# Africa and Colonial Legacies: Analyzing a Troubled Continent

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**ABSTRACT.**

*To say that the African continent is underdeveloped, poor and beset with political and economic instability is beyond debate. Scholars have spent time and energy debating the causes of African crises, the same way they have proffered solutions to the problems. However, what is clear is that European imperialists colonized Africa, exploited her resources, brutalized her peoples and left some legacies that continue to torment the people of Africa till today. This paper is therefore on the legacies of colonialism which have indelible impacts on the political, economic and social life of Africa. The paper breathes some fresh ideas into the debate by arguing that after independence, African leaders pre-occupied themselves with the struggle to occupy state institutions and agencies because these are the places where political power resides. Thus, the ensued bitter and violent struggle for power, occasioned by the nature of the emergent state and the inverted process of capitalist state formation, resulted in African leaders being unable to realize the need to redefine all the legacies of colonial institutions and agencies in order to make them more relevant to the African environment. Also, they do not have the peace to pay attention and develop the economy and society. Therefore, Africa is today in the dilemma of change and continuity; in a motion without movement. The paper concludes by arguing that Africa can only make progress if those colonial legacies are redefined.*

## Introduction

Today, Africa is the poorest of the six continents in the world but strangely, Africa has no business to be poor because development and a nation's wealth is the result of what is created out of nature and the African continent is so endowed by nature with variety of resources that poverty ought to be far from the continent.  The poor conditions of Africa include unproductive economy, social disequilibrium, corrupt leadership, embarrassing dependence on foreign aid, humongous debt profile, dominant factional crisis, election violence, abuse of constitutional process and the rule of law, migration, high inflation, and high unemployment rate; above all, crisis of class hegemony in terms of the absence of a dominant and generally agreed culture, ideas and values.  But, to understand the disturbing and pathetic conditions of contemporary Africa, we need to engage contemporary African political history to see how colonialism has disorganised and fractured the continent.

Quite a number of scholars have spent much time in debating the causes of the African crisis, with some stressing colonial rule, slavery, and the cold war which made Africa a punching bag between the then two superpowers. Others lay emphasis on corrupt leadership, misplaced priorities, inter and intra ethnic and tribal wars. While others explain Africa's backwardness with theories of development like, modernization, north-south, dependency and capitalism. The various arguments and perspectives may appear logical but none is really incisive enough to explain the problem from its roots. Even the argument about colonial rule being the problem can be faulted by the fact that with independence and sovereign status, colonial rule automatically ends in a colony. After all, there was colonial rule in Asia and in North and South America.  However, the perspective of colonial rule is still being emphasised by some scholars because colonial rule and colonialism appear to such scholars as the same thing. Thus, colonial rule may end in a colony, but colonialism may still continue as neo-colonialism as the case in Africa. In other words, Africa is poor and backward, today, not because Europeans are currently present in the continent, occupying political institutions and ruling the African peoples, but in spite of the fact that European colonizers have relinquished power to Africans and they are no longer in power with authority, the institutions they vacated and which are today occupied by Africans are part of the colonial legacies that still haunt the African continent till today. In other words, colonial rule has ended in Africa but colonialism continues as neo-colonialism which is made possible by those un-redefined colonial legacies.  Hence, the need for the interrogation of those colonial legacies in order to understand how the legacies are responsible for African backwardness.  It is against this

background that it has been the argued that whichever way the African problems are analysed, the fact remains that the contemporary African state and society are seriously affected by their colonial origins. (Kwaghe, 2008). And this is precisely because contemporary Africa is the creation of European colonisers which makes the African state and society, of today, to be artificial because they did not evolve naturally but were created by Europeans to meet their economic and political interests. Consequently, it is important to interrogate African contemporary political history and emphasise the serious role that colonialism had played in the life of the continent in order to understand the immediate past, the present and the future of the African continent. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of the colonial legacies is a logical way of reviewing, rethinking and changing the existing strategies for African development.  Put differently, it is important to understand that colonialism left some deep and enduring legacies on the African continent which account for the current crisis, in the areas of her economy, politics and society. (Gobo, 2020).

This paper is therefore on colonialism and it's legacies in Africa. It begins with a brief conceptual note on colonialism, after which it discusses colonialism and the transformation of Africa, followed by some analysis on the colonisation and colonial rule of Africa by European imperial powers and then a discussion on post-colonial Africa and the dilemma of change and continuity followed.

In conclusion, the paper argues that Africa can only make progress, grow and develop if only those colonial legacies are redefined to make them more relevant to the African environment.

## Colonialism: A Brief Conceptual Note.

Colonialism is not a modern phenomenon according to the (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2017) because history is replete with examples of one society gradually expanding by incorporating other territory and setting its people on the newly conquered territory. To (Longley, 2021), colonialism is the practice of one country taking full or partial political control of another country and occupying it for purposes of profiting from its resources and economy. In other words, colonialism is the process of a country taking full or partial political control of a dependent country, which is in essence, an act of political and economic domination that involves the conquest of a country and its people by a foreign power. (Longley, 2021). Indeed colonialism is the practice of extending and maintaining a nation's political and economic control over another people or area. To (Payne & Nasser, 2006), colonialism is defined as a country's control of areas outside its territory. In other words, colonialism entails the imposition of the culture, politics, education, ideas and values of the colonial power over the colonized country. In essence, therefore, colonialism is the domination, politically, socially and economically of a colonized country by a foreign power (Longley, 2021, Ekeh, (1983). In most cases therefore, the goal of the colonizing country is to make profit from the resources of the colonized country.  Thus, European colonialism in Africa can be referred to as the activities of European colonizers in the process of the conquest of the colonized territories of Africa.

