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**THE DYNAMICS AND STRUCTURES OF DEPENDENCE IN AFRICA:  
A THEORETICAL STUDY OF NIGERIA'S EXPERIENCES.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Post 1990's saw a re-invigoration of the structures of international socio-political and economic imperialism: the dynamics of neo-liberal agenda which ensures the re-negotiation and repositioning of these structures to meet the set objectives. This paper, therefore, argues that the dimensions and dynamics of these structures deepen the problems of Dependence. This paper advances the example of Nigeria as atypical case of a caged state and an environment where the process and the dynamics of these structures of dependency are discernible. It also articulates the philosophical underpinnings which drive the new dependency neo-liberal agenda in the third world and Nigeria has no control over it.*

*Keywords –Dynamics, Dependency in Africa and Nigeria's Example*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As for neo-liberalism, is it a general idea of political development or is it simply another eurocentric attempt to project and universalize or globalize the development experience of the west? What theoretically grounded counter-arguments are available against the pressures mounted on African countries to pull back the state and restructure their economies, through the implementation of structural adjustment programmes, economic liberalization and civil service reforms? What is the relationship between the current structure of the world system and contemporary globalization ... We must pose these questions because of the strong ideological push to sell globalization as an objective, inexorably positive force for world development. We must confront and discuss it with the same critical and iconoclastic dialectical methodology we used to x-ray the ideology of developmentalism as a form of western domination. Globalization might well be another form of diffusionist thesis which denies the possibilities for autonomous self-development in Africa by viewing African societies as follower-societies, with no choice but to imitate the developmental path of the industrialized world (Adele, 2002, p :8 – 9

The relevance of this position appears to be two. First, its implications for the African economy and second, why it is expedient to continue to challenge the neo-liberal postulations and its visions for Africa and the third world. We must understand that the new international political economic order is guided primarily by the classical theses of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Their thesis was that market system should be encouraged while the role of the state should be minimal. In fact, their thesis was that market system is efficacious and that state should assume minimalist responsibilities.

The classist postulate is anchored on the presumption that product prices are optimal and income distribution is equitable as a result of effective competition and social justice... By implication, the classist theory confines the state role to the establishment of relevant institutions and creating the enabling environment for the effective functioning of the market (NISER, 2001, p: 184)

The character of the contemporary international economic order seems to have had its root in the post-World War II international political economic relations. With the triumph of the West from the cold war, the nature, philosophy and essence of the contemporary international political economy become crystal – politics of neo-liberalism (Akin et al, 1996, p:1). This new

order defines the scope for states interaction and the structures of development which defines the new process of modernization.

This paper re-examines the concept of dependence within the new structures created by the contemporary international political-economic order. The new process and structures can only deepen the crisis of development and speedily facilitate the process of Africa's socio-political and economic extinction. These structures explain the vortex and dilemma of Africa Africa's deepening crisis of development. This is inexorably a contribution to the critique of modernization agenda in Africa.

What do these structures portend for Africa development? Is it another trap and web of dependence? These questions underscore the dimension of this paper. This work however has Nigeria as its primary example.

This paper is divided into eight parts with each discussing issues that are related. It also contains a reference page.

## **2. DEPENDENCY AND ITS POLITICAL- ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY**

The international political economy of this era no doubt reveals how the European states cleared the way through the use of force and creation of institutions for the unhindered activities of the slave traders just as they did during the epoch of the legitimate trade when the European businessmen denied state intervention in the creation of policies and institutions to sustain the new industrial trade. Walter's (1982) view captured this thinking when he argued that:

Both openly and by implication, all the European powers in the 19th century indicated their awareness of the fact that the activities connected with producing captives were inconsistent with other economic pursuits. That was the time when Britain in particular wanted Africans to collect palm produce and rubber and to grow agricultural crops for export in place of slaves(p.107)

The point we need to stress here is that the changes in European economic initiative which was principally for the European interests necessitated a change in Africa's economic production. This is the fundamental of dependency syndrome. The classical economic theses held sway until 1930's global depression, which necessitated a review of European development policy. This saw the emergence of the liberaleconomic thesis. It was the era when John Maynard Keynes' theory held sway. It once again saw the re-emergence of state re-occupying a central position in development debate. This was the age of colonial political-economy which saw the

consummation of Africa's dependent status. Before we examine the nature, philosophy and essence of the contemporary political economy, we shall turn to the examination of the concepts of dependency and how its structures historically incorporates Africa into the international political economy with assigned functions which it continues to perform with date and makes more formidable by the neo-liberal international political economic order.

