



MU-TAJOP



Vol. 1 No. 1 February, 2022

Maiden Edition

Madonna University
Thought and Action
Journal of Philosophy

...liberating the world with reasoning

A publication of Department of Philosophy Madonna University, Nigeria
thoughtandactiontajp@gmail.com

**Colonialism,
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Abstract

There is no gainsaying, that most African societies that have been victims of slavery, colonialism and imperialism have consequently remained underdeveloped. Discussions on freedom and agency from developing countries perspective continue to highlight the historical realities, especially colonialism, as being the cause of underdevelopment and backwardness of African polities. In many instances, African leaders or better still, African political actors place less emphasis on endogenous socio-political issues (e.g., corruption, bad leadership) which have negative consequences on self-determination, progress and development, but on the other hand, provide effective guard to crime, corruption, levels of poverty and social apathy. The interest in this research effort is a focus on how individual and collective moral agencies have resorted to scapegoating to avoid taking responsibility for state failure in Africa. Thus, this paper posits that individual and collective scapegoating proffers an alternative perspective ~~onto~~ to taking moral responsibility by individuals and groups in the polity. Essentially, therefore, scapegoating places the blame elsewhere other than on the self or on one's group for one's actions or inactions towards the stagnation of the state. This form of scapegoating may have been the derivative of a social coping mechanism as blame shifting to avoid moral responsibility. Therefore, this paper, through qualitative analytic method, argues that leadership moral responsibility rather than scapegoating, can only be game changer to the growth of African society.

Key Words: Colonialism, scapegoatism, moral, failure, underdevelopment, Africa.

Introduction

The complexity and the perplexity that most enormously perturb the human society with more emphasis on African polities continually become more obscure to analyze. Thus, the quest to pinpoint, locate and appropriately identify the real agents of negative political and socio-cultural change and development within and outside the African polities has become very imperative in order to morally hold these agents responsible. Many philosophers, social scientists and political analysts, especially of African descent, are divided in their opinion of the causes of the backwardness, underdevelopment

and poverty that is replete in Africa continent. Most persons blame it on the interference and activities of the Europeans, which include slave trade, colonialism and purportedly, neocolonialism, (Woddis, 1967, p.14) while others blame the African woes on bad leadership and followership. The philosophical evaluation of where the blame should be placed upon becomes a question of either believing or using the scapegoating theory to justify the anomalies, predicaments and underdevelopment rampaging the African polities or to argue that African leaders and Africans themselves need to take responsibility for their odiferous and stagnating situation. It is along this line, that it is pertinent to know that decisions by human beings play a key role in political analysis, as they involve the exercise of both power and moral responsibility. Decisions may be made by individuals, such as the heads of governments, agencies, or other organizations, or by collectivities, such as legislatures, higher courts, or electorates. Decisions of interest can be singular, occur in a series of related choices, or form a more continuous process of re-evaluation and adjustment. This raises a lot of question seeking answers. Who is responsible for African development and Underdevelopment? To what extent can we apportion blame to the Western Countries in the face of African predicaments? Are the African leaders the ones to be held solely responsible for the positive and negative trends in African polities? Can we attribute any form of moral responsibility to the political agents? Is there any psychological relief gained in scapegoating individuals and other group for Africa's woes and predicaments? What are the factors necessary for an agent to be viewed as morally responsible? Is scapegoating an avenue of absconding from moral responsibility?

In his Magnus opus Walter Rodney(1982) assertively argued that Europe is to be blamed for the underdevelopment and political cum human predicaments within the African continent. On the other hand, Chinua Achebe (1983) placed the blame on the ineptitude of African Leaders and eloquently asserts that bad leadership is the bane of progressive development. Meanwhile, it is against this background that the researcher seeks to critically analyze the concept of scapegoating and moral responsibility in African polities.

The Concept of Scapegoatism

The term 'scapegoat' actually has its origin amongst the Hebrews of the Old Testament scriptures, more specifically, in the book of *Leviticus* (6, 8-10), where God commanded for the provision of two goats. The one of the two shall be burdened with the sins of the Jewish People, while the other shall be killed as an offering to God. The former was to be sent to the desert or wilderness possibly for the purpose of placating that evil spirit. This confers on her the status of a scapegoat. Scapegoat because she looks a bit luckier than the other that was sacrificed. However, the scapegoat is in a deeper trouble for being sent to the wilderness. So, her escape is only pyrrhic because some understanding of wilderness is "an area that is empty or barren; a place or situation that makes somebody feel confused, overwhelmed, or desolate" (Encarta Dictionaries). Because of the situation she is pushed into, the scapegoat definitely will die or where she survives, will know no progress.

