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REVISITING AFRICA'S UNDER-DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF THE DEPENDENCY THEORY

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Abstract

The paper examines African development through the lens of the dependency theory. It asks if Africa is still socio-economically and politically dependent on its former colonisers. Employing a qualitative research approach, where a literature review was undertaken, the paper reveals that indeed, Africa is still very much dependent on former colonisers for its political and economic direction. Additionally, Africa has failed to break free from colonial domination not only because African leaders have become complacent with the status quo but because of the unorthodox intervention by former colonisers in the affairs of Africa. Consolidating the spirit of Pan-Africanism will contribute towards Africa breaking free of colonial chains.

Keywords: Dependency; Africa, Growth; Colonisation

Introduction

For African countries, the periods of decolonisation (1945 and 1960) were meant to consolidate four key elements, namely, freedom, interdependence, Pan-Africanism and continental integration, and the reintegration of Africa into the global political and, by extension, financial system. It is unsurprising therefore that these periods were met with feelings of jubilation throughout the African continent. This signalled a new era in African development, where African countries could work together to consolidate development, collaborate on solving continental problems and, more importantly, have one voice with regards to projecting African interests within the global political systems (van den Boogaard 2017, 17). Former colonisers joined Africa in this jubilation and reiterated the importance of a free and stable Africa. However, soon this jubilation turned into misery.

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Conflicts, external intervention by former colonisers into the affairs of Africa, the inability of African leaders to put the people first, corruption, and poor governance became a parasite for a decolonised Africa. Pointing this out, Shafiqur et al (2019, 10) contended that in reality colonisers had never really left; while they left in their physical form, their ideological grounding remained. For him, since independence, colonisers have both indirectly and directly intervened in the affairs of African countries, especially exerting undue influence on African leaders. Therefore, although colonialism was the end of physical occupation it was not the end of European domination. Today, Africa is not only at the mercy of former colonisers, but other countries (Russia, China, USA) have since joined the scramble for Africa (Besenyő, 2019). Africa, with its abundant resources, has failed to spur inclusive development; rather, conflict driven by the need to control these resources and the scramble to extract them by foreign powers has compounded Africa's developmental woes. However, Africa's political and economic misfortunes are not isolated incidents. As pointed out by Gathara (2019), Africa was never going to be free in its totality. While colonialism may have ended, Africa was too lucrative to be removed from the grip of former colonisers. Therefore, with the above in mind, and employing the assumptions of the dependency theory, the paper examines two important elements (the economic and political sphere) in its quest to understand Africa's dependency conundrum. The guiding research question was to understand the extent to which Africa is still socio-economically and politically dependent on former colonisers (taking into account new players in the scramble for Africa) and whether this has held back economic development and, by extension, political freedom.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted to enable the use of secondary data literature. The purpose of this approach was to contextualise the understanding of the efforts undertaken by African states to break free from colonial chains. The research methodology was undertaken by reviewing and contextualising the literature regarding the topic of the paper. At this point it should be noted that there have been many studies undertaken to understand the increasing emphasis being put on the need for Africa to break free from its colonial dependence, and how Africa can go about achieving this, given the challenges that the continent is likely to experience. Some studies have also gone on to look at the link between Africa's

socio-economic and political dependence and its continued exploitation and underdevelopment. With the abundance of literature on the topic it was felt that the paper would have sufficient information to explore and draw conclusions. Furthermore, taking into account the historical understanding and debates regarding colonialism, neo-colonialism and Africa's socio-economic independence, the research approach was deemed adequate in attempting to answer the guiding research questions.

Theoretical Perspective

The paper employed the dependency theory to explain and answer the guiding research question. The theory was first proposed in the late 1950s by the Argentine economist and statesman Raúl Prebisch who was concerned with how states developed over time at the expense of others, often through exploitation and unfair trade practices (Bracarense 2012, 377). Subsequently, proponents of the dependency theory, namely Dos Santos (1970) and Bodenheimer (1971), argued that the development of some states resulted in the underdevelopment of others and this then created a sense of dependency. The theory is rooted in the philosophical grounding of Marxist schools of thought, i.e. globalisation, the spread of market capitalism, and the exploitation of cheap labour and resources in return for the obsolete technologies of the developed world (Vincent 2008, 58-60). Dependency theorists argue that the developed western world relies on a division of labour between the rich 'core' countries and poor 'peripheral' countries. Over time, the core countries will exploit their dominance over an increasingly marginalised periphery. Dos Santos (1970, 231), describes dependence as a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected. Therefore, the concept of dependence in the international system can be used as a measure for explaining global inequalities. Proponents of the dependency theory see structures and processes of the world economy as having inbuilt biases leading to relations of dependency which directly cause the underdevelopment in the Third world (Elisabeth 2016). The inequality can be explained in terms of dependency relations in trade, finance and technology. The assumptions of the theory were further highlighted by Vimercati (2019), citing Rodney (1972), who contended that the colonisation of Africa was not only about resources but also about states, through post-colonialism, remaining dependent on European-owned capital and investments. The winds