Colonialism is generally of different but overlapping types which reflect the nature and consequences of colonialism on the subjugated territory and its indigenous peoples. The different types of colonialism are settler colonialism; exploitation colonialism; plantation colonialism; surrogate colonialism; and internal colonialism.  The settler colonialism is about the migration of large groups of people from one country to another country to build permanent, self-supporting settlements..  Exploitation colonialism is about the use of force to control another country for purposes of exploiting its population and natural resources. Plantation colonialism was an early method of colonialization in which settlers undertake the mass production of a single crop, such as cotton, tobacco, coffee, or sugar. In surrogate colonialism, a foreign power encourages and supports, either openly or covertly, the settlement of a non-native group on territory occupied by an indigenous population.  Internal colonialism describes the oppression or exploitation of one racial or ethnic group by another within the same country. (Ikime, 1980)

In Africa, the experience with colonialism was that of exploitation type of colonialism which involved fewer colonialists on ground, in the colonies, but which focused on unrestrained and unmitigated access to resources for export to Europe. Consequently, colonialism in Africa was the imposition of foreign domination on the peoples of the African continent, for the benefit of European colonizers.  The practice was a lopsided relationship that created a master-servant relationship between the peoples of Africa and European colonialists.

## Colonialism and the Transformation of Africa

The present geographical compass known as Africa had been inhabited by different peoples for thousands of years before the Europeans made their incursion in the continent, conquered and annexed effectively the continent by 1885. The conquest and annexation of the continent led to the arbitrary partitioning of Africa along imaginary

boundaries. Although the effective colonization of Africa did not last more than a century, as each colony of the Europeans powers was granted flag independence within seventy to eight years of European rule. However, the brisk episode produced a massive disruption of African societies so much so that the brisk episode became a whirlwind that scattered the African peoples for which they still suffer from the consequences (Collins & Burns, 2008). In essence, contemporary Africa is the creation of European powers, the act that wrought great calamities on the peoples of Africa.

The transformation of Africa by colonialism was at three levels, viz at the economic level, at the social/cultural level and at the political level. This is why it can be argued that, not only did colonialism transformed Africa, it also recreated the continent. From the imposition of capitalism, as a new mode of production, to the restructuring of the African societies and to the establishment of very alien political practice, Africa became the creation of the Europeans.  Hence, modern Africa and colonialism is one and the same thing which is why colonialism has its greatest and most vivid expressions in Africa.

*Colonialism and the African Economy*

Colonialism has greatly influenced the African economy, so much, that little can be meaningfully analysed about the African economy without reference to colonialism. And that is precisely because colonialism badly distorted the African economy that the effects of the disruption is still of severe and damaging  consequences on the growth and development of the African economy.

Before European colonization, the African economy was basically agricultural making the people to engage in subsistence production, which was mainly for consumption and for small local barter exchange. The means of production were just land and labour and production within the system was supervised by village or the community leader. (Ekundayo, 1973, Onimode, 1982)).  Thus, pre-colonial economy had the two basic means of production, land and labour, as communal property and not so much as private property. As a result, the pre-colonial economy made social structure to be basically egalitarian and power was exercised by the village, community or clan head (Brett, 1973).

Colonialism instituted the colonial economy in Africa which created different socio-economic features for social production, with severe consequences.  One of the consequences of the colonial economy was the destruction of the units of indigenous social production which was based on the village or the clan, because at that time, labour and land, the two major factors of production, were jointly owned by all the different social groups in different forms. The arrival of European colonialism in Africa therefore, led to a transition of indigenous African economy to colonial economy which changed the relationship between indigenous African social groups and led to the development of some emergent capitalist social classes whose interactions were based on different values. Thus, colonial method of socio-economic production was central to the formation of new classes in Africa. (Onimode, 1983,  Brett, 1973) Consequently, the colonial economy, which was a capitalist system, gradually started to create the petty-bourgeoisie class, the proletariat class and the peasant class.

The petty-bourgeoisies class was made up of the privileged natives, like the chiefs and kings, the merchants, like those in timber and cash crops business, transport business and those into palm oil business. The petty-bourgeoisie class also included the professionals, like the lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, teachers and journalists.  Also included in the petty-bourgeoisie class were top officials in the public and private sectors, the officers in the armed forces and police. The petty-bourgeoisie class was then basically a comprador class because their businesses and services were tied to the interests of international capital and those of the colonizers.

The proletariats were those wage and salaried workers and labourers, including the migrant workers who were not permanent urbanized workers. The peasantry was made of a class of those who were tied to the land for their production and whose major objective for cultivation was subsistence. (Fadakinte&Onuoha, 2023).

Thus, colonialism brought capitalism to Africa and the capitalist system created a dual economy for the continent, in that, in Africa, the indigenous economy was not the same as the imported economy of capitalism in Europe. Thus, during colonial rule, while capitalism was flourishing in Europe, what was in existence in Africa was the pseudo capitalism or better still, comprador capitalism. It should be noted that each of the dual economies was the creation of the colonizers which they controlled. The first type of the dual economies was the indigenous, largely rural, subsistence economy and the second type was the colonial export oriented economy a classical economy with a limited range of products but with emphasis on growing primary products or on mining for export. (Hodder, 1978)  Thus, the transformation of African economy produced dramatic changes in the African societies, bringing

about demands for labour and the introduction of a cash economy. In addition, Africans started to sell their labour power in order to enjoy the new opportunities and lifestyles that were made available by the new duties, in terms of job and employment that were created by the new cash economy. (Collins &Burnc, 2007).

However, the African colonial economy was subjected to damaging fluctuations in world markets including the prices for the very limited number of primary products, (Hodder, 1978). Unfortunately the trend continues till date. Thus, the beginning of the integration of African economy into the international capitalist economy and markets was started by colonialism which led to the disturbing conditions of dependence and exploitation of Africa. Consequently, colonial capitalism began to squeeze Africa into the international capitalist system, while the continent was an outsider, not even a marginal player. Indeed, the economy of most African countries still depend on the colonial pattern of trade  with their prosperity also still dependent on the export of a few primary products, like minerals and agricultural products, while African countries are obliged to import most of the manufactured goods they need. (Hodder, 1978). It is important to note that colonialism used capitalism to integrate Africa into the global structure which has been perpetuating poverty and suffering in Africa and which must be redefined, as a colonial economic legacy, before Africa can grow, develop and be transformed.