The use of scapegoats pervades history and is usually varied involving many kinds of animals, as well as human beings. In ancient Greece, human scapegoats (*pharmakoi*) were used to mitigate a plague or other calamity or even to prevent such ills. The Jonah Nineveh encounter was another form of scapegoating where Jonah had to be sacrificed to appease a sea billow threatening to drown everybody in a ship. And of course, Christianity reflects this notion in its doctrine of justification and in its belief that Jesus Christ was the God-man who died to atone for the sins of all mankind. By extension, a scapegoat has come to mean any group or individual that innocently bears the blame of others.

Scapegoat theory refers to the tendency to blame someone else for one's own problems, a process that often results in feelings of prejudice toward the person or group that one is blaming. Scapegoating serves as an opportunity to explain failure or misdeeds, while maintaining one's positive self-image. A person may be using others as scapegoat and may end up hating them as a result. Scapegoating refers to a process by which a person or group is unfairly blamed for something that they did not do and, as a result, the real source of the problem is either never seen or purposefully ignored (Masolo, 1994). Though Rene Girard thinks scapegoatism is as result of mimetic desire. Girard has developed a mimetic theory according to which human beings imitate each other, and this eventually gives rise to rivalries and violent conflicts. For him, such conflicts are partially solved by a scapegoat mechanism (Andrade,n.d., para. 1). In the apt words of Andrade (n.d.),

When mimetic rivalries accumulate, tensions grow ever greater. But, that tension eventually reaches a paroxysm. When violence is at the point of threatening the existence of the community, very frequently a bizarre psychosocial mechanism arises: communal violence is all of the sudden projected upon a single individual. Thus, people that were formerly struggling, now unite efforts against someone chosen as a scapegoat. Former enemies now become friends, as they communally participate in the execution of violence against a specified enemy (§ 3, para. 2).

Meanwhile, sociologists have documented that scapegoating often occurs between groups when a society is plagued by long-term economic problems or when resources are scarce. Scapegoating of one group by another has been used throughout history, and still today, as a way to incorrectly explain why certain social, economic, or political problems exist and harm the group doing the scapegoating. Some sociologists claim that groups that scapegoat occupy a low socio-economic status in society and have little access to wealth and power. The basis of their claim is that these people are often experiencing prolonged economic insecurity or poverty, and come to adopt shared outlooks and beliefs that have been documented to lead to prejudice and violence. According to Girard cited by Adas (1989), owing to human nature, envy gradually builds up in a society until it reaches a tipping point, at which order and reason cede to mob rule, chaos, and violence. To quell this 'madness of the crowds' which poses an existential threat to the society, an exposed or vulnerable person or group is singled out as a sink for all the bad feeling, and the bad feeling bred from the bad feeling(p.45).

The idea of colonialism

Colonialism is the direct and overall domination of one country by another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power. A typical example is the direct and overall domination of Nigeria by Britain between 1900-1960. The first objective of colonialism is political domination. Its second objective is to make possible the exploitation of the colonized country. The logic of colonialism is, therefore, a power relation between the colonizer and the colonized. In the said relation, the colonizer is perceived as wielding a superior power to overshadow her colonial other perceived to be the less powerful in the equation. However, what has been of paramount importance has been the justification for colonialism in the first instance. Equally, there has been varied opinion concerning the legitimacy of colonialism both among political and moral philosophers alike. But cultural experts, especially of Third World hue, are united in condemning colonialism and regard same as aberration to freedom and development. When we talk of colonialism in Africa we mean a

phenomenon which took place between 1800-1960s. It is a phenomenon which is part and parcel of another phenomenon called imperialism. In fact, colonialism is a direct form of imperialism. This is why it is often said that “all colonialism is imperialism, but not all imperialism is colonialism”(Nkrumah, 1965, p.196). Colonialism began as a result of changes in the mode of production in Europe (for example, the emergence of industrial revolution). The industrial revolution ushered in a new process of production in place of the earlier slave-based economy. The slave trade and slavery have by this time fulfilled their basic function of providing the needed primitive capital (Fanon, 1967,p.24). The quest for the investment of the accumulated capital and the need for raw materials led to the colonization of Africa.

