Chapter 27: Postcolonial Africa and the West
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Introduction:

When he pronounced his famous saying, ‘Seek Ye First The Political Kingdom…..,’ Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana, a leading African philosopher and proponent of pan-Africanism unwittingly set the tone for what became the preoccupation of African political leaders since independence – the pursuit of political power. In the last 60 years, Africa has experienced genocides, rebel movements, coups, xenophobia, economic crises and others. Associated with all these is the lack of economic, political and institutional change in Africa as venal leaders cleave to power. This is not what Nkrumah had wished to see happening in Africa. For Nkrumah, political power was not an end in itself, but a means to an end, chiefly the jettisoning of global capitalism and the inception of a just society in which national goods and endowments fairly distributed under a socialist dispensation. Thus African socialism was envisaged as a complete package that would drive Africa’s political, economic and social agenda. However, the African socialist experiment failed because of a number of reasons, including the structural conditions of the inherited states; the nature of African politics since independence, and chiefly, the nature of Africa’s relationship with the West after independence. Colonialism set in place Africa’s terms of engagement with the West. As in the years of Western colonial control, post-independent Africa remained tied to the enduring yoke of colonial capitalist enterprise and its world systems that dictated Africa’s pace and nature of economic (under-)development. In most parts of Africa, the majority of Western industries did not immediately withdraw following the demise of formal empires, but remained firmly rooted in Africa where they continued to extract resources to the mother countries using multinational corporations. Coupled with this was the rise of American economic imperialism, whose companies also prowled in Africa for primary goods. This situation meant that Africa’s efforts to transform its economy led to hopeless failures. Neither capitalist oriented African leaders, like Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast (aka Cote d’Ivoire) and Mobutu of Zaire (Congo) who increased their economic ties to the West nor the avowed socialists like Nkrumah, Nyerere of Tanzania and Samora Machel of Mozambique who had radical, pan-Africanist ideas ultimately improved the African economic plight. Afro-pessimists and some scholars tend to blame Africa’s poor economic performance on Africa’s bad policy choices and bad African leadership. There is credence in their critique and we will allude to that in this chapter. However, the Afro-pessimist account does not sufficiently examine Africa’s limitations, particularly the nature of Africa’s economic and political relationship with the West. The West’s parasitic economic agenda, we argue, has been and still is the major contributory factor not
only to the failure of Africa’s economic performance, but also to the rise of toxic forms of political expression such as coups, military rule, and other forms of instability after independence. To demonstrate this salient point, we will take a number of examples from sub-Saharan Africa since independence.

Legacies of the Colonial Economy

To understand the postcolonial African condition, and Africa’s relationship with the West we need to first appreciate historical linkages between Africa and the West. The relationship between Africa and the Western countries, particularly European countries emerged as a result of colonization and the systems that colonizers established. The colonization of Africa happened at a specific era in Western history. By 1850, mercantile capitalism had firmly established itself in Europe and had extended its tentacles across the globe. Mercantile capitalism was further strengthened by the profits of the slave trade and aggressive industrialization with its associated political and social changes in Europe. Technologically, the evolution of efficient shipping technology and the invention of lethal military technology were of course important factors. The aggressive expansion of mercantile commerce, post-slave trade, particularly in the late 19th century which period is glibly referred to as the era of legitimate commerce (which it was not); the rise of new Western strains of aggressive nationalisms spurring and themselves further spurred by aggressive state unifications (for instance Germany; Italian, French, and others), and the birth of certain philosophies, especially social Darwinism, all heightened appetites for adventure, notions of Western grandeur and chiefly, dictated changing ideas towards modes of business between Europe and the rest of the world. Colonization became one preferred approach to create and safeguard new markets for the industrial revolution in Europe, to accelerate the extraction of cheap raw materials, and to reproduce cultures of perpetual dependency by delegitimizing indigenous innovation and knowledge systems through incorporating Africans into a lasting regime of cheap labour.\(^1\) With this in mind, we will understand why colonialism became primarily an extractive enterprise which depended on the establishment of certain political and economic systems whose enduring structures shaped and further undermined African economies after Independence, exacerbating Africa’s dependency on former colonizers. Even in this era of Chinese economic dominance, African countries’ with former colonial masters have remained inexpungable.

Colonialism was a complete package that thrived by integrating Africa to Western economic system on unequal terms. This happened through a combination of processes. First, African judicial and political structures were destroyed and immediately replaced by Europeans structures that made possible the extraction of resources through monopoly capitalist entities. In settler colonies, colonial officials deliberately undermined pre-existing African political and economic systems. They passed a raft of laws that impacted on Africans’ productive capacity. These included land laws that authorized land alienation; laws controlling the prices of agricultural goods such as the Maize Control Act of 1934 in colonial Zimbabwe, and laws controlling labour mobilization in the colonies. In protectorates and indirect rule colonies, colonial power was exercised through salaried and despotic monarchies (mainly kings and chiefs) and through a few African educated elites who served as part of the civil service. Where centralized polities did not exist, such as in Eastern Nigeria, new warrant chiefs had to be invented to make the system work.\(^2\) In most parts of Central Africa, particularly the Great Lakes region, where there were established monarchies, divide and rule was used to facilitate colonial resource extraction. The institution of kingship was transformed as kings became key in mobilizing forced labour for colonial projects such as railway and road construction. They also forced their subjects, mainly from weaker ethnic groups, to produce cash crops such as cotton and coffee in

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2 Afigbo on Warrant chiefs
central and East Africa. In Rwanda and Burundi, for instance, the Hamitic myth was perpetuated, with the Tutsi kings and chiefs, who were ‘nilotes’ being given unwieldy powers over the mainly Hutu ‘bantu’ subjects. In Uganda, the old despotic monarchy of the Baganda, the kabaka (king) were retained, this time under a new colonial mandate. It is not surprising that when the nationalist movement rose in the late 1950s in the Great Lakes region, it was strongly anti-Monarchy as the later was associated with the evils of indirect rule colonialism. In Uganda, the king’s residence was attacked in 1966, the king forced into exile in Britain, and his residency was turned into one of President Milton Obote’s military barracks. The institution of kingship was legally abolished in 1967. In Rwanda and Burundi, Tutsi regimes, that had been in positions of privilege during Belgian colonial rule were violently ousted from power between 1959 and 1962 and replaced by majoritarian Hutu politicians. Consequently huge Tutsi populations trekked into parts of Central and Eastern Africa such as Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), Uganda, Tanzania and elsewhere. In many ways, this refugee crisis situation explains many challenges that we have in Central Africa today, namely, the perpetual refugee crisis in the region; the 1994 Rwanda genocide; the crisis in Zaire that ended the Mobutu regime a key Western ally during the Cold War; the perpetuation of ethnic politics in the region; the rise of new political heavyweights in the region in the name of two friends, Yoweri Museveni and Paul Kagame (both key Western security allies in the region) at a time Nyerere’s influence was on the wane following his retirement from politics in 1985; the failure of democratic transitions in the entire Great Lakes region; the rise of insurgencies and the collapse of traditional social structures and social fabric. Scholarship has demonstrated that the West has been the key beneficiaries of the disorder in the Great Lakes region. Since the short lived reign of Patrice Lumumba up to now, Western multinational corporations have continued to foment disorder and loot the economies during times of civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since the Rwanda genocide, Western food and financial aid and other interventions has continued to fuel the refugee crisis in the region.

The second point is that under colonial rule, industrial production in Africa focused on extracting raw materials mainly through the mining and (cash crop) agricultural sectors which produced raw materials required in the colonizers’ mother countries from where they were then processed into finished goods. These finished products were then imported to Africa (and of course elsewhere), from the metropolitan countries, usually by companies owned by citizens from the metropolitan countries, which firms invariably ploughed back the profits to their mother countries. Therefore the capitalist system operated an organized cyclical system. Consequently, there was no deliberate attempt to invest in the manufacturing sector as doing so would ultimately have compromised the colonial project by creating possibilities for colonies to become more competitive and self-sufficient, which would make them more difficult to govern and possibly more self-reliant, should they become politically independent. Moreover, any attempt to develop processing industries in colonies required either a massive immigration of skilled white personnel to the colonies or heavy financial investment in setting up tertiary education institutions for Africans so that they get the skills required to run those kinds of industries. Neither these possibilities were inherently desirable to the colonizers as this would directly undermine the colonial project for no apparent gain. In settler colonies such as Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), massive immigration campaigns were done to attract new white settlers between the 1950s and 1970s, but such campaigns were not successful as this did not bring in the much needed capital investment and the skilled persons envisaged by the Rhodesian government. The few immigrants who came into Africa after 1945 did not set up new competitive manufacturing industries but served mainly in the agricultural and mining sectors. Elsewhere, in the 1950s, white settlers were already leaving Africa mainly due to the end of colonial rule in different African

3 reference
5 Fieldhouse, Black Africa, p.4 - full ref on first mention
countries. Some were leaving their colonies for other African settler colonies which still appeared to be intact. For instance some left the Belgian Congo to Southern Rhodesia following the collapse of Belgian rule, the same applied to whites from Kenya following the Mau-Mau violence.

The cyclical capitalist system that we described above, which made it unnecessary for colonies to develop manufacturing industries, is a very pertinent factor in understanding African economic history. It helps us to appreciate why Africa of today is still dominated by huge (and usually multinational) corporations which are listed on stock exchanges of their parent countries, for instance Anglo-American, BHP Billiton, Shell, and may others. None of the corporations, if not a tiny fraction, focused on manufacturing in Africa as their model was and still is based on extracting it raw, shipping it out, process it, then sell it worldwide, including to the original source. This was Africa’s first impediment. This situation meant that when African countries got independent, the newly independent states had to maintain very close ties with established Western corporations and Western governments because these were the only known and available economic avenues for Africa to access the outside world and sell its raw materials. Any diplomatic relationships were handled in such a way that Africa avoided anything that could upset this status quo. Those who tried to delink from the West, especially by adopting socialist principles immediately faced the wrath of the West. Congo, Mozambique, Somalia, Angola and a few others are examples. Those who became pro-capitalist, like the Ivory Coast, yet with an Afro-centric economic model were not spared either. They held on for a few years, but by the mid-1970s, they were also in trouble and highly indebted.

