POS 213
Politics in Africa I

Course Manual

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Copyright

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Vice-Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfillment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.

Prof. Isaac Adewole

Vice-Chancellor

Foreward

As part of its vision of providing education for "Liberty and Development" for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.
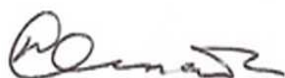
Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.

The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre's provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.

Professor Bayo Okunade

Director

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About this Error! No text of specified style in document.

Error! No text of specified style in document. Error! No text of specified style in document. has been produced by **Error! No text of specified style in document.**. All **Error! No text of specified style in document.**s produced by **Error! No text of specified style in document.**are structured in the same way, as outlined below.

How this Error! No text of specified style in document. **is structured**

The course overview

The course overview gives you a general introduction to the course. Information contained in the course overview will help you determine:

- If the course is suitable for you.
- What you will already need to know.
- What you can expect from the course.
- How much time you will need to invest to complete the course.

The overview also provides guidance on:

- Study skills.
- Where and how to get academic support and technical help.
- Course assignments and assessments.
- Margin icons.
- Study Sessions.

We strongly recommend that you read the overview *carefully* before starting your study.

The course content

The course is broken down into Study Sessions. Each Study Session comprises:

- An introduction to the Study Session content.
- Study Session outcomes.
- Core content of the Study Session with a variety of learning activities.

- A Study Session summary.
- Assignments and/or assessments, as applicable.
- Bibliography

Your comments

After completing **Error! No text of specified style in document.**, we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this course. Your feedback might include comments on:

- Course content and structure.
- Course reading materials and resources.
- Course assignments.
- Course assessments.
- Course duration.
- Course support (assigned tutors, technical help, etc.)

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this course.

Course Overview

Welcome to Error! No text of specified style in document. Error! No text of specified style in document.

POS213 is a three unit required course that exposes learners to the problems of conceptualising African politics and various historical experiences which have abiding influence on politics in Africa today. Furthermore, the course will discuss how internal social structures, especially relations of production, exert influence on political power distribution and the consequences of external and international division of labour, in particular, on African politics.

It is important to note that this course - Politics in Africa I, is followed by Politics in Africa II (POS214).

Course outcomes

Upon completion of **Error! No text of specified style in document. Error! No text of specified style in document.**, you will be able to:

Outcomes

- *discuss* politics in the pre-colonial Africa.
- *highlight* the types of colonial administration in Africa.
- *analyse* the theories and practice of imperialism in Africa.
- *discuss* the consequences of imperialism on African states and politics.

Timeframe

How long?

This is a 15 week course. It requires a formal study time of 45 hours. The formal study times are scheduled around online discussions / chats with your course facilitator / academic advisor to facilitate your learning. Kindly see course calendar on your course website for scheduled dates. You will still require independent/personal study time particularly in studying your course materials.

How to be successful in this course

As an open and distance learner your approach to learning will be different to that from your school days, where you had onsite education. You will now choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself in areas such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the web as a learning resource.

We recommend that you take time now—before starting your self-study—to familiarize yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the web. A few suggested links are:

- http://www.dlc.ui.edu.ng/resources/studyskill.pdf

    This is a resource of the UIDLC pilot course module. You will find sections on building study skills, time scheduling, basic concentration techniques, control of the study environment, note taking, how to read essays for analysis and memory skills ("remembering").

- http://www.ivywise.com/newsletter_march13_how_to_self_study.html

    This site provides how to master self-studying, with bias to emerging technologies.

- http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php

    Another "How to study" web site with useful links to time management, efficient reading, questioning/listening/observing skills, getting the most out of doing ("hands-on" learning), memory building, tips for staying motivated, developing a learning plan.

The above links are our suggestions to start you on your way. At the time of writing these web links were active. If you want to look for more, go to www.google.com and type "self-study basics", "self-study tips", "self-study skills" or similar phrases.

Need help?

Help

As earlier noted, this course manual complements and supplements **Error! No text of specified style in document.**at UI Mobile Class as an online course.

You may contact any of the following units for information, learning resources and library services.

Distance Learning Centre (DLC)
University of Ibadan, Nigeria
Tel: (+234) 08077593551 – 55
(Student Support Officers)
Email: ssu@dlc.ui.edu.ng

Head Office
Morohundiya Complex, Ibadan-Ilorin Expressway, Idi-Ose, Ibadan.