*Colonialism and African Society*

Anthropologists refer to society as a group, small or large, whose members are united by social, economic, political and religious affiliations (Srivastava, 2013). To the sociologists, society simply means a relatively self-sufficient collectivity whose members are able to satisfy all their individual and collective needs and to live entirely within its framework (Ritzer, 2008). And to Giddens, a society is a system of inter relationships which connects individual together (Giddens, 1993). To Simmel, society is merely the name for a number of individual's connected by interaction (cited in Ritzer, 2008). It has been noted that human beings are special species that have evolved to live with and depend upon others of their own species. Thus, human interdependence means that we cannot survive as individuals but need to live with others, that is we must live in society (Lavenda& Schultz, 2003).  In other words, the human society is a group of human beings living together whose interactions with one another are patterned in regular ways. Thus, some human groups can be identified by the particular geographical territory they inhabit, by the particular language they speak and by the particular custom they follow, which are the distinguishing features of one society from another (Lavenda& Schultz, 2003).

Today, archaeological evidences from various parts of Africa suggest that parts of the continent had been settled by man since the Stone Age period, i.e., 500,000 to 9000 BC. (Oliver & fage, 1989; Asiwaju, 1980) It has been argued that pre-colonial societies in Africa fall basically into two main categories. First, there was the group of those societies which have centralized authority, administrative machinery, judicial institution and a government in which cleavages of wealth privileges and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority.  Second, there is the group of those societies which lacked centralized authority, administrative machinery, constituted judicial institution, a government and,  in which there are no sharp divisions of rank of status and wealth. Other pre-colonial societies that have been identified include the centralized political system the segmented political system, the band organization, the classical segmented system, the stratified segmented system and the autonomous village system. Africa existed in the above types of societies before Europeans arrived with their reign of terror in form of troops of military men and police which they deployed for brutal expeditions in Africa.  And that was the beginning of physical threat and naked colonial violence on the African peoples from which they have not recovered till today.( Oliver & Fage, 1989; Ikimi, 1980)

The first, indelible and devastating impact of European onslaught on Africa was on the African societies. Apart from the imposition of a new economic order, which was necessitated by capitalism, the imported mode of production, the balkanization of Africa into illogical partitioning of African societies into different countries, disorganised the African peoples. In creating different countries in Africa, for European effective control and domination, the boundaries of the different countries were created without regard for existing patterns of cultural or political affinity. And that was because colonial boundaries were created in order to produce African colonies for the ease of exercising political control without regard for the shape, size, composition and diversities of the peoples within each country. Today, the amalgamation of many disparate ethnic/tribal  communities into a single country make Africa to be, perhaps, the continent with the most diverse and  ethnically composed continent   in the world. Thus, the highly divergent and artificial geographical forms and the distortion of traditional social and economic patterns were superimposed over Africa.  In effect, the creation of the artificial boundaries led to previously cohesive social groups to be separated while previously well-established trading areas were divided. (Gordon and Gordon, 2007). Indeed, some Africans found themselves bounded together with others, with whom they had little or no previous contacts, while some homogeneous ethnic groups were divided between alien rulers,

by the creation of the artificial boundaries. ( Collins & Burns, 2008),  The created artificial boundaries made the political map of Africa to have huge internal differences among the various African countries, particularly in their potential for nation building and for economic development and political stability, (Gordon & Gordon, 2007). And that is because many countries in Africa, today, are indeed, a conglomeration of a large number of different nations, ethnic and tribal groups that were artificially pieced together with the weak glue of colonialism. Thus, the nations, ethnic and tribal groups within the majority of the African countries are different peoples with some of them very antagonistic, mutually anti pathetic, utterly incompatible and even bitterly hostile to each other. ( Nwabueze, 2010).   Indeed, the artificial boundaries created the enduring problems of border disputes which are now responsible for many border clashes, conflicts and even wars among African countries, after independence.

As African societies were restructured, regrouped and renamed, the continent finally succumbed to European conquest which became so pronounced that what is Africa today is the transformed colonies of the continent. Thus, today, European incursion into Africa gave birth to both colonialism and coloniality. For colonialism, it refers to political and economic relations by which Europe dominated and exploited Africa and by coloniality, it means the enduring patterns of power as well as a way of thinking and behaving that emerged from colonialism and which is still surviving long after the end of colonial rule. (Bulhan, 2015). Today, most African peoples either have lost or have subordinated their own languages to those of the colonisers because of the fact that Europeans imposed their languages upon those in their colonies.  And as Africans abandoned or lost their languages to those of the colonisers, so also they lost their culture, as European cultures came to be the dominant cultural norms for the colonised African societies, (Payne & Nasser, 2006).

Thus, today the official languages of most of African countries are European languages, even African elites, including Obas, chiefs and emirs, those who are supposed to be the custodian of African cultures, still go about with European names, with pride, which confirms that coloniality rests on the epistemic and ontological biases that promotes the validation of European hegemony and superiority, (Buthan, 2015). There is no doubt that the legacy of colonialism is permanent in Africa because the first thing colonialism did to the African peoples was to impose European  cultures  and languages  on African natives which led to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised Africans. And that was because economic and political control would not have been fully achieved without mental control. Thus, Europeans believed that to control African culture and its medium of transmission is to control their instrument of self-definition, particularly in relation to others, (Gobo, 2020).

*Colonialism and Politics in Africa*

Before Europeans arrived in Africa, African societies like all known societies whether small or big already had functional institutions with hierarchies that had evolved over time. Consequently, societies may vary in Africa; each type of the societies had evolved the institutions which were well adapted to their environment before European colonisation. In other words, institutions, which are collections of agreed norms, rules,  procedures and routine, had long existed in Africa (Burnell and Randall, 2008). Thus, long before Europeans came to Africa, there were political institutions, which embodied the governing of the relations of power and the authoritative distribution of resources. In other words, Africans were with their own ways by which power was accumulated, arranged and executed, a process that each society created to maintain social order. Indeed, African societies already had their ways and means for resolving internal conflicts and preventing a breakdown of social order (Haviland, Prins, Walrath and McBridge, 2008).  It is without debate, therefore, that when Europeans arrived in Africa, they met indigenous societies in their multiplicity, with well established institutions that have evolved many centuries earlier. The details of such societies have been well documented and need not detain us here.