The second challenge for Africa was that at independence, (and in many places until now) most Africans were not yet trained and skilled enough to set up and run their own industries. At independence, in Congo there was not a single African graduate student. In some African countries, at independence, except for West Africa, where missionary education predated colonialism, there were only a handful of degreeed Africans. Moreover, the education system that was established in many post-colonial African countries did very little to solve Africa’s economic conundrum because the education system reproduced the colonial education model of producing workers to serve in established entities as opposed to training entrepreneurs. The third impediment was that African governments had very limited economic resources for them to be able to advance loans to their rising business persons to establish competitive industries. The banks, mostly foreign owned and serving foreign business interests were reticent about advancing Africans money to start big business as their lacked collateral. Faced with this situation, African governments had one main option – to borrow from Western multilateral institutions, which drove them into debts. Unfortunately, some of these loans were badly managed and squandered by the new politicians in their efforts to sustain vertical patronages.

In Africa, the relationship between capitalism and colonialism dictated that capital be invested in those colonies where there was more likelihood for extracting more raw materials, particularly in mineral rich areas. By 1938, more than half of British investment to Africa (a total of £1,222 million) went to South Africa (£555 million) and colonial Zimbabwe (£102 million). These two were mineral rich settler colonies in Southern Africa. This made South Africa and Zimbabwe economically stronger than their regional neighbors, and were used as springboards by the British to control the neighboring colonies which were under indirect rule (at least before 1948, for South Africa and before 1965 for Zimbabwe). The story was the same for other settler colonies that were strategically scattered in different African regions. Before the Mau-Mau insurgency and its ultimate independence, Kenya, for instance, influenced Tanzania, Uganda and the Island of Zanzibar. This history of strong colonial investment and the corresponding huge white settler populations in these countries increased these countries’ dependence on Western economic models and heightened their vulnerability when Western corporations disinvest. Zimbabwe is currently struggling to revive

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its economy following substantial closure of mainly foreign owned firms, most of which were owned by British descendants. South Africa is also beginning to experience an economic downturn following similar Western capital flight and the speculative tendencies of its international investors.

We alluded above to the relationship between colonialism and capitalist extraction. In colonial Africa, responsibilities to extract certain raw material were allocated to different colonies so much that each colony became a specialized economic unit that produced a narrow range of products, particularly certain minerals or cash crops that were required in metropolitan countries for their industrial, military and food necessities especially during the two World wars. By creating a situation in which Africans produced what they could not consume (raw materials) and consumed what they did not produce (finished products), colonial economies entrenched and perpetuated Africa’s cycle of dependency which started during the slave trade era. This narrow economic structure also had serious ramifications for Africa’s food security after independence, particularly in the light of Africa’s post-war population boom and also on Africa’s overall balance of trade after independence. For instance, in South Africa where the major economic venture was mining by the big corporations, huge urban centers emerged with the Africans evicted from certain spaces into reserves, whereby by the 1930s, their food security situation and their tradable products had drastically declined to almost fifty percent below their 1885 levels because of declining production in those unproductive areas they had been driven into. Consequently, the Ciskei and Transkei regions became so impoverished that they became nothing more than reservoirs of cheap colonial labour for the mines. The historical connection between these region and mine labour has continued till today, with the majority of miners working in the platinum mines of the North-West province being predominantly from these regions. Post-apartheid South Africa had to contend with this huge and vulnerable rural populace whose plight would not change because they have been submersed into a permanent social and economic crisis.

Reliance on a limited range of primary products was risky for Africa because in the event of a fall in prices of certain products, the country had no fall back plan. This happened to the Ivory Coast of Houphouet-Boigny in 1988, then a producer of about 40% of world cocoa. When the price of cocoa declined by 50%, the Ivorian economy collapsed, also worsening Ivorian food security situation as the country did not have sufficient foreign currency to import food. Zambia, which relied on copper also suffered when copper prices fell drastically in the 1970s. In Africa, cash crop specialization was not primarily and invariably a climatic consideration, but a deliberate economic choice to turn colonies into specialized economic zones so as to connect Africa to the global capitalist economy. Thus, certain African colonies were better known for growing certain cash crops. For instance, cotton was mainly produced in Mozambique and Uganda, rubber in Liberia and Belgian Congo, coffee in Kenya and Uganda, cocoa in Ivory Coast and Ghana, palm oil in Nigeria, groundnuts in Senegal and Gambia, and many others. Between a quarter and a third of all cultivated land was dedicated to cash crop agriculture.

Before the rise of African nationalism in Africa, mainly after 1945, African peasants who were drawn into this parasitic colonial economy could not successfully challenge the system because of increasing colonial violence. Cash crop cultivation during the colonial era thrived because of the use of many forms of violence including physical force, the rejection and demonization of African

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indigenous agrarian knowledge systems, evictions of villagers from the land, price-fixing by the state controlled marketing boards, and an introduction of a dual-tiered pricing model whereby products from European farmers fetched higher prices than from those of Africans. In the 1940s, efforts by African peasants to create alternative markets for their products were thwarted by colonial regimes which tightly controlled the marketing boards in ways that further reduced peasants’ profit margins and their economic competitiveness in the face of the capitalist enterprise. Post-independent African governments inherited this parasitic character of the colonial state. They did not perform well but they either failed or were unwilling to move beyond the limits of the colonial economies as moving away entailed creating a completely new and different relationship with the West. So, African governments reproduced in subtle ways the same system that exploited peasants either under the guise of promoting African socialism and in some cases, under the guise of promoting overall economic development. Peasants remained at the center of the state’s developmental goals, perhaps because the peasants were viewed as softer targets to manipulate than the burgeoning urban populace which was politically virulent because of their trade union movements, their access to information and because of their being politically outside tribal structures where they had been controlled through some despotic chiefs and headmen. In post-independent Africa, peasants had the dual role of producing food for the rapidly expanding urban population and at the same time producing cash crops that helped boost the export sector. In Tanzania and Ethiopia, peasants were moved from their original villages into resettlements where they were forced to farm under close supervision from government development agents in ways that undermined their own agency. The same socialist experiments were adopted in Mozambique, using the whip. In other countries, peasants were forced to work on chiefs’ farms at the expense of their own farms, were forced to pay back government loans by being beaten up or sprayed with fertilizer or insecticides (Senegal), or were threatened that their farms would be seized if they disobeyed (Ghana) or if they were not productive enough (Ivory Coast). Post-independent peasants never got to control the marketing of their produce as this role continued to be managed by state controlled marketing boards, which fixed the producer prices of their cash and foods crops so as to compete at international markets. Declining profits, coupled with the rise in input costs, especially in the 1970s and 1980s drove many African peasants out of business, leading to what Brycesson termed the problem of Africa’s ‘vanishing peasantry’. The ultimate result of the collapse of the peasant agricultural sector is the food crisis which drives Western NGOs into Africa, bringing in their divers politics and preconditions.

Third and finally, colonies were sustained through a system of gatekeeping, which thrived on the capacity of the colonial officials to enforce the payment by the subjects, of taxes that sustained their colonial administrative costs. A raft of taxes such as hut tax, poll tax, cattle tax and many others were introduced during the early period and these generally remained in force throughout the colonial era. The introduction of taxes was multi-pronged. First, it was meant to force Africans to participate in the colonial cash economy by accepting cheap labour for purposes of paying the compulsory taxes. Cheap labour was necessary for company profit maximization. Secondly, taxes were symbolic, a kind of vulgarization of the pre-colonial tribute system, to make a political statement. The third and most important factor is that colonial taxes played a huge part in sustaining the small colonial economies. Metropolitan countries wanted to spend as little as possible on service delivery in the colonies particularly on African education and health, and also on their increasing administrative wage bill. It was important to spend as little as possible, considering the profit motive

14 SEE BRYCESON Vanishing Peasantry
and also the economic recession of the period between the two world wars. By 1934, a sizeable amount of revenue in most African colonies came from the taxes from Africans themselves which by far exceeded taxes from non-Africans. The following table, which demonstrate the tax revenues in 1934 is instructive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Tax from Africans</th>
<th>Tax from non-Africans</th>
<th>% of annual budget revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nyasaland</td>
<td>£ Sterling</td>
<td>129,562</td>
<td>18,970</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>£ Sterling</td>
<td>544,480</td>
<td>116,495</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>£ Sterling</td>
<td>775,010</td>
<td>32,633</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Equatorial Africa</td>
<td>French Francs</td>
<td>37,298,300</td>
<td>1,185,000</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian Congo</td>
<td>Belgian francs</td>
<td>80,709,434</td>
<td>19,764,683</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Historian Basil Davidson argued that in general, taxes that were levied from Africans increased during the Great Depression, in the 1930s, a time when living conditions were harder than before. Reliance on taxes to pay a significant part of the administrative bill was obviously due to the fact that colonial economies were not diversified enough. Except for South Africa and a few colonies, most colonial economies were small, lacked transformative ambition, and were run on an exploitative, extractive model whereby the products of the land were systematically siphoned out of the colonial state to the metropole. To prevent a total collapse of such colonies, colonial officials instituted a gatekeeping system, which relied on levying a range of taxes and charges on certain services provided to its citizens. This system was also followed by the post-independent state, except that the latter abolished some of the evidently repugnant taxes, like hut-tax. The gatekeeper system impedes innovation and popular participation in state’s economic development. This is so because gatekeeping thrives primarily on coercion and patronage whereby the big men (usually senior politicians) have a chain of small men (their lower level administrators, governors, and others) who pay homage to them and do all the errands for the big men to stay in power and also to get richer. These small men are in turn rewarded for their services in some way, either by promotion, or by being given certain powers to abuse state resources knowing fully well that they have protection from those in political office. We will finish this discussion by briefly analyzing the impact of the post-1945 developments on post-independent Africa.