Information Centre
20 Awolowo Road, Bodija, Ibadan.

Lagos Office
Speedwriting House, No. 16 Ajanaku Street, Off Salvation Bus Stop, Awuse Estate, Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos.

For technical issues (computer problems, web access, and etcetera), please send mail to webmaster@dlc.ui.edu.ng.

Academic Support

Help

A course facilitator is commissioned for this course. You have also been assigned an academic advisor to provide learning support. The contacts of your course facilitator and academic advisor for this course are available at onlineacademicsupport@dlc.ui.edu.ng

Activities

Activities

This manual features "Activities," which may present material that is NOT extensively covered in the Study Sessions. When completing these activities, you will demonstrate your understanding of basic material (by answering questions) before you learn more advanced concepts. You will be provided with answers to every activity question. Therefore, your emphasis when working the activities should be on understanding your answers.

Assessments

Assessments

There are three basic forms of assessment in this course: in-text questions (ITQs) and self assessment questions (SAQs), and tutor marked assessment (TMAs). This manual is essentially filled with ITQs and SAQs. Feedbacks to the ITQs are placed immediately after the questions, while the feedbacks to SAQs are at the back of manual. You will receive your TMAs as part of online class activities at the UI Mobile Class. Feedbacks to TMAs will be provided by your tutor in not more than 2 weeks expected duration.

Schedule dates for submitting assignments and engaging in course / class activities is available on the course website. Kindly visit your course website often for updates.

Getting around this Error! No text of specified style in document.

Margin icons

While working through this **Error! No text of specified style in document.** you will notice the frequent use of margin icons. These icons serve to "signpost" a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity; they have been included to help you to find your way around this **Error! No text of specified style in document.**.

A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with the icons and their meaning before starting your study.

Activity	**Assessment**	**Assignment**	**Case study**
Discussion	**Group Activity**	**Help**	**Outcomes**
Note	**Reflection**	**Reading**	**Study skills**
Summary	**Terminology**	**Time**	**Tip**

Study Session 1

Conceptualizing Politics in Africa

Introduction

In this Study Session, we will discuss politics in African context. We will also discuss the extent to which the conventional definitions of politics are applicable to politics in Africa, including certain aspects of politics in Africa that distinguish it from politics in Europe and North America, for example.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Study Session, you should be able to:

1.1 *define* politics.

1.2 *explain* why those definitions are valid even for politics in Africa.

1.3 *discuss* the definition of African political region to which our notion of Africa will always apply throughout this course.

1.4 *discuss* the peculiarities of African politics.

1.5 *describe* the various political changes Africa underwent since the colonization of the continent.

1.1 What is Politics?

Politics The processes by which people and institutions exercise and resist power.

Political Science
The study of and reflection upon politics. It involves the analysis of the state, government and political processes used to formulate policies, influence individuals and institutions, and organize societies.

Political Scientists have not been able to agree on a common definition for **politics**. This is essentially due to the fact that it is not possible for all of them to see 'politics' from the same angle. As you proceed in your study of **Political Science**, you will appreciate why different Political Scientists view 'politics' from different angles. I shall give you just two definitions here. The first one is from *Vernon Van Dyke*. This is as follows: "Politics involves the struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues". The other one is from David Easton and it says, "Politics is the authoritative allocation of values".

It should be noted that although those definitions are given by non-Africans as a result of their study of politics in Europe and North America, you must know that they are also valid for Africa in the same measure as they are valid for all geographical areas and human societies. Therefore, whenever we talk of politics in Africa we mean the totality of the moves and manoeuvres that are involved in relation process of authoritative allocation of values in African states. Or, you can use the

first definition, i.e. how political actors in African states conduct the struggle for the pursuit of conflicting desires on public issues among themselves. By Africa in the context of this definition, we mean the whole geographical area encompassing continental African states, Madagascar and all the islands surrounding Africa. This is the definition given by the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) to African political region. (See the Charter of Organization of African Unity - Art. 1(2)).

Although African people are now found not only in Africa but also in Europe, North America, Latin America and Central America as well as the Caribbean, our focus as far as this course is concerned is only of the politics in the states and societies that constitute the African political region, defined in the OAU-Charter - Art 1 (2). Reference will however be made to all these political regions as occasion demands.