of change of the late 50s and 60s had liberated most of Africa, but it is hard not to observe how in a post-colonial era Africa has become socio-economically dependent on its former colonisers. Politicians from across the continent have consolidated calls for collective efforts on the need to break the chains of colonialism and imperialism, and to promote the entrenchment of Pan-African solidarity and socialism (William 1984, 225-227). Such calls were further strengthened by the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was meant to guide Africa's post-colonial integration. However, the OAU came at a time where the world was experiencing significant geopolitical changes, including the fall of the Berlin wall, the demise of the Soviet Union and the global spread of liberalisation and market capitalism, meaning that its impact became diluted by these events. Gathara (2019) notes that Africa was and continues to be dominated economically as well as politically by external centres of power. Most noticeable here is the economic, political and cultural dependence of the continent upon America and Europe. Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012, 47-49) argue that because colonialism was bent on repatriating the profits made in Africa to the so-called homeland, 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. Nevertheless, Elisabeth (2016) argues that the holistic application of the dependency theory and its categorisation of countries according to "Core-Periphery" or "North-South" distorts the individual gains made by individual countries to break free from the dependency cycle and perpetuates ethnocentric frames of analysis. The problem with these categorisations is that they are inherently ethnocentric, because the "Periphery" or the "South" is characterised by socio-economic and political backwardness, as measured against Western values and standards, and this simply should not be ignored (Elisabeth, 2016). Therefore, one has to question whether distinguishing the world by providing such categorisations is useful for analysing global inequalities. Needless to say, as Matunhu (2011, 68-70) argues, Africa's poverty is not natural but an engineered position. For him, the role of colonial education exacerbated the underdevelopment of Africa. The Missionary education curriculum was the main instrument used to destroy the pre-capitalist social structures in Africa. The education system brought about the mental impoverishment of Africans by de-emphasising the importance of African values and culture while at the same time glorifying that of the Europeans

(Matunhu 2011, 69). This process of brainwashing Africans created fertile ground for the exploitation of the continent's human and non-human resources.

The dependency theory has not been short of criticism. Firstly, Elisabeth (2016) argued that the problem of an overall encompassing theory in explaining global inequalities is that it may lead to generalisations without considering the specific histories and development of individual countries. Secondly, the main problem of using dependency theory as an overall encompassing premise for making sense of global inequalities is that by providing categories such as "Core-Periphery" or "North-South" (Elisabeth, 2016). Secondly, it is argued that dependency theory fails to explain a number of developments and draws wrong conclusion in several cases. It would seem that the theory is a partial explanation of existing inequalities at best. Perceiving these criticisms, however, African scholars and politicians have contended that the assumptions of the theory are a reflection of the developmental challenges that Africa is facing. The debate has resonated around Africa's socio-economic dependence, and the following section of the paper discusses the details.

On Economic dependence

The political discourse in Africa has lamented how colonialism created Africa's economic dependence on its former colonial masters. Shedding further light on this discourse, this section discusses the concept of trade and foreign aid.

Trade

The increase in manufactured goods which incorporate technological content accounts for much of global trade, but for Africa, the continued reliance on colonial-era "extractivist" development models has marginalised the continent with regard to the global economic and trading environment (Hippolyte, 2019). Furthermore, it has increased the continent's exposure to global volatility and risks associated with long-term deterioration of commodity terms of trade—the ratio between a country's export prices and its import prices.

