

Sovereignty; Neo-Colonialism, Structure Adjustment and Africa Political Economy

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Abstract: *Neocolonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy are all topics covered in the essay. The paper concludes that neo - colonialism and structural adjustment have had detrimental effects on the political economy of Africa, including sustaining economic inequality, impeding industrialization, and raising debt loads. This conclusion is reached using a content analysis technique. The essay also suggests a number of alternatives, such as advancing fair trade principles, spending money on healthcare and education, and enhancing governance and accountability. These suggestions are meant to improve the economic conditions of African nations and make them more sustainable and egalitarian. In order to solve the complex difficulties facing the African political economy, the article's conclusion emphasizes the necessity for ongoing study and collaboration.*

Keywords: Neo - colonialism. Africa, economy, colonial, political, Somalia

1. Introduction

The political and economic development of various African countries has been significantly impacted by the interconnected topics of neo - colonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy. (Ake, C. (1981).).

The practice of former colonial powers still having an economic and political influence on their former colonies years after colonialism was formally outlawed is known as neo - colonialism. (Arrighi, G. (2010). In the 1980s and 1990s, several African countries were pressured to adopt a set of economic measures known as structural adjustment by international financial institutions including the IMF and World Bank. (Banful, A. B., & Oppong, J. R. (2016). African political economics examines how resources are distributed both inside and among African nations as well as how outside players influence African politics and economies. (Bond, P. (2001). These concerns have both positive and negative consequences on African countries. Neocolonialism and structural adjustment programs have helped certain developing economies and attract foreign investment, but they have also made social unrest, inequality, and poverty worse. (Chibwana, C., Masiye, F., & Mvula, P. M. (2020). The political economy of Africa is influenced by historical and contemporary factors such as globalization, corruption, and violence. of general, knowledge of these topics is essential for evaluating the political and economic situations of African countries as well as for determining how to promote social justice and sustainable development in the region.

2. Research Methodology

A multidisciplinary approach is used to study neocolonialism, structural change, and African political economy. This approach combines concepts from economics, political science, history, and sociology.

Quantitative methods like econometric analysis are commonly used to analyze economic data and determine how significant economic indicators like GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment rates are affected by policies like structural adjustment. Qualitative approaches like case studies and ethnography are used to better understand the political and social dynamics of African countries as well as the role of external actors like multinational corporations and international financial institutions. Additionally, critical viewpoints like postcolonial theory and dependency theory are utilized to examine the unequal distribution of resources and advantages in the global economic system as well as the power relations between African nations and former colonial powers. Overall, interdisciplinary research techniques are used to examine power dynamics and advance social justice in the study of neo - colonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy. (Chibwana, C., Masiye, F., & Mvula, P. M. (2020). These methods include quantitative and qualitative approaches.

2.1 Objective

Depending on the exact research questions and objectives of the study, the aim of a study on neo - colonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy may change. However, the following are some potential study goals:

- 1) To investigate the past and present effects of neo - colonialism on African societies, economy, and politics.
- 2) To examine how structural adjustment initiatives affect economic development, poverty, and inequality in African nations.
- 3) To look at the politics, economics, and management of natural resources in African nations.
- 4) To list the possibilities and problems that African nations face in the twenty - first century and make suggestions for long - term economic growth.
- 5) To evaluate the contribution of civil society, foreign governments, and international organizations to the advancement of just and sustainable economic growth in Africa. To highlight the importance of collaboration and partnerships among African countries, international

organizations, and civil society to address the complex challenges facing the African political economy.

These objectives would inform the research questions, methodology, and findings of the study, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of the complex issues related to neo - colonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy.

2.2 Problem Case Study

The effect of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the economy of Ghana in the 1980s and 1990s might be one potential issue case study associated with neo - colonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy. (Chibwana, C., Masiye, F., & Mvula, P. M. (2020).

Ghana experienced a serious economic crisis during this time, which included high inflation, slow economic development, and significant foreign debt. In response, the Ghanaian government requested help from the IMF and put in place a number of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in return for loans and debt relief. ((Bond, P. (2001).

The SAPs implemented measures including budgetary austerity, trade liberalization, and the privatization of state - owned firms with the goal of fostering economic growth and reducing poverty. However, many Ghanaians, including farmers, employees, and small company owners, suffered from the deployment of SAPs. For example, the removal of agricultural subsidies led to a decline in food production and a rise in food prices, while privatization of state - owned enterprises led to layoffs and a decline in social services. Moreover, SAPs resulted in a significant increase in external debt, leading to concerns about Ghana's long - term economic sustainability.