Hint

Whenever we talk of politics in Africa we mean the totality of the moves and manoeuvres that are involved in relation process of authoritative allocation of values in African states.

1.2 Sources and Peculiarities of Politics in Africa

Politics in Africa cannot be defined differently from politics in other political regions of the world. This is because the essence of politics remains the same all over the world. In like manner, the broad objectives of politics remain the same, irrespective of creed, race and geographical location. What makes the difference between, for instance, politics in Western Europe and politics in Africa is the way politics is conducted in both places. This involves a lot of factors including structure of society, prevalent mode of production, external linkages as well as psycho-social ones whose roots lie in the historical experience of individual political actors and that of the society as a unit. When two societies do not share these factors, we should not expect the conduct and the outcome of politics to be the same for both societies. If we do, we are making the same mistake as the man who expects his cat to produce a puppy!

Tip

Politics in Africa cannot be defined differently from politics in other political regions of the world. This is because the essence of politics remains the same all over the world.

Since the 19th century, the conduct and outcome of politics in Africa have not been the same as in Europe nor have they been what they used to be in 17th and 18th century Africa. It is these remarkable differences that make the study of contemporary African politics a worthwhile enterprise. Otherwise, one could say he who knows politics in Europe knows politics in Africa.

1.3 European Penetration and the Peculiarities of Politics in Africa

Certain things are peculiar to politics in Africa. It will be wrong to say that all the peculiarities that we observe in African politics today are directly traceable to the activities of European countries in the 19th Century, which were directed towards the establishment of dominance over African societies. Some were already there before the penetration. Let us take 19th century African politics and societies as an example. Political Anthropologists tell us that they had very little in common with their European counterparts. The structure of politics and structure of power in the polities differed from the prevalent structures in Europe. This was essentially due to the fact that both continents operated different political economies at the period.

Reflection

The African student of political science has an additional interest in African politics because he or she is part of the political society that is being studied. He/she has the moral obligation to contribute to the improvement of his or her political environment where such improvement is necessary.

The second set of peculiarities came about as a result of dominance exercised by Europe on African societies for periods ranging from about 60 years in the case of the peoples that now form the Nigerian society and about 500 years in the case of Angola! A Political Anthropologist, Georges Balandier, describes the various political changes which Africa underwent since European colonization of the continent. The most important ones are as follows:

i. Creation of artificial boundaries without respect for cultural and economic similarities of old political units, e.g. the old kingdom of Congo was divided into two states-- Congo and Angola. The one (Congo) was administered until 1960 by Belgium while the other (Angola) was held as an overseas province of Portugal until she was defeated in a war of liberation by Angolan nationalists in 1975.

ii. Depoliticization of the polity. In the colonial situation, the colonizer

reduced every political problem into a technical one. In this manner, the pre-colonial political process was destroyed and political activities were driven underground. Whatever remained of the pre-colonial political structures of the colony was preserved by the colonized through skill.

iii.	The weakening of the economic position of traditional rulers resulted in limiting their power while the colonial administration also encouraged appeal to the colonial administrator against age-long exercise of traditional power. Only inferior chiefs were eventually preserved while warrant chiefs were created by the colonial administration to serve it, where none existed before.

iv.	The operation of two incompatible systems of power and authority. The mere existence of two systems of power and authority operating within a single polity created political confusion. The coexistence of tradition and modernity gave rise to the birth of a hybrid political system, a strange creature.

Now that you know the sources of the peculiarities of politics in Africa, you will agree with me that the study of such a strange political model will increase our knowledge of politics generally. The African student of political science has an additional interest in African politics because he or she is part of the political society that is being studied. He/she has the moral obligation to contribute to the improvement of his or her political environment where such improvement is necessary.

Discussion Activity

What is the practice of politics in your home town/village in the pre-colonial era?

Provide response and join your tutor in an online discussion on this topic on Study Session One forum page on course website

Study Session Summary

Summary

In this Study Session, we took a cursory look at popular definitions of politics and why they are valid for the African political region. We discussed the peculiarities of African politics and the various political changes Africa underwent since the colonization of the continent.

Transformation of Traditional African Political Systems

Introduction

In the previous Study Session, you learnt about how the features which define how African politics came about. In this Study Session, we will explore the transformation of indigenous African political systems and consequences of the transformation.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Study Session, you should be able to:

2.1 *explain* the reasons for the political transformation of Africa by the colonialists.