However, one of the most obvious colonial legacies in Africa, with indelible impacts on African politics  is the division of Africa into modern type  of countries that were modeled after the countries in Europe and which resulted in Africa being fully integrated into the international system of sovereign territories (nations). (Thomson, 2010). Thus, the restructuring of African pre-colonial societies by European colonizers led to great political changes that established the immediate context for African politics which continue to shape and influence the future of the continent (Thomson, 2010). Therefore, the present political systems in the continent are the replica of those of the colonial master's which were adopted by replacing African indigenous political institutions. In other words, the contemporary political systems being practiced in Africa are colonially imposed systems (Bayeh, 2015).

The present political  party system in Africa is also one of the political legacies of colonialism which continues to create crisis in Africa because the imposed system does not take it roots from the African environment and therefore, steadily tears African peoples apart instead of integrating them. Before independence the colonizers and African political elites had agreed on party formation in preparation for independence. Thus, one of the

implications of the origin of the party system in Africa is that political parties were of top-down organizational structure and therefore were autocratic (Bayeh, 2015). In other words, African political parties were the formations of a few political elites making them devoid of democratic credentials. And because artificial boundaries grouped different peoples in one country, multiparty system made each political party to be ethnic or tribal based with each ethnic group violently competing for political power. In effect, the dominant class in each country breaks into different factions, making it difficult for a cohesive dominant class with a common value and ideology to emerge. Thus, hegemony becomes farfetched and therefore agreements on how to formalize power become contentious, with no consensus on the basic principles of politics (Competition for power). So, any faction of the dominant class that wins election will privatise the victory and the office, while the leader becomes President for life. Till date, multiparty system may be in Africa but it is never genuinely practiced. (Bayeh, 2015). And that is because political parties are allowed to be formed and operated in an environment that is not conducive for political competition.

Thus, in Africa, opposition parties face ruthless oppression and opposition leaders are haunted and imprisoned. In some cases opposition parties are banned and their activities criminalized. In addition, the African political parties are authoritarian and therefore they do not bother to substitute political legitimacy for coercion, which is part of the inherited political culture because colonial authority was obtained in Africa through conquest and political institutions were then imposed on the African peoples. The result is that African leaders take electoral victory to be a conquest and also take coercion to be a substitute for legitimacy (Thomson, 2008). Therefore, in today Africa, the society finds itself in a state of flux and, most of the time, African leaders depend on lawlessness and violence to retain power. Consequently, the nature of the political system, the political parties including the political culture that were inherited from the European colonizers makes it difficult for Africa to democratize (Bayel, 2015).

Thus, because the inherited political system and its practice are not rooted in African culture, African leaders find it difficult to imbibe the culture of modern state system and politics. Also, with the incidence of inverted process of capitalist state formation and the fragility of the emergent state in Africa, colonialism makes the following elements to characterize politics in Africa,

- The integration of African politics into the international modern liberal democracy without the requisite democratic institutions and the democrats with democratic temper.
- The imposition of sovereignty on arbitrarily constituted countries as nations
- The total absence of hegemonic values in the dominant class which is responsible for the recklessness and indiscipline of African leaders.
- A disconnect between African leaders and their people and between the state and society.
- A disorganized dominant class without cohesion ideology, philosophy and focus which makes it impossible to have consensus on politics.
- The imposition of authoritarian and elite dominated political parties on African people.
- Ethnic/tribal politics and its attendant disagreement on election results leading to violence and bloodshed.
- Rigging of elections that lead to sit tight leaders.
- The common incidence of crisis of political legitimacy of the government in many African countries.
- The nature of the party system and the inherited political culture which makes political competitions (politics) be zero- sum games.
- State institutions and agencies get weaken as a result of political crisis and violence.

**Colonialism and Africa: The Colonization and Colonial Rule of a Continent**

As earlier noted, colonialism, as a practice, involved the domination of a society by settlers from a different society. Thus, we have seen how Africa was dominated, economically politically and socially by European imperial powers from mid 19th to mid-20th century. During colonial rule and the colonization of Africa, the practice involved the superimposition of the rule of an alien socio-economic and political order on the continent that led to the subjugation of the African peoples. In other words, colonialism was a total system with three interconnected elements or factors that were used for the domination of African society. (Gobo, 2020). The three interconnected factors are politics, society and the economy.