**Post-War Transitions**

The situation facing colonies after 1945 varied. Some colonies suffered economic stagnation as a result of the economic slowdown after the war. In some parts of Africa however, particularly in some British and French colonies, the period saw some measure of economic development triggered by attempts by British and French governments to promote colonial capital projects and limited infrastructural development in colonies under the assumption that this investment would boost chances of the metropolitan countries’ recovery from their post-war recession. New capital projects such as hydro-electric power generation, mechanization of agriculture, capacitation and development of some industries were undertaken. However, it is gross exaggeration to assume, as Fieldhouse does, that these initiatives “...stimulated an unprecedented expansion of African economies which was still under way when the colonies received their independence” and that,

16 Cooper, Africa Since 1940, p. 5.
“...the African economies, far from being ‘underdeveloped’, were well equipped for sustained development, provided that they maintained the sensible policies previously imposed on them by the colonial authorities.”  

The allocated funds for most of these projects were insufficient to meet the overall developmental needs. Marxist theorists, which Fieldhouse is critical of, help us to understand why this investment was minimal. A key argument by Giovanni Arrighi (quoting Oskar Lange) in his discussion of the duality of the center (in this case, Western countries) and the periphery (in this instance, African countries) is instructive, notwithstanding its flaws. He rightly argues that there was no interest in making African economies competitive as this threatened Western economic monopoly.

With the development of large capitalist monopolies in the leading capitalist countries, the capitalists of those countries lost interest in developmental investment in the less developed countries because such investment threatened their established monopolistic positions.  

In British colonial Africa, settler colonies also engaged immigration experts to help them attract new white skilled immigrants to bring in human and financial capital to boost industry. This effort reaped very limited results because Africa competed with the new world, like New Zealand and Australia for immigrants. Moreover, the waves of protests that led to the first phases of decolonization in Africa during the 1950s scared away prospective immigrants and new investors, who preferred safer investment havens elsewhere. Protests and anti-colonial movements also added to the financial, military and administrative burden of sustaining colonies. For these reasons, the envisioned grand projects of the period usually called ‘the second colonial occupation’ in Africa were unsuccessful.  

These developments did not provide foundations for a dynamic, sustainable and strong African economy. As Cooper argued, African “…economies remained externally oriented and the state’s economic power remained concentrated at the gate between inside and outside.”  

Undiversified and unindustrialized economies remained, and these were entrenched by the entrance, after 1945 of bigger multinational corporations, mainly backed by America, whose economy was strengthening, relative to other Western countries that had been severely battered by the war. These added to the already existing traditional European capitalist monopolies, some of which were established in the 19th century, years before the scramble for Africa. The American corporation were however more technologically advanced and engaged in some basic low cost integrated manufacturing industries (such as Unilever’s turn into soap making and cooking oils in West Africa) which did not require highly skilled labour and riskier and high capital investments mainly in perceived stable African states, hence the increased investment in South Africa (and Brazil) where settler colonialism was entrenched.  

American multinational corporations grew mainly due to their government’s expenditure in research and development, which multiplied fivefold between 1948 and 1966, further strengthening the relationship between technology, state policy and resource extraction. By the 1960s, their market share in Africa had overtaken most British and French corporations that had focused almost exclusively on extracting raw material.  

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18 Fieldhouse, Black Africa, p. 30  
21 Cooper, Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 5. In other words, the colonial state was a gate-keeper state.  
22 Immanuel Wallerstein, ‘Globalization or the Age of Transition?: A Long-Term View of the Trajectory of the World System,’ International Sociology, 15, 2, 251-267.  
24 Seidman and Makgetla, Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism, pp. 7-10, 17-21.
Also relevant to the developmental colonial state’s initiatives after the war were the colonial officials’ attempts to control agriculture in African communities. In Kenya and in colonial Zimbabwe, for instance, new land laws were passed to deal with soil erosion and to enforce new farming practices. Technical experts were deployed to rural areas to teach Africans ‘modern’ ways of farming, usually by using force, such as the violence meted on Africans when the 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act was implemented in Zimbabwe. These top-down, emerging from Western notions land use and the Green revolution, completely ignored indigenous knowledge systems in Africa. This brought about massive peasant discontent which also spurred African nationalism cause in rural areas. Europe was not prepared for this political ferment in Africa, which happened when the West was already militarily and financially stretched because of the Second World War.

Another notable development in the colonies were the post-war advances in medicine, especially the availability of anti-malarial drugs which made it possible for new areas to be opened up for human settlement. In apartheid South Africa, this accelerated the movement of African people to what were called bantustans, so called African homelands, which were usually dry, inhospitable, and far from major transport networks. In colonial Zimbabwe, there were new waves of evictions to previously uninhabited areas as colonial officials alienated land in anticipation of the arrival of many new white immigrants. Medical advance also led to a general reduction in population mortality rates, which triggered rapid population increase in Africa after the war. Attempts to open up new districts for human settlement and agricultural production proved costly as there was need to invest in public infrastructure such as roads, health facilities, reliable and clean water supply, schools and others. These were rarely achieved as many new resettlements remained inaccessible from major routes. Population increase also called for increasing the economic and human capital costs of ‘native’ administration. The rising cost of colonial administration and infrastructure meant that new models of running the colonies should have been imagined. Moreover, it called for the need to plough back more money into colonial development, which the metropolitan countries were not prepared to do. Evidently, traditional colonial rule as was facing a crisis. In the absence of meaningful direct financial support from the metropoles, settler colonies were no longer going concerns.

In African communities, the rise of politically active African educated elites sharpened critiques of colonial power, especially through their writings and broadcasts. Educated Africans were not many, but were usually resolute and were generally respected by their African compatriots. People like Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Leopold Senghor, Ndabaningi Sithole and many others were using their connections to global emancipatory movements and socialist ideologies mainly from Eastern Europe to influence and radicalize political thought in their colonies and beyond. It is not a coincidence that most African protest movements of the late 1940s and 1950s happened at a time similar movements were happening globally, chiefly the August Revolution of 1945 that created the Republic of Vietnam; the Workers Party of Korea’s revolution that led to the birth of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in 1948; the Chinese Communist peasant victory of 1949, and the Cuban revolution (1953 to 1959).25 African nationalism grew partly as a result of local conditions within certain African states which were further radicalized by the philosophies and revolutionary ideas of African intellectuals of the time, one of which was pan-Africanism, championed in Africa by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Nkrumah’s radical writings were inciting Africans to unite and jettison colonialism, arguing that there was no way the means and relations of production would ever change in Africa unless colonialism was overthrown. He stressed, “…the only solution to the colonial problem is the complete eradication of the entire economic system of colonialism, by colonial peoples, through their gaining political independence. Political freedom will open the way for the attainment of economic and

social improvement and advancement.” True to Nkrumah’s thoughts, Sudan got independent in 1956 and Ghana in 1957 after Nkrumah raised radical youths and women protesters. Many other colonies followed suit until the last African state (South Africa) got liberated in 1994. By the 1970s, more than three-quarters of Africa had become politically independent.

A number of factors led to decolonization. One was the change in official thinking about the economics and politics of empire especially in post-war Britain which was now under the Labour Party. Secondly, the costs of suppressing political movements in Africa were heavy, as Britain realized in Kenya. Thirdly, the anti-colonialism pressure from the America government, which was a rising global economic giant after 1945 was also critical. America preferred a new economic model in the former colonies whereby Multinational Corporations would take advantage of the structural economic setting provided by the colonial governments to create a new relationship between Africa and the West. This is called new-colonialism. For it to thrive, neo-colonialism did not require formal political empires or colonies to exist, but only a manipulative and exploitative relationship with governments in Africa. Fourth, the crisis in certain European countries led them to decolonize. For instance Portugal which was poor and badly governed ousted its dictator, Salazar. He was replaced by a new government which feared the embarrassment of continuing to fight a losing battle against African nationalist movements. This led to abrupt decolonization in Portuguese Africa. As for France, French colonies collapsed following the embarrassing defeat in Algeria, which happened after protracted efforts by the French to repress anti-colonial demonstrations in their West African colonies since 1945.

We are now able to summarize the above sections as follows: first, primarily, the relationship between Africa and the West since the colonial era has been unequal, as it had been characterized by systematic extraction of African resources by multinational corporations without corresponding local manufacturing industrial development. The colonial economy was what economic historian Hopkins, influenced by Dudley Seers’s writings, termed an open economy. An economy in such a phase exhibit the following characteristics that we identified above: First, it exports a very limited range of primary products and imports a wide range of largely consumer goods in return. Second, foreign interests dominate the major sectors of that economy. Third, corporations exercise strong influence on colonial economic policies, which are consequently developed in their favour. In other words, the colonial state acts as a legitimizing instrument for corporate looting by international corporations. Trade restrictions, for instance, are kept at bare minimum for the benefit of the corporations. Fifth, metropolitan powers expect the colonies to be self-sustaining financially, and puts in as little money as possible for the running of the colonies. This is why the biggest share of the budgets of most of the colonies were covered by taxes from the colonized and peasant mono-cropping agriculture. This also explains Africa’s weak public infrastructure at independence. And lastly, in an open economy, monetary system is an appendage of the colonizing country, as they system was designed to increase ties with the West. Monetary policy was controlled from abroad, with exchange controls manipulated to stem capital leakage from the colonizing country. For the colonies, this whole situation created an environment of dependency which post-independent Africa is still struggling to deal with. In essence, dependency theorists like Andre Gunder Frank and others were not wrong as their argument is backed by overwhelming evidence from every African country that experienced colonialism. The legacy of colonialism on African economies, which in turn dictated Africa’s relationship with the West must not be underestimated, so are other factors that we will also explore below.