2.2 *discuss* the methods or mechanisms for carrying out the transformations.

2.3 *explain* what political economy is all about

2.4 *discuss* how and why the colonizers used it on African political and economic system.

2.5 *defend* the view that Africa had a strong and distinctive political economy before the advent of the colonialists.

2.1 Need for Political Transformation under Colonialism

The colonizer was a total stranger to Africa when he started his adventure. He was handicapped not only by his lack of the knowledge of the physical terrain which he sought to annex and rule, but also by his abysmal ignorance of the political arrangement of the communities he stumbled upon. What is more, he could not understand any of the components of the political life of the communities. He was, for instance, totally ignorant of their political symbols, or how political decisions were made; what constituted use and abuse of power, as well as how the systems managed to endure through their crisis management mechanisms. Since he came to Africa not to learn but to teach and to exploit, he played down all that he was ignorant of and embarked on teaching what he knew

and was familiar with. He circumvented all the components of traditional political life mentioned above. At first he reduced all political problems to technical problems and proffered his own solution. Later, he introduced brand new symbols, political decision-making processes, political institutions, and all that he needed to rule effectively. The ones he rejected were called traditional while those ones that he introduced were referred to as modern. The so-called modem political institutions were in fact models that were adapted for African colonies. They were not introduced in their pure forms. If, for instance, he introduced democracy in its popular form into the colony, the colonial governor would have no business giving assent to bills before they became laws. He was not a representative of the people that he governed.

Tip

The colonizers had to clear all the obstacles to dominance, hence it was necessary to dismantle the main components of traditional African Political Systems so that they could assemble effective machinery for exploitation.

2.2 Mechanisms for the Transformation of Traditional Political Systems

Colonialism A policy in which a country's dominates other nations and develops trade with them for its own benefit. It is usually achieved through aggressive, often military, actions.

The mechanisms differed from one colonizing state to another. This is due to different colonial policies which they adopted. In other words, the British approach was different from the French, the Portuguese, Belgian, Spanish and the German as long as their colonial rulership lasted in Africa. Again, each colonial power changed her approach from one stage of **colonialism** to another. The following approaches were common if we disregard details of execution.

2.2.1 Prohibition

By declaration of political structure, symbol or process is made illegal. Under Lugardism or Indirect Rule, the traditional ruler who was a political leader in the community was converted into an administrator, executing rules handed down by the resident colonial administrator. In most cases the prohibition is pronounced by the chief on behalf of the paternalistic colonial administration. As a prelude to the massive assault on the traditional political system that would follow, spurious treaties of friendship and protection were signed, in most cases, under pressure by traditional rulers with the colonial adventures. J.A. Barnes reports that in the heydays of imperial expansion in Africa, British agents were provided with printed treaty forms which could be completed with the names of traditional rulers as they went on their journeys of colonial expedition. As the full implication of the treaties unfolded, some traditional rulers put up resistance to various aspects of colonial rule and were speedily exiled from their domain. In this manner, Prepeh, King of the Ashantis and King Jaja of Opobo were exiled.

It is noteworthy that the loss of indigenous sovereignty of the polity

usually preceded the attempts at transforming traditional political systems.

2.2.2 Constitutionalism

Constitution The fundamental system of law, written or unwritten, of a sovereign state, established or accepted as a guide for governing the state.

Through the use of **constitutions**, colonial authorities transformed indigenous political systems into adapted forms of Western models. This mechanism was in widespread use in British, French and Belgian territories. For instance from 1922 to 1960, various constitutions formed the milestones in the transformation process of the modern state. From the Clifford Constitution of 1922 through Richards Constitution and Macpherson Constitution to the Independence Constitution of 1960, the British incrementally introduced an adapted model of the Westminster system in Nigeria. The story is the same in all Anglophone, and to a certain extent, in Francophone African colonies.

It is instructive to note that nationalist activities in the colonies were directed towards rapid transformation so that political power could pass into the hands of indigenous politicians. One should add here that in British colonies where a sizeable population of whites existed, these minorities were favoured in the distribution of political power as the colonies went through transformation. Such discriminatory practices, with racial overtones, were responsible for the war of liberation which indigenous Africans had to wage in order to establish majority rule especially in Rhodesia which is now known as Zimbabwe.

In Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique, the story is crassly different because the colonial administration simply integrated a small minority of Africans known as *assimiladoes* into the mainstream of Portuguese politics and made very slow progress towards modernization of the colonies which officially constituted overseas provinces of metropolitan Portugal. The friction was terminated by African nationalists through long-drawn wars of liberation.

Note

It is instructive to note that nationalist activities in the colonies were directed towards rapid transformation so that political power could pass into the hands of indigenous politicians. One should add here that in British colonies where a sizeable population of whites existed, these minorities were favoured in the distribution of political power as the colonies went through transformation. Such discriminatory practices, with racial overtones, were responsible for the war of liberation which indigenous Africans had to wage in order to establish majority rule especially in Rhodesia which is now known as Zimbabwe.

2.3 Introduction of Colonial Political Economy

It is important for you to know that it was necessary for the colonizer to change the political system and other political activities that related to it before African indigenous politics could undergo the kind of total, effective and everlasting transformation which the colonizer needed. Therefore, he had to attack other spheres which make up the socio-political life of the polities. Thus, the material, production, distribution and exchange processes that were indigenous to African societies were

attacked. We can therefore say that the transformation was not just the transformation of the political sphere, but rather the transformation of the indigenous political economy.

Government The machinery of the state; comprising the individuals and institutions authorized to formulate public policies and conduct affairs of state

The Oxford Universal Dictionary (illustrated) defines political economy as "the art of managing the resources of a people and of its **government**". This definition was first given by Adam Smith, one of the earliest scholars in the field of Political Economy which is, "the theoretical science of the laws of production and distribution of wealth," according to McCulloch. You must realise that the whole political economy of any polity must be changed before the politics of the polity can be transformed, because politics itself is no more than the process of authoritative allocation of resources. Resources, their production, distribution and exchange, obviously, belong to the economic sphere of life of human beings.

This explains why we must pay particular attention to the economy of the polities and the changes that they underwent in order to understand fully the transformation which occurred in the colonial era. As you know, the importance of things like food, shelter and clothing to human beings and their capacity to handle these basic needs cannot be over emphasized. Availability or non-availability of these resources including their pattern of distribution in any society spells social problems. Therefore, a change in the political economy of a polity registers effect on the social life of the political society inhabiting the polity.

We can now conclude this argument by saying that the transformation which occurred in African indigenous polities was not limited to the political sphere alone. It began in the economic, social and cultural spheres of life of the peoples living in the polities. It was a pervasive transformation. It is instructive to note that rather than the changes in the political sphere, it is the changes in the polity because material resources stand at the centre of human activities on earth.

Political Economy The study of economics and government policy: the study of ways in which economics and government policies interact.

Once the most important and most vital aspect (political economy) of the life of the polity had been tampered with, and controlled by the colonizer, the people lost their economic independence completely. In the process of introducing a new **political economy**, the political economy of colonialism, that is, the colonizer established a teacher-student relationship between him and the colonized. This relationship, in some cases, resulted in master-servant relationship. Even today, many years after political independence, this relationship still persists in various forms. The dependence that it still engenders marks out Africa as a political region of weak nations and unstable political economies.

2.4 Political Economy of Pre-Colonial Africa

Part of the reason why scholars began to dig into African past was the allegation by the West that Africa had no past worthy of mention and systematic study and that the history of Africa began with her contact with the west. In other words, that Africans began meaningful existence

as Homo sapiens with their colonization by Europe. Research into pre-colonial political economy of the continent has proved this allegation wrong. Instead, it is now known that before the heydays of colonialism there was already in place a political economy with distinct features.

2.5 Periods in the Development of Pre-Colonial Political Economy and their Characteristic Features

In order to help your understanding of the development of African political economy before colonialism took over, it is important to examine the various stages that are identifiable. Each stage is linked up with a period. Thus, the following periods are identified:

1. The communal mode of production
2. The slave mode of production
3. The feudal mode of production.

2.5.1 Communal Mode of Production

At the beginning of the emergence of African political societies, the clan represented the unit of social organizations and in terms of social production the family was the basic unit. It was the clans, in their clusters, that built up the traditional polities which also developed into kingdoms and empires.

