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UNDERDEVELOPMENT AS A HISTORICAL PROCESS: THE EXPERIENCE OF AFRICA

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Abstract

With a land area three times the size of the United States, Africa's vast rich continent possesses all the resources required for modern development. The many-faceted history and culture reach back through the empires of early antiquity to the modern site of human life. Long before Europeans discovered the Americas, peoples of Africa had built towns and carried on trade with Europe and Asia. Prior to World War II, Africa was a net exporter of food. Today, with a population of over 500 million, Africa shifts an infinite variety of mineral and agricultural riches - the raw sinews of modern industry and luxurious consumption - to all corners of the earth. Yet, at the same time, four decades after the peoples of Africa began to throw off the bitter yoke of colonial rule, some 28 African countries, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, still rank among the words forty-two poorest. The World Bank (1989) noted that, in 1980s alone six more African states had "slipped" into the lowest income group. Deteriorating economic and social conditions left the average African government to adopt policies that many critics claim push tens of thousands more Africans still deeper into the mire of poverty and dependency. The problems of Sub-Saharan African countries is such that the recovery of the World economy from the global economic recession of the late 1970s, as noted by the World Bank, "seems to have by-passed sub-Saharan Africa, even in those countries with the best earlier" records, (especially oil exporters (Olowu, 1988 p.1).

Keywords: Underdevelopment, Historical Process, Challenges, Poverty, Africa.

Introduction

At the beginning of any academic discourse it is always necessary to begin with the definition of terms. Thus, the word "history" comes from the Greek "historia", meaning what we know as a result of enquiry. In theory, history concerns itself with the verifiable actions, fortunes and misfortunes of human beings (Esedebe, 2003). It does this through the tracing of the sequence of events of material interest. In other words, it is past-oriented and offers explanations which throw light on the problem. In this work, we view history as a causal process and as working according to a well- defined pattern. So, we see the historical process as causal in respect to its mechanical workings, divine in respect of its goal, and social in respect to its impact on human life, (Forde, 1965).

History is rife with irony. What is it, for example, that determines which peoples shall be rich and which poor? Does the explanation lie primarily in the physical environment? Are not the variables essentially cultural? Why have wealth and power continually and dramatically shifted from one civilization to another throughout history? First, it is clear that no universal or general explanation exists. Second, it seems equally clear that the simple answers based on theories of resource availability and technological capability (examined in a limited number of individual situations) does not provide adequate explanations (Dudley 1973).

Without running into a hasty conclusion, one can guess that not only there is no single answer but there is no single approach that will correct the current imbalance in resources. Instead, it seems apparent that the causes of under -development vary from case to case; in some instance, variables are rooted in local, social, political or economic practices; in others poverty exists because the local resource base is not co-ordinated with planning and policy activities; in still other cases, under-development pervades because unequal power relationships create dependencies, making it difficult, if not impossible, for poor societies to free themselves from an umbilical relationship with the industrial world.

Since the practical implications of classifying nations as developed, under-developed or least developed have, to a considerable degree, intertwined with theoretical, by extension, ideological implications, the term under-development has gained a rather ambiguous meaning. From a practical stand -point, the term implies a group of countries that, at a given moment and from certain concrete considerations, find themselves in a relatively disadvantageous position vis-a-vis other countries (Frank, 1970; Leys, 1975).

From a theoretical stand point, the term suggests a particular stage of development, thereby explaining the country's disadvantages in the area of international relations (Szentes, 1971). Generally under development can simply be explained by such unfavourable internal conditions as geographical location, small size of the country, poor natural resources, low per capita income, under-developed industry, high illiteracy, low productivity, shortage of skills, traditional production systems, and weak administration (UNCTADAD 1976).

Others include such socio-economic indicators as low levels of labour productivity, scarcity of skilled labour, inadequate knowledge of existing natural resources, low levels of physical and institutional infrastructure, dependence on primary goods for export and a lack of integrated industrialization (Clark University Programme in International Development and Social Change, 1974).

In this work, even though the least developed or under-developed countries are found in Africa, Asia, as well as South America (Central America) and Oceania, our analysis is mainly on Africa which has the greatest number of under-developed countries. Our interest on

African is again because since the early 1960s, when many African countries attained independence, the declared goal of public policy has been development. Yet, development, howsoever defined, least reflects the current sub-Saharan African condition. Instead of political development, the region has had to contend with political decay, and in place of economic growth, it has witnessed economic stagnation and depression. While its peoples had, on the eve of independence, eagerly looked forward to an era of abundance-an era when the "fruits of independence" would be shared by all and sundry, the realities of today differ significantly from the dream of yesterday. Indeed, no term more accurately describes sub-Saharan Africa's dilemma over the past four and half decades than that of "development deficit" a term coined by Stuart Holland (1993) but here used in a broader sense than implied by a mere comparison of revenue with expenditure outlays.
As noted by Amin (1990).