Secondly, the post-war European economic situation paved way for the entrance and dominance of the African economy mainly by American multinational corporations (oligopolies). This was backed by America’s increased public spending on research and development, technology as well as its aggressive economic policies. America’s domination started when Europe’s major colonialists were weighed down, not only by the post war economic downturn but also by the rising economic costs of sustaining formal empires. The American neo-colonial approach later became an important vector in Africa’s post-colonial politics as African leaders tried to renegotiate their positions after independence. At the time of dependence, many African states experienced a generally similar trend, namely, the immediate capital flight of many small scale but skilled enterprises and an inflow of big conglomerates that specialized in raw material extraction and agro-based industries. This trend meant that the colonial pattern of capital investment for export purposes never changed after independence, but was further entrenched. Other than mining, these multinational corporations also focused on processing primary products for export purposes, or on import substitution by developing light industries that processed soap, cooking oil, textiles, beverages, footwear and others. These of course guaranteed them quick profits as they were daily domestic consumer needs. But, heavy manufacturing industries remained either non-existent or were export oriented, and this continued to stall Africa’s industrialization.29

Finally, at the time of independence, Africa also inherited a number of impediments. The majority of its African citizens were uneducated. Tertiary education was rare and the few universities that were there were still very new and degreeed Africans were a very tiny minority. In 1960, only 16 percent of the adult Africans were literate. In British settler colonies, a racialized dual education system existed, with Africans exposed to a system that did not help them to develop into highly skilled workers. In colonies under indirect rule, some Africans never got an opportunity to go to school at all. In Portuguese Africa, the education situation was a lot worse. In French colonial Africa, assimilationist education system was about wiping away any Africanness out of the Africans by integrating Africans to French culture so that the most educated Africans became (in theory) the most brainwashed and supporters of the French Union. In practice, reactions to French assimilation produced militant anti-colonialists like Leopold Senghor. At independence, the same Africans were expected to take over political power, serve in the public service, create policies that were meant to run the economy, and at the same time negotiate the murky waters of the Cold war era which complicated Africa’s international relations. In terms of infrastructure, most areas were unreachable because of poor road networks, most of them were gravel roads and electricity generation was below the required capacity to industrialize Africa. The agricultural sector had been compromised by the colonial regimes which had focused on cash crops. Moreover, land redistribution was a burden that African countries faced after independence, with no clear clue on how this could be done without upsetting the inflow of foreign direct investments. Economically, African families were generally poor as their earnings during colonialism were not competitive enough to encourage meaningful investment which would have created a basis for Afro-capitalism. There was severe racial economic inequality that makes it futile to argue about the economic performance of colonial Africa versus post-colonial Africa. Because of Africans’ widespread poverty (not to say that not a single African could empower themselves), most initiatives to empower black Africans would require efforts from the African governments themselves. This did not happen in most cases, and where this happened, it was usually marred by systemic challenges such as the politics of citizenship, such as was the case with the Ivory Coast cocoa agriculture which triggered the politics of autochthony versus foreigners, and also instances of corruption and nepotism elsewhere.30 Efforts to ensure broad based economic empowerment were also hampered by financial sustainability challenges. As we reiterated above, manufacturing was weak as companies continued extracting, also threatening to pull out whenever

governments try to do anything that is not in their favour, so the tax levied from the big corporations remained relatively low so much that most of their profits did not help develop the former colonies. Meanwhile, the new African governments faced a bloated civil service that increased public debt. These were some of the economic constraints facing Africa at independence, and the majority of these continued unabated till today. We will shortly do an overview of the general trends in Africa within the following periods: the 1960s, the late 1970s and 1980s, then the 1990s onward.

**Africa, 1960 to 1973**

Between these years, about three quarters of the African countries attained political freedom from colonialism, with Ghana leading the way in Sub-Saharan Africa. In North Africa, Egypt had already become independent in 1922, followed by Sudan in 1956. The exception were most countries in Southern Africa, some of which were under highly repressive white settler regimes and the Portuguese assimilationist dictatorship. Whereas decolonization was relatively peaceful in British West Africa where British ruled through indirect rule, it was not the case in the settler colonies of East and Central Africa. In settler colonies like Kenya, where there was a large body of white settlers, the struggle for independence was as violent as it was in French controlled Algeria. In this section, we will examine how Africa’s attempt to negotiate its own transition was affected not only by its bad political leadership and the colonial legacy on African institutions, but also by the overall international political environment, especially the politics of the Cold War. We also examine Western responses to certain African crisis and ways by which this exacerbated the crisis as opposed to solving them. Thereafter, we also examine the challenges faced by those countries that tried to replace capitalism with socialism as a developmental philosophy and economic principle and how this brought those states in a collision course with Western powers. We will finish this section with a brief analysis of Africa’s economic performance and Africa’s dealings with Western multinational corporations.

Independent Africa inherited weak social, political and economic institutions that were not suitable going forward, yet at the same time they weren’t easy to change as changing them would lead to instability. Let’s take the example of the Great Lakes region. In this region, colonial politics of divide and rule had created serious tensions between different ethnic groups. Here, the Belgians and British had practiced forms of indirect rule that solidified ethnic animosity between the ruling classes, usually the ‘nilotes’ (mainly Tutsi) who had been promoted to administrative and political positions and the majoritarian ‘bantu’ (mainly Hutu) who had been the recipients of colonial abuses meted on them by privileged Africans who served as the colonial agents. Following the rapid withdrawal of the British and Belgians there was chaos in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda since 1959 as majorities sought to overthrow old colonial political establishments and replace them with democratically elected regimes. In Rwanda, a Hutu controlled government came into power, resulting in many Tutsi, who experienced forms of state retribution leaving for exile mainly into Eastern Congo and Uganda. In the latter, these Rwandese refugees became involved in the local politics of their countries of adoption, resulting in their formation in Uganda, of a Tutsi militia called the Rwanda Patriotic Front, which helped Yoweri Museveni to ascend to power after he ousted Milton Obote. The same Rwanda Patriotic Front (with the tacit support of Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni) later invaded Rwanda in 1990, eventually leading to the 1994 genocide in which close to a million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed. In Burundi, a Tutsi monarchy was retained under Michel Micombero, resulting in the formation of all-Hutu political organizations in 1972 that attacked Tutsi people. This gave the Tutsi military regime excuse to attack Hutu people in revenge. The result was a loss of more than 100,000 Hutu lives and massive refugees outside the country, mainly in Tanzania and Rwanda, where the new governments were pro-Hutu. The crisis in Burundi would eventually lead to coups in 1987 and later. Contemporary Burundi is still struggling with this identity based politics which is still an important vector in the politics of this region. In other words,
there was a failure to deal with identity politics which had been solidified during colonialism. Attempts to create a peaceful environment by way of unity governments, power sharing arrangements, and peace accords only reaped short term rewards between the years 1960 and 2000. In Kenya, the new government of Jomo Kenyatta inherited in 1964 a weak constitution that weakened the powers of the central government as a result of the rivalries of ethnic groups that vied for power under a quasi-federal system. As a Unitarian nationalist and pan-Africanist, Kenyatta used his ingenuity – a combination of paternalism and statesmanship to create a unitary government and to run the economy in a nuanced mixture of strong capitalist leanings and very mild socialist ideas. He did this very well as he was perceived to be an astute father figure of the new nation. Although Kenyatta’s interventions ensured peace in Kenya during his reign, the unity between powerful ethnic groups (especially Kikuyu and Luo) was fragile as it was marred by disagreement between eve members of the same political party over national policies, due to ethnic antagonisms, and personal rivalries.\textsuperscript{31} His successor, Daniel Arap Moi, was unable to hold the country together enough and his reign was characterized by increasing use of violence against opponents and cronys.\textsuperscript{32} Many aspiring Luo politicians went into exile for fear of Arap Moi. The challenges of regionalism, political tribalism and even xenophobia are common problems in Africa. However, these emerged primarily within the colonial politics of divide and rule. Post-colonial African leaders usually resorted to the politics of ‘othering’ when their political positions came under threat. They often rallied minorities against minority others to perpetrate genocides and other vices, and also to promote one party state dictatorships. The fundamental challenge for Africa therefore, was the failure to reform the social and political architecture of the states they inherited. In this line, Crawford Young is correct when he said, “New political superstructure directed by the triumphant nationalist leaders was bolted onto the sturdy frame of colonial autocracy...In many silent ways, the mentalities and routines of the colonial state were absorbed into the quotidian action of its postcolonial successor.”\textsuperscript{33}

By the mid-1970s, a number of African countries had experienced political instability of one form or another. More than thirty military coups had occurred in Africa, with at least nine countries experiencing coups twice or more times. Benin alone (formerly Dahomey) experienced six coups between 1963 and 1972.\textsuperscript{34} Although bad African leadership is often blamed for instability in Africa (and some of the African leaders are indeed culpable), the role of Western powers in political processes in Africa also require closer scrutiny. In some African states, political instability happened as a result of either direct or indirect Western political interference. Most parts of Africa gained independence amidst the international political divide created by the Cold War rivalries between the East and Western blocs. Whereas, some African governments asserted their agency in negotiating these murky waters of the Cold War, others never got a chance to do so as their countries were subjected to Western interventions just after independence which worsened the confusion and made peaceful transition impossible. Some Western countries sponsored rebel movements, secessionist movements, and coups in Africa especially in the first two decades since 1960. Instability became the order of the day because of a combination of the internal weakness of African social and political institutions and the political and economic agenda of the intervening Western powers. This effectively turned most post-independence African states into quasi-states, relying on foreign patronage.\textsuperscript{35} The USA, in particular, sought strategic allies across the world to form a bulwark against the advance of Soviet communist expansion. A number of African countries were seen as