European colonizers established the colonial state precisely because the capitalist state and its structures are essentially institutions of power for the organization of people and resources through the establishment of policy outlines and priorities, ( Chazanet, 1992).  Therefore, to effectively control and dominate Africa, European colonizers needed the state and its institutions to formulate policies regarding politics, society and the economy (Brett, 1973) and also to assist in the implementation of the policies that were formulated by the home state (government). It was against that background that the European model of the modern capitalist state was injected into Africa, giving birth to the colonial state, to protect the interests of the metropolitan capitalists in Europe.  It is therefore important to note that "colonial rule" (as shown in Fig. 1) was used by the colonial state to carry out the "colonization" of African economy and society. Thus, Europeans established the colonial state with its institutions and agencies like a government with a legislature, executive and judiciary including a bureaucracy, the armed forces, police and the prisons which were deployed for the administration and management of the African economy and society. All the established institutions and agencies were modeled after such institutions and agencies in Europe. In addition, all the institutions and agencies were headed by Europeans and at the early stage of colonial rule, were mostly occupied by European personnel. The established colonial state then became an instrument in the hands of the Europeans which they used in facilitating colonial rule (administration) and the colonization of African economy and society.  The colonial system is depicted in Figure 1 below.
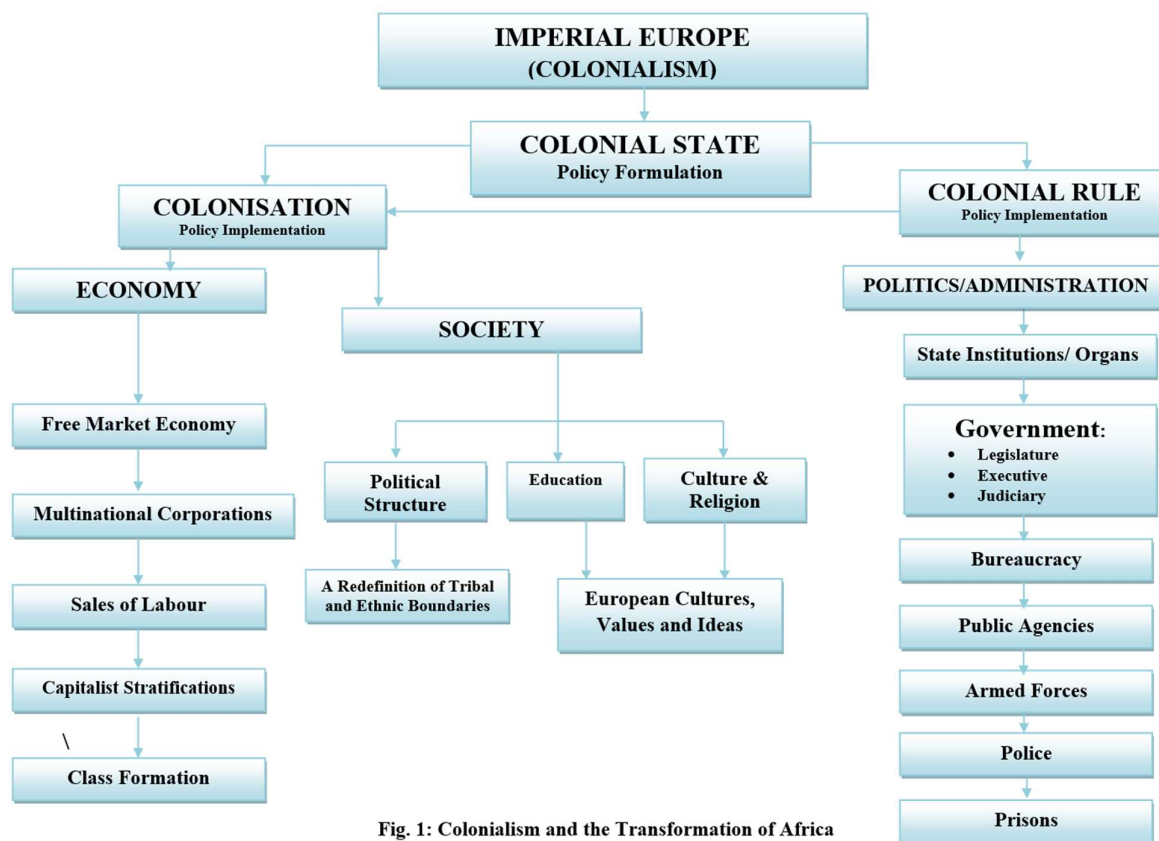


Fig. 1: Colonialism and the Transformation of Africa

After European colonizers had arbitrarily divided Africa into different colonies as, countries, the colonial state in each colony then embarked on the colonization of each colony  by transforming the society (colony), in terms of massive political restructuring of the society (colony) which led to a redefinition of tribal and ethnic boundaries in form of the creation of local councils, districts divisions, provinces and regions. Again, the transformation of the society led to the imposition of European type of education, culture and religion on Africans. The outcomes were the European cultures, values and ideas that were internalized by the African peoples.

The colonization of Africa also involved the transformation of the economy from the slavery/feudal economy which the colonialists met on arrival to that of capitalism. Consequently, the capitalist economy was instituted in

Africa with massive intervention by European multinational corporations. Thus, African economy became market economy or free enterprise economy, while Africans started selling their labour power which led to the typical capitalist stratification of blue and white collar jobs, middle and management levels workers, big merchant men and middle level traders to petty traders and labourers.

However, some six decades ago, most African countries gained independence from their colonial masters. Although African countries were granted formal independence and they became sovereign nations, the colonial state was not dismantled by European colonizers at their departure and therefore the colonial state became post-colonial state and it was left in the hands of African political leaders, those who had struggled for political independence. As a result, colonial rule ended because Africans gradually began to take over by assuming the headship of those institutions and agencies that were occupied by Europeans and which were used for the implementation of colonial policies. Therefore, it can be argued that at independence, "colonial rule" ended because those who became political leaders as the inheritors of political power were Africans.

At independence, there was a heavy delusion by Africans precisely because of the notion that with independence, Africa was free from European colonialism.  However, over six decades after all African countries have gained independence from their colonial masters, little did they realise that they have inherited some colonial legacies that need to be redefined otherwise, the undefined colonial legacies will continue to tie Africa to the apron string of their colonial masters (Kwaghe, 2008). In the process, colonialism will continue as neo-colonialism because Europeans will still be in charge and in control of the African economy and society.  Thus, because colonial rule ended with the granting of independence to African countries which means that Africans were given political power and they occupied those positions in the state institutions and agencies that were created to facilitate colonial rule, African leaders were carried away by the euphoria of self determination that they did not realise that without redefining those inherited colonial legacies, independence will not disengage them from their colonial masters. However, because African leaders failed to redefine the economy, society and politics, at independence, they continue to rule the continent with the same institutions, ideology and policies that were created and adopted for the colonies by European colonizers. The result was that while colonial rule ended, colonization continued because the economy, society and politics did not experience any change from how European colonizers left them in the hands of emerging African leaders.

Again, after independence, colonialism simply became post- colonial Africa, as sovereign countries, the colonial state became post-colonial state; colonial rule became politics and administration why colonization became socio/economic management. Although, political powers are now in the hands of African leaders nothing has really changed after African countries have attained independence status some six decades ago.  Figure 2 below shows post-colonial African system.