> *if the 1960s, were characterized by the great hope of seeing an irreversible process of development launched throughout what came to be called the Third World, and in Africa particularly, the present age is one of disillusionment. Development has broken down; its history is in crisis, its ideology the subject of doubt.*

The result is what Mazrui (1980) called the *paradox of habitation*, meaning Africa being the first habitat of man is now in a sense the last to become truly habitable; resulting in "the first really voluntary wave of African migration west ward across the Atlantic ever", i.e. the brain drain (p.15).

The implication of the above, is that by the common criteria of under-development, all countries of it the region are under-developed. Scarcely any of its countries had achieved a per capital income of above 200 U.S. dollars per annum. They are all in the lowest fourth of the worlds development ranking; and this, in spite of the rapid expansion of world trade and of foreign capital inflow which were supposed to have served as "growth spurs" for more than a century. But what is probably more striking -indeed frustrating-is not so much of these absolute and relative levels themselves; but rather the economic distance between sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world. Notably, this gap has also been widening further over the twentieth century, and even into this 21st century and continues to do so unabatedly.

Theoritical Foundation of the Study
This study is hinged on the Marxist theory of development, as espoused by scholars like Baran (1968), Andre Gunder Frank (1969) and Weisskopf (1972). This theory argues that an equitable distribution benefits is impossible within the international capitalist system. Thus, underdeveloped countries are exploited and as such are poor because of their history as subordinate element in the world capitalist system this condition will persist for as long as they remain part of that system. Present international economic order is under the monopoly of developed capitalist nation~ and thus operate to the detriment of the under-developed countries tied to it.

The theory argues that economic cooperation and trade between the advanced capitalist nations and the under-developed areas is a process of unequal exchange, since the control of the international capitalist market by the advanced areas leads to declining price for the raw

materials produced by the third world and a rising price for industrial products by the advanced capitalist countries.
The Marxist school reveals further that foreign investment hinders and distorts development in the underdeveloped countries often by controlling the most dynamic local industries and expropriating the economic surplus of these sectors via repatriation of profits, royalty fees, and licenses resulting in net outflow of capital from the underdeveloped countries to the advanced capitalist nations' financial institutions, both public and private.

These dependencies based on how the world economy is structured create for the under-developed countries, impossible conditions for normal development.

Africa in the World Economy
Sub-Saharan Africa, it can be argued, constitutes the economic backyard of the contemporary 'world. It has not always been so. And it needs no longer be so. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) straddles both sides of the equator and above 7.4 square miles, south of the Sahara and north of the Zambezi.

From Gambia to Somalia, and from Chad to Malawi some 240 million people are caught in an intense struggle of poverty against the forces of history, geography and times. Each of these forces has been discussed extensively in diverse literature with great depth and penetrating insight (see for example, Robson and Lury, 1969). Almost all the known bottlenecks to economic development have been pointed out at one time or another, in one place or another, or in some degree or other with respect to sub-Saharan Africa. Compounded in a maze of problems are diverse bottlenecks of grievous dimensions natural, human, institutional, statistical or what have you. Indeed, the list of obstacles is so long and exhaustive that it is often a mystery that some development still takes place at all.

The part, we know, is meaningful only in terms of the whole. Thus, the problems of the development of SSA can best be appreciated in the proper historical context of the contemporary world economy, of which it is a poor part, and within which the full realization of its potential can best materialize.

The Pre-Colonial Economy
Not much is known about the economies of SSA countries before the beginning of Western imperial incursion and control. Generally, the economic history of the area has been written or is been studied mainly from the standpoint of the impact of slavery and of the foreign trade in tropical commodities which accompanied the growth and expansion of industrial capitalism in Europe (See Stewart and Ord, 1965).