To Theotonio Dos Santos (1971)

Dependency is a situation in which a certain group of countries have their economy conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which the former is subject. The relation of interdependence between two or more economies, and between these and world trade, assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant) can expand and give impulse to their own development, while other countries (that) can only develop as a reflection of this expansion... In all case, the basic situation of dependence leads to a global situation that situates them in backwardness and under the exploitation of the dominant countries.(p.33)

Dos Santos' position carefully captured both the situation and character of relations between the dependent and the dominant. The importance of this position lies in his ability to articulate the nature of the relationship established by the pre-U.S hegemonic international political economy.

Stratchey's (1974) position appears rather illuminating in its dimension. He argues that:

The backward region assumes a dependency status (the last step before outright control) in relation to the metropolitan powers chiefly because the former were indebted to the latter. What was significant about the shift from consumer goods to capital goods in world trade was that the colony needed long-term credits or loans to pay for the capital goods, and that finally, the relationship between the backward country and the metropolitan country is one of debtor and creditor. And from this, it was but a small step to dependence and domination(p.78)

Theotonio Dos Santos established the situation. Stratchey articulated the mode and dimension of dependency and third world structural incorporation through the structures of trade and debt politics. In Africa, this was facilitated through slavery and slave trade (Williams, 1984,p: 171). Technology,trade (Claude, 2002,p: 105 ), debt, colonialism and neo colonialism (Aruj, 1987,p: 14). In both the classical and liberal ages, the structures of dependence facilitated uninterruptedly, the process of under-development in Africathrough the "European slave trade, technological stagnation and destruction of the African Economy in the pre-colonial epoch and

expatriation of African surplus under colonialism . The post 1945 international political economy provided a scenario for continuous dependence of Africa and the other third world economies and their peripheral status appears more proclaimed (Betham, 1989,p: 17). In this era, the Breton wood institutions play significant roles (Kenwood & Loughheed, 2003,p: 237 but yet, these institutions created further polices for Africa’s continuous dependence and underdevelopment. At this juncture, we may now turn to the contemporary structure of dependence and politics of underdevelopment within the vortex of contemporary international political economy.

### **3. NEO-LIBERALISM, ITS STRUCTURES AND AFRICA’S**

#### **DILEMMA**

The world capitalist economy has always been characterized by the unequal development of declining old and rising new leading economies or metropolitan centers, new developing and old under- developing intermediate economies... Leadership in world capitalist development passed from north Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (perhaps briefly via parts of the Iberian Peninsula) to England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to United States in the twentieth century. Leadership and power passed from the old center to the new one principally during periods of crisis to which the old center was unable to adjust (Andre, 1981,p: 2).

The emergent international political economy, under the U.S hegemony, though had its root in both the World War II and in the ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ war era (at the eve of 1945 with the establishment of the Breton wood institutions), but its character became more vivid at the end of the cold war (Parret, 1996,p: 14). The emerging system of international collaboration against the common eastern—block-enemy needed a leadership of a dominant western power. The founders of the contemporary international political economy considered a choice “that leader was of course, the United States of America.As the world’s foremost economic and political power, the United States was clearly in a position to assume responsibility of leadership” (Joan, 1980,p::24) from the west. The emergent new system of relation with the underdeveloped world involves form of dependence that can hardly be overcome (Daniel, 1980,p: 241). This system defines its own politics, economy and social system. The dependent status of Africa remains unobliterated. Its neo-liberal philosophy has been sophisticatedly clothed with an imperialist

apparel of globalization; an agenda espoused to spread and control the international space with the emerging US's pretext state-driven civilization.

Neo-liberal theory was erected on the principle that the public sector has been unable to overcome the huge economic difficulties confronting many economies. The public sector is an agent hindering economic development by perpetrating distortions in the workings of the market" (NISER, 2001). Thus in the third world, neo-liberal thesis opines greater reliance on market forces through effective privatization and commercialization of the existing public enterprises, deregulation of local industries, market and trade liberalization (Henshaw, 1999, p: 71). With an economic agenda, its politics was premised on 'liberal democracy' as against the "popular democracy" which it struggled against for ascendancy. for decades before its triumph. For a unique order, the US sponsored a third generation church since political economic hegemony without religion for disorientation and diversion may not last long (Hassan, 2003, p: 19). The neo-liberal agenda is a civilization in itself. Crucial questions were raised by Daniel and Joseph (1998 )

Why the move to the market? Why, and how, the shift from an era in which the "state"-national governments – sought to seize and exercise control over their economies to an era in which the ideas of competition, openness, privatization, and deregulation have captured world economic thinking? This question, in turn, begets others: Are these changes irreversible? What will be the consequences and prospects – political, social and economic – of this fundamental alteration in the relationship between government and market place?(p.11)

A plethora of questions inherent in this view informs a necessity for the identification of the structures for the facilitation of this new imperialism and a new web of dependence (Martynov, 1988, p: 180 – 185) on one hand, and a study of its implications for Africa's development on the other hand. At this juncture, we may now turn to the study of structures of "neo-liberal imperialism".

