

A BOOK REVIEW OF - NEW SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA

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The book opened with “Conceptual and Theoretical Issues in the Scramble for Africa”. This chapter was written by L. Adele Jinadu, and highlighted various meanings attached to the New Scramble for Africa by the foreign countries notably Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, China, India, Portugal among others. The rush for Africa is to continue the “sphere of influence”. This is different from the Berlin Conference of 1884/85 where colonization and hegemonization of Africa resources including its manpower balkanized. “All that the Conference did was to draw up imaginary lines across Africa to ratify the takeover in order to minimize inter-imperialist conflict over the Scramble for the continents resources”. This formal conference was in fact basically the origin of scrambling for Africa.

No doubt, the current Scramble is being facilitated by the awesome technological superiority of the European powers and an evangelizing, racist and crusading psychology of domination, which assumed the cultural, moral, and racial superiority of Europe over dominated peoples in Africa and Asia. This process refused to recognize “mutuality and reciprocity in respect of the relations between the European powers and African countries”. The author enumerated salient factors that aided the old Scramble: the competition over resources, expansion of markets, the creation of spheres of influence, etc. The Scramble combined materialist explanations with social psychological ones.

He went on to argue that residual import of the Scramble is linked to historical and structural institutions created by the world hegemony i.e. the Multinational corporations “The new globalization is propelled by the transnationalization of finance capital, in search of new markets, and the logic of capital accumulation”. Thus the contemporary globalization have transformed the old globalization,

Which the Scramble exemplified, with new centers, emerging centers, and new peripheries, is, like the old globalization, characterized by structural differentiation and unequal functional integration or interdependence and exchange between metropolitan and dependent or satellite nations, peoples and markets.

The new globalization is characterized with rapid development of technological advancement, world trade regimes and by hegemonizing and universalizing or homogenizing cultural and intellectual institutions “it is in this sense that it makes sense to talk of the New Scramble for Africa”, and “New Imperialism”, to capture some dimensions of the exploiting, hegemonizing and homogenizing character of contemporary globalization”. This facilitated the transfer of surplus from the periphery to the center...” and anchored its

mechanisms on “structural foundations, which are complemented and reinforced by a number of universalizing cultural, legal, political, and social factors, which constitute its ideology”.

He concluded that both the New Scramble and New Imperialism poses serious possibilities for the re-colonization of Africa, for they confer power and influence on the new imperialists, without political responsibility and accountability to us. Globalizing economy poses a big threat to African states.

There is the link between the old colonialism and new the neocolonialism made the second chapter significant. It shows the contacts between the African peoples and the Europeans who through the slave trade, and merchant capital penetrated the continent in search of raw materials and cheap labour. The slave trade transactions around 1673 and 1711 were estimated that the Royal African Company alone transported about 91,000 slaves to the English West Indies. The implication was that African countries were denied the manpower needed for development “Able bodied men were transported to foreign lands to develop them instead of working at home to develop it”.

Each epoch established a formal contact and relationship between the various countries in the continents. These contacts disadvantaged the African peoples and this led to weak states, and weak political leaders through the importation of political and economic, and religions and foreign institutions. This brought about two publics (Ekeh, 1995). The Second World War produced new mechanisms through which the global hegemony laid hands on the continent. Multifinancial institutions such as General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank (WB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were created to compliment colonialism in Africa “it has redefined the rules of the game and through the propagation of neo-liberal ideology defined the new nature of the Scramble for African resources”. This further led to expansion of capitalism where western interests were perpetuated. Therefore, colonialism is not for the people nor is it for their benefits. Thus colonialism imposed capitalist mode of production upon “hitherto pre-capitalist formations. ... It was essentially violent in both nature and operation”.

The post-independence was bedeviled by weak states, poor leadership, and the “African economies continue to be tied to those of the industrialized world”. The continuous attachment of African states to their former colonial masters increased debts rate, asymmetrical in trade and dominations of foreign companies on the continent with “US companies have been granted access to many African countries and have made huge profit which they have in the past repatriated to the US”

The interest of those who control African economy was the concern of Peter Egom. Arguing that the US dominated the economy financial value of the world because “she received the open-ended mandate to go out to the wide-world and inflate herself into global financial and industrial hegemony”. And the open mandate was detrimental to Europe, Africa and other part of the world. Since the Dollar (US currency) has been the sole decider of world economy at large.