Much scattered evidence is now being synthesized by scholars of African history to establish that before the colonial era, most of SSA could be described as having:

(i) Thriving agricultural and pastoral communities producing adequate food for their requirements as well as some surplus for inter-regional commerce;
(ii) An essentially democratic economic organization based largely on small peasant proprietorship with strong egalitarian elements in the access to and use of land, and in the resulting distribution of income by factor shares, and

(iii) Impressive indigenous works of art, crafts and artifacts, which are distinctive and could only be products of long settled communities with high cultural values, expressing an integral part of everyday economic life, religious worship and social order (Ajayi, 1974; Leys 1975; Isichei, 1982; Crowder, 1984, and Davidson, 1978).

From the standpoint of development economics, these historical findings are of great significance. First the old notion of various circle of poverty can scarcely apply to communities that produced a surplus for expanded reproductive as well as for supporting cultural goods and services. Second, given the wide expanse of land and the beneficence of good tropical weather, fairly high output of food per man-acre can be achieved with unsophisticated production technique. Third, the social relations that formed the basis of economic organization ensured not only the democratic imperative of government, but a distribution of real incomes in a way that mitigated against wide social injustice. Finally every able -bodied person was gainfully occupied in economic role and in the pursuit of maximum self-fulfillment, within the constraints of available technology and the ethos of established social values (Aboyade, 1976). This situation was succinctly captured by Davidson (1994) this way:

> *Away from the coast in the vast interior, states and communities continued to depend on themselves and on their neighbours, Slumps or booms in Europe, Asia, or American made little or no difference to them. Their exports were small, as were their imports. At a simple level of life, they could continue to provide for their own needs. Troubles in the outside world barely touched them.*

In such a system, what was the main fulcrum of the development process, and what were the limiting forces to cumulative growth? The core of the pre-colonial economic wheel was an agricultural sector based on a fairly egalitarian system of peasant proprietorship. Although there were people in non-agrarian sector, complete production specialization was not really wide spread. Since access to land-was no real barrier to expansion of output, then production above the necessary subsistence level by any family would depend on the internal terms of trade between farm and non-form products. For any given term of trade, the extent of output would depend on technology which at the high muscle work content required, would depend ultimately on the number of working-age males in the family.

The constraints on this system as a major engine of economic transformation are derived mainly from the tropical nature of the environment. First, the land-labour ratio was such that there was little pressure in technological innovation in production. Secondly, the, perilous, tropical disease not to mention flood, fire, pests, parasite and other natural perils, operated to keep a rather morbid kind of ecological balance. Thirdly, poor knowledge in the mechanical engineering was another. Fourthly, the very munificence of the tropical climate which we had referred to earlier was not altogether beneficial (Hodder, 1973; Hopkins, 1973; Davidson, 1974; Aboyade, 1976; and Mazrui, 1990.) As noted by Mazrui (1990), the agricultural potentialities were realized quite early though it continued to be underutilized. As a Western historian, put is as far as 1879, Africa contained:

> *... millions of square miles of rich and fertile land, some of which are open and park-like in their appearance; and others covered with extensive forests of valuable timber*

> *where the sound of the woodman's axe has never yet been heard, and which only required the culture of the husband man to make produce an ample return for labour. (Cited by Robert Hallet, "Changing European attitude to Africa, in Flint, 1977)*

But by last quarter of the 19th century, a new potential source of wealth began to be taken seriously - the discovery of diamonds, gold etc in South Africa – "provided on entirely unexpected riches to be found in Africa" (Mazrui, 1980). Thus, instead of supporting intensive agriculture:

> *"colonialism found it easier to take an immediate super-profit without cost (without investment) by forcing the African peasants into unpaid-or poorly paid surplus labour through direct forms of indirect control" (Amin, 1990 p. 9).*

The Colonial Economy: A Dependent Economy

Africa's economic dependence on the outside would of markets and market prices had began to take shape, long before colonial times, with the major growth of the Atlantic slave trade after about 1650.As opined by Davidson (1994), Africa's export of captive labour as slaves was in fact an early kind of colonial export and so it is from around 1650 that we should date the origins of modem African dependence on the would system of wealth and wealth -transfer.

With the discovery of the minerals in Africa, as pointed out earlier, great numbers of men were now pressured into working in mines opened by foreign companies. In this way, Africa became a vital source of minerals for the world overseas (Davidson, 1978). Even as early as the five -year period from 1925 to 1929, African colonies together with the white-ruled South Africa produced 56% of all the gold used in the world; 16.4% of the manganese; 12% of the platinum; and much other mineral wealth (Davidson, 1994; also see Davenport, 1978).