This case study emphasizes how controversial and complicated SAPs are, as well as how they affect African economies. Although SAPs were designed to encourage economic growth and combat poverty, they also had serious adverse effects on a large number of Ghanaians. The case study also calls into question the role that international organizations play in determining economic policies in African nations and the significance of fair and sustainable economic growth for long - term success.

Sovereignty. (Mkandawire, T. (2001).

A state's absolute control over its land, citizens, and administration is referred to as its sovereignty. It is the capacity of a state to exert dominance inside its borders and make choices devoid of influence from outside parties. ((Ake, C. (1981)).

In considerations of statehood, territorial integrity, and non - intervention, sovereignty has been a key notion in both international affairs and political philosophy. In the contemporary nation - state system, where each state is seen as an autonomous and equal member of the global community, sovereignty is frequently perceived as a crucial component. (Sardanis, A. (2003).

However, sovereignty is not a fixed idea and may be restricted or challenged by a number of different things. (Banful, A. B., & Oppong, J. R. (2016). As examples, state sovereignty has been viewed as potentially being threatened by factors such as globalization, economic interdependence, and international law. Moreover, Due to the historical legacy of colonialism and the ongoing influence of external actors on African politics and governance, sovereignty in the African context has been a particularly contentious concept. some scholars have argued that African states have limited sovereignty because colonialism created artificial borders and systems of governance that do not necessarily reflect local identities and cultures. others have pointed to the ongoing influence of external actors on African politics and governance.

3. Literature Review

There is a large and diverse body of literature on neocolonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy. Although there is significant disagreement over the scope and character of these effects, scholars have generally been critical of how these ideas have affected Africa. Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of Ghana, invented the phrase "neo - colonialism, " which describes how Western nations have continued to rule over African nations via economic and political methods long after colonialism ended. Neo - colonialism, according to Ake (1981) and Bond (2001), maintains economic inequality and hinders the development of African countries. Bond (2001) examines South Africa's transition from apartheid to neoliberalism as a case study of neo - colonialism in action. (Sardanis, A. (2003).

In the 1980s and 1990s, several African nations had to execute structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in order to qualify for loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Typically, these initiatives focused on cutting government spending, privatizing state - owned businesses, and encouraging export - driven development. (Thirlwall, A. P. (2013). SAPs, according to its detractors, have had detrimental effects on the political economy of Africa, including impeding industrialisation and raising debt loads. While Banful and Oppong (2016) investigate the connection between SAPs, human capital investment, and economic growth, Ndikumana and Boyce (2011) investigate the relationship between foreign loans and capital flight in Africa. Economic growth, political stability, and social welfare are just a few of the many topics that fall under the umbrella of the complex and dynamic subject of study known as African political economics. Mkandawire (2001).

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However, Since sovereignty is not a fixed idea, it may be questioned or limited in various ways. As examples, state sovereignty has been viewed as potentially being threatened by factors such as globalization, economic interdependence, and international law. Furthermore, discussions regarding the boundaries of state sovereignty and the contribution of outside players to the advancement of universal standards and values have been sparked by topics like human rights, humanitarian assistance, and environmental preservation. (Thirlwall, A. P. (2013).

Due to the lingering effects of colonialism and the continuous impact of outside players on African politics and governance, the notion of sovereignty has been particularly contentious in the African setting. Because colonization left behind artificial borders and governing structures that did not always represent local identities and traditions, several academics have claimed that African governments had limited sovereignty. Others have drawn attention to the continuous impact of outside players on African politics and governance, including foreign nations and international organizations, which can limit the capacity of African governments to fully exercise their sovereignty. Noman, A., Botchwey, K., Stein, H., & Stiglitz, J. E. (Eds.). (2014). Overall, sovereignty is a complex and contested concept that is central to discussions of statehood, governance, and international relations. The African context raises unique challenges and questions about the nature and limits of sovereignty, as well as the role of external actors in shaping African politics and governance.