As shown in figure 2, the post- colonial state, politics and administration, state institutions, the government with the legislature, executive and judiciary together with the bureaucracy, the public agencies, the armed forces, the police and the prisons, which were created by European colonizers, were inherited by African political leaders at the end of colonial rule. Immediately after independence therefore, the areas became hotbeds for contentious political offices for which African leaders struggled to occupy and control because those are the institutions and agencies that house political power. Thus, in effect, African leaders are so busy fighting to occupy the positions that little attention is given to the proper and efficient management of the economy and little attention is paid to the society, in terms of making adequate provisions for infrastructural facilities to enhance education, health and agriculture. The result is that while African leaders are busy struggling and fighting to take control of state institutions and agencies in order to  capture political power, especially during elections,  elections are then turned into warfare, violent and bloody resulting in  the economy and society being neglected, with consequences for development. In addition, because of the belligerent, violent and chaotic atmosphere that is created by African leaders in the process of their struggle for power, they do not have the peace to reflect and think of redefining the colonial institutions and agencies, as colonial legacies, so as to make them more relevant to the African environment. Instead, they are more preoccupied with survival strategies for staying in office for life. That is why all incomes and resources earned by the country are corruptly taken by the leaders, sometimes in collaboration with their foreign comprador bourgeoisie.
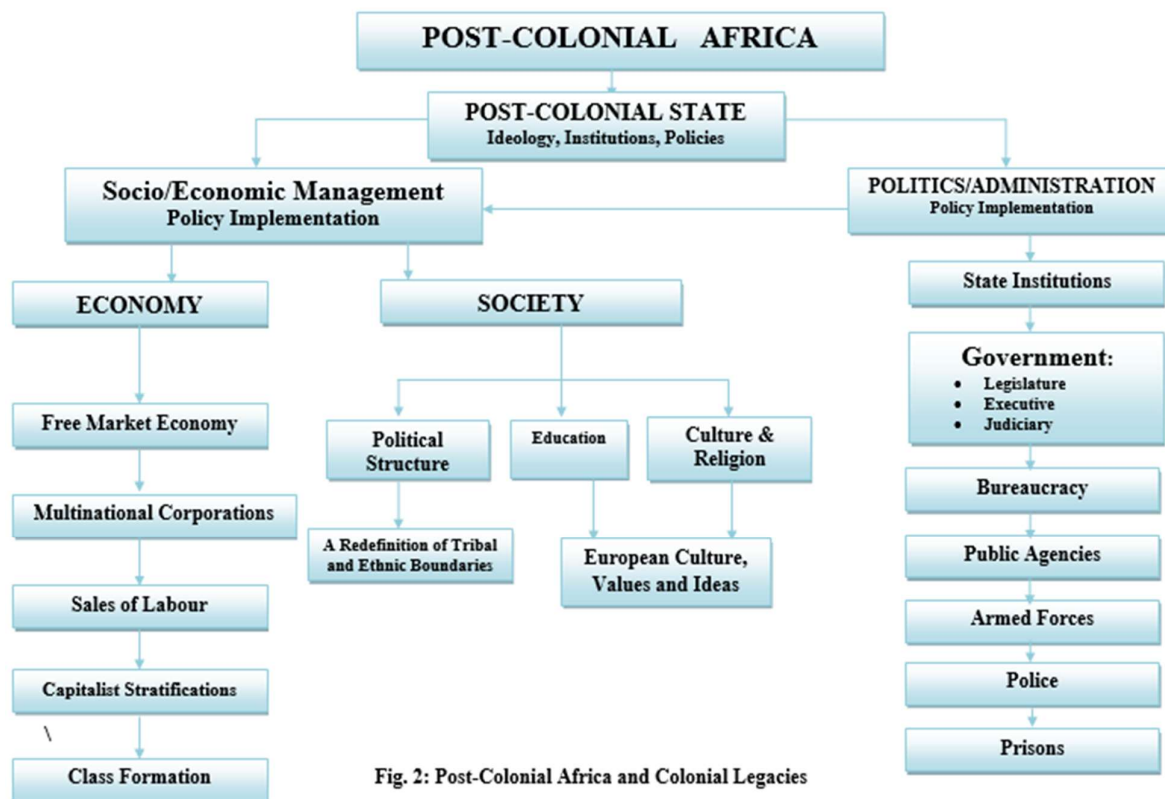
Fig. 2: Post-Colonial Africa and Colonial Legacies

**Post- Colonial Africa and the Dilemma of Change and Continuity**

At independence, African societies/social formations began a movement, as a transition, which was at three levels. The three levels are the transition from traditional/primordial society to one of modern capitalist society, the transition from feudal/subsistence economy, to one that is integrated into the world capitalist system and the transition from colonial dominated society, to one of independent and sovereign nations. The transition of any society from one level/stage to another is simply the movement of the society along the path of history. (Fadakinte, 2023). And each stage of the path of history presents its own brand of characteristics.

Thus far, we have seen that when colonial rule ended the colonial state was transformed to post-colonial state with all state institutions and agencies under the control of African leaders, while African leaders were ruling their countries with the same institutions, ideology and policies of their colonial masters as if they were doing so on behalf of the Europeans.

However, it is pertinent to ask that why did African political leaders, immediately after independence, fail to realise the need for a paradigm shift and redefine those inherited colonial legacies in order to change and transform their countries? The failure to realise the need for change and transform their countries was due to the following factors.
1. Inverted process of capitalist state formation.
2. The nature of the post-colonial emergent state.
*Inverted Process of Capitalist State Formation*

At independence, the following three dimensions of power became discernible.

1. Political power
2. Economic power
3. Socio/Cultural power

In Africa, after independence, political power fell in the hands of the children of teachers, office clerks, railway workers, church ministers and the children of those Africans who worked for Europeans as drivers, cooks and gardeners. Although, a few farmers who were then cultivating some cash crops were able to send their children to

school and such children were among those who inherited political power at independence.  So, this set of educated African elites became leaders not because they had economic power but because they had the opportunity to go to school, both in Africa and in Europe and therefore were able to acquire European culture and education and also, were able to speak European languages. Consequently, they were able to confront the European colonialists to demand for independence.

