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Review Paper

THE BRITISH EMPIRES INTEGRATION OF PRECOLONIAL NIGERIA INTO THE BRITISH COLONIAL ECONOMY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT:

A collection of disarticulated colonial economic legacies sits at the heart of Nigeria's and Africa's development crisis. The introduction of the cash crop economy to Nigeria, as well as other parts of Africa, came with the creation of British colonial rule. In Nigeria, there was the downplaying of the value of the indigenous economic system, which made each household dependent on others for food and other socio-economic necessities, in line with the British colonial policy of providing raw materials for the industrial needs of the metropolitan powers. Most clans and villages were gradually deprived of food supplies and thus introduced to acute hunger as a result of a deliberate policy of suppressing food crop cultivation in favor of the cultivation of cash crops required by British enterprises. Nigeria's colonial

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territory served not only as a cheap source of raw materials to Britain and European states' growing industrial needs, but also as a trading post for British and European traders and merchants. Under the cover of native authority, a small group of local individuals were exploited as agents for the destruction of the indigenous food crop economy and the zealous implementation of the new economic strategy, thus inflicting evil on their kinsmen. In light of this, the current state of the development crisis in Nigeria and other African countries have been linked back to the antecedents of pre-independence British colonial economic policy, amongst other colonial. Relying on desktop methodological review, this study concludes that Nigeria, and indeed Africa, needs a determined policy design to turn the colonial economic legacy into an internally oriented, sustainably produced economy.

KEY WORDS:
Colonialism, Colonial Economic Policies, British, Nigeria, Africa.

SAŽETAK:

Brojni problemi kolonijalnog ekonomskog nasljeđa leže u središtu u razvojne krize Nigerije i Afrike. Uvođenje koncepta ekonomije zasnovanog na komercijalnim usjevima u Nigeriju, kao i u druge dijelove Afrike, došlo je sa stvaranjem britanske kolonijalne vladavine. U Nigeriji je došlo do umanjivanja vrijednosti autohtonog ekonomskog sistema, koji je svako domaćinstvo učinio zavisnim od drugih za hranu i druge društveno-ekonomske potrepštine, u skladu sa britanskom kolonijalnom politikom obezbeđivanja sirovina za industrijske potrebe metropola. Plemena i seoske zajednice su postepeno lišavane zaliha hrane i na taj način dovedena do teške gladi koja je bila rezultat namjerne politike suzbijanja uzgoja prehrambenih usjeva u korist uzgoja komercijalnih usjeva koje su zahtijevala britanska preduzeća. Kolonijalna teritorija Nigerije nije služila samo kao jeftin izvor sirovina za rastuće industrijske potrebe Britanije i evropskih država, već i kao trgovačko mesto za britanske i evropske trgovce. Nigerija je postala jeftina sirovina za rastuće industrijske potrebe Britanije i evropskih država. Lokalna vlast bila je oslonjena na malu grupu lokalnih pojedinaca. Sve ove okolnosti ukazuju da su rezultati britanske ekonomske kolonijalne politike uticale na postojeće stanje ekonomije u Nigeriji. U članku se metodološkim pregledom saopštava da su Nigeriji neophodne sveobuhvatne reforme kako bi se rješili nasljeđeni problemi kolonijalnog ekonomskog nasljeđa. Pod okriljem domaće vlasti, mala grupa lokalnih pojedinaca je eksploatisana kao agenti za uništavanje autohtone privrede usjeva i revnosnu implementaciju nove ekonomske strategije, nanoseći tako zlo svojim rođacima. Shodno tome, trenutno stanje razvojne krize u Nigeriji i drugim afričkim zemljama povezano je sa prethodnicima britanske kolonijalne ekonomske politike prije nezavisnosti, između ostalih kolonijalnim. Oslanjajući se na metodološki pregled postojećih podataka, ova studija zaključuje da je Nigeriji, a i Africi, potreban izrada odlučne politike kako bi se kolonijalno ekonomsko nasleđe pretvorilo u interno orijentisanu, ekonomiju održive proizvodnje.

Ključne riječi:

kolonijalizam; Kolonijalne politike; Britanija; Nigeria; Afrika.