It was the same with farming. Great numbers were this period pressured as migrant workers, into producing crops for settlers or on foreign-owned plantations: again for export (Madison, 1970). As demonstrated by Amin (1981):

> *... the traditional society was distorted to the point of being unrecognizable; it lost its autonomy, and its main function was to produce for the world market under conditions which, because they impoverished it, deprived the members of any prospects of radical modernization (p. 40)*

Other large numbers mostly in the non-settler colonies, had become involved in cash- crop production. By 1929, for example, locally produced cotton provided 80% of all Uganda's exports. Cocoa, 79% of all Gold coast exports; Groundnuts, 78% of The Gambia's export and Cloves 61 % of Zanzibar's (Davidson, 1994). What colonial development really meant in these "mono -crop colonies" was that they were being turned into producers for the overseas market.

Before the colonial period, as noted earlier, Africa had a reservoir of cheap labour- as enslaved labour for the outside world. Now, in colonial times, African labour was used increasingly for "on-site" production in Africa itself. This brought more and more of Africa's communities, above all of Africa's rural communities, into the service of non-African interests. Here, Mark Twain confesses rather satirically in a tone that indicts the greed of his brother colonizers:

> *In many countries, we have chained the savage and starved him to death ... in many countries we have burned the savage at the stake ... we have hunted the savage and his little children and their mother with dogs and guns ..., in many countries we have taken the savage's land from him, and made him our slaves and lashed every day, and broken his pride and made death his only friend, and over-worked him till he dropped in his tracks (quoted in Chinweizu, 1978.*

In what appears to be a defence against the accusation of greed levelled against European imperialism of the 19th century that devastated and disvirginated Africa (see Opata, 1990; Oguejiofor, 2000), in its avaricious search for raw materials to feed the industries created by the Industrials Revolution, Lord Fredrick Lugard, at various times, Governor of Nigeria between 1900 and 1919, had to this to say.

> *It is a cheap form of rhetoric which stigmatizes as "common good" the honourable work by which men and nations earn their bread and improve their standard of life (cited in Offiong 1983 p 50-51).*

In Lugard's view, therefore, no matter the level of exploitation of men by their colonial "lords", as described above by Twain, it was justifiable in as much as it was geared towards facilitating the "honourable work" by which (Europeans) earn their "bread to improve their standard of lif". So, in one way or another, Africa's workers and traders and their families were dependent on the outside world. As long as that would prospere, they could make a living. But if the outside would failed to buy their products which Africa's farmers produced for export, or bought less of them, or paid lower prices for them, then Africa's livelihood must once suffer. This dependence, by the colonial transfer of wealth from Africa to the outside could became more obvious when most profits were not used to strengthen the African economies which produced them,; rather they were used to strengthen western European and north American economies (Amin; 1981; Isichei; 1982; Hopkins, 1973 Davidson, 1978 and 1994). Thus, according to Davidson, 1994:

> *In the years between 1886 and 1934, for example, foreign companies invested some 200 million pounds in producing African diamonds. In return, for investment, these companies paid out dividends (profits to share-holders) of 80 million pounds in those 48 years. But these dividends (except when paid to white share holders in South Africa), all went overseas. This was African wealth, but did not stay in Africa and it did not help to develop Africa (p. 50).*

The above expert on African history equally noted that because of this dependence and wealth transfer about half of all the profits of mineral exports from the Gold Coast (Ghana), between the early 1920s. and the end of the colonial period, were sent out of the country, mostly to Britain; yet Gold Coast could only have one government higher secondary school Achimota College (founded in 1924). The reason being that money that could have been used in establishing more schools were transferred overseas instead.

Same for wages paid to mine workers in mineral-rich colonies. There is no place that Mark Twain's remark quoted above is more relevant than in the ratio of profits from mines sent home overseas and the ones spent or left in African countries. For example, the copper mines of Rhodesia (Zambia), in 1937 made a profit of 4 million pounds but only 540,000 pounds, by way of taxation, was kept by Northern Rhodesia The rest was repatriated to Britain and British South Africa company "which owned" the land where the mines were" (Ibid, p. 50).

Colonial Budgets in the Colonies

Methods of Taxation

One other economic consequences of colonialism was the system of taxation imposed on the colonies by the colonisers. Government money, or revenue, came from three sources. One was the taxing of foreign companies. This was the smallest source not because profits were small, but, as we have seen, because most of the profits were sent, untaxed, overseas. The second source was the taxing of exports and imports (customs and excise). The third source, and usually the biggest, was the taxing of the people. By the 1930s, the system was long in use in all colonies. Some official figures for 1934 gave on idea of how matters stood (see table 1 below).