#### **4. ECONOMIC STRUCTURE**

The Breton wood institutions have come firmly under the control of the U.S and international reserves currencies and its distribution and firmly controlled by them. The major international financial institutions e.g. the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) otherwise, known as the world bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) became the

economic structures, which facilitates the new dependency syndrome. These institutions prescribed, finance and control the nature and mode of economic activities in the peripheral states. In most instances, they give loan to trap the states into debt. This syndrome was well captured by Samir Amin (2002)

The J.M.F prescription offers a voluntary but stylish trick of forcing the underdeveloped economies into a trap of debt, complicated economic crisis and subordination. (p.74)

The global economy and the assigned peripheral role for the underdeveloped economies operate within the structure and agenda of the I.M.F and the World Bank. Like in the colonial age, the underdeveloped economies are now to serve the continuous development of the metropolises.

The devaluation of currencies, economic liberalization and state withdrawal are obviously antithetical to the economic logic of protectionism and transformation of infant industries. The apparent tenets of neo-liberal theory suggests that the orthodox Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), which has crippled most third world economies, propagated by the World Bank and the I.M.F are based on parallel philosophy of neo-liberal thinking of underdeveloping the underdeveloped world whose leadership are refusing to take a radical dimension witnessed in South Korea (Adeyemi, 2009).

With the structures provided by the Bretton institutions, other economies are incorporated and their dependent status is guaranteed. Third world countries are further disadvantaged in the international economic order because trade and commerce between them and the developed/ industrialized ones results in exploitation of the former by the later. (Adesola, 2004, p: 112).

In the contemporary international order, third world countries have no say. The advanced countries operate and control the structure of organization of economic co-operation and development (OECD), where decisive international economic decisions are deliberated and decisions taken with impunity (Adesola, p: 113). These structures explain Africa's incorporation into the web of neo-liberal dependence. (Not only has 'state' been very necessary in the transformation and modernization processes in the third world and Africa inclusive). Contemporary system has equally prescribed an agenda of structural incorporation for Africa through an agenda of the New-Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - a neo-liberal agenda that is completely Un-African (Olukoshi, p: 2002). Since the adaptation of this agenda, Africa's socio-economic space becomes more opened, industries capitulates, more history of wars, insecurity and woes in Africa and problems of alienation and African identity became

worrisome in the face of rising unemployment and economic underdevelopment crisis. The only business that appears striving in Africa, with Nigeria as a typical case, has been the kingdom of God industry (Hassan, 2008,p:12). This situation so worried Benjamin Mkapa, Tanzanian president, who was a signatory to NEPAD's document and he concluded that:

...The way things are going, we in Africa will soon have no image beyond geography, no identity besides colour and no decency except flags... worse, we will end up compelling to do the master's urging in the neighbourhood (Olukoshi: 2002)

This statement reveals the unstated issues behind NEPAD and secondly, it is mindful of the hostile policies of the new international economic regime which seeks to entrench Africa's further dependence (Adeyemi (2003, p:39) underdevelopment and loss of identity. This explains the sophisticated nature of the neo-liberal philosophy in Africa.

## **5. TECHNOLOGICAL STRUCTURE**

The structure of technology and need for its transfer to the underdeveloped settings symbolizes another issue in dependency. That Africa is assumed to be technologically backward and its transformation into a modern society depends largely on the amount of technological assistance and cooperation Africa could get from the developed world is no longer an issue. The more frustrating dimension is that the developed world determines the nature and mode of technology that the third world countries must employ for development both industrially and militarily. Osita (2001) got this more clearly in his view.

The emergent world order consequent upon the lessons of the Gulf war, the temporary crisis of socialism and the domination of the world economy by market forces, have created an environment which may continue to impede the desire of some under-developed economics to achieve some measure of technological autonomy needed for self-sustaining growth and development.(p.1)

This situation creates acute problems of dependence both in military affairs, defence and strategy. This inevitably renders, the degree of security African states could seek, constrained by the west interest in this sphere. Rather interesting however, has been the use of the United Nations Organisation by the hegemonic powers in cementing this structure of technological dependence. the western philosophy of globalization has suddenly become its agenda. The measure of modernization has been within the vortex of the measure offered by globalization

and sustained by the U.N.O. This ultimately necessitates the political dimension in this web of dependence.