However, the new comers into the global market like China argue the author “the fact remain that their financial and industrial fundamentals do say the stark contrary that there is increasing and inexorable economic distress in the first-tier nation of the West”. Bank for African Settlements (BAS) the author enumerated the importance of this institution that

Is equipped to do is to transit any African economy from the asymmetric in economic distribution which goes with the economic policy territory of public sector debt money to the symmetric in economic distribution which emerges when an African economy uses private sector commodity money to drive its economy policy.

BAS is a win-win market development and banking initiative which, under the current floating rate and global two-tier structure of reserve and non-reserve currencies, will steadily grow local content in the reserve currency nations of Europe and North America as well as in the regional pocket of the non-reserve currency nations of the African continent.

Chapter Four was titled “The New Scramble for Africa: A Strategic Policy Framework” written by C. C. Nwoke. He lamented the presence of US presence in the Gulf and USA-AFRICOM, and increasing presence in Africa of the emerging new economies of Asia like China, India, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc. Their presence “is to obtain investment opportunities, markets for their products and services, and raw materials”. And those African leaders especially Nigerian government have remained silence and myopic “highly placed Nigerian officials simply pooh-poohed the seriousness of that development” regarding the US presence in the Gulf of Guinea.

The author articulated nature of first Scramble for Africa that included: slavery; colonization, and neo-colonization. The major forces included Britain, France, Spain, Germany, etc. The purpose included: to capture and control: human resources; markets; natural resources, and cheap labour. These were achieved by the colonial powers. The second or New Scramble for Africa is rested on neo-colonization. The major forces are: North-America and Western Europe, and their multinational corporations, and financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, WTO). Others include: China – Malaysia, India – Indonesia, etc., and South-Korea. As other scholars argued, the aim is to capture and control natural resources, markets, and to get cheap labour for their industries. The solution for the new scramble is revolution, "... with articulating the revolutionary path to re-asserting the economic independence of the countries of Africa".

Chapter Five was titled "Globalization and the Dynamics of External Interests in Africa" written by Osita C. Eze. Like other scholars, the issue of siphoning African natural and gifted resources is what the New Scramble for Africa is stand for. He argued that neo-colonialism has brought about the concept of globalization. For him, globalization is characterized from "its push of free-market economies, liberal democracy, good governance, gender equality and environmental sustainability among other holistic values that could be said to be positive". Relying on the work of Tandon (1998: 2) that globalization encourages "decreasing national control and increasing control over the (internal) economy (of the state) by external players".

The West and others used WB, IMF and UN as global mechanisms to drive the globalization and the new scramble for African resources. However, the benefits and losses due to globalization are managed by undemocratic, opaque and supremacist forces, which defy rational dialogue on most items in the various agreements of the WTO.

Thus, globalization has not reduced global poverty, but aggravating inequality and worsening the conditions of the poor by eroding their incomes, increasing their vulnerability and adding to their disempowerment. Globalization is leading to the disintegration of African economies, exploitation and made African a dumping ground for markets, goods and services.

The author argue that "as globalization increases and capitalism entrenches itself, there is a corresponding depletion of world's natural resources with attention being directed to Africa, hitherto considered inconsequential in the global trade equation". Thus, the New Scramble for Africa is to continue the attachment, exploitation, colonization and neo-colonization by powerful external interests for centuries to come. The author identified three levels of the new scramble. The local compradors, the national governments and global institutions. These instruments according to the author "further deplete Africa's resources".

Democratization of governance and resources, suffice it to say, that democratization in this context means more access for external interests in the exploitation of Africa's resources to the foreign countries.

Globalization did not come from space, it was created by some forces, mainly economic, supported by political, forces and interests". While imbibing this model Africa "must be selective in its embrace of ideas from outside, it should rationally think globally, but must act locally" and "by first ensuring ownership and use of the resources it has been blessed with by nature" and this should be assisted by the reconstruction of Africa is to develop the necessary capacity for exploiting its own resources in such a way that it is able to add value to it before it gets to the global markets".

Chapter six was titled "China-African Relations and the increasing competition for Access to Africa's Natural Resources" written by W. O. Alli. He identified the push and the pull factors that encouraged China-African relationship. African countries are extraordinarily endowed with all manner of solid mineral resources, oil and gas and agricultural production of food and cash crops. There is also the factor of the relatively huge market of potential consumers of products.