At this stage of production, agricultural and pastoral activities were undertaken. Agricultural activities were limited to the tropical rain forest areas as well as to other climatic belts with sufficient rainfall to support the cultivation of tree and root-crops. Pastoral activities dominated production efforts in areas with little rains. Ownership of land was communal while its use was regulated and managed by the chief and individual families.

Land and labour formed the major means of production while in addition, agricultural implements and herds of animals were important to the agriculturalists and the pastoralists respectively. It is important to note that at this stage of production there was equal access to land, the regulation of which was conditioned by egalitarian principles and proven need. Both land and animals were transferable but in the case of land, an inheritor must also demonstrate ability to continue to farm the land otherwise it reverts to the community for fresh allocation.

An essential feature of this mode of production was co-operation at all levels. There was cooperation in form of pooling of labour and material resources, mutual assistance and deep sense of responsibility to the community in all economic matters were also important ingredients. The community frowned at cheating and bad practices. Laziness was visited with profound social sanctions.

Another feature of this period is the absence of social classes. Relations

among people and social roles were dictated by age and status and not by social classes. Political participation of the individual was determined by the generation to which he or she belonged. The exercise of power and authority was vested in elders who were initially elected but as such exercise became institutionalized, it also became hereditary; thus losing its initial democratic content. In the exercise of power and authority, checks and balances did exist. A chief could be removed if such checks and balances were not recognised by him.

Despite the crude mode of production, enough was produced to cover the need of the community and some surpluses were also recorded. Such surpluses served as objects of barter with neighbouring communities based strictly on need.

2.5.2 Slavocratic Mode of Production

As interaction among various communities increased, so also conflicts increased among them. Expansionist impulses in some cases gave rise to feuds over land. In some other cases, inordinate ambition to expropriate the wealth of another community caused conflicts that were carried out in form of organized raids on weaker communities. Such raids ended with the capture of animals, land and people. Human beings thus became slaves. When a mode of production is based, essentially, on slave labour, like the one that we shall discuss shortly, we say it is *slavocratic*.

Since slave-labour was crucial to this mode of production, the organization of communities and their activities were dictated by sources of slaves from wars, raid and other conflictual activities, and defence of territories and prevention of enslavement. In other words, military activities perpetuated this mode of production.

This development brought in other changes in social relations and the exercise of political power. For instance, decentralization was occasioned by the emergence of feudal lords whose source of wealth and power was war-mongering. This coincided with the emergence of the military class and war-lords. The polities themselves became 'military democracies'. This development was observed in Africa around the 10th century.

Hint

Aside from slave labour, other means of production in Slavocratic mode were land and arms. Communal ownership of these resources could not persist as individual war-lords developed ranting ambitions. Land cultivation and construction of infrastructures (roads, bridges and so on.) were left for the slaves to do. They also formed the bulk of the army. Free-

men also farmed but employed slave labour.

Elders served as political advisers and logisticians. It is noteworthy that the status of a slave was not a perpetual one under this mode of production. A slave got integrated into the family of the captor with time. In some cases, they are known to have become rulers of their captors, courtiers and ambassadors.

Slavocratic mode of production threw up more surpluses than the preceding mode of production. Private appropriation of such surpluses by chiefs, elders and free men came into existence. This is therefore the first class society, and the first exploitative society. Slaves were exploited by the free men.

2.5.3 Feudal Mode of Production

This mode of production is defined by two main actors. These are a fief and a serf. The fief is land-holding, serf-owning, possessed distinct political power and authority in a decentralized administrative system and a tested member of the military and therefore ruling class. The serf is economically just a step away from slavery because he enjoyed some measure of economic freedom no matter how small. But for all practical purposes, the serf stood in a personal bond of dependence upon the feudal lord. They were peasant producers for the expropriation of the land-lords. The social relations were exploitative as surpluses flowed into the coffers of the land-lord in form of tribute. The amount of tribute payable is entirely dependent on the consumption need of the land-lord. His need must be covered by the sweat of the serf.

Ownership of land defined social classes under this mode of production. Thus, the landowning chiefs and their vassals constituted the ruling class. Class divisions were clear and unmistakable. By the 17th century a group of artisans, skilled in various arts emerged as the economy called for such specialized skills. Thus, black-smiths, gold-smiths, carpenters and sculptors emerged.