TABLE 1 (TAXATION REVENUE (1934)

	Tax from Africans	**Tax from African Non-African**	**% Annual Budget**
Nyasaland (Malawi) (pound Starling)	562 ,29[	18,970	43.0
Kenya (pound Starling)	544,480	116,495	32.5
Nigeria (pound Starling)	775,010	32,633	18.15
French Equational Africa France	37,289,300	000 ,185 ,1	57.0
Belgian Congo (Belgian Francs)	80,709,434	19,764,683	28.8

Source: Lord Halley, An African Survey 1945, p. 547.

Generally, taxes on Africans rose during the Great Depression and, after, even though conditions of life were harder than before. So did taxes on non- Africans, chiefly on white settlers.

Budgeting for Social Services

The spending pattern varied from one colony to another, but its main characteristics can usually be summarized. Table 2 shows in approximate way how a number of colonial governments allocated money to their colonies.

TABLE 2: ANNUAL BUDGET EXPENDITURE ON MAIN ITEMS

	1936/37Government (Civil Service, Police, etc) %	Social Soviets (education, Health, etc) %	Colonial Economic Development %
N. Rhodesia (Zambia)	40.6	21.9	9.4
Kenya	38.9	22.0	14.5
Nigeria	29.3	17.8	11.5
Gold Coast (Ghana)	31.6	28.0	16.3
French West Africa (1937)	20.0	11.0	13.0
Belgian Congo (1935)	24.0	12.0	17.0

Source: Lord Hailey, An African Survey, 1945 pp. 1433, 1453, 1456

Principal forms of expenditure. The figures are each a percentage of total expenditure for each colony for the 1936-37 financial year.

These percentages are only a rough guide, for each colonial system estimated its expenditure in different ways. Yet, it can still be seen that the cost of colonial government was high whether in salaries paid to Europeans officials and in organization of colonial civil services or in the always high cost of police and security services. Funds available for social services had to be correspondingly low.

The third column "colonial economic development" - had a strictly limited meaning. Mostly, it meant money spent on railways, labours, and other facilities needed by foreign companies, chiefly mining companies-physical infrastructure. These facilities had mostly to be built by the colonial government, after using forced labout (Mazrui, 1980); and Amin, 1990), because foreign companies naturally preferred not to invest their own money in building them.

For such incidental gains, the colonized peoples had to pay an often stiff prize. This prize was partly in forced labour and in taxes to colonial governments. But it was in the payment, by government, of debt-interest to foreign lenders. In the Belgian Congo, for example, only 12% of government revenue was spent on education and other social services during the year we are examining, 1936-37. But in the same year the Belgian Congo government was paying, to foreign lenders, about 40% of all its revenue These was in respect of debt interest to foreign lenders for railways and other facilitities needed to export the produce of the Congo's foreign-Owned mines and plantations. About 20% of the Nigerian annual budet was spent in the payment of debt-interest in that same year, and more than 16% of that of Northern Rhodesian (Zambia).

In other words, colonial economic development seldom meant the development of the colonised peoples. Largely, it meant the development of the means by which foreign companies could increase their profits (Kunu, 1987) . As noted by Mazuri (1990):

> *it was only after the Second World War that colonial powers thought seminally about development in Africa by not only incorporating Africa into the world capitalist system but also by transforming colonial policy from the morality of maintaining law and order in Africa (Pax Britannica) to a new imperial morality of increasing development in the colonies and pursuing the welfare of the colonized peoples.*

But in spite of this effort, the thrusts of development:

> *... Were themselves a further aggravation of Africa's incorporation into Western capitalism ... which contributed in its own way towards deepening both Africa's economic dependency on the West and Africa's cultural imitation of the (p 78)*

Impact of Colonialism

We have seen how the new contact with Europe brought gains to Africa as well as to Europe, especially in the exchange of goods and ideas. We equally saw how it also brought the long and painful tragedy of the trans-Atlantic trade in Africans captured into slavery and sent to the Americas brought about development of Americas, but proved very bad for the development of Africa. In all these, what was new was the change both in pace and in character of the external incursions of the 16th century, reaching its, depth of commercial deprivation in the West African slave trade and its economic dominance in the foreign owned plantations and mines of East and central Africa. For the purpose of this section, the relevant issue is simply the impact of colonialism on the nature of the productive capacity of sub: Saharan Africa, and the legacies which this has bequeathed in terms of problems for national economic management and the painful process of social recruitment.