The author also discussed strategies which African countries including Nigeria used that attracted China into its markets. These include: the Bureau for Public enterprises (BPE), the Nigeria Investment Promotion Council (NIPC). Essentially the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) became an avenue for the Chinese government to invest up "to \$4 billion in the down-stream petroleum sector of Nigeria..." The pull and the push factors according to the author made

The Chinese are all over the continent with billions of dollars already invested in different sectors, particularly the oil sector, construction, infrastructure (including power and water), healthcare, defense and others. Accordingly, a combination of these push and pull factors have enabled China to become such a visible player in the economics of several African states thus enriching the relations between China and Africa (111).

Chapter Seven “The New Scramble for Africa-China Engagement” was written by Adegboyega C. Ariyo. Like other scholars the author related relationship between the China and African based on the availability of raw materials and markets for the finished product that necessitated the rush for Africa by the Chinese government and others. The author enumerated various engagements that the Chinese government had entered into with various governments in the continent which according to the author “Africa would have more to offer the world to sustain the industrialized world, if she fail to industrialize. Thus, Africa “needs to make more friends and encourage the old one to keep faith with Africans’ dictated pace of development”.

Chapter Eight “Nigeria-China Relations: Sources and Patterns of External Interests” was written by Ogaba Oche. The author mentioned five principles, namely: respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful co-existence”. These principles opened relationship with Africa society.

Therefore, China’s role in the continent is distinguished from the Western societies. China has visited African countries and established economic ties. This is different from recolonization tendencies, because “48 African states and some 1500 business person hosted in Beijing”. Chinese President Hu Jintao has made a multi-billion dollar development package for African countries.

He concluded that China interest in Nigeria is neither positive nor negative, but warm that “Nigeria’s national interest should carefully be factored into her relations with China, with the aim of maximizing long term strategic benefits”. Arguing, China offers as competing developmental model to that of the Western nations. Thus, China and Nigeria relations

Presents itself as an alternatives to the neo-liberal consensus because Chinese aid comes without political strings attached and because China concentrates investment in infrastructure and human capital rather than primary products, and addressing developmental problems that are not solved by market fundamentalism.

The book presented the nature of the New Scrambling for African resources by all and sundry that is the foreign governments, multinationals, and financial institutions. This is because our scholars holistically visited historical antecedences of colonialism which started with the Missionary mission to slave trade, from the raw resources to formal colonization as depicted by the Berlin Conference. The colonization metamorphosed into imperialism and graduated into neo-colonialism and globalization.

The insatiable of New World Order to answer all the questions in the Western interests, despite the fact there is globalization which goes with trade liberalism, privatization and commercialization has not sufficiently solve their industrialization quest and made the case for New Scramble for African and human resources respectively as another avenue to relaunch their political hegemony on the continent.

The former scrambling according to Professor Jinadu devastated and relegated African countries to the peripheral levels. Distortions in our political, economic, cultural social, is what has been described as “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa” hegemony (Rodney, 2005: 16). Thus, the distortion fitted into Coleman’s work. He argues that for “Hundreds of thousands of the most virile members of their (Africans) race were physically withdrawn from African society over a period of 400 years” (1958: 41). Rodney in commented in a questionable manner that “what would have been Britain’s level of development had millions of them been put to work as slaves outside of their homelands over a period of four centuries? Furthermore, assuming that those wonderful fellows could never never never have been slaves, one could speculate further on the probable effects on their development had continental Europe been enslaved” (2005: 116).

The New Scramble for Africa is both natural and non-natural resources. Some scholars agreed that this will benefit Africa, while others have countered the argument insisting that China in Nigeria for instance meant well. These scholars agreed that what African countries and Nigeria inclusive should do is to ensure that they are part and parcel of the new scheming “she therefore needs to make more friends and encourage

the old ones to make more friends and encourage the old ones to keep faith with African's dictated pace of development".

Thus, our scholars advised our political leaders, decision-makers, entrepreneurs should be on board and ensure that decolonization cum de-neo-colonization, technical know-how, home grown technological development, good governance through democracy, transparency, accountability should be an anthem on which African countries can be saved from the Second Scramble for African resources including its teeming population because on like first Scramble when our resources and people were taken away. The new Scramble may be disastrous, if these countries and their institutions lay 'total' siege on the continent just as the former scramble when Africa was balkanized into pieces. This balkanization is still a parasite today.

Therefore, the book is a warning signal to every one of us in Africa to beware, and take heed

In its embrace of ideas from outside, it should rationally think globally, but must act locally. The continent has suffered enough, and must begin to reclaim its self-worth, by first ensuring ownership and use of the resources it has been blessed with by nature (p. 100). "an opportunity to take charge of its affairs and unlike during the old Scramble when Africans had no say and had less capacity to protect their interest.

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