\textsuperscript{32} C. Young, The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, p. 165.  
\textsuperscript{33} Young, The Postcolonial State in Africa, p. 337.  
important regionally. Zaire (Congo), Morocco, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya were identified as strategic allies, and had diplomatic support provided them and foreign aid poured to them in exchange for political support of the USA and other Western countries. In some cases, Western governments intervened directly in the internal affairs of African countries, such as the USA’s involvement in the Angolan civil war in support of UNITA, a Cold War ally. In the Central African Republic, French foreign intervention was pervasive as the French government helped Jean-Bedel Bokassa a military ruler into power through a 1966 coup, only to depose him through another army coup that they sponsored in 1979 when he no longer served their economic and political interests. In Chad, the French supported Christian southerners into power against the Muslim northerners in exchange for continued French economic control over Chad in a neo-colonial setting. French troops were stationed in most of the country. This regional animosity led to rebel movements emerging from the North in 1968 which led to a civil war which the incumbent Tombalbaye, supported by French troops failed to control. He was eventually ousted from power in 1975. In a typical Cold War scenario, the northerners were getting support from Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi to fight the southerners under French support. This chaos continued into the 1980s and beyond. It is because of the traditional rivalry between the French and Libya that French troops directly intervened in Libya in 2011, leading to the killing of its leaders Muammar Gaddafi. In Congo, Belgian and American governments interfered in the country by supporting Moïse Tshombe, a secessionist who wanted to control Katanga, a rich copper mining region and use proceeds from corporate taxes to advance his secessionist agenda. Lumumba was murdered within a year of assuming office because he was an avowed communist ally. Since Lumumba’s death, Congo has never known peace, beginning with the thirty-two year dictatorship of Mobutu who was a key American cold war ally in central Africa. For this reason, his human rights abuses of the Banyamulenge of the eastern parts of the country, his killing of opposition members, his kleptocracy, his huge patronage system, and other forms of misrule were never questioned, but rather abetted by the Americans and Belgians authorities who had close corporate and political interests in the country. During this time, Congo, now named Zaire, received massive financial aid from Western multilateral institutions, which Mobutu diverted to sustain his dictatorship by paying his vertical and horizontal patronage networks. It only became prudent for the West to criticize Mobutu’s excesses in the early 1990s, a few years after the end of the Cold War, when the human rights agenda had become the new way of perpetuating Western influence in Africa. Western governments dumped him and began supporting his rivals. Mobutu’s successor Laurent Kabila was also a dictator, so is the incumbent Joseph Kabila, who, like his predecessors has failed to deal with the multiple crises facing the country. Perpetual instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo has always created an important environment for multinational corporations to continue to loot the Congolese economy as they had done since the colonial era. So, overwhelming evidence from across Africa demonstrate the relationship between political instability and bad western interference. But perhaps another challenge for Africa was its adoption of socialism, not so much its mere adoption as such, but the implications of this move for Africa’s relationship with the predominantly capitalist West. We will briefly examine that below.

Independent Africa had no clear socio-economic and political model to learn from. Colonial regimes had not created institutions that could be fully relied on, yet completely destroying such institutions would also have been disastrous and reforming them was not going to be easy too. The future of Africa therefore, lay in attempting alternative experiments, but the danger was that such experiments were being done using old colonial apparatus – especially the state’s violent machinery and its top-down approach to politics and development. Some governments also paid lip service to these alternative experiments. An important ideology that had propelled African governments into power was the promise by the leaders to oust capitalism and establish socialist states in which resources and the fruits of the labours of *maAfrica* would be shared equally. This obviously had some appeal from mainly the African poor who had been on the receiving end of capitalism since the colonial era, yet they did not fully understand what lay ahead for them. Socialism was also intellectually received in Africa because of the frustrations with failures that came with attempts to develop Africa using the Western economic models. So it was seen as an alternative model, yet this too was unsuccessful. The third reason for preferring socialism was the mistaken belief that socialism would stem rampant corruption and misappropriation of funds by political leaders. The assumption was that corruption was a capitalist thing. The fourth reason for adopting capitalist was the assumption that African societies have traditionally been collectivist, and therefore closer to socialism than capitalism. But socialism, as espoused by the new African governments was not on the lines of African traditional collectivist pre-colonial lifestyles where societies operated on the basis of consensus, with multiple centres of power in the form of ethnic groups, clans and kingdoms. The socialism of the post-1960s was based on centralized political power, with one party governments dictating the socialist agenda, as was the case in Asian dictatorships and in socialist Russia. The tendency of African socialist government to compel its citizens to undertake certain development projects without sufficient prior consultations with them appeared to mirror a very colonial model of mobilizing the populace into state projects. This ultimately led to serious discontent and ultimately military coups, as happened in Nkrumah’s Ghana in 1966. Moreover, broad-based collectivist understandings of socialism were superimposed on African societies which had been fragmented into rival ethnic groups and economic classes, which made developmental projects difficult to implement on a one size-fits-all basis. Additionally, African political elites in one party never fully agreed on how to implement socialism in their countries, often clashing on state policy matters. And finally, African socialism was doomed to fail because it was being adopted, without adaptation to African economies which had long been so tightly linked to global capitalism, which Africa did not have control over. As Ali Mazrui correctly said, “If the genius of capitalism is production, the genius of socialism is distribution. And yet one cannot distribute poverty or socialize the means of non-production. Africa will need to develop a productive capacity before it can meaningfully implement a programme of distribution. At least to some extent Africa has to become capitalist before it can genuinely become socialist.” Africa’s socialist countries were well meaning in their attempt to champion an alternative developmental framework. However, such efforts were not successful because of certain systemic flaws in the inherited economy and also because any move towards socialism was a total affront to the Western powers which immediately put Africa in a difficult political and economic position as the Western governments and corporations withdrew their capital from such countries. They also sponsored local rebel movements and regional neighbors which had taken the capitalist route, as happened between Ghana and Ivory Coast. Let us examine a few examples below

In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah took a socialist route. Nkrumah strongly and genuinely believed that socialism would be the central political philosophy, the critical social ideology that would unify all, and also that it would be the driving force behind Africa’s economic development agenda. But he was too radical and did not understand how intricately linked to the West and how small and fragile

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the Ghanaian economy was. He was like the builder that started building before counting the cost. Nkrumah’s immediate goal of industrializing Ghana through state controlled enterprises appeared to be very noble when he came to power in 1957. It was an attempt to move beyond the limited cocoa cash-crop economy inherited from the British. A key project was the Upper Volta hydro-electric project, from which Ghana would tap electricity require for major industrial projects. But this was too expensive and drained most of the loans that Ghana had borrowed from the Americans, which drowned the country into serious debt. Most of this loan had to be serviced using the hard earned monies of the overtaxed cocoa farming peasants, who were also underpaid.\textsuperscript{43} Eventually the Upper Volta dam was completed in 1966, the very year he got ousted through a coup. Nkrumah also had great difficulties convincing his opponents in government about economic strategy as they were divided between those who wanted private enterprise against his faction, which preferred public enterprise. However, Nkrumah’s Ghana did not have sufficient capital to develop import substitution industries, the mechanized farms and other state run businesses and those which had been developed realized massive loses because of mismanagement and possibly corruption.\textsuperscript{44} To deal with Ghana’s financial crisis, Nkrumah tried to nationalize some gold mines, but for fear of immediate Western criticism, he only targeted smaller mines instead of the Ashanti mines which were the largest. As the urban population grew, Nkrumah’s Ghana faced an urban food crisis, which further alienated Nkrumah from the very young people who had voted him into power. Soon he asked for food from America, which was not approved because of his radical ideas on neocolonialism.\textsuperscript{45} In rural areas, the plight of the peasants did not improve from what they were during colonialism because the state’s parasitic relationship with them continued. The indigenous business sector was unhappy with the tight controls on exchange rates, business permits, and other impediments. The army, whose older leaders were quickly removed and sometimes overlooked in promotion in favour of younger and inexperienced ones, became divided in a way that created an atmosphere of suspicion and tension. Nkrumah no longer had guaranteed military support. Some of his ministers felt sidelined as Nkrumah arrogantly pursued his socialism. Neighboring countries did not help Nkrumah’s fate as capitalist oriented ones such as Ivory Coast were thriving economically in the first decade up to the early 1970s. As internal opposition grew, Nkrumah engaged in some forms of dictatorship, especially the tendency to use preventive detention law to detain critics without trial. Similar laws had been used widely in British colonies and were still being used in the Southern African settler colonial to suppress African nationalists. His dictatorship emerged from his feeling of being misunderstood, and the general paranoia that came after an attempted assassination on him. Nkrumah was eventually ousted in absentia through a bloodless coup and exiled.\textsuperscript{46}

Although Nkrumah’s socialism was driven by a noble aim to indigenize the economy, it failed. The economy remained highly capitalist as foreign enterprises remained intact and British presence still strong. His leadership was a kind of charismatic leadership that depended on inspiring awe and fear and had almost built a personality cult around his figure. He did not do enough to ensure that his ideas were well understood at grassroots level and in his party leadership. His failure also had a lot to do with the constraints of the limited economy that he inherited. He also failed because of the influence of the West. Since his disagreement with the Americans in the 1960 Congo crisis, where he advocated non-Western intervention in the Congolese internal affairs as he believed in the ‘African solutions to African problem’ approach, his relations with the Americans and other Western countries was never the same. Western governments used pro-capitalist African states such as Ivory Coast, Malawi, Zaire, Kenya and Nigeria to thwart Nkrumah’s pan-Africanist ideas. These Africans

countries had no option as their risked losing financial aid and loans should they not be acquiescent. In Ghana itself, Nkrumah came under increasing American CIA rudder, with the spies secretly meeting with some of his unhappy government Ministers inciting them to rebel against Nkrumah for his alleged soviet leanings and his alleged authoritarianism. The American government was also very concerned about Nkrumah’s consistent attacks of neo-colonialism. Evidence from CIA files and other sources suggest that the CIA were directly in touch with the coup plotters and actively aided them. Nkrumah was replaced by a military regime which ruled and handed over power to a civilian government following the 1969 elections, but in 1981, Gerry Rawlings, a flight lieutenant took over power in a military coup once again. He engaged in pro-IMF and World Bank structural adjustment policies in an attempt to gain access to Western loans. He is credited for the good use of the IMF money, but he did not deal with the fundamental problems of creating economic self-sufficiency and alleviating poverty. Rawlings also failed to develop a democratic Ghana state but sustained a repressive state, yet he continued to receive financial support from the western multilateral institutions.