Africa's problem is not just that it trades too little with the world, but that it trades too little with itself. Africa's economic geography is still much as it was in the colonial era. Knowles (2016) contends that according to UN figures, only a tenth of African countries' exports go to the rest of the continent. The equivalent figure for the European Union is 60 per cent. The question, therefore, has been what these

statistics reflect in terms of trade dependency. For Zartman (1976), fifteen years after most of Africa received its independence, Europe was still present and influential in the continent. The European presence has, however, shifted from being overt and direct to subtler forms. While military occupation and sovereign control over African territories have all but been eliminated, political influence, economic preponderance, and cultural conditioning remain. Today, the inability of African governments to invest in new infrastructure and to bring down colonial borders and raise the level of connectedness, even between neighbours, has resulted in just about all trade routes leading to Europe. Echoing the above, Hippolyte (2019) noted that the bulk of African countries are still dependent on exports to former colonisers – a situation made possible by the fact that colonial Africa's infrastructure was originally designed as feeder routes to largely serve European markets. As Ngwenya (1984, 74) observes, colonialism did not build infrastructure to serve Africans, rather infrastructure was built to ensure the easy movement of resources needed to fuel European industrialisation. When African leaders ascended to power they consolidated the very same colonial infrastructure systems that were used to ship raw materials, hence missing the opportunity of replacing these systems. However, I also argue that colonialism impacted the economic conditions of contemporary Africa. When Africans took over, colonisers had already entrenched policies that would ensure that Africa remained within their sphere of influence. For example, even after independence, the financial power of West Africa was controlled by France, and this had a profound impact on the development of the region.

Additionally, colonialism turned the continent to producing primary products and cash crops as well as raw materials which have no extra market value. This, in turn, caused unequal trade relations (Farah & Mazongo, 2011, 3). As a result of the exploitation of necessary resources, the continent has been forced to rely on the importation of foreign products, resulting in the inability to develop its agricultural sector. Former colonisers, despite their repeated pledges to work with Africa as equal partners, have not refrained from imposing unfavourable trade policies on the continent. Highlighting this, Grain (2017, 2-4) notes that since 2002, African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries have negotiated a reciprocal free trade agreement known as the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU). While the EPA has been touted as the key to economic stability for Africa, it is, in fact, an unfair

agreement that is anchored in a colonial framework which perpetuates trade inequalities and the exploitation of Africa. The EPA has faced continued opposition from across the ACP countries, not least because of its devastating effect on small-scale farmers, but also because African countries are fighting to regain control over their resources and protect their markets from the flooding of cheap EU processed foods, along with pesticides and genetically modified organisms (Grain, 2017, 2-4). This is just one of many examples where colonial trade principles are aimed at further exerting control over African trade patterns. Apart from former European colonisers, Africa has become dependent on other countries that have joined the scramble for the resources of the continent. Hippolyte (2019) notes that 90 percent of Africa's exports to China are concentrated on natural resources while imports are more diversified, including manufactured goods, transport equipment, and machinery, to name a few. For Simplice and Aminkeng (2013: 262) China's increased engagement with Africa is no different from earlier ones which largely cast Africa as the supplier of cheap but abundant raw materials, as well as fertile ground for the sale of cheap manufactures. Critics have labelled China the new coloniser of Africa, arguing that trade with China is one-sided and unequal, i.e. Africa imports finished goods, while China imports mainly raw materials from Africa. For Olander (2020) Africa's financial dependence on China for infrastructure loans, coupled with the importation of mainly finished goods has reduced Africa's appetite for industrialisation. The mistrust between Africa and China was highlighted by an open exchange between the former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Lamido Sanusi, and China's Special Representative on African Affairs, Ambassador Zhong Jianhua (Leviathan, 2019). While Sanusi argued that China was exploiting African resources and people and practising a "new form of imperialism", Zhong defended China's approach to Africa by arguing that the Chinese undertaking was boosting African economies so that they could become competitive in the global market.

Whatever the case might be, Africa's trading patterns have failed to break free from colonial legacies. While other actors have joined the scramble, colonialism ended decades ago and yet African leaders for all this time have failed to forge a collective agreement on trade (until the recent African Continental Free Trade Area, ACFTA). However, Gathara (2019) thinks otherwise. For him, colonialism's tentacles never left Africa, especially with regard to trade; rather, African economies were rigged to maintain their dependence on their

colonial masters. Decades after independence, little has changed with regard to Africa's patterns of growth and trade. They are still largely driven by primary commodities and natural resources, reflecting the persistence of the colonial development model where natural resource-endowed nations served as feedstock for advanced economies. This was evidenced by the demise of the last commodity boom (2000-2014) and the fall of oil prices which brought to the fore one of the most important binding constraints to long-term growth and economic development in Africa, namely, the long and unchanging lingering effects of colonialism on Africa's patterns of trade and the dynamics of world markets (Hippolyte, 2019). Driving this has been the challenge of installing the right infrastructure to transcend the colonial legacy of extractivist models which have dominated Africa trade patterns in a post-colonial Africa.