## **6. POLITICAL STRUCTURE**

The measurement of political modernization and a state's admission into the committee of nations now revolves around the degree of its compliance with neo-liberal democratic project (Adekunle, 2003,p: 17). Debt forgiveness and asses to financial assistance are premised on this requirement. Thus, African states must democratize along the neo—liberal requirements of multi-partism, periodic elections e.t.c Even, at the level of African politics, conformity with this order is guided jealously by the African Union (AU). Compliance is being monitored by the Peer Review committee. Thus, the era of African socialism and its variance has gone. The western model perceived as most modern and developed becomes the basis for the measurement of all other models even if others such as China, etc have propelled development through proper annexation of endogenous development factors.

The new global order outlines its politics, economy and social system defined in terms of norms and values, institutions and precepts, which facilitate dependency and Africa's underdevelopment. No wonder, the contemporary international political economy clothed in the logic of imperial global philosophy underscores its vision and features for the term of Africa and Africa's continuous dependent status in the global political economy.

## **7. NIGERIA EXPERIENCE**

Nigeria provides environment for the inter-play of the structures and process of continuous dependence. Nigerian state economic and social structures rest on the neo-liberal global political economic philosophy. Nigeria's situation is not only historical. It is also informed by the neo-colonial dependent development policies of the Nigeria state.

The state and government bequeathed on Nigeria since independence wererecreated, captured and nurtured for the convenience of British imperialist and to yearn to the neo-liberal philosophy of the contemporary international order which forced weak states intoits dependent orbit for the realization or its global agenda. Nigeria, both in terms of foreign policy postures, economic philosophy and social principles, except during the short reign of Muritala/Obasanjo regime, has not really betrayed its clientille foundation. (Rone, 2011,p: 19). Even the seemingly independent foreign policy fortune of Nigeria and its political economic focus during this period was

premised on some factors. These were considered to be both favourable regional and external conditions.

Although, Nigeria maintains a near regional influence and domination in West Africa but this has not in any way reduced her independence on the global imperial order or the great powers. The context of Nigeria's relations with the external world must be within the dichotomy of continental influence and global dependence. The continuous discussion of an alternative to this dominant orthodox explications of Nigeria's external relations (especially with the great powers) reveals a more dynamic mode of Nigeria's dependency problems and her role in west Africa and Africa. This is better captured by the concepts of sub-imperial or semi-imperial state principles. Shaw ( 1977) articulated this position more succinctly.

A sub-imperial state exists at the centre of the periphery: it is a client state that is able to exert dominance in one region of the third world. Thus, it can exploit the process of regional integration while at the same time remaining dependent on a greater metropolititan power. A sub-imperial country exerts a regional hegemony akin to the global dominance of an imperial power but at subsystemic level, it plays an important intermediate role in a sphere of influence by dominating a region while still being subordinate to major actors at the centre of global feudal networks.(p.376)

We must understand that Shaw's analysis is a reflection of Wallerstein's conceptualization of core-periphery relations in contemporary global formations. While it is difficult to quantify the degree of influence Nigeria exerts' on West Africa sub-region, its clear that Nigeria a largely dependent on the metropolitan states for survival. The political economy of Nigeria's foreign policy vision was largely dependent. Bassey Ate (1986 ) clearly stated that:

Nigeria, during the crucial period 1960 – 66 was clearly dependent multirally on both the United Kingdom and the United States, that is, in addition to the emerging bilateral ties to the U.S with serious political consequences for its foreign policy the pattern of Nigeria's diplomatic ties in the period is question closely corresponded to, and actually reinforced the external economic pattern.(p.240)

If this position suggests the post 1960 cementation of the Nigeria's neo-colonial dependence, it also, vigorously, reinforced the impotency of the Nigerian state not only in negotiating alternative development policies but that it is a state created to perform specific task defined by the post-colonial dependent agenda. The functions which Nigerian state never shy away from

carrying out since 1980's adoption of the World Bank structural adjustment programs prescription of the Breeton wood institutions. Prior to 1990's and the emergence of African Union, the adoption of NEPAD and the role of Nigeria in this initiatives explain the outplay of the process and dynamics of structural dependence and its sophistication in Nigeria. In facts, the domination of the Nigeria's political and economic space, the dictations from the World Bank, IMF and the nature of Nigeria's structural incorporartion into the contemporary international political economic order suggests that

It is self- deception to pretend that Nigeria can have a foreign policy independent of her relationship with the U.S and the West in general. As long as we remain dependent on the West and cultivate this dependency, all statements condemning and threatening the U.S will be meaningless (Obadina, 1983,p: 2)

While it is difficult to condemn the U.S, it may be appropriate to state that the U.S also contribute to the inability of the Nigerian state to embrace alternative independent political-economic policies in view of the way the U.S vigorously pursue the neo-liberal agenda and its principles of Global Governance.