In Tanzania since 1967 to 1980, socialism as seen in the Ujamaa village system did not take into account various pre-existing community economies, such as those who had survived for years on cattle ranching since the pre-colonial era. When they were forced into villages, the evictees had to start to learn a new farming based-economy, which only drove them into abject poverty. Traditional local authorities, mainly chiefs were undermined and slowly became redundant because of inordinate political interference of the ruling party, TANU whose officials directed rural agricultural production. TANU organized people into cells, with cell leaders systematically replacing what were previously called headmen during the colonial era. These leaders became the new elites in rural areas, perpetuating inequality. The limited successes of the ujamaa villages programme was undermined in the mid-1970s by the drought of 1974 and the oil price hikes of the same decade, which made Tanzania a net food importer. The economy slowed down, with the Tanzanian currency devalued significantly, debts continued to mount, and with inflation rising sharply all leading to the decline in public support for Ujamaa. The Tanzanian story is not so different from that of the socialist government of Haile Mengistu which moved huge populations into resettlements after the 1973 droughts. These movements are largely blamed for the devastating Ethiopian famine of 1983 to 1985. Western attempts to pour in aid and loans to Ethiopia did not help it to emerge from its economic and social crisis. Instead this increased the country’s dependency on the West for its survival. In Mozambique, in the late 1970s and the 1980s, Samora Machel’s socialist regime compelled peasants to work on village co-operatives, in almost the same way they had been exploited under the Portuguese regime. Like Nkrumah, Machel did not live to

47 D. Rooney, Kwame Nkrumah, p. 226-28
48 Rooney, Kwame Nkrumah, pp. 252-54.
53 Falola, Key Events in African History, p. 258.

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see the end of his vision as he was killed by agents of the South African apartheid state. Elsewhere in Africa, many grand projects failed not merely because of corruption, bloated expenditures, mismanagement and the general inefficiency of the African state in conducting business, but also because of declining terms of trade with the West. Having said this, let us briefly examine the economic condition of Africa since independence.

Many newly independent African states attained independence partly because of the ideological and military support of the socialist countries. At the time of independence, their diplomatic and military ties with these socialist countries remained. However, Africa’s economic and cultural ties with the Western capitalist bloc remained in place after independence, even in those states that took up radical strains of socialism. African education continued to be offered in the languages of the former colonizers, with very little effort to intellectualize African languages for broader adaptation to the curricula. This had implications for indigenous knowledge systems, as this was also not intellectualized, sufficiently embraced and legitimized for economic development. In general the African economy continued to be run on Western models that favored foreign capitalist extraction and accumulation with no critical thinking about alternative models that would benefit the locality. Even socialist countries were not free from the trappings of accumulation as the state itself became a capitalist entity of sorts by controlling and directing production at state controlled businesses, by nationalizing some businesses, and also by forcing peasants to work for the state agricultural projects, supposedly to attain the goals of socialism. These failed dismally. African countries like Ivory Coast that took the capitalist route endured only for just over a decade after independence before their economies collapsed in the late 1970s. They relapsed into the dependency mode, saw a rapid collapse of their promising economic structures, eventually leading to deepening xenophobia, civil wars, coups and other vices. At the time Ivory Coast was being hailed as the African miracle, its leader Houphouet-Boigny, a conservative French assimilado was busy using the profits of the land to extend his personal rule, thwarting opposition and trade unions, and also to engage in the grand project of turning his village home of Yamoussoukro into the state capital of Ivory Coast. But how is it that neither the capitalist nor socialist model worked for Africa? The answer lies in the fact that neither socialism nor capitalism were fundamentally African ideologies, but were convenient models borrowed from elsewhere. Moreover, Africa’s ties to the West and the role of Western multinational corporations (MNCs) in African politics and economy have been underestimated. During the struggle for independence, there was been no careful thinking about how the African economies will be run after independence. The assumption had only been that political independence would make it possible for the leaders to use state power to control and dictate events, including economic policy. The assumption was wrong as African leaders underestimated the power and role of strong corporate interests and their linkages to global politics and multilateral institutions. They also did not realize that Western governments were planning carefully on how to dictate terms of engagement with Africa in the post-1960s.

Relations between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries were dictated by the 1957 Treaty of Rome which set in place the broader neocolonial framework of multilateral relations that would saddle Africa in the long run. This led to further conventions, generally known as the Lome Conventions which built upon this Treaty and further refined the original thoughts in this Treaty. The 1957 Treaty hinged on three critical points, which are: First, the gradual opening of markets of associated African countries to the exports of the EEC member states without discrimination. Secondly, the opening of EEC markets to the produce of associated African countries under preferential arrangements. And finally, the inauguration of social and economic investment programme in these overseas countries, financed by the European

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We can see from this that Africa played no part in determining terms of trade with the West under this Treaty and even in deciding on the nature of development finance which would be loaned to her. The first two points of the Treaty above illustrates the West’s intention to continue with the colonial system of syphoning raw material from Africa and the trading of finished goods to Africa. There was no intention by the Western powers to encourage Africa to fully industrialize. The ‘bail-out’ strategy in the Rome Treaty was a bait to pull Africa into the vortex of economic dependency. Former colonial powers knew exactly the fragility of the economies they left in African states, and how Africans would soon come for various forms of aid and loans. With the economic crisis of the 1970s which was mainly caused by the oil price hikes of 1973 and 1979, Africa’s fragile economies were severely affected as governments had no financial reserves and the necessary foreign currency to buy capital goods and food to feed its starving population. Africa consequently turned to Western loans and various forms of financial aid. This paved way for them to come under the neo-liberal regime of controls, with the IMF and World Bank imposing new, restrictive conditions under its structural adjustments programs. Since then, Africa never recovered from the huge debts that they incurred from these loans. Most of the debts kept being rescheduled as African countries were unable to service them. The ballooning debts and the associated mal-performing economies had serious political ramifications for the incumbent regimes, as they had to deal with widespread political opposition, rebel movements and so on at a time Africa’s (economically effective) population was being decimated by the HIV-AIDS virus. African dictatorships went a step further to contain this rising discontent. In Malawi, the Banda regime became more repressive, so was the Kaunda regime in Zambia, which was also struggling since the 1970s because of the falling copper prices. In Zimbabwe, the economy struggled to weather the challenge of restructuring, leading to the militarization of the trade union movement, which eventually became a political party in the late 1990s. In Somalia, Siad Barre’s regime became more repressive, leading to clans revolting, and to the eventual collapse of his regime in 1991. This marked the beginning of the enduring Somali crisis. In the same year, Haile Mengistu’s regime collapsed in Ethiopia. Barre and Mengistu were of course ‘collateral damage’ of the end of the cold war, them having been strong socialists. But a salient issue that also require some analysis is the role of MNCs that we alluded to above.

In postcolonial Africa, MNCs continued to maintain the old exploitative relationship with Africa, with the continued support of their mother countries, which were supposedly democratic, yet financially propping dictatorial regimes which resisted democratic change. In nine French speaking West African states (Benin, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, and Niger), French multinational corporations invested a considerable amount of money between 1960 and 1970 that surpassed their investments during the colonial era. As this was happening, there was relatively very little investments from the local African state coffers into industrial development during the same time so much that any assumed economic growth was basically capital growth of the MNCs themselves, not real sustainable growth of the African countries’ economies. As Samir Amin argues, the distribution of this foreign investment to the different sectors has continued to follow the colonial pattern of investing into agriculture, mining, energy, and fishing. However the total investment into these sectors was only a third of the total investment, with the rest going into infrastructure, housing, social services, and transport that were not directly linked to the productive sector. For this reason, only two countries (Ivory Coast and Mauritania) out of all these former French West African states realized reasonable economic growth between 1960 and 1970. The United States corporations were also another investor in Africa, especially into apartheid South Africa in the 1970s. Ironically this was the time South Africa was under economic sanctions, with the

60 S. Amin, Neocolonialism in West Africa, p. 268-69.
apartheid state perpetrating gross human rights violations against the black populace as evident in the Sharpeville massacres and other instances of violence. Scholars do not agree on exactly how much was invested by the USA to Africa between the 1960s and 1970. Suggested figures range from about $500 million to $755 million, with USA exports to settler ruled South Africa and Namibia alone totaling $563 million and their imports totaling only $208 million, epitomizing a negative balance of trade scenario.\(^61\) The story of negative balance of payments is pervasive all over Africa because of low industrialization levels and declining terms of trade.

Multinational companies continued to siphon investable surpluses from Africa in almost the same way companies did during the colonial era. Seidman and Makgetla argue that between 1965 and 1975, USA firms directly sent home more than $601 million, which was twenty five percent more than their original investments.\(^62\) This figure does not include other unreported capital leakage and income from their shady business deals in war-torn countries. Having recouped their investments, MNCs are under no serious pressure to stay in some African countries, especially when there is a drastic change in the investment climate in that country. They can leave at will or siphon money from one part of Africa and invest in another continent. Moreover, the fact that some of these companies are in a stronger position financially than the state in Africa encourage them to defy government orders and threaten to disinvest should African governments pass laws that seek to demand them to invest a larger portion of the profits locally or to sell shares to indigenous populations. Facing demands to sell some of its shares to Nigerian indigenous businesspeople in the mid-1970s, American owned Citibank chose to leave Nigeria than to sell. In many cases, Western countries directly intervened to contain the threats of nationalization of some MNCs by signing investor protection agreements to protect their companies in African countries.\(^63\) This protection is always necessary because MNCs are the chief agents of Western neo-colonialism as they help to maintain Africa’s dependency on the West by dictating business terms on the poor and desperate African states which are also divided amongst themselves because of a lack of coherent pan-Africanist agenda. As Markovitz argued, the power of the MNCs lie in the fact that they “represent the forces that have created the world market system,” evidently the Western countries. In this regard, one understands the then USA Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger’s United Nations General Assembly address of 1975. Here, he declared that transnational enterprises were the “engine of development” warning that the host governments must treat these enterprises, “equitably without discrimination … [and] not as objects of economic warfare.”\(^64\) Kissinger had to defend the MNCs because they are the mainstay of the American economy. In the mid-1970s, American MNCs accounted for 62 percent of American exports, 35 percent of American imports of manufactured goods, and about a third of America’s domestic economic activity. In the early 1970s, their largest MNC, General Motors was bigger than the Gross National Product of most of the countries internationally, including some European countries, having a turnover of more than $36 billion.\(^65\)

MNCs also thrived in Africa, as they did elsewhere, because of their patronage networks with corruptible African politicians and rebel movements. In the Congo, Belgian and American MNCs supported and even paid ‘taxes’ to Moise Tshombe’s so as to thwart communist supporter Lumumba whom they feared would nationalize their businesses. During the reign of Mobutu, MNCs promoted his kleptocracy and dictatorship in exchange for favorable business deals and limited scrutiny. During Kabila’s era, they helped ferment disorder as this helped them to continue extracting mineral resources, especially diamond, even as the conflict raged on. In Nigeria, soon after the discovery of oil and the beginning of oil mining operations, a coup took place resulting in

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\(^61\) Mazrui, *Africa’s International Relations*, p. 165.