The “civilization” project of colonization was launched and was spearheaded by the Christian missionaries who had the Bible in one hand while they use the other hand to pillage the resources of the colonized for their home governments. Little wonder a great many scholars have tried to see in colonialism not merely the proclaimed civilizing mission but an essential content of economic exploitation.(Babbitt &S. Campbell, 1999, pp.157-186)

The era of colonialism was properly called the age of imperial expansionism. Colonies were sought and annexed not merely for economic expansion but for the “libido of political prowess that was the situation in the early 1870’s. Thus, according to Oguejiofor, (2001) African territories became the target for compensation of France when she lost Algeria. Nations were gaining and losing territories. One loses here and gets compensated there. In this power equation, the weak African nations were susceptible to plunder and annexation. The question we now wish to ask is, what factors made it possible for the direct colonization of Africa by European powers? In other words, what strategies did the colonialists use to maintain their direct economies and political domination of African states or territories during the period of colonial rule of the continent? In responding to these crucial questions, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) are of the view that “the colonialists used a number of methods and strategies to compel Africans to submit to colonialism and colonial administration. These included the use of conquest, forced labour, taxation, monetization of the economy, and payment of low wages” (p. 48). Faced with the evidence of European exploitation of Africa, many bourgeois writers would concede, at least partially, that colonialism was a system which functioned well in the interests of the metropolis. However, they would then urge that another issue to be resolved is how much Europeans did for Africans, and that it is necessary to draw up a ‘balance sheet of colonialism’. On that balance sheet, they place both the ‘credits’ and the ‘debits’, and quite often conclude that the good outweighed the bad.(Woddis, 1967,p.20)

Meanwhile, Rodney (1982) weighed in to argue that:

After all, the statistics which show that Africa today is underdeveloped are the statistics representing the state of affairs at the end of colonialism. For that matter, the figures at the end of the first decade of African independence in spheres such as health, housing and education are often several times higher than the figures inherited by the newly independent governments. It would be an act of the most brazen fraud to weigh the paltry social amenities provided during the colonial epoch against the exploitation, and to arrive at the conclusion that the good outweighed the bad (p.112).

Impact of Colonialism in Africa

The major impact of colonialism in African is that it brought about the under-development of African territories in many different ways. It is usually argued in favour of colonialism that it brought western education and hence western civilization to the shores of Africa which by implication is a positive contribution towards African development. This argument will appear to be true on the surface level or superficially, but if it is subjected to critical analysis, it will reveal the hollowness or emptiness of colonial education which is partially responsible for the present African underdevelopment (Césaire, 2000,p.23). The colonial education was not rooted in African culture and therefore could not foster any meaningful development within the African environment because it had no organic linkage.

Furthermore, colonial education was essentially literary; it had no technological base and therefore antithetical to real or industrial development. The poor technological base of most of the present day African states, which has been responsible for their underdevelopment stems from their poor foundation of education laid by the colonialists. Colonial education essentially aimed at training clerks, interpreters, produce inspectors, artisans, etc., which would aid their exploitation of the Africa's rich resources.

Colonial education did not aim at industrialization of African territories or at stimulating technological development within the African environment. Colonial education brought about distortion and disarticulation in African indigenous pattern of education which was rooted in African technology. Before fully embracing colonial education, Africans were good technologists, advancing at their own rates with the resources within their environment. For example, Africans were good sculptors, carvers, cloth weavers, miners, blacksmiths, etc. (Chinweizu, 1978, p.17) They were able to provide and satisfy the technological need of the various African societies. The introduction of colonial education made Africans to abandon their indigenous technological skills and education in preference to one which mainly emphasizes reading and writing. This was the prelude or foundation for the present poor technological base of African states which has perpetuated their underdevelopment. As we know, education that is not deeply rooted in a people's culture and environment cannot bring about any meaningful technological advancement. This has aptly been shown in the unsuccessful attempt at the so-called technological transfer, which is more of a myth than reality.

Another important impact of colonialism in Africa is the disarticulation of their economy. Colonialism distorted African pattern of economic development in many different ways. There was disarticulation in production of goods, markets, traders, transport, provision of social amenities and pattern of urbanization etc. The colonialists introduced a pattern of international division of labour which was to the disadvantage of Africans (Ebegbulem,2012). They assigned to Africa the role of production of raw materials and primary products for use by their industries at home. Africans were not allowed nor encouraged to go into manufacturing. The only industries Africans were encouraged to build were those that would facilitate in the processing of the raw materials for export. The African raw materials were bought at a very low price while manufactured goods from abroad were sold at expensive price. This situation accounted for the impoverishment of most Africans. There was also disarticulation in the type of goods produced by Africans. According to Rodney (1982),

The argument so far has been aimed at showing that benefits from colonialism were small and they were not gifts from the colonialists, but rather fruits of African labour and resources for the most part. Indeed, what was called 'the development of Africa' by the colonialists was a cynical short-hand expression for 'the

intensification of colonial exploitation in Africa to develop capitalist Europe' (p.351).