Foreign aid

The heavy dependence on foreign aid and the activities of the multinational corporations in Africa reveal that Africa at the beginning of the 21st century is still in a neo-colonial stage of development. The activities of the corporations in Africa, particularly those from Europe and America, reveal nothing short of economic exploitation and cultural domination. Foreign aid is defined by Barret (2008) as "the transfer of government resources from rich countries to poorer countries with an intention to reduce poverty and hunger. Ever since the periods of rapid de-colonisation, Sub-Saharan Africa has become a huge recipient of foreign aid, which has come from former colonisers and international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, and the United States Agency for International Development (Bräutigam and Knack 2004, 257). However, this continuous inflow of aid to Africa has failed to translate into development; rather it has consolidated the culture of begging and being at the mercy of developed nations, something which represents another form of neo-colonialism. Peron (2001) concurs that for almost half a century the countries of Africa have been awash with aid. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been given to African governments. More billions were lent to these same governments. Yet, the state of development in Africa is no better today than it was when all this started. Per capita income, for most of Africa, is either stagnant or declining. Aid in many African countries has been used to fund military regimes, and foreign aid is also being used in patently destructive, and sometimes genocidal, ways (Peron, 2001). The Marxist dictatorship of Ethiopia's

Mengistu Haile Mariam was a major recipient of donor funds, a portion of which was used to forcibly resettle large segments of the population. The Congo also sold donated food supplies and used the funds to purchase an arms factory from Italy (Peron, 2001). The more peaceful Mauritius took donated rice, which it insisted be of high quality, and diverted it to tourist hotels.

Criticisms of foreign aid were also laid bare by development economist Peter Bauer, who argued that there is an inherent bias of government-to-government aid toward state control and politicisation. Foreign aid, he argues, has contributed substantially to the politicisation of life in the Third World (Peron, 2001). For Africa, aid to Sub-Saharan Africa has not shown any significant achievements as far as economic development is concerned. For example, between 1981 and 1991, the World Bank evaluated the performance of 29 African countries to which it had provided more than \$20 billion in "structural adjustment loans. The bank's report, 'Adjustment Lending in Africa', concluded that only six African countries had performed well: The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. That gives a failure rate of above 80 percent (Ayodele et al, 2005). Nonetheless, Ijaiya and Ijaiya (2004, 1), contend that aid would be a huge contributor to poverty alleviation, if only it was managed effectively and used for its intended purposes. Hence I posit that aid, per se, is not the problem; it is how it is utilised that needs to be addressed. However, one ponders whether Africa's weak economic management, evidently due to the high levels of corruption, unscrupulous governance, and political and economic instability have clouded the role played by aid in socio-economic development.

Critics argue that aid, coupled with poor accountability, has stifled the need for the developing of innovative policies needed to spur socio-economic development. Building on this insight Kwemo (2018) contends that former colonisers have observed that Africa has become dependent on aid and lacks the political will to collectively pursue African development, meaning that African leaders are happy to receive aid in exchange for neo-colonial domination. A large number of Africans are today even poorer and many African states are less developed than they were before. Despite continuous massive inflows of foreign aid far exceeding debt servicing outflows, Africa has failed to use aid to make significant improvements in its development. The paper argues that Africa is heavily dependent on aid, not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of the institutional mechanisms (Park, 2019, 37-40). According to a 2014 report, Africa

receives about \$133.7 billion each year from official aid, grants, loans to the private sector, and remittances, but at the same time, some \$191.9 billion is extracted from the continent in the form of debt repayments, multinational company profits (Firoze and Yanguas, 2018), illicit financial flows, brain drain, and illegal logging and fishing. More recent figures put the outflow much higher – at over \$218 billion. In other words, Africa suffers a net loss of more than \$85 billion every year. Such a net outflow suggests that far from the West aiding Africa, it is Africa that is aiding the West (Firoze and Yanguas, 2018).

Cheidu Moghalu, in his book “Emerging Africa”, noted that the main obstacle perpetuating underdevelopment in Africa is foreign aid. He asserts that decades of aid have failed to lead to significant development. However, despite these assertions, aid inflow to Africa has been on the increase and this is for one simple reason, the need for the donors to have access to the resources of the continent (Moghalu, 2014).

On Political dependence

The narrative is that Africa's governance systems have been inherited from colonialism. To broaden this perspective, this paper argues on two important observations, namely political control and governance, and conflicts.