Introduction

Colonialism, in the broadest sense, can be explicated to mean the direct and total dominance of one country by another using the instrumentality of superior military, economic or technological possessions. This recalls the direct and general dominance of colonial powers over Nigeria and other African countries between 1900 until early 1990s (Aghahowa and Ukpebo, 1999:149). Colonialism's primary goals have always been economic, social, and political objectives (Boahen, 1987: 31). Its second goal is to allow for the exploitation of colonial countries. When we talk of colonialism in Africa, we are referring to a phenomenon that occurred between 1800 and 1960, notably from 1879 onwards (Boahen, 1987: 32). It is a phenomenon that is a byproduct of another phenomenon known as imperialism. In truth, colonialism is a sort of imperialism in its purest form. As a result, it is sometimes stated that "all colonialism is imperialist, but not all imperialism is colonialism" (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). Colonialism arose as a result of changes in Europe's manufacturing methods (for example, the emergence of the industrial revolution). In place of the previous slave-based economy, the industrial revolution brought in a new mode of production. The industrial revolution was a revolutionary movement in human history. The question of how to lubricate machinery arose with the advent of the industrial revolution. By this period, the slave trade and slavery had served their primary purpose of producing rudimentary capital. The desire to spend amassed cash and the necessity for raw materials resulted in the colonization of Africa (Boahen, 1987: 26). This paper aims to examine the economic consequences of colonialism on Nigeria against the backdrop of this journey. In order to do this, the next part will be devoted to a critical examination and appraisal of colonial economic policies in Nigeria, followed by comments on how to refocus Nigeria's developmental strides in the proper direction.

Colonial Economic Legacies in Nigeria: Road to Present

The first decade of the twentieth century was a watershed moment in Britain's and other imperial European nations' ambitions to successfully colonize the African continent (Boahen, 1987). It entailed a reinterpretation and consolidation of Britain's imperial strategies (Ikime, 1972). The Nigerian economy is undeniably in a state of crisis. There is also little doubt that the current economic crisis has historical precedents. A thorough examination of colonialism has revealed that the Nigerian economy has been skewed and deprived of its enormous development potential. Indeed, economic backwardness shows that any understanding of the Nigerian economy must begin with the country's bleak history of colonial economic policy. Okwudiba Nnoli, Inyang Efeng, Bade Onimode, C.C. Onyemelikura, and Eskor Toyo are by far the greatest and most instructive authors who address the problem of colonial Nigeria's economic policies and underdevelopment in this regard (Aghahowa and Ukpebo, 1999:149). The integration of African peasant producers into the global market has been regarded as one of the most successful colonial policies, removing millions of Africans from the security and stability of subsistence and semi-subsistence production and placing them in the web of an uncertain and exploitative global market. This impression has been primarily reinforced by the language of reliance, underdevelopment, and related notions, which refer to the systematic subordination of raw-material producers to the pressures and vagaries of the global market. Within this framework, the African downturn signifies a strengthening of African manufacturers' integration into the global economy. During the colonial period, Britain maintained solid control over and dominated the Nigerian market, owing mostly to the influence of the colonial government's favorable policies in Nigeria. It has been established that Britain's and Nigeria's colonial governments' stances have hardened in favor of protectionism. The practice began in earnest on the brink of World War I and culminated during World War II. For example, in 1917, the colonial authorities issued a blanket restriction on the export of palm oil from Nigeria, with the exception of the United Kingdom. It also levied discriminatory charges on palm kernels from Nigeria between 1919 and 1922, with the goal of underlining the 1917 prohibition. According to Falola et al. (2007), among the so-called benefits was the promotion of inter-group social, economic, and political interactions through measures such as road, rail, and port development. It is also suggested that the introduction of a new portable money promoted inter-Nigerian commerce. It is stated that colonial economic policies contributed to the growth of urban centers and trade in the country. Finally, it is claimed that, in some ways, these assertions are correct, but they must be considered in their right context. That is, we must interpret them as inescapable outcomes of British economic policy, which was plainly aimed at advancing Britain's economic interests and goals. This is why, notwithstanding these seeming economic benefits, it is more true to say that British economic policy had one primary outcome. This is Nigeria's underdevelopment (Falola et al., 2007).

Supporting Falola's point of view, Babawale (2007:1) claims that the history of Nigeria's economic crises can be traced back to the time of British colonialism, which resulted in disruptions and dislocations of the post-colonial mode and relations of production.