The colonialists compelled Africans to concentrate in the production of goods meant for Africans were not encouraged to produce those goods required by the local population. This made many Africans to abandon the production of food items required to feed the teeming and growing population. The effect of this was food shortage and escalation in food prices. The present day situation where Africans now import their food is a carry-over from colonialism. The point being stressed here is that colonialism distorted the satisfaction of local needs in terms of food production and other requirements in preference to production and satisfaction of foreign needs especially the industries. According to Rodney (1982), colonialism was not merely a system of exploitation, but one whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profits made in Africa to the so called home land. From a dependency perspective, repatriation of profits represents a systematic expatriation of the surplus values that was created by African labour using African resources. Hence the development of Europe can be viewed as part of the same dialectical processes that underdeveloped Africa.

In other words, the domination of Europe over Africa retarded the economic development of the continent. For five running centuries, Europe capitalized on its encounter with Africa. The above situation is succinctly expressed by Rodney (1982) whose analysis of the relationship between Europe and Africa is that during colonialism, Europe organized herself, accumulated capital gained from her colonies in Africa, shrewdly invested the surplus in productive economy, and steadfastly increasing national wealth and riches for its people. This is the reason why Africa was and continues to be dominated economically as well as politically by external centers of power. Most noticeable here is the economic, political and cultural dependence of the continent upon America and Europe (Chinweizu, 1978,p.3).Colonialism had a devastating effect or impacts on the African colonies. It is responsible for the present situation explained by Walter Rodney in, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Also, this fact was vividly articulated in Chinweizu, *The West and the Rest of Us*. Colonialism introduced a dichotomy between the centre and the periphery nations. The periphery nations are exploited by the centre nations. The periphery nations produce raw materials which are expropriated by the centre nations. Africa is periphery nation as a result of her colonization. African colonies produced raw materials which were expropriated by the colonialists (centre nations). Furthermore, colonialism introduced a dual economic structure within the African economy. It also brought about disarticulation of African economy, education, trade, market, transport and currency institution. Colonialism made African colonies dependent by introducing a monocultural economy for the territories (Ocheni&Nwankwo, 2012). It also dehumanized African labour force and traders. It forced Africans to work in colonial plantations at very low wages and displaced them from their lands. Similarly, the business of African traders or middlemen were taken over from them and controlled by the colonialists.

Colonialism encouraged and intensified class struggle, tribalism and ethnicity within the African colonies. These were strategies introduced by the colonialists in order to perpetuate or prolong their rule and domination of African territories. An example is the British colonial policy of "Divide and Rule" in Nigeria (Ejimofofor, 1987). In the same vein, colonialism shaped both the economic and political structure of African colonies to be in line with the need of the metropolis. It ensured that African economic and political structures both in form and content serve the interest of their home government (European powers). Colonialism therefore, in all intents and purposes was a disservice to Africa.

Bad Leadership or Colonialism as a Scapegoat?

The power of leading can be exercised positively for public good, generally seen as good leadership, or negatively, which leads to underdevelopment, depression and conflict – otherwise, simply called bad leadership. When we speak of bad leadership, it is easy to point to obvious indexes and factors which are regarded as the cause for bad leadership like corruption. Hence, Leadership is a necessary factor in every sphere of life, especially at the political level where decisions and actions affect the entire members of a society. Leadership and development, as defined by the *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, is the “power of leading and the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced and stronger”. And for us, for development to be possible, leadership must go with certain moral tinge, obligation and imperative. This guarantees a leader taking responsibility for leadership, and where there is a failure, to take the blame where and when necessary. This is in a bid to distance scapegoating as an alternative to moral responsibility in governance.

The exposition of colonialism and its impact on Africa above, is putting the blame game for African underdevelopment squarely on Western interference on African affairs – economy, culture and social existence. However, more the 60 years after independence, one wonders why colonialism would still be seen as a scapegoat from our inactivity. Does it mean apart from colonialism and its appurtenances, as exogenous factors, no endogenous factors can be responsible for our predicament? Who takes the blame for the endogenous factors when they are present?