Note

It is instructive to note that all the periods identified in the development of pre-colonial political economy of Africa and described above paid particular attention to culture. Surpluses were allocated to the promotion of culture as evidenced today by highly intricate works of art and artifacts that now do us proud as a people with a glorious past.

Study Session Summary

Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the reasons for the political transformation of Africa by the colonialists and how the colonizer transform indigenous political systems into adapted Western models to facilitate his understanding of the political environment in which he had to operate. The political economy of African state before colonization was also examine.

Study Session 3

Penetration Thesis

Introduction

This Study Session explores the penetration of western capitalist on African societies. We shall examine the impact of this on African polity and consequently African politics as we know it today.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Study Session, you should be able to:

3.1 *discuss* the penetration thesis.

3.2 *write* a discourse on the underdevelopment of Africa by the colonizers.

3.3 *draw* up your own conclusion to the penetration thesis in addition to that of the proponents.

3. 1 Western Capitalist Penetration

Capitalism An economic system in which private individuals and business firms carry on the production and exchange of goods and services through a complex network of prices and markets.

Independence State of having political freedom and being free from control or dependence on another state.

A simple way of defining western **capitalist** penetration is to see it as the totality of processes and procedures, structures and linkages which were put in place by the colonizer in order to effectively accomplish the self-serving transformation of pre-colonial political economy into a form of capitalist one. It can also be seen as the process by which pre-colonial political economy lost its internal dynamics and **independence**. It seeks to explain how African societies were turned away from self-directed development and made appendages of western capitalist societies. It is an account of how pre-colonial African mode of production had the capitalist mode forcibly super-imposed upon it.

3.2 Articulation of Penetration Thesis

The penetration thesis seeks to explain the root of African situation today. In this attempt it takes stock of or evaluates pre-colonial political and social conditions as well as the state of the economy. In a nutshell, an assessment of the totality of African existence in the pre-colonial era is considered and the following conclusions are reached:

    i.   That African states and societies had developed, in most parts of

the continent, political order and economic systems that provided adequately for their members without reliance on external assistance. Testimonies from early European explorers represent objective evidences in support of this fact.

ii. That each African polity and political society represented an organic and homogeneous unit economically and culturally.

iii. That African societies had, on the eve of European penetration, developed an impressive technological standard that well served their needs in the productive process as well as in the fabrication of works of art and artifacts compared with the achievement of other societies in that period.

iv. That the pattern of exchange among pre-colonial societies was dictated by real needs of the people. Exchange across borders was equal or symmetric.

v. That African states and societies of pre-colonial era, like other human societies, had possessed internal dynamics which was capable of generating self-directed auto development.

Penetration thesis then proceeds to examine the colonial situation in Africa and what transformation had taken place. The conclusion is drawn that the whole colonization process and the colonial order, in its entirety, represents, from the point of view of the African, a mal-development which is a far-cry from natural course of movement of pre-colonial situation.

Reflection

> The whole colonization process and the colonial order, in its entirety, represents, from the point of view of the African, a mal-development which is a far-cry from natural course of movement of pre-colonial situation

Finally, the state of affairs in Africa after "flag independence", in view of the African experience in the colonial situation and the deplorable state of affairs in the post-colonial state and society, is traced to the abiding features of colonialism and imperialist enterprise that put colonialism in place in the first instance. Hence, this period is referred to as the neo-colonial stage of western capitalist penetration. The foregoing represents the premises on which the proponents of penetration thesis base their argument.

3.3 Consequences of Penetration

In their argument in support of the penetration thesis, its proponents examined first and foremost the consequences of penetration of one society by another as an act by itself and concluded as follows:

A penetrated society cannot be said to retain all its characteristic features once the business of penetration is in full swing. This is because certain discontinuities are bound to occur since the penetrator or penetrating agent is at the same time a transformer with a set of objectives in mind. These objectives are subjectively defined and cannot be executed unless

the transformer or prime-mover stops aspects of the indigenous order or the entire indigenous order. Thus, the interruption of indigenous order followed by the introduction of new things into the society further complicates the matter and ultimately causes distortion of the original but now penetrated society.

Since the external prime-mover has now taken charge of the entire society by exercising multipurpose dominance, the internal dynamics of the penetrated society is now externalized. Henceforth, the penetrated society would depend on the external prime-mover for vital activities including the direction, rate and character of development in the society. A penetrated society becomes the shadow of its former self.