Political control and governance

Post-colonial studies have shown extensively that despite achieving independence, the influences of colonialism and its agents are still very much present in the lives of most former colonies. Just like economic dependency, African countries after independence consolidated colonial political systems (Endalcachew 2015, 89-90). In Africa today, the present political system of the continent is a direct reflection of the colonial system. Colonialism greatly influenced the politics of the continent by replacing indigenous institutions by alien administrations which were meant to consolidate its political ideology. Africa had a democratic culture in the pre-colonial era which was later dismantled through the influence of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism (Endalcachew 2015, 89-90). The colonialists' centralised state system produced an ethnic and authoritarian based political culture and one where power was monopolised. This malpractice was inherited by the post-independence African leaders. It is due to this fact that Africa has suffered from, inter alia, the evils of corruption and authoritarianism since the time of independence (Endalcachew 2015, 89-90). Africa's political system is still

reminiscent of colonialism. For Cheeseman & Fisher (2019) colonialism entrenched the culture of oppression and rule by fear. When independence arrived, African leaders missed the point by further consolidating these oppressive political systems which were neither democratic nor legitimate. Even though political parties are allowed to exist, the political environment is often not conducive for them to compete for power; rather it is common to observe them being banned or criminalised for their activities (Endalcachew 2015, 89-90). Post-Independence saw several governments perverted into one-party states or military dictatorships characterised by corruption and inefficiency. These shortcomings have been linked to the tactics used by colonialism to divide and conquer Africa. African rulers are also known to be highly corrupt, something which can be traced back to the legacy of colonialism (Endalcachew 2015, 89-90). Munyae and Lesetedi (1998, 18) contend that the corruption in Africa was inevitable considering that the colonialism was an extension of the new economic and political policies anchored on the need to forcibly dispossess Africa of her raw materials. From this, therefore, one can deduce that the existing corrupt behaviour of the contemporary leaders of Africa is the continuation of the policies and administration of imperialists. Corruption is one of the biggest contributory factors to poverty, and poverty in turn leads to corruption, thereby creating a vicious cycle. This situation is true in Africa and it is attributable to the far reaching effect of colonialism. In many African countries leaders enjoy political power as a means of accumulating wealth (Endalcachew 2015, 89-90). The European concept of 'state' has had a strong influence on African countries and it was this concept of the state that led to the drawing up of arbitrary borders throughout Africa. Such Eurocentric thinking, reinforced by technological and scientific achievements, is still very present in Africa (Fonkem, 2013). Kalidou (2020) argued that the reality is that no African country is truly free or independent; all of them are still being destabilised and manipulated so that their former European colonisers can continue to make a profit. This type of colonisation is called "Neo-Colonialism". For him, the political control of Africa is characterised by numerous neo-colonial instruments, such as colonial debt, automatic confiscation of national reserves, the right of first refusal on any raw or natural resource, the exclusive right to supply military equipment and train the country's military officers, the right to pre-deploy troops and intervene militarily in the country to defend its interests, the obligation to use colonial money, and the obligation to make the

colonial language the official language of the country and the language for education and money (Kalidou, 2020)

Peace and Conflict resolution

The scholarship on conflict in Africa has argued that Africa is a troubled continent. Persistent issues of conflict have hindered socio-economic development and prolonged political stability. However, the scholarship has largely been defined from a Eurocentric and Western perspective. Additionally, scholarship on conflict in Africa fails to reflect on the role of colonialism in the destabilisation of Africa and the subsequent conflicts that have emerged. Fonkem (2013) argues that the distinctive colonial styles of the British and French created fundamentally different systems of ethnic stratification, which left contrasting legacies for post-colonial ethnic conflict. The colonial factor ought to be a consideration in attempts to address African conflicts because the roots of many post-colonial conflicts in Africa remain buried in Africa's past and, specifically, in the colonisation and de-colonisation processes. Fonkem (2013), citing Okoyo (1977), contends that the instability in Africa is rooted in her colonial past. Former United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman J. Cohen, echoing the above, emphasised that the internal conflict and political instability in Africa is a direct result of colonialism, the political transition to freedom and the formation of states. He argued that the modern African state was created by colonial powers out of ethnic and regional diversities, and rendered conflictual by gross inequities in power relations and the uneven distribution of developmental opportunities (Fonkem, 2013). The subsequent demise of colonialism and the formation of African states failed to rectify these remnants of colonialism and these gave way to the conflicts experienced in post-independence Africa.