Thus, there is a strong opinion that the major reason why African continent is tagged as the most underdeveloped in the World is the fact that many Africa leaders in general and Nigeria in particular, had at one time or the other made verbal commitments to the principles and objectives of good governance and official code of conducts, but lack capacity or political will to implement them. It is important to note that historical, political, economic and institutional factors had been the bane of African development since independence coupled with the hydra headed monster of corruption. According to Oguejiofor (2000), lack of development in Africa can be traced back to the lukewarm attitude towards developmental plans in the continent, as there were no major zeal and enthusiasm regarding development from the leaders(p.33). And according to Ifeanyi Menkiti (2001) following Basil Davidson, the failure of African leaders to “abide by an ancient moral order”, is responsible for the failure witnessed in Africa (pp. 134-135). Thus, Mismanagement of resources in Africa is one of the major factors that made African continent the poorest among all the continents in the World. Thus, lack of improved governance and the absence of transparency, as well as taxation issues, were identified as factors by the Panel of 10 prominent African figures led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan for the loss of revenues from mineral wealth. Proceeds from natural resources in Africa are not transparent; therefore it's uncountable, because the people have no idea of how much money that was derived from whatever transactions carried out by their government. (Mmoneke, 2020) With all these, one still wonders why there is constant reference to colonialism as perhaps the sole source of the African predicament.

However, a quick response to justify scapegoating colonialism is that colonialism laid the foundation for bad leadership in Africa. This is because, at the ‘end’ of colonization, the Colonial masters handed over power and machineries of government to those unwanted and pliants who happened to be the ‘educated’ ones, but educated in their image. Remember that the said education was mere ability to speak and write European language. Meaning that our African modern society started with our empty brains that happened to be educated at that time whereas the right ones filled with wisdom, leadership skills and well accepted by the people were relegated to the background (Fanon, 1982). Here comes

the reason for poor leadership and underdevelopment in Africa: while the Western societies started their modern civilization with their best hands, the African societies started with the least expected persons. This has remained a debatable issue, with viable reasons littered on each side of the argument.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Western capitalist nations developed through processes that underdeveloped Africa (Rodney, 1982 and Chinweizu, 1978). It is true that the relationship between colonized and the colonizers was nothing but parasitic. Economic wealth was transferred from the colonized to the colonizer. Thus, one can safely argue that Western imperial powers set the stage for Africa's underdevelopment. The attraction of the colonial masters was over and above every other thing economic. Underlying colonial economic relations and institutions are evolving beliefs or ideologies that make possible the permanence and reproduction of colonialism to which one can argue has taken a new turn in the contemporary time, in form of neocolonialism. Despite this, however, one is taken aback when African scholars continue to heap the blame for Africa's underdevelopment on colonialism. This, effectively, creates a scapegoat of colonialism even when African leaders bear a large chunk of the problem of underdevelopment through their inability to steer the ship of the state to the right direction. This is why Achebe (1983) is convinced that the problem with Nigeria is simply the problem of leadership.

Africans must ask themselves tough questions, and provide brutally honest answers. They cannot keep blaming these imperial powers forever. For how long can they hide behind the finger of colonialism? The independence of African states from colonial rule began from the middle part of the 20th century signaled strong prospects and hope for a better and prosperous continent. However, that hope never stood the true test of time. Today that hope is dashed/ shattered by bad leadership, corruption and mismanagement. That, after decades of independence, Africa is still home to majority of the world's poor irrespective of the availability of abundant human and material resources. The continent is, unarguably, one of the most endowed and fertile regions of the world and the richest continent on earth in terms of natural resources, but today, the image of the world's most resourced rich continent has been damaged by corruption, mismanagement and bad/inept leadership. The corruption level of many African leaders is beyond imagination. The continent's resources are personalized at the expense of the people. Using Nigeria as a case study, we see that abject poverty, inadequate health facilities and unemployment pervade the land and these are borne out of the failure on the part of leadership, mismanagement and corruption (Oguejiofor, 2000,p.35). It is one thing to fail and completely another thing to own up the failure. It requires serious moral rectitude to own up failures in African polity. When a leader understands and owns up his/her shortcoming, knowing where and how to make amend becomes easy. Some scholars on development have attributed the lack of a national identity as the biggest threat to development. We must develop an authentic ideology that we can use to further the development agenda and consolidate our independence. As Africa's young generation it is our responsibility to shape and develop this ideology. An ideology that must address Africa's challenges: income inequality, impoverishment and insecurity. We must always seek to improve the lives of ordinary citizens and not engage in an orgy of intellectual idealism.

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