationalization of private property to minimize capitalism and accelerate poverty and unemployment amongst the citizens of the African population.

The Marxist approach to governance misled most of the African leaders in the process of decolonization, if the nationalists had only embraced the communist approach as experienced by the Chinese community, Africa would be one of the competing economic figure globally. Nkrumah's pan Africanism and the black conscientiousness were greatly misconstrued by leaders like Julius Nyerere and Nigeria's first president who were embraced in socialism and caught the Pan-Africanist ideology with a leftist mentality. In the 1980s and 1990s a wave of privatization swept the world (Trebilcock and Prado, 2011). Privatization which was complimenting the Washington Consensus as a fostering measure of economic recovery did not work for Africa and the same move is blamed as capitalism in the 21st century by political clowns like Julius Malema. The American economic approach of capitalism has made Africa poor than before the colonial era as the continent was caught in a demise of political, economic and ideological dilemma.

Industrialization should be a priority in Africa as it has the market for the western products instead of producing for their own market. The fear of the western regulations has made Africa the worst economic serf in this world. Africa is a mere exporter of the currently diminishing raw materials and they in turn become importers of their own resources which are sold to them in the form of manufactured products. In reality African states like Zimbabwe which has a potency of producing tons of cotton wool, DR Congo and its timber, and even the diamond of Sierra Leon are not processed in the region. Kwame Nkrumah once penned the following words in conjunction with the issue of manufacturing and the control of the economy;

“Neo-colonialist control is exercised through economic or monetary means... Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress... Neo-colonialism, like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries.”

Africa in the continuing debt and the Rothschild pandemic on the economy is an incurable disease which is now spreading to the following generations like a DNA. The African states have made some unthinkable mistakes by borrowing from the west so as to finance their governments and also fund the guerrilla warfare movements. This social control from the West in Africa's economics and politics is the bigger issue being discussed here. The West must allow fledging African democracies and their democratic institutions to evolve without petty interferences (Appiah, 2014).

Remedies to Economic, Political and Ideologies towards Reconstructing Africa

Economic emancipation is a phenomenon which Africa should seek to achieve without external aid as was the political independence where the Soviet and the Communist frontlines including Cuba handed their aid. Professor Lumumba in one of his speeches presented to an All Africa Conference Programme in 2010 said that Africa must address the issues that have held her down particularly the issue of leadership and the Achebeist diagnosis must be taken seriously if Africa is to pull itself out of the muck and mire of underdevelopment. The economic independence of Africa is hinged on the self-centered elected leadership which is much concerned about personal coffers, own motives and give a deaf ear to the interests of the people. Leadership must no longer be understood in its narrow sense to mean political leadership. Africa must have its leaders in politics, economics, arts, science, and business; indeed in all sectors (Lumumba, 2010). Hence good leadership will help Africa to achieve the objective of total independence and development will flourish in the continent as in other continents such as Asia and the Latin America which were once in the same plethora with Africa in the dead centuries.

Africa can no longer afford to produce that which it does not consume and to consume that which it does not produce (Lumumba, 2010). This phrase made by Lumumba implies that for Africa to be economically independent, it should not be a consumerist continent. Instead, it should swiftly avert to productive means such as industrializing, transforming the infrastructure as most of the economic networks have dilapidated and in most instances were left by the colonialists. The fact that there is no proper economic network for Africa today whilst globalization has taken a great room and interdependence is hovering the world, Africa cannot be

independent and enjoy economic freedom. Hence industrialization is highly expected to be an agenda for the 21st century for Africa as Lumumba articulates that the coffee produced in Ethiopia and Kenya must have value addition in Africa as must iron ore from Ghana; oil from Angola, Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda; and rubber from Liberia.

Pan-Africanism should not be under weighed by African leaders and the Africans themselves. Like other continents such as Europe, Asia and even the Americas, Africa is expected to enhance free trade within its borders, protect the local markets and the present fragile industries from intercontinental competitions. Pan-Africanism will yield relevance to the African society if well embraced, there is need for free movement of people within the continent, there is a requirement for Africa to have its own headquarters, and to actually have a currency which can be used to fight against the odds of the imperialists when there are economic brutalities as what happened to Zimbabwe during the past decade of economic sanctions which made the state to sink and ruined its economy resulting in the closure of manufacturing industries such as Willovale Car Assembling, Monarch and Zisco Steel to mention but a few although coupled with internal corruption. Afrocentricism should be a prime goal and economic policies should not be designed in Europe and implemented in Africa. Multiple currencies whose value is questionable must slowly begin to give way to a continental currency and labor must be allowed to move without let and hindrance (Lumumba, 2010).