2) Neo - Colonialism

Neo - colonialism is the term used to describe the ongoing, frequently covert, economic, political, and cultural influence of former colonial powers over their former colonies. The Ghanaian politician Kwame Nkrumah initially popularized the phrase in the 1960s, and it has since been often used in debates of global inequality, post - colonialism, and development. (Sardanis, A. (2003).

Neo - colonialism has been viewed in the African setting as a significant barrier to economic and political progress since it upholds colonial - era practices of exploitation and dependence. Neo - colonialism can manifest itself in a variety of ways, such as unfair commercial practices, restrictions on foreign aid, and political meddling.

For instance, some academics have argued that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have continued neo - colonial relationships by putting strict economic requirements on African nations in exchange for loans and debt relief. (Van de Walle, N. (2018).

These circumstances frequently force African nations to liberalize their economies, cut back on government expenditure, and expose their markets to international competition, all of which have a negative impact on domestic industry and cause volatility in the economy.

Foreign nations have also been charged with meddling in African politics and backing authoritarian governments that serve their interests. (Banful, A. B., & Oppong, J. R. (2016). This may entail offering military assistance and instruction, sponsoring uprisings and coups, or influencing elections in order to elect individuals who favour the West.

Overall, neo - colonialism is a complex and multifaceted concept that highlights the ongoing legacy of colonialism and the continued dominance of Western powers over African politics and economies. Its impact on African development and governance remains a subject of debate and discussion, with some arguing that it perpetuates patterns of exploitation and inequality, while others see it as a necessary component of global economic integration.

3) Structure adjustment

Structural adjustment refers to a set of economic policies that were implemented in the 1980s and 1990s by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These policies were intended to help developing countries overcome economic crises and promote long - term economic growth. (Sardanis, A. (2003).

Structural adjustment programs typically involve a combination of policies such as fiscal austerity, trade liberalization, and privatization of state - owned enterprises. The main objective of these policies was to reduce government spending, open up markets to foreign competition, and promote private sector growth. (Banful, A. B., & Oppong, J. R. (2016).

In the African context, structural adjustment programs have been a source of controversy and criticism. Some scholars argue that these policies have led to economic growth and poverty reduction in some countries, while others argue that they have led to increased inequality, social unrest, and economic stagnation.

Critics of structural adjustment programs argue that they often require developing countries to make painful and socially divisive reforms, such as cutting public spending on health, education, and other social services, and that these reforms can harm vulnerable groups such as the poor and marginalized. Others argue that the privatization of state - owned enterprises can lead to job losses, increased inequality, and environmental degradation. (Di John, J. (2014).

Moreover, some scholars argue that structural adjustment programs were not successful in achieving their stated objectives of promoting long - term economic growth and reducing poverty. Instead, they argue that these policies reinforced the global economic system that perpetuates patterns of inequality and dependency.

Overall, structural adjustment remains a controversial topic in African political economy, with ongoing debates about its impact on economic development and governance. While some see it as a necessary component of economic reform and modernization, others argue that it perpetuates patterns of exploitation and inequality.

4) Africa's political economic

African political economy refers to the study of the relationship between politics and economics in African countries. It is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses a range of topics, including economic development, political governance, social welfare, and international relations.

African political economy has been shaped by a range of historical and contemporary factors, including colonialism, post-colonialism, global economic integration, and regional integration efforts (Ake, C. (1981)).

These factors have influenced the economic policies and political systems of African countries, and have contributed to ongoing debates about the role of the state, the market, and civil society in promoting economic development and political stability. (Mkandawire, T. (2015)).

In recent decades, African political economy has undergone significant changes as many countries have transitioned from authoritarian regimes to democratic governance systems. These changes have led to new debates about the role of democracy in promoting economic development, and about the relationship between civil society, the state, and the private sector. (Van de Walle, N. (2018)).

At the same time, African political economy is also influenced by broader global economic trends and geopolitical considerations. For example, African countries are increasingly being integrated into global markets through trade agreements and foreign direct investment, which can bring both opportunities and challenges. (Stewart, F. (2014)).

Overall, African political economy is a dynamic and evolving field that reflects the complex interplay of economic, political, social, and cultural factors. Its study is critical for understanding the challenges and opportunities facing African countries, and for developing policies and strategies that promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and political stability.