The first and most direct impact of colonialism was, of course, to alter the balance between man and his environment. Generations of slave raiding by both marauding Western Christians to the West and Arab Muslims to the East fostered and reinforced inter-fratricidal wars, substantially raising the normal tolls on the population extracted by the natural climatic conditions. Not only were there now less people to the same land than before, the character and distribution of the remaining population was necessarily altered: less able men; more aged people, children, woman and the infirm; closer spatial redistribution of settlements for greater protection and safety, weakening of social relations and a strain on the maintenance of social order through traditional democratic institutions as power relations were substituted (Aboyade, 1976).

Even as the era of slavery receded in response to the growing inefficiency of a slave-production system in the Western would, the entrenched external dependence of the economics of SSA only changed in style but not in character. Slavery did not alter production techniques in African economic activities: imported musket, gin and velvet were not in themselves likely to improve total commodity production of the land. They were inducement for providing more slaves. But even with the introduction of more legitimate international trade and indeed with the introduction of new kinds of commercial crops (cocoa, tobacco, cotton etc), the emphasis was not on the reconstruction and development of post-slavery economy. Rather it was on the creation of enclave economies as service satellites for the rising tempo of 19th century Western industrial capitalism.

Generally, all the superficial indices of economic growth were evident, even if they were difficult to aggregate, quantify and articulate the growth of new shanty towns, rising imports, expanding money supply, the spread of Western literacy, the creation of modem welfare services and the evolution of a new life style.

But the international holocaust that shook the industrial economies of Europe in the inter-war years demonstrated clearly the fragility of the "economic revolution" which SSA was assumed to have experienced for the previous half a century. It brought home the simple lessons that they were enclave economies (Ake, 1981. and Amin, 1990); that the prosperity neither had an indigenous root nor was it structurally skin-deep (Aboyade, 1976); and that its main fulcrum of development resided in the Metropolitan countries. Whether in respect of the planter settlers of East Africa, the mine extractors of central Africa or the commercial operators of West Africa that dominated the character of each colony's economic performance, the lessons were the same. Basically, the engine of growth came from outside the system and was dictated by the demand patterns, prices, policies and political vagaries in the industrialized economies of the west.

As noted earlier, another serous impact of colonialism was the system of taxation imposed on the colonies by the colonizers. Each colony was run by the rule that the cost ofcolonial government must not be allowed to cut seriously into colonial profits, or prove a burden to European taxpayers in Europe (Ajayi, 1974, Davidson, 1992, and 1994), As note by Davidson, very few Africans had to pay for it. In kenya, for example, Africans were for long forbidden to grow cash crops, and so earning enough money to pay taxes without having to work for European (Fieldhouse, 1986 and Hargreaves, 1988).

Again, colonialism brought about what Mazrui (1990), called “five biases in the history of economic change in the continent that has condemned the continent to the paradox of retardation” These were the export bias mentioned earlier; where cash crops for export were given priority as against food for local people, Here more than 2/3 of the cultivable fertile areas were devoted to the production of such export commodities like cocoa in Ghana, Coffee in Uganda, ground outs in Senegal and the Gambia, pyrethrum in Tanganyika and Tea in Kenya, Yet prizes paid for those cash crops were fixed by foreign companies which controlled the export trade (Davidson, 1994), This "colonial-type trade" had two serious implications on African economy, One, such companies made their profit from the difference between the low prices they paid to African suppliers and the much higher prices for which they sold these crops in Europe and America, Colonial government ensured that the price difference was as big as they could (Fieldhouse, 1986), Secondly, there was the exchange of agricultural products against imported manufactured goods, While little or nothing was paid for the agricultural products, the imported were very costly for the overage African to afford.

Another bias which occurred in the development process was the urban bias. According to Mazrui; much of the economic changes internally subordinated the needs of the countryside to the needs of the towns. In other words there was unequal distribution of the benefits of development which led to urban migration by youths from the rural area - crisis of habitability. The implications have remained the same since after independence.

A third bias was the development of some ports of a colony at the expense of the other parts of the same colony. For example, the settler colonies became more developed than other parts, As noted by Mazrui. "this burden of uneven development had its own stresses and strains" as such sections "acquired not only extra leverage, but also the passionate jealousies and distrust of other parts of the country.