However, economic power at the time of independence was in the hands of the European colonialists because they still dominated the economy. At that time, the multinationals were still in charge of the economy and were controlling it. Such multinationals like Liver Brothers, PZ, UAC J. Allens A. G Leventis and others.

And for socio-cultural power, it was in the hands of the Obas, Emirs, Kings and Chiefs who were the custodians of the local cultures.

In Africa, the educated elites got political power at independence without economic power which was why the leaders broke into factions, comprising those with political power, who used the power to accumulate resources and those without political power and therefore had no access to economic resources. As a result, political competition (politics) became violent between the factions of the political leaders because they were always struggling over the sharing and distribution of resources. Therefore, whenever a faction gets hold of political power the faction will hold tight to the control of state apparatuses which they used in amassing wealth and in intimidating oppositions. Therefore, since independence, African leaders exist as antagonistic factions because they are in pursuit of political power to be used in accumulating economic resources (power).

However, the history of state formation in Europe is quite different from what is happening in Africa. In Europe, state formation was carried out by those with property, those who had a common interest in the form of a common aim of promoting and protecting capital and then they consciously embarked on state formation so that the state will evolve as an institution that will protect capital and capitalists interests. In other words, in Europe, those with capital, the bourgeoisie, created the state because they needed it, while in Africa, the colonialists left the European model of state, which they had created as an instrument of domination, in the hands of African political leaders who did not have economic means (power) at independence. Consequently, since independence, African leaders have turned the state into a means of exercising power as well as a means of amassing wealth. Thus, even though Europeans colonialists imposed the modern capitalist state on Africa, in order to facilitate colonial rule, but since African countries gained independence, there are no bourgeoisie to see the state as an institution to protect capital. As a result, any set of African factional leaders, with political power, will be busy trying to acquire economic power by using the instrumentalities of the European imposed model of capitalist state to do so.  In other words, in Europe, those with economic power (the capitalists) built the state, which was possible because a strong economic class had evolved in the society with the needed hegemony that enabled them to do so.  However, in Africa, because the political leaders have no economic power they are now using political power to acquire economic power and in the process    they engage in violent political struggle, especially during elections. Consequently, African political leaders are now too busy pillaging the resources of their countries and therefore do not have the peace to think of redefining the philosophy of the post-colonial state to make it more relevant to the African environment and transform the African continent. Today, Africa is in chaos, which explains African development crisis and also the reason for electoral democracy being a charm in continent.

Thus, in Africa, state formation process is taking the form of the cart moving in front of  the horse.  And that is because capitalist state formation became inverted in Africa due to the fact that those without economic power are with political power which makes politics, the struggle for power, to be severe, violent and bloody because any faction with political power uses the state to amass wealth (Fadakinte, 2013). In Africa, because there is no ruling class, a class that controls the economy and politics, with the required hegemony, that is, a dominant culture with the proper, effective and positive control of the apparatuses of state, to be in charge of the society to provide positive leadership, organize the different nations and ethnic groups, and socialize them to have a common identity, Africa found herself  in a flux, a pathetic and chaotic condition, making Africa a continent in dire need of a post-colonial redefinition.

*The Nature of African Post- Colonial State*

From the above analysis on the inverted process of the creation of the state in Africa, it will be apparent that there was no state in the sense of modern capitalist state, in Africa, where a bourgeoisie class created the state as an institution to protect bourgeoisie economic interests.  It can therefore be argued that, there was no capitalist class or capitalist social classes in antagonistic relations in Africa before European colonialism and therefore there was

no state as an institution that represented class interests.  Consequently, a capitalist state was established for Africa when the African society was not sufficiently in a position to run capitalism, in terms of managing a capitalist economy and its institutions, because there were no African capitalists and no  capitalist social classes or capitalist state institutions and,  as argued by  (Magubane, 1976),  the situation in post-colonial Africa was complicated because there did not even exist in African societies a class that could be described as an African capitalist's class or bourgeoisie

Thus, the European model of state that was inherited in Africa was artificial because it did not originate from Africa; neither did African political elites have the culture of the capitalist state. As a result, the post-colonial state cannot function well to grow the economy and be able to provide the basic needs of the people. Indeed, the post-colonial State continues to depend on external forces to maintain its existence and because of that, independence did not constitute a total break with the colonial masters or with colonial political values and interests (Chazan, 1992). Again, the inheritors of the colonial state, in most cases have not been able to settle the underlying crisis of the structure of the inherited state and society and the political elites, who were the inheritors of the colonial State, have been exercising power with the help and support of their colonial masters (Magubane, 1976). Therefore, it should be noted that the colonial state, as an alien institution, was an imposition that disorganised pre-colonial political institutions, an imposition on the territorial boundaries of the established countries by the colonizers that introduced external ideas to African politics and society, within   the territories that have arbitrary boundaries that did not coincide with pre-existing national or ethnic boundaries.  In effect, the colonizers left behind a state that was constructed for the colonized territories without taking due cognizance of the capacity of the colonized societies to cope and manage a capitalist state without capitalist social classes or a bourgeoisie class, as the case in Europe. At independence, Africans did not understand the state as an institution of class rule because they did not have the culture of the European capitalist ethos and therefore could not comprehend the philosophy and ideology of the new institution. Consequently, the African leaders who took over the administration of the post-colonial state from the departing colonizers assumed their new roles with hardly anything from Africans past that could prepare and guide them in their new roles. Thus, they continue to grope in an unfamiliar terrain with the inherited state system that is so alien, so sophisticated and which they little understood. ( Nwabueze, 2010).   In other words, both in its nature and character, the colonial state did not fit into the African society and that is why, till date, the post-colonial state, in each African country,  continues to wobble, lacking the capacity to exercise control over the recourses within its territory, lacking the capacity to control the people they govern and lacking the capacity to bring together all the periphery ethnic formations in order to build and consolidate a nation.