The economic war in Africa can be eliminated through the fight against the skirmishes such as ethnicity, xenophobia and the fight for resources, turning them into what are now known as blood diamonds in Liberia, DR Congo and Zimbabwe recently. Africa should speak with one voice as Kwame Nkrumah advocated during his times. Pan-Africanism should not be ear-marked as a failure for Africa and the entrance of the America CIA and the West be accepted as a substitute to the endeavors by Africa in economic battles. Security in an attempt to defeat economic colonization is essential and indispensable to the African continent.

Corruption is a vice which has harnessed the African continent and a tool which has been always readily available for the merciless neo-colonialists on the black soil. Corruption in Africa is a

leading factor to the failure of economic decolonization as expounded by Kwaka and Mutunga (2011) corruption rose to intolerable levels. Africa should end corruption through good governance systems, implementing and supporting ant-corruption policies in order to promote economic independence. Further, the black continent is supposed to develop leaders although some philosophers would say that leaders are born. Leaders developing has led to politics being personalized instead of being policy driven to benefit the people governed. Corruption for the African continent has accelerated by political aid which is expected to cease in order for the states to fully exploit their own resources for the benefit of their own people and political interest should be to the interest of the ruled people.

The slow embracement of technology exacerbated by grand brain drain instead of brain gain has ached Africa. Levy Nyagura a Vice Chancellor at University of Zimbabwe articulated that Africa needs to be on 'space' and the most important resolution is that Africa has to work together for the cause of earth observation and for capacity building through skills training (Ncube, 2016). Africa is failing economically because technologically it's backward though it may sound as hogwash to express the point this way. In essence, the learned and scientific experts trained abroad have remained and some have returned to the West due to the failure of the governments to exploit the available human capital and poor remunerations which compared to the West sounds more appealing and attracting for the African man. Hence it is compelling to suggest that the African governments should revisit their education curriculums in order to build skills in the people which is relevant to the state development.

It is a vivid notion to suggest that there should be an independent thinking for the African people and minimize copying and pasting the Western curriculum which is not relevant to the African problems. African problems should not wait for the Westminster to suggest to the leaders on what should be done, instead the African leaders should be in a capacity to have an open and frank dialogue to discuss solutions to the problems such as the Sudanese, Nigerian and even the Kenyan problems of al-Shebab to promote peace, stability and business. The African Union should be utilized to the fullest and not be a club of mystic wedding dinning discussions which end in the invisible honeymoon.

The Sankarist philosophy is of great importance when it comes to the liberation of the African economy as he (Sankara) advocated for the use of local Labor to produce and not for a country to rely on imports and aid for its sustainability. Africa can provide a market for her own produce from industry and even the agricultural sector. Africa is not a producer and most of the governments as opposed by Sankara rely on foreign goods and the leaders viciously swindle in luxury of western products. This needs debunking the blinkered mindset of the nationalists who still believe they cannot economically prosper without selling their economies to the colonialists.

The third universal theory by Gaddafi explained in his book the “The Green Book”, should yield meaning to Africa and African leaders should not be taken lightly as it helps to implement the relevant and actual democratic principle that can enhance good governance and economic management. In principle, the third universal theory as explained by Gaddafi will help reduce foreign invasion of African resources, devaluing and expropriating them in the expense of African economies. This further helps the people to choose the rightful people instead of creating conflicts which repel business and lead to economic downturn.

Conclusion

Although Africa has managed a political delink from the imperialists, its economic determinates still squarely lie with the west. To quench the zest of economic freedom, Africa has to embark on a serious process of industrialization, investment in technology and Pan-Africanism as an ideology should be embraced to help unite and build a single continental board such as the European Union and come up with its own currency. Also, Decoloniality proffers masked global order that drive a wedge of divide between the white and black. At the core of decoloniality is the agenda of shifting the geography and biography of knowledge – who generates knowledge and from where? Decoloniality’s point of departure is existential realities of suffering, oppression, repression, domination and exclusion (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The absence of Africa from the UN is necessary as the board only serves the interests of the worldly political prefects of today. Acting independently will not solve the African problems, hence African leaders are supposed to work together towards the same goal of a united Africa and end conflict

which does not go hand in glove with business and take a step from the import is superior and export is inferior conundrum to investment and trade. Personalization of politics should be a thing of the past and politics should be in the interest of the governed in order to promote free trade and movement of people to enhance the exchange of ideas and networking amongst the African populace.

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