The post 1990 reveals further entrenchment with the collapse of soviet Union. Since 2000, the nature and vision of Nigeria's economy and its political and social systems reveals this syndrome – Dependence and the entrenchment of it process, structure and politics. This situation may remain so because,

The overriding factors conditioning Nigeria's relations with the great powers are its basic vulnerabilities as a dependent nation in dire need of development assistance, such as technology and ability to dictate and sustain the prize for its raw materials. This feeling basically account for the posture of restraint and caution that observers of Nigeria's foreign policy have apply described as economic alignment and political non-alignment' (Ogwu and Olukoshi, 2006 ,p: 123)

Since 1990's, the push (Internally but engineered externally) for neo-liberal political economy as state policy knows no bound. The completion of this process of dependence and the entrenchment of Nigeria into the new structures of dependence was engineered, a process which began in the 1980's during Ibrahim Babangida's Regime.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The contemporary international political economy and structures that sustains it remains the same processes and structures used to facilitate the new web of dependence controlled by the new hegemons under the U.S's neo-imperialism. Two examples would suffice in reinforcing our earlier thesis and the third in our unit of analysis – Nigeria.

When Nimeri: of Sudan embarked on a radical economic reform in 1970 to boost the export base of the Sudanese economy in line with the annexation of internal development dynamics with financial assistance from its Arab brothers. The World Bank and I.M.F frustrated this effort. Sudanese experiment went bankrupt with the conspiracy of the Arab countries who were lured in by the U.S. Eventually, the government reluctantly initiated a series of three year 'stabilization' or economic recovery programme starting in 1978 in consultation with the I.M.F World Bank consultative Group (Fantu, 1989 ,p: 78)

In South Africa, the adoption of the Growth Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR) by the democratically elected government in 1996 was not just an introduction of a new set of policies, but most importantly, it was a consolidation of various pockets of neo-liberal measures that had been scattered through different aspects of governmental work.

What GEAR did was to consolidate all these into a single platform on which the economy was to be managed. As it is well known, the substance of the policy consists of the standard menu of neo-liberal items propagated by the International monetary Fund (IMP) and World Bank (Ishmael, 2006, p:19).

The two experiences and the Nigerian experience articulated the fact that the contemporary international political economy has sophisticated structures and the processes for ensuring dependence and obedience to its philosophy even by erring radical leaders. Its engagement by Africa through NEPAD — a neo-liberal western inspired antidote to facilitate a speedy Africa's incorporation into global economy through its peripheral status and the African union — another experience in how not to transform (Jonathan, 2004: 132) suggests discerningly the characters of the new politics of underdevelopment in Africa. A politics foisted by the new international political economic order. That the new order would not tolerate dissenting position, Peter (1998) ) remarked that:

“The end of the twentieth century has seen a wave of change”. (p.43) Dictatorships have become unfashionable and are now the anomaly, as democracy — in one form or another — has become the norm and the basis for capital advancement and economic success.

Who defines the forms of democracy, politics and processes of capital advancement and economic success? Who leads? Who defines the institutions? Who set the civilization? These questions are however germane to the understanding of the structures and politics of the contemporary international political economy.

The quests for technological advancement and the implementation of neo-liberal political economic agenda, the practice and sustenance of the global norms on Human Rights and Rules of Law (Kenneth, 2012,p: 19) are variables of domination. The quest for technology, the domination and dictation by the Breton wood institutions to the Nigerian government underscored the capture of Nigerian state on one hand and the institutionalization of dependency through neo-liberal philosophy and its structures on the other hand.

Nigerian economy presents a gory state of complete take-over and a parody of western civilization. Nigeria found herself in a context in which her defeat was completed (Johnson, 2011,p:16). The Asian tigers and western countries now controls the commanding heights of Nigerian economy, the political system follows the model of the West, the financial system which underpins the economy in completely yearning to the dictates of external imperial powers and the cultural system has collapsed (John, 2012,p:111). Nigeria presents an environment where the process and dynamics of the structures of dependency are discernible.

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