4. Findings

Negative effects of structural adjustment include decreased social services, greater poverty, and economic contraction in African nations where these policies have been applied. Impact of outside parties: Outside parties, such as former colonial powers and growing economic superpowers like China, have had a considerable impact on the political economy of Africa, frequently leading to unequal economic relations. Alternative economic models are required, and it is important for them to put social justice, environmental sustainability, and local empowerment first. Importance of education: Education is a key factor in promoting economic development and social justice in African countries. Climate change impacts: Climate change poses a significant threat to African political economy.

5. Conclusions

Encourage local empowerment: Prioritize local agency and empowerment in African political economy, promoting

grassroots organizations, strengthening democratic institutions, and providing opportunities for local communities to participate in economic decision-making processes.

Promote alternative economic models: Explore and promote alternative economic models that prioritize social justice, environmental sustainability, and local empowerment, such as cooperatives, community-led development, and sustainable agriculture.

Encourage regional integration: African countries should work together to promote regional integration and cooperation, strengthening regional economic communities, promoting cross-border trade, and harmonizing economic policies.

Prioritize education: Prioritize investment in education and promote access to quality education for all in African countries.

Address the impacts of climate change: Promote renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and conservation initiatives to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on African political economy.

Promote social safety nets: Promote social safety nets to protect vulnerable populations and promote inclusive economic growth in African countries.

Address the role of external actors: Explore ways to mitigate the negative impacts of external actors and promote more equitable economic relationships in African political economy.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges posed by neo-colonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes local empowerment, alternative economic models, regional integration, education, climate change mitigation, social safety nets, and equitable economic relationships.

6. Recommendations

- 1) The following suggestions are made for dealing with the problems brought on by neocolonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy:
- 2) Promote local empowerment: In the political economy of Africa, it is critical to place a priority on local agency and empowerment. This may be done through supporting community-based groups, bolstering democratic institutions, and giving local communities a chance to participate in economic decision-making.
- 3) Support alternative economic models: Social justice, environmental sustainability, and local empowerment must be the main focuses of alternative economic models. The use of cooperatives, community-led development, and sustainable agriculture are a few of the techniques that should be researched and supported by policymakers.
- 4) Promote regional collaboration and integration: African nations should collaborate to advance regional cooperation and integration. This may be accomplished

through fostering cross - border commerce, supporting regional economic communities, and harmonizing economic policies.

- 5) Give education a priority. In African nations, education plays a critical role in fostering social justice and economic prosperity. Investment in education should be given first priority, and everyone should have access to high - quality education.
- 6) Address the effects of climate change: The political and economic stability of Africa is seriously threatened by climate change. Promoting projects in the areas of conservation, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy should be a top priority for policymakers when combating the effects of climate change.
- 7) Encourage social safety nets: Policies for structural adjustment have a detrimental effect on communities that are already vulnerable, notably women and children. To safeguard these people and encourage inclusive economic growth, policymakers should place a high priority on creating social safety nets.
- 8) Address the influence of outside parties: One of the major challenges facing African political economy is the influence of other parties, especially former colonial powers and developing economic superpowers like China. Policymakers should look into how to lessen the harmful effects of these actors and encourage more equal business practices.

These suggestions are not all - inclusive, but they offer a place to start when tackling the difficult problems brought on by neocolonialism, structural adjustment, and African political economy. We can contribute to building a more prosperous and fair future for the continent of Africa by cooperating to support sustainable and equitable economic growth throughout the continent.

- Support for healthcare systems: African governments should place a high priority on funding investments in healthcare systems, particularly bolstering staffing and facility capacity. African nations should encourage domestic production of basic commodities and services to lessen their dependency on international supply networks.
- Support for small companies: To help them withstand the pandemic's financial effects, governments should offer assistance to small enterprises, particularly those operating in the unorganized sector.
- Prioritizing vulnerable populations: In their pandemic response efforts, governments should give priority to vulnerable groups including women, children, and the elderly.
- Investment in digital infrastructure has become more important as a result of the epidemic since it makes it possible for people to work remotely and access crucial services. Investment in digital infrastructure should be a top priority for African nations in order to support distant employment and education.
- Encouragement of regional collaboration: The epidemic has brought to light the value of regional cooperation in tackling shared problems. African nations have to cooperate with one another to advance regional cooperation and handle problems brought on by the epidemic.

In conclusion, the COVID - 19 epidemic has significantly impacted the political economy of Africa, causing already - existing economic and social problems to worsen. However, African nations can solve these issues and benefit from regional collaboration and targeted investments.

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