Without going into the other two biases, it is partly the nature of these biases in the history of development in Africa that helped condemn the continent to the paradox of retardation; "a continent well-endowed in mineral wealth and agricultural potential which the United Nations has calculated to be the poorest in the world" p, 79).

Whatever the short and medium-term physical benefits that the colonial economic system may have conferred on SSA, certain residual features needs to be under-lined in appreciating the magnitude of the problems faced today for development policies. First, it denuded the area of vital manpower and left a lopsided demographic process. Second, it appropriated to a small elite (consisting .mostly of its own members, race or power disposition) a disproportionate share of the capital stock of the community, especially of fertile land.

Fourth, it imposed both by indirect price incentives and by direct fiscal and physical coercion, a structure of production and specialization dictated by demand patterns and strategic requirements which were external to the African economies and beyond their influence. Productive factors of land, labour and social institutions were directed to satisfying external wants; and at terms which clearly amounted to a net out-flow of real resources from the dependent SSA economies. Fifth, it created a set of administrative institutions which not only undermined local traditional democratic processes, but were eminently unsuited for motivating and mobilizing the community for the real task of massive sustained development. Sixth, colonialism led to what philosophers call crises of identity (Oguejiofor, 2000, Opata 1992) According to Oguegifor.

> *The cumulative effect of history, of natural disaster and the later conquest of Africa crystallized into a trauma of inferiority complex before Europe. This was because colonialism came with evident and huge technological superiority (p. 49).*

With some empirical signs to show and with the systematic denigration of Africa in general as people who had no culture, no religion, no history and no philosophy, the African very quickly came to accept his inferiority. Leopold Senghor summarized this consequence by saying, "African misfortunes have been that our secret enemies in defending their values, made us despise our own" (1976).

It is not just technological superiority that is in question; it is the superiority of the being itself. This attitude towards former colonial masters has been correctly described as something specifically African:

> *Africans have not been the only people overrun by rampaging Europeans, but Africans are unique in their belief that their future lies in becoming, in thought, speech, and hobbit, like their erstwhile colonizers (Owomolyela, 1996).*

Finally, it destroyed an essentially humanist value system which inherently reconciles material development with moral virtue and social justice. It is the loss of this value system which constitutes the greatest intellectual obstacle to the search for meaningful approach to the economic development and social transformation of SSA.

The Impact of Colonial Economic System on the Future Development of Africa

One dominant feature of the growth of the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in the last four decades is its inherent instability. Not only was the average growth of real incomes less in the 1960's than in the 1950's, it was also quite unstable (see Tables 3 and 4). This is the inevitable consequence of an economic structure which is heavily dependent on and closely controlled by export earnings from primary commodities, whether of agricultural or mineral variety. It is another way of saying that they are dependent enclave economies with no internally established engine of growth for structural change (Amin, 1981; Frobel et a11981; Williams 1981; Davidson, 1974, 1994, 2000; Hopkins, 1973 and Field House, 1986).

TABLE 3
ANNUAL REAL GROWTH RATE OF THE GROSS DEMESTIC PRODUCT BY DIFFERENT REGIONS 1960-70

Region Africa (excluding)	1961-65	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Southern Africa	4.4	3.8	2.3	5.2	5.4	5.1
Southern Europe	7.3	7.3	4.5	5.6	7.7	5.9
East Asia	5.5	7.1	4.2	8.0	9.1	7.1
Middle East	7.5	5.9	5.5	11.3	8.2	5.1
South Africa Asia	3.4	1.9	7.5	5.2	4.5	4.5
Western Hemi-Sphere	4.91	53	4.4	5.9	6.3	6.6
All Developing Countries	**5.12**	**5.0**	**4.9**	**6.2**	**6.3**	**5.9**

Source: World Bank, International Development Association Annual Report, 1971, PP 58-59

In historical prospective, it is pertinent here to recall that while commerce had always played a beneficial role in the expansion of traditional African economies, the massive (almost sole) dependence on the vagaries of external market was a by-product of the colonial conquest that accompanied the growth of 19th century industrial capitalism

TABLE 4
ANNUAL PER CAPITA REAL CROWTH RATE OF THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT BY DIFFERENT REGIONS, 1961-70

Region	1961-65	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Africa (excluding Southern Africa	1.9	1.3	0.3-	2.5	2.8	2.4
Southern Europe	5.8	5.8	3.0	4.0	6.1	4.3
East Asia	2.6	4.3	1.4	5.2	6.1	3.2
Middle East	4.4	2.9	2.5	8.0	5.0	2.0
South Asia	0.8	0.6-	4.9	2.6	2.1	2.3
Western Hemisphere	91	2.2	3.1	2.8	3.2	3.4
All Developing Countries	2.5	2.4	2.2	3.5	3.6	3.3