Nnoli (1981) contrasts a picture of how colonial economic policies, and their intensification in post-independence Nigeria, contributed to the country's continuing underdevelopment. Thus, the colonialists' goal of integrating pre-colonial Nigeria into the global capitalist economic system as a peripheral member resulted in the development of new productive economic activity based on the demands of foreign capitalist nations. It shifted focus away from local creative potential and resources and toward the production of fundamental materials required by Europeans. This explains why, up to the present day, the function of Africa's economy and nations in the global market or international commerce has been the production of primary goods and agricultural items. Savvy European countries have complete control over the production of manufactured products. One of the reasons for the colonization of Africa, as we know, was the necessity for a suitable market in which the various European manufactured commodities could be quickly disposed of at a respectable profit. Because the African economy was mostly built on a barter system, it was necessary to monetize the economy in order to compete in the European market and meet international trade norms. This money was imposed as the only official accepted means of trade, and in order to enforce it, the colonialists needed to gain full control of the administration of the African colonies. Furthermore, the colonialists needed to seize complete control of the African economy and government in order to ensure that Africa became a consumer nation for European-produced products. If this condition was not ensured, it would have had a negative impact on the growth and advancement of Europe's new industrialization because most industries would be forced to close if there was no ready market and buyers for their products. Furthermore, direct control over the African economy and political administration allowed colonialists to ensure that African colonies or governments did not turn to manufacturing. It contributed to the confinement of Africans and their technology to the production of only primary items or agricultural raw materials required by European industry. This is the primary reason why today's African states are having such a terrible time. This explains why, up to the present day, the function of Africa's economy and nations in the global market or international commerce has been the production of primary goods and agricultural items. Savvy European countries have complete control over the production of manufactured products. One of the reasons for the colonization of Africa, as we know, was the necessity for a suitable market in which the various European manufactured commodities could be quickly disposed of at a respectable profit. Because the African economy was mostly built on a barter system, it was necessary to monetize the economy in order to compete in the European market and meet international trade norms. This money was imposed as the only official accepted means of trade, and in order to enforce it, the colonialists needed to gain full control of the administration of the African colonies. Furthermore, the colonialists needed to seize complete control of the African economy and government in order to ensure that Africa became a consumer nation for European-produced products. If this condition was not ensured, it would have had a negative impact on the growth and advancement of Europe's new industrialization because most industries would be forced to close if there was no ready market and buyers for their products. Furthermore, direct control over the African economy and political administration allowed colonialists to ensure that African colonies or governments did not turn to manufacturing. It contributed to the confinement of Africans and their technology to the production of only primary items or agricultural raw materials required by European industry. This is the primary reason why African countries find it difficult to industrialize and enter the manufacturing sector. This also explains why Africa is a consumer of foreign-made goods. This circumstance explains both the current underdevelopment of African countries and their technological reluctance to industrialize and enter full production. This also explains why Africa is a consumer of foreign-made goods. This circumstance explains both the current underdevelopment of African states and their technology.

Colonial Economic Policies in Nigeria: How Impactful?

It has been largely acknowledged by Eurocentric researchers that colonialism had a large number of beneficial effects on the African economy, with Nigeria being no exception. According to these experts, the development of fundamental infrastructure such as roads, trains, ports, telegraphs, and telephones, was the greatest economic gain of colonialism. They contend that nothing can be said about the growth of these infrastructures following the end of colonialism and that, in most cases, they are no longer available (Cooper, 2005). This is evidenced by the colonial railway stations at Langa Langa, Nassarawa, Lagos, Iddo in Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt. Furthermore, during the colonial period, certain critical mineral resources were discovered, which sparked modern scientific mining in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. It goes without saying that these seeming gains were rendered useless and meaningless in the face of the effects of colonial economic policies in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. First, they made Nigeria's colonial economy dependent on three key export crops: cocoa, palm oil, and groundnuts. During colonial times, they accounted for the majority of exports (Ahazuema and Falola 1987). The colonial authorities felt that the development of cash crops might be accomplished not by dramatically eliminating and/or modifying the people's existing indigenous production skills, but rather through progressive adjustment of such practices (Usoro, 1974: 35). Second, the colonial authorities attempted to make available to local farmers' seeds known to boost output. Second, the colonial authorities attempted to increase the quality of the people's cash crops (Aghalino, 2000:10).

Similarly, British agricultural policies had no revolutionary influence on the region's economy. The influence of the planting initiative on society was limited. Regardless, the acquisition of a few acres of land for the creation of a plantation diminished the percentage of fertile area for food crops.