Thus far, even though it was apparent to some African leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Seuku Toure, that European economic, social and political philosophy that were imposed on the continent needed to be redefined, but they were constrained to do so because state formation process has been inverted by colonialism with the emergent state being a fragile institution and therefore the nature of the fragile state impeded their efforts. In addition,   African leaders are busy fighting over the acquisition of political power in order to control the state. As a result, the state cannot play the role of a power house of society in bringing about order, peace and the proper coordination of the distribution of resources. And that is because the political leaders are so absorbed in the struggle to capture state power that they do not pay much attention to anything else, including the need to redefine those colonial culture, ideas and values in order to transform the continent. Today, African leaders are only pre-occupied with holding political power, at all cost, not bothered about the socio/economic and political consequences, with no thought on redefining the nature and  philosophy of the post-colonial state in order to transform the economy and society. They are just a bundle of novices, as brigandage in power, recklessly pillaging the economy.

Thus, Africa fails to make significant progress because African leaders are unable to maintain order, enforce laws and most importantly provide essential public service, such as education and health care (Payne and Nassar, 2008), because those who are supposed to do so (the political leaders) do not have the needed vision and peace to function properly. As a bunch of disorganized leaders, African political leaders have weakened all emergent institutions and agencies that were inherited from colonial rule, to the point of making them inefficient and unproductive. This is why it can be argued that Africa is today in a flux because the leaders are embroiled  in violent factional struggle for power and are therefore  unable to organize themselves  to be united with a common ideology that is needed to transform the continent . In effect, Africa is presently thrown into a condition of anomie, akin to the Hobbesian state of nature, as a result of pervasive corruption, bad governance syndrome, wars, coups, election violence and anarchy in some cases.

**Conclusion**

Today, it is obvious that colonial legacies are still very much alive in Africa and they continue to shape and influence the contemporary economic, political and social structures of the African continent and her peoples. (Barker, 2018). And that is because the fallout of colonialism is multiple and pervasive with its reality having very serious effects on the thought, behaviour and generally the life of the African peoples. In other words, colonialism has not ended, but only operates as neo-colonialism which, in its meta-colonial form, continues to influence the entire being of the African peoples. (Bulham, 2015).

Tragically, African founding fathers were oblivious of the long and enduring effects of colonialism partly because the colonial education they acquired did not enlighten them enough to realise the long time efforts of colonialism, and partly because they were carried away by the thought of being the future successors to colonial leaders and later the euphoria of independence, that little thought was given to the fact that foreign cultures, ideas and values will shape and influence the future of their countries. Thus, they erroneously believe that with independence, Africans will be enjoying some collective benefits with greater material prosperity for all. In other words, they thought that the end of colonial rule would be the panacea to Africa's problems. (Kwagbe, 2008). It is pertinent to note that formal independence and the declaration of sovereignty by African nations may have brought self-rule to Africa but it did not break the ties that bound African's future to that of her colonial masters. And because Africa still conducts her life with those inherited colonial legacies, her economy is still disarticulated, and her governance system is still characterized by pervasive corruption and political instability. Indeed, the African society is anomic, with frequent tribal and ethnic conflicts and violence, religion crisis with poor and inadequate infrastructures. (Kwagbe, 2008). The sad thing about the African crisis is that Africans themselves hardly see the root cause of the above problems in those inherited colonial legacies that need to be redefined. Thus, the instituted colonial rule with its institutions and agencies became colonial legacies, which were bequeathed to African political leaders at independence, which now need to be assessed and redefined. Today, all the institutions and agencies as colonial legacies gave birth to the nature and character of the emergent state at independence, making post-colonial Africa to be characterized by the following.

- A very serious crisis of state formation process, making the state to be weak with inefficient, unproductive and in some cases non-existent institutions to make the state perform optimally.
- A disorganized, confused and factionalised dominant class whose factions are in belligerent relationship as a result of bitter and violent struggle for power.
- The absence of a ruling class, due to the absence of a class that controls the economy and politics. As a result, the base and the superstructures of the African society operate at variance because the base is not strong enough to carry the heavy weight of the infrastructures.
- The absence of class hegemony due to nonexistent of a class with the dominant culture, ideas, and values that are embraced by the people as the suitable elements of the society.
-  The absence of a class that can demonstrate purposeful leadership and domination and because of that there is no agreement on the process of formalizing power, no agreement on the definition of citizenship and no agreement on the process of nation building.

In Africa, therefore, governance is weak, inefficient and unproductive because there is a gap between the rulers and the ruled with the gap bringing about a kind of disconnect between the government and the people and between the state and society.

Finally, we need to understand African crises in their gargantuan proportions but to do so, we must engage contemporary African history in order to know how Africa has been disorganized and fractured, the tragedy that truncated her historical process and accounts for the African crises. The current African situation now creates an urgent need for a redefinition of existing social formations and economic systems, which are basically colonial legacies, and also the need to understand the extent to which the superstructures reflect the nature and conditions of the base. And that is because in Africa, the base obviously cannot support the superstructures because the base is too weak to carry the historically imposed activities that are generated by the superstructures. For example, the institutions, public agencies and political structures that were created during colonial rule make governance at the superstructures to be extremely costly and heavy for the base. Furthermore, the cost of maintaining the superstructures contributes to the siphoning of money into the hands of power hungry and relatively unproductive and parasitic elites thereby making corruption and pillage to be some of the negative features of post-colonial Africa. (Gordon &Gordon, 2007). Therefore, the rudimentary and fatally weak nature of the base is partly responsible for a highly fragile state in Africa and that is because the imposed capitalist system is at best a pseudo

system of mode of production which did not completely destroy the feudal system that was in Africa before the arrival of European colonisers and at independence the pseudo capitalist system did not create strong capitalist institutions and capitalist social classes to engage in the practice of meaningful capitalism. Again, members of the dominant class who are in antagonistic factions are, even till date, still engaged in fierce struggle for political power with the aim of capturing the state, as a result, African leaders do not have the peace to think of redefining the colonial legacies that are not working in the African environment. In addition, because African leaders have been historically weakened by the way colonialism was responsible for their emergence that they are not able to construct the needed hegemony for state formation and consolidation and until that is achieved the African continent will continue to be the most backward of all the continents in the world.

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