Source: Ibid, Table 4

Analytically what colonialism did was to change the internal dynamics of the development process; replace it with a larger, volatile and unstable external stimulus; and bend both he structure of production and pattern of resource-use to the requirements of an international trade system between unequal trade partners. The result was wider market, greater specialization, higher money income and exposure to goods. But it also brought about alienation and resignation to the hopelessness and helpless uncertainties of outside forces that has only peripheral (if any) bearing on the conscious development of SSA.

Within SSA, two basic topologies of economic organization developed that had bearing on the technology of production and achieved identical result in shifting the core of the transformation process from internal to outside forces. In the West, both the peasant proprietorship and the traditional technique were left intact except in the mines and in railway construction where partial labour conscription was enforced, a restructuring of the economy as an enclave to industrial metropolitan Europe was achieved through the fiscal manipulations and the administrative ingenuity of in direct rule. In the Eastern and central parts of SSA, the revamping of the economy towards export dependence was achieved directly by a combination of force and money-wage incentives that depleted the traditional economy. In the West, the rural economy survived. In the East and Centre, it degenerated.

But, in all cases, the focus of economic activity was the demand of the colonial powers. Not only had the centre of the transformation changed, the shift brought with it a legacy of structural problems that were to distort later development process in many significant ways:

(i) Pre-occupation with foreign trade meant the diversion of production factors away from goods and services that were substantially of domestic or indigenous significance, especially, local food.

(ii) Research and development activities that could have impact on productivity were restricted to export crops that would ultimately increase real incomes in the metropolitan economies Attention to local commodities was more prominent by its absence than its mention.

(iii) The sequence, pattern and combination of resources use had little to do directly with their probable impact on the long run development of the domestic economy. Rather, resources were used and activity patterns selected on the basis of their supplementary or complementary impact on the growing industrial metropolitan economies.

(iv) The pattern of income distribution was such that encouraged export earnings to be expended largely on consumer goods. This explains the present penchant for foreign made goods and conspicuous consumption by Africans especially Nigeria (Ozor 1999; Okoli, 1999).

Conclusion

One can appreciate from this study that at the broadest level, almost everything about the contemporary African scene may be viewed as a manifestation of the historical dependence of Africa upon Europe] of the profound historical conditioning under-gone by African societies over the past two hundred to three hundred and twenty years as a result of imperialism and the international expansion of capital. From the study we can appreciate that the colonial invasion of Africa during the 19th century succeeded because invaders from Europe came from countries that were more or less industrialized. The physical and political dispossession involved more than African loss of control over territory. The colony-building invaders wanted far more than the control of the lives of the peoples whom they had enclosed within their colonial frontiers.

The colonial administrative and economic policies required great changes in the functioning of indigenous societies of Africa. The objectives of colonial rule, we should be Reminded were outlined in 1980 by Ivory Coast Governor Angoulvant (Hargreaves, 1969, 203.

> *To subdue all hostile elements, to win over the waverers; to encourage the masses, who can always be drawn to our side by self-interest until one day they are drawn there by simpatly; in short, to establish our authority beyond dispute; and, finally, to express these results in such tangible ways as the full collection of taxes, the rendering of assistance by the natives in the creation of public fixed capital and economic and social progress.*

Above all, they wanted the control of the labour power of these peoples. Africans were therefore stripped of powers of self-development. There would have to be new development; but this must be along European lines and in line with European interests. Thus, every place that wealth could be extracted by commercial means fell within the scope of European companies, mostly British. They took control of the export trade, fixed prices and milked producers at the rates thus fixed (Davidson, 2000).

This colonial economic dependence on African resources created a pattern of out-ward looking life in the new towns, an administrative system geared to external commerce rather than development; an elite class deriving its power and wealth from that administrative machinery. A labour drift away from depressed domestic-oriented activities in search of increasingly elusive job opportunities in the cities; a stagnant traditional sector that had now lost it zest and a weakening loss of social confidence in the very foundation of values of African Humanism - its egalitarian character and its sense of communal responsibility and a system of education that was not geared towards the solution of African development problems.

In general therefore, given the severely distorted economic structure inherited from the colonial and post-colonial periods, it could hardly be anything different from the present under-developed situation of SSA.

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