\(^62\) Seidman and Makgetla, *Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism*, p. 49.


\(^64\) Markovitz, *Power and Class in Africa*, p. 92, 95.

military rule. This was followed by a second crisis, the Biafra civil war (1967 to 1970), with the Igbo-dominated Biafra region, the source of most of the oil, turning to French support to secede from the Nigerian state. The British and the Soviet Union supported the central Nigerian government instead. Whereas the French hoped to enter the Nigerian oil market by supporting a secessionist movement, the British government supported the central government under which its oil corporations Shell-BP were already operating, having long secured oil prospecting licenses during the colonial era.

Concluding his analysis of the role of MNCs in Africa, Markovitz had no kind words:

The MNCs pour asbestos into drinking water, Sulphur dioxide into the air, hormones into cattle, mercury into fish. The MNCs pollute, they corrupt. They buy prime ministers and pay the 10 percent to administrative officials. The willingness of indigenous nationalists to accept bribes should not divert attention from the bribers. If the MNCs can, as alleged, bribe the Dutch royal family and arrange payoffs to Japanese prime ministers, they can do it to anybody...the multinational corporation represents the latest chapter in the long history of the continued expansion of national capitalism.

His criticism was not off the mark. The history of these corporations in Africa is not a good one. By the mid-1970s, Africa had been driven by the same corporations into bankruptcy, with negative balance of trade and very limited foreign currency reserves. They had become more indebted and their economies in dire straits.

‘The Lost Years’: 1973 to 1990

During the period, Africa’s economy was severely battered, even as its political institutions were challenged. Economically, two key issues are worth exploring here – the fall in oil prices and the associated economic distress. In this misery, Africa turned to the World Bank and the IMF for more loans. However, assessing the economic environment in Africa, the IMF and the World Bank took on more interventionist approaches guided by the new neo-colonial world order supported by strong neo-liberalist thinking. Politically, there was an increase in the number of military regimes and limited efforts at political change since the mid-1980s.

We already noted how post-colonial Africa inherited narrow, unindustrialized economies. In the 1960s and the 1970s, African governments engaged in different economic development initiatives, most of which failed because of inordinate political interference and because of lack of sufficient skills base to drive the economic agenda, among other reasons. In Ivory Coast, government continued profiteering from cocoa monoculture, but did not diversify their economy early enough to prepare for life beyond cocoa agriculture. In Nigeria, the discovery of oil which was immediately followed by a protracted civil war resulted in a switch from a predominantly agrarian economy that produced cocoa, palm oil, palm kernel and groundnuts to a spigot economy. The country became one of Africa’s biggest net food importers, whose peasants and other farmers were driven out of farming because of the rising costs of agricultural production. In Ghana, Nkrumah tried to industrialize the economy by initiating a hydro-electricity generating scheme, but this noble investment drained most of the country’s financial reserves. We noted how governments of Mozambique, Tanzania, Ethiopia and others engaged in ambitious state controlled agricultural ventures, which only led to internal political opposition from below and to serious food crisis. In many countries, governments tried to deal with the problem of dependency, especially the skewed balance of trade in which their earnings from exports were much less than their imports. African

66 Markovitz, ibid, p. 96-97.
governments tried to set up small manufacturing industries which produced certain goods locally so as to substitute the huge import costs. Import substitution was a very noble idea had there been sufficient capital, managerial and political capacity to deal with the growing international economic competition in the 1970s and 1980s. Under the import substitution strategy, governments provided certain special incentives to industry such as access to cheap credit, protected markets, favourable exchange rates, and state subsidies. The assumption was that such industries would eventually grow and generate surpluses to make them self-sustaining and competitive in the international markets. Unfortunately these industries did not grow, but either became retarded or moribund. They could not compete with bigger international MNCs which had already gained many concessions from the African governments. The urban development bias and the inefficiency of state controls are also to blame. Most of the state enterprises were unsuccessful, with many them requiring the state to bail them out of debt. Whereas state control of the economy worked during the colonial era because the colonies were themselves controlled by the Western powers that in turn controlled international economic processes, state control of the local African economies after independence would not work in a world where Africa was not a key global economic player. Increasing state controls over the economy also led to disinvestment and capital flight, which made Africa more vulnerable economically as this reduced overall corporate tax collections. To stem capital flight, desperate African governments had to acquiesce to the demands of its belligerent international investors.

There were others efforts to grow the African economies. Attempts to modernize agriculture and encourage peasant agriculture failed to move Africa beyond the colonial model of parasitism. Efforts to encourage economic growth via regional integration initiatives were met with lack of political will to unite and also the lack of agreement on the overall economic agenda of the various African states. Some parts of African countries are not linked at all to other countries as the existing road networks have not yet been developed beyond the old colonial trade routes. Today, Africans still find it more difficult to travel to and trade with a neighboring country, yet their European and Chinese counterparts usually require no visa to visit and conduct business in parts of Africa.

Although Africa’s economic challenges predates the 1970s, African economies became more challenged in the 1970s than they were in the 1960s. This was mainly due to the global recession of the decade which hit Sub-Saharan Africa, whose economies were based on exporting raw materials. Between 1970 and 1975, Africa’s growth rates were lower than other least developed countries. This was due to the global hike in oil prices of 1973, which affected agricultural and industrial development, and the drought of 1974 which drastically increased Africa’s food import costs. As the economies tried to recover, they were hit by other oil price shocks in 1979. This triggered a sharp increase by the international financial institutions of interest rates, supposedly to curtail reckless spending, at a time African governments were borrowing more to keep their countries afloat. In addition, Africa also experienced droughts between 1983 and 1984. Consequently, Africa’s economic growth rate was as low as one and half to two percent in the mid-1980s, the lowest since 1960. Economies that had thrived in the 1960s began to collapse, and Ivory Coast, which had been hailed as the African miracle severely declined economically, with all its financial reserves drying up. Zambia’s once successful copper industry also collapsed due to declining terms of trade. In Zaire

Congo) Mobutu’s patronage was tested as he no longer had enough wealth to distribute to his loyalists due to the fall in copper prices from the Katanga. In Ethiopia, in the 1980s, pictures of famished people began to appear on the British Television, all heralding the sorry state of Africa. The widespread economic crisis made it difficult for Africa to service its earlier debts to international multilateral financial institutions. By 1987, Sub-Saharan Africa’s external debt stood at US$129 billion, which was roughly about 47 percent of the continent’s Gross Domestic Product. This indebtedness was worsened by the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s, dictatorial regimes had accessed cheap credit from Western funders because of their cold war loyalty. They used most of the monies to defend themselves from coups and rebel movements as opposed to developing their economies. The economic crisis made it difficult for African countries to import capital goods to revive the collapsing import substitution industries. To recover the monies that was owed by African governments to them, the International Monetary Fund and the World Banks, starting in the late 1970s began to tighten their funding criteria in a manner that fundamentally deepened Africa’s economic crisis. They forced Africa into what was called structural adjustment programs (SAPs).

The basic assumption of the World Bank, as evident in their ideologue, Berg’s 1981 report was that Africa’s economic crisis was a product of it local economic distortions that he blamed on inappropriate government policy interventions and lack of institutional reform. He cited over protection of industry hampering external competition, exchange rate controls that made African currencies stay overvalued and discouraging international trade, a raft of state subsidies which were increasing public debt, and also the bloated civil service, the agriculture development bias, among other things. With the exception of Ghana where food production temporarily increased in the mid-1980s, structural adjustments in most parts of Africa severely affected agricultural production, with the removal of state subsidies leading to high input costs which increased producer prices, yet without a corresponding increase of the price of the final product on the international market. This severely affected cash crop agriculture and domestically, it worsened poverty and further slowed Africa’s economic growth. Education and health care services became more expensive as state subsidies were removed, so were the job losses which became more pronounced as companies tried to cut off production costs by retrenching workers. Structural adjustments did not help deal with the problem they proposed to address, but rather drove Africa in acute economic and political crisis which increased Africa’s dependency on the West. As John Loxley and Bonnie Campbell argued, “...Never before have the international financial institutions wielded such pervasive influence on policy formulation in Africa: not since the days of colonialism have external forces been so powerfully focused to shape Africa’s economic structure and nature of its participation in the world system.” SAPs reduced African governments’ capacity to industrialize as their emerging import substitution and other industries came under severe competition from international suppliers from more industrialized countries under the market deregulation regime. The export bias of the SAPs also meant continued focus on cash crops, which compromised Africa’s food security. Additionally, the SAPs did not lay out any clear strategy to take Africa out of debt. What was clear was the intention to increase lending to Africa, even to highly indebted countries, increasing economic dependency on the West, with more money transferred to the West than was initially loaned. Between 1984 and 1990, there was a net transfer of $156 billion from Sub-Saharan Africa to the Western countries, with $4.7 billion being repaid to the IMF and the World Bank alone between

75 A. Adetoju (ed), The Impact of Structural Adjustment on the Population of Africa, pp. 5-6
1986 and 1990, incidentally when Africa was struggling economically.\(^{77}\) This reduced Africa’s ability to develop alternative approaches to economic development beyond the IMF and World Bank SAPs program. However, what is also not usually said is the political repercussions of the SAPs on Africa.