Cohen further argued that the period of decolonisation failed to consider several colonial contradictions, which were inherited by newly formed states (Fonkem, 2013). For example, recurring political instability and breakdown in the governments of in Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi can be traced back to the hasty and unprepared granting of independence by Belgium in 1960. Major wars in Angola and Mozambique were also driven by the 'panic' de-colonisation from a revolutionary and chaotic Portugal in 1974-75 (Fonkem, 2013). Fonkem (2013) describes six types of conflicts which have colonial tentacles in them. Firstly, there are inter-ethnic conflicts: conflicts involving opposing tribal or ethnic groups which are mainly found within national boundaries although the inherent problems of artificial

borders caused by colonialism have resulted in some ethnic groups being found in two, three or even more African countries. For him, in post-colonial Africa, these conflicts are greatly exacerbated by the neo-colonial arrangements that characterise many African governments (Fonkem, 2013). Moreover, they have been able to gain ground because much of the leadership remains in the same hands and continues to serve colonial interests. Secondly, there are inter-state conflicts: conflicts between the governments and sometimes peoples of two different countries. These conflicts have been exacerbated by artificial borders inherited from colonialism and the lumping together of different nations to make up new countries at independence (Fonkem, 2013). Thirdly, he mentions liberation conflicts, which are those conflicts that involve entire nations or peoples who find themselves within the territorial boundaries of given countries by colonial and colonising arrangements. Fourthly, there are civil rights conflicts: civil rights conflicts arise mainly over issues of participation, distribution, and legitimacy in the politics and governance of nations. As noted earlier, while multiparty political systems have emerged, political participation in some countries is still oppressed and the aspect of civil rights is non-existent (Fonkem, 2013). Fifthly, there are annexationist conflicts: annexationist conflicts arise when one nation annexes another nation in part or wholly, or where two nations lock horns over interests that belong to neither of them from history or international law. Such conflicts in Africa have been exacerbated by backdoor deals of colonial powers that effectively sold out the fundamental right of the people of those nations to determine their destiny. Finally, he mentions the political transition conflicts which occurred in many African countries out of rising tensions resulting from a stalemated transition to the democratisation of political life in the 1990s (Fonkem, 2013).

The irony in conflict management in Africa

Conflict management in Africa has largely been outsourced. For example, in West Africa, French troops have been assisting former colony Mali against the rise of terrorism. In other parts of Africa, American, Chinese and Russian military personnel have also established themselves (Fonkem, 2013). Conflict in Africa has presented an interventionist approach from former colonisers and allowed them to further drown Africa in their sphere of influence, especially considering the failure of African countries to resolve continental conflict. Subscribing to this view, Fonkem (2013) observed that the main actors intervening in African conflicts were

almost entirely from outside of Africa. These were made up of individuals, countries, groups of countries, institutions and organisations. Reinforcing this, it was Herman Cohen who asserted that, until 1993 Africa was almost totally dependent on outside entities for conflict management and that even today, Africa is sliding back into the era of dependence (Fonkem, 2013). Some of these outside entities or actors include former colonial masters who are direct contributors to conflicts in Africa, international organisations and foreign powers like the United Nations, the European Community, and the United States of America, as well as regional bodies like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in West Africa and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD) in East Africa. The intervention by foreign powers under the pretext of fighting terrorism has created a sense of dependency and driven the narrative that Africans cannot solve African problems independently. For example, France and Britain sponsored several conferences in 1994-1995 in a number of African capitals to facilitate dialogue on the development of consensus on conflict management policy along specific lines, including, inter alia, the development of conflict management approaches tailored to African circumstances under African leadership (Fonkem, 2013). In all, persistent conflicts in Africa still harbour colonial roots, the failure of African states to collectively deal with continental security issues has allowed international players under the pretext of fighting terrorism to intervene in the sovereign affairs of African states.

Concluding remarks

The socio-political independence of Africa since decolonisation has largely been non-existent. Subsequent failure to induce socio-economic development has marred Africa's post-independence development trajectories. Narratives have argued that Africa has failed to break free from the chains of colonisation; rather it inherited colonial economic and government systems which have failed to reflect current African realities. The dependency theory, through its analyses of underdevelopment, argues that Africa (notwithstanding the emergence of new role players) has sunk even deeper into the circle of dependence on former colonisers. Colonial tentacles are observable in almost every sphere of Africa's socio-economic and political life and any discussion of 'internal or national governance' therefore cannot exclude the structure of the state and the political leadership as inherited from colonialism, given that the basis of

African states and political leadership in most of the continent is colonial. Incorporating the concept of neo-colonialism, one cannot help but observe that Africa is still dependent on her colonial masters.

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