The inhabitants stated that the land leased out to the plantations by the locals was the most fruitful (Aghalino, 2000:13). The railways and other modes of communication enabled the evacuation of Nigerian exports to Britain and other European nations on commercial conditions determined by colonial rulers, to the detriment of Nigerian commodity owners. According to Falola et al. (2007:38), the value of such so-called exports was frequently quite substantial, indicating that Nigeria experienced a massive fiscal or monetary loss. According to them, the amount of palm oil evacuated from Nigeria in 1901 was around 66,000 tons, rising to 272,000 tons in 1921 and 497,000 tons in 1951. In 1938, 110,243 tons of palm oil brought £981,330. In the same year, 180,136 tons of groundnuts worth £1,305,828 and 97,100 tons of cocoa worth £1,305,828 were assessed. The majority of this money was either remitted to the Imperial Treasury or offshore banks as reserves, or it was utilized to support the colonial government in the form of wages, infrastructural provisions, and so on. The British colonial economic strategy prioritized agricultural growth in order to maintain the ideology of cheap raw material production and exports (Aghahoura and Ukpebor, 1999:150). Nigeria's colonial lands supplied not only as a convenient source of inexpensive raw materials to feed food crops in Europe, but also as a means by which European consumption was efficiently addressed (Usoro, 1977:12). The inhabitants stated that the land leased out to the plantations by the locals was the most fruitful (Aghalino, 2000:13). The railways and other modes of communication enabled the evacuation of Nigerian exports to Britain and other European nations on commercial conditions determined by colonial rulers, to the detriment of Nigerian commodity owners. According to Falola et al. (2007:38), the value of such so-called exports was frequently quite substantial, indicating that Nigeria experienced a massive fiscal or monetary loss. According to them, the amount of palm oil evacuated from Nigeria in 1901 was around 66,000 tons, rising to 272,000 tons in 1921 and 497,000 tons in 1951. In 1938, 110,243 tons of palm oil brought £981,330. In the same year, 180,136 tons of groundnuts worth £1,305,828 and 97,100 tons of cocoa worth £1,305,828 were assessed. The majority of this money was either remitted to the Imperial Treasury or offshore banks as reserves, or it was utilized to support the colonial government in the form of wages, infrastructural provisions, and so on. The British colonial economic strategy prioritized agricultural growth in order to maintain the ideology of cheap raw material production and exports (Aghahowa and Ukpebor, 1999:150). The colonial territories of Nigeria served not only as a ready source of cheap raw materials to feed the growing industries in Britain and Europe (Usoro, 1977:12), but also as a trading post for British and other European traders and merchants forced to find an external market for their manufactured goods. As a result, the problem of underdeveloped industries in Britain and Europe is addressed, as is the need for British and other European traders and merchants to find an external market for their manufactured goods. In this way, Europe's under-consumption problem was skillfully eradicated (Usoro, 1977: 77).

The consequences of British colonial agricultural programs, which stressed the development of cash crops for export while doing nothing to boost food production, may be observed in Nigeria's post-independence economy. While

Nigeria remained impoverished and hence more reliant on British merchants and corporations, European commercial firms continued to prosper. This marketing link led to the formation of a Nigerian business elite that served as simple conduits for the supply of Nigerian goods to Europe and the distribution of goods from British and European manufacturing sectors to Nigeria. This was an aspect of economic dependency erected by colonial officials to the continuous detriment of Nigeria and her people (Falola et al., 2007:39).

The British colonial industrial strategy in Nigeria was primarily concerned with the production and shipment of mineral products like tin, columbite, gold, and so on to British and European industries, as well as the procurement of manufactured goods (Nnoli, 1981:98). Companies such as the United African Company (UAC), the United Trading Company (UTC), the African Timber and Plywood Company (ATP), and others. The colonial export-import policy was accomplished via the use of these foreign firms.

As a result, the British colonial administration supported agriculture and an industrial system aimed at exploiting Nigeria's colonized population and natural riches.

According to the preceding examination of British economic policies in Nigeria, the British colonial agricultural and industrial policies in Nigeria fundamentally disturbed the pre-colonial economic system of production. Nigerians could not be the final source of proposals on Nigeria's economic difficulties because of the colonial economic framework. Instead, they are incorporated into an economic system in which they are reduced to the status of mere agents of European economic institutions. We now have an export-import trade that is externally oriented, with foreign dominance of the local economy and surplus value appreciation by foreign enterprises (Falola et al., 2007:39; Aghahowa and Ukpebor, 1999:152). Nigeria's economy was not only skewed at the time of independence, but it also responded to the vagaries of the worldwide capitalism system into which it had been placed. It was distinguished by a poor productive base, little or no technology, and reliance on a limited number of cash crops and, subsequently, crude oil (Babawale 2007:1). Since its inception, the American economy has been reliant on foreign markets, foreign subsidies, and foreign technology.

Reflections and the Way Forward

Following an examination of the economic consequences of colonial rule on Nigeria, many key findings emerge. There is little question that, on the economic front, there was a shift from the previously existent economy, which catered to the immediate needs of the people and their neighbors, to one that primarily served the interests of the British. Cash crop development was fostered at the expense of the people's "subsistence" economy. The economy was monetized not to help or expand the Nigerian economy, but to enable British commerce. There was also the development of plantation systems, which, despite their apparent advantages, caused social and economic upheaval. It should also be noted that the British colonial administration's economic and fiscal policies had a negative impact on the population, since immoral tactics were used by the people to survive societal hardship. This introduced various pathological inclinations into society that were previously unknown to the Nigerian population. Regardless, after several decades of decolonization, there are a thousand and one reasons why Nigeria and other African countries should be self-sufficient, despite their colonial background. Several internal constraints have been identified as important contributors to Africa's development issues. This includes, to name a few, corruption, poor leadership, parochialism, and ethnicity. As a result, colonialism should no longer be used to justify Nigeria's and Africa's underdevelopment. Although a conscious policy design to transition from a colonial economic legacy into an economy that is locally focused and sustainably developed is required, Nigeria and other African countries must find a long-term solution to their internal problems.

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