Evidence suggests a corresponding relationship between the SAPs oriented economic change and the entrenchment of one party dictatorships as African governments tried to contain popular discontent from everywhere. As Legum correctly observed, “By the beginning of the 1990s, forty-two [African] states were under either military or single party rule, and only five still maintained multiparty systems.”\(^{78}\) Legum however did not see the SAPs and politics nexus. In Morocco, the mere announcement by government in 1984 that subsidies would be cut led to countrywide streets protests which invited high levels of police and military brutality as government sought to contain its restless populations, arresting over 9000 protesters and killing about 400 people in the process.\(^{79}\) The story was the same in most African countries. In Zimbabwe, the implementation of SAPs radicalized the trade union movement and the student organizations, with the result that government also used police force to control protests in 1989 and in the early 1990s. In Ivory Coast, economic hardships brought about increasing xenophobia as the politics of citizenship was evoked in claims to land, which eventually led to more human rights abuses as citizens protested against the Boigny regime, which eventually collapsed in 1993. Boigny also used brute force to suppress protesting students, teachers and workers in 1990, arresting more than 100 people. In Zambia in 1985, rioting against the state happened following almost a decade of government’s association with the SAPs. This forced Kaunda to temporarily break from the IMF and World Bank reforms, before reintroducing them in 1986. The Zambian riots led to the loss of 15 lives as government sought to contain this discontent. Citizens soon started mass gatherings demanding political change.\(^{80}\) In Zaire, the state collapsed as civil servants could no longer afford to go to work, with soldiers abandoning Mobutu as he could no longer financially sustain his patronage networks in the country. The list is endless, but all this points to the fact that in the 1980s, dictatorial tendencies had strong origins in economic crises facing neoliberal Africa. We are therefore correct to argue that dictatorship was not causa sui and that it was not always to be blamed on the characteristics of individual African politicians.

When it became evident that Africa’s economies were not reviving and that there was a rise in African political ferment, the West changed its political game. This started in the late 1980s, particularly after 1989. For the first time in history, Africa’s poor economic performance was blamed on Africa’s bad politics and fragile institutions. Democracy and economic development began to be seen as Siamese twins. This became an important facet of Africa’s engagement with the West since the end of the Cold War, which saw the weakening and collapse of communist regimes.

**From 1990s onward**

The collapse of communist dictatorial regimes internationally in the late 1980s had serious repercussions for Africa. African countries that had benefitted from the military, diplomatic and financial support of communist countries were in a crisis. Revolts in communist controlled Ethiopia, Somalia, and Liberia, for instance resulted in chaotic second transitions in these countries, the first transitions being the transition from colonialism. Countries that had sided with neither the capitalist nor the communists, in what was called the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), did not perform better

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\(^{78}\) C. Legum, *Africa Since Independence*, p. 49.


\(^{80}\) B. Turok, ‘Towards a Democratic coalition against SAP’, pp. 131-144.
as they were also beset by increasing poverty. Those countries that had benefitted from Western support during the Cold War were also in a quandary as to what the future held for them. Some of them began to collapse as a result of declining Western financial support in the 1990s. It is important to know that although most African countries crafted investor friendly laws in the late 1980s and 1990s with the view to attract more foreign capital, Sub-Saharan Africa of the 1990s experienced very low levels of foreign direct investment (FDI) when compared to Latin America and Asia. Ghana, which crafted a sound economic development package in 1985 only secured a total FDI of one billion by 1991, which was insufficient to meet its development needs. The story was the same in Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Malawi and many other countries. Although this poor FDI position is easily blamed on the fact that many African governments were still under coups and military rule, therefore not investor friendly, it is also true that the West has generally been unwilling to promote industrialization projects in Africa that would have resulted in Africa becoming economically self-sufficient. Critical to this section are the changes in the west’s terms of engagement with Africa, especially the rise of the language of democracy and human rights which did not seem to be important before 1989.

Western financiers, backed by their governments which drew up country ‘fact files’ came up with one major argument – that African dictatorships were the major cause of Africa’s poor economic performance. It is little wonder that the era in which economic men ruled African politics (the IMF and World Bank), backed by their political men who supported them (the Western powers) saw to the promotion of this key idea – the notion of political and economic liberalization. There were increased calls by Western countries to have Africa twin governance and democratization to the broader questions of economic reform and increased economic accountability. In both cases, civil societies had to emerge so as to serve as human rights and rule of law watchdogs to blow the whistle so that those in political positions would not abuse their positions. When the IMF and World Bank started their SAPs in Africa, they never concerned themselves with Africa’s political questions. This concern started in 1989 with the World Bank starting to mention the term ‘governance’ in its discussion of Africa’s developmental issues, blaming Africa’s internal political conditions and weak commitment to policy and political reform for the failures of their SAPs. Given its global reach, especially in the West, the World Bank set the pace for other international investors and donors to Africa, who also joined the governance bandwagon. The World Bank led attacks on Africa criticizing the continent as having severely declining quality of governance, creeping bureaucracy, weak judiciary, inadequate rule of law, corruption and rent seeking tendencies, and ‘deep political malaise’ which were making it impossible for Africa to cope with ‘rapid modernization’. Following this highly negative slant, many Afro-pessimists rose in the academia pandering to the same World Bank whim. Thus, Africa began to be described in the academic, mainly in the post-1990s, as having vampire states, kleptocratic regimes, rogue regimes, failed states and so on. Such depictions usually seek to diminish the interface between this bad governance and bad Western interventions that we have clearly elucidated in this chapter.

In their attempts to operationalize reforms in Africa, the World Bank had, by 1994 initiated civil service reforms in 29 countries so as to contain bloated civil service costs and to privatize state enterprises as well. The bank also enforced legal reforms in Uganda, Angola, Ivory Coast, Cape

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Verde, Ghana, Mali, and Guinea to promote human rights and contracts which would have affected the private sector loans and credits. They also undertook projects that focused on legal training and awareness such as the ones offered by the Legal Resources Foundation in Zimbabwe and many others in Tanzania, Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Zambia. The Bank also sponsored women gender awareness and activisms across Africa with the stated view to empower women economically in the ultimate. Aggressive efforts were made to support grassroots non-governmental organizations under the banner of empowering people so that they could counter the neo-patrimonial state. Some of the NGOs were also given much money to undertake development work and were trained on capacity building. In schools, curricula were brought to scrutiny for their overall economic value, so were funds made available to laboratories and libraries within the overall rationalization schema. At this was not helpful for many reasons. First, the World Bank systematically distorted Africa’s post-colonial developmental experience and did not appreciate a myriad of reasons why certain developmental initiatives had failed. Its own explanations were not the whole story, as the Bank did not appreciate Africa’s global constraints. Moreover, there was no proven link between economic development and democracy, and as the Asian economies demonstrated, their economies grew the most under dictatorial regimes that enforced and directed economic programs in almost the same way that Ivory Coast had developed under the dictatorship of Boigny, especially before the 1970s crisis.

In most cases, African countries were not sufficiently persuaded by the World Bank’s political demands. However, they ‘adopted’ them under duress for purposes of conforming so as to gain access to Western financial aid and loans. According to Crawford Young, by 1991, more than forty states had either undertaken political liberalization or had promised to implement such reforms. A number of old African regimes were voted out of office, in addition to those who were ousted through military coups. Critical however is the fact that the World Bank and other funders were willing to work with amenable dictatorial regimes that appeared to have reformed themselves under a semblance of democracy, such as Senegal, Gambia and Mugabe’s Zimbabwe in the 1990s. Other dictators like Yoweri Museveni of Uganda received so much foreign aid in the 1990s, being well liked by the West, especially after the demise of Mobutu. In Rwanda, Paul Kagame continued to gain Western support by playing the victim card after the 1994 Rwandan genocide, even when evidence of extra-judicial killings of political and ethnic enemies in the country continued to surface. The West itself watched the horror happening in Rwanda where close to a million people were killed. Another pint is that where communist regimes collapsed like in Somalia, the West watched the country degenerate into chaos, perhaps because there was relatively very little wealth for their corporations to tap from the country. In Ethiopia, the fall of Mengistu’s regime did not lead to democratization, but to protracted ethnic fights particularly regarding resource allocation. During the rest of the 1990s, both countries heavily depended on donor aid, this being the West’s major input into the countries for decades. This is also similar to the West’s approach in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where food and military aid have been availed there for decades, without a corresponding action on how to deal with the civil conflict in which foreign interest groups have played an active part. Even amidst this conflict, some Western companies are involved in mining and smuggling conflict diamonds and other minerals.

**** ON NGOs and AID to Africa **** to be completed

Conclusion: Whither Africa

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86 R. Lemarchand, The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania University Press, 2009, see Ch.7 generally.
In short, we have found the following to be true. First, colonial economic structures were replicated in the post-colonial era, and where there were attempts to modify them, there were more often than not uprisings in African states. In Congo, this happened, with Belgian and American companies and intelligence forces supporting the secessionist Moïse Tshombe against the nationalist Patrice Lumumba. Secondly, African leaders who took over power had no political model to learn from. Colonialism had not showcased good governance, but had thrived on divide and rule and forms of patronage, be it in the form of direct rule colonialisms, indirect rule or even assimilationist colonialisms. Thus the politics of patronage in Africa were merely an extension of bad leadership that was inherited from the colonial era, and of course perfected after independence as stakes for political control became narrower due to the challenges of putting down rebellions, banditry, political tribalisms, calls for secession, and other forms of political expression manifested in Africa.

Third, Kwame Nkrumah’s vision of seeking first the political kingdom as a pathway to gaining economic freedom was noble, but it was not fulfilled. Africa struggled to deal with the challenges of overcoming neo-colonialism, and also of developing countries out of a traditionally narrow economic units that colonies were before independence.

Another significant point is that, with the exception of a few African countries where political figures had clear plans of action, like Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Mozambique and a few others, some new African leaders had not necessarily prepared themselves for leadership over the new states, with many lingering questions about the future having never been considered. In contrast, the West had planned more carefully about it engagement with post-independent Africa. Where their planning was not so good, Western countries took advantage of opportunities that presented themselves in Africa, particularly political and economic instability, ideological confusion, and the lack of unity between African states, to reassert their new forms of control in the different African countries.