3.4 How the Colonies were Underdeveloped

1. Once the colonizer seized initiative of vital activities in the penetrated society, he embarked on a massive satellization of the economy of the colony and its culture to metropolitan economy and culture. As the metropoles developed themselves through the resources found in the colonies and unleashed further resources by means of their own technology, the colony was systematically underdeveloped in the same process. In the early part of western capitalist penetration, emphasis was on labour as a resource. Thus, millions of Africans were shipped to Europe and North America during the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Reflection

The introduction of money nexus consolidated the satellization of the colonies. Taxation systems further completed the economic pressure on the African. The resources lost to Europe through the various methods of exploitation enriched the western capitalist metropoles while African societies were impoverished. In its crude colonial form, this exploitation lasted between 100 and 500 years.

Later, it was mineral resources, agricultural produce and other goods of value. The introduction of money nexus consolidated the satellization of the colonies. Taxation systems further completed the economic pressure on the African. The resources lost to Europe through the various methods of exploitation enriched the western capitalist metropoles while African societies were impoverished. In its crude colonial form, this exploitation lasted between 100 and 500 years. You should imagine the amount of resources carted off over this long period of time.

2. Indigenous technology was 'killed' in order to eliminate possible competition between the imported technology and the indigenous one. This is particularly the case in areas where indigenous technology has demonstrated superiority. The case of textile technology and distillation of alcoholic drinks readily come to mind in this respect. Prohibition and importation were employed by the colonizer to affect the policy of technological dominance.

The first and most widely used was prohibition. In such cases, the

use of technology to produce certain goods is simply prohibited. Thus the indigenous gin became' illicit gin' in colonial Nigeria because distillation of alcohol was prohibited. The reason for this act was economic. It was designed to give various drinks imported into the colony monopoly of liqueur market.

Hint

Indigenous technology for the production of arms and ammunition was also prohibited. The reason for this was military. The colonizer wanted to ensure that he enjoyed monopoly of force in case of a military show-down between his administration and the nationalists.

Such an attack on indigenous technology served as precursor for the dumping of inferior goods from the metropole which later served as the alternative to the product of indigenous technology especially clothing and materials for the construction of shelter as well as food items. This is the root of technological dependence that African societies are now experiencing.

3. Exportation of capital into the colonies in form of investment as well as capital for running financial institutions like banks and insurance companies by metropolitan-based companies. Such investments which were backed by the political dominance of the colonizer yielded bumper interests which were repatriated at regular intervals to swell the stock of capital available in the metropole while the colony was, by the same amount repatriated, impoverished. Imagine the huge amount of capital siphoned off over scores of years. And this old process continues in new forms today.

Tip

In the assessment of the proponents of the penetration thesis, politics in Africa today has its origin in western imperialist intrusion in the continent over a long period of time.

4. The superimposition of alien values, perspectives, beliefs, superstitions and idiosyncrasies to the neglect of indigenous ones did not help cultural advancement of the colonies. Thus, the colonial society was forced to learn new ways. A new language had to be learnt, a new religion and mode of worship were introduced, while the colonized spent all his energy learning the new ways, his own culture was not promoted. The imposed mimicry and catching-up mentality dealt severe blows to the confidence of the colonized. This psychological problem sometimes resulted in self-rejection. This is reflected in the African's love of goods and services of foreign origin. It is also observable, even in post-colonial Africa, in the choice of socio-economic and political models and ways of doing things. The ruling classes in the continent are particularly guilty of this self-rejection. The situation is so bad that some post-colonial African states mounted massive campaigns for self-reliance as a development strategy because pervasive self-rejection of the African has been identified as a source of under-development.

> The colonial society was forced to learn new ways. A new language had to be learnt, a new religion and mode of worship were introduced, while the colonized spent all his energy learning the new ways, his own culture was not promoted. The imposed mimicry and catching-up mentality dealt severe blows to the confidence of the colonized. This psychological problem sometimes resulted in self-rejection. This is reflected in the African's love of goods and services of foreign origin.

3.5 Conclusions on Penetration Thesis

After an intense analysis of the discontinuities and distortions that have been brought about in African societies through western capitalist penetration, a number of conclusions are drawn by the proponents of the penetration thesis. For easy understanding these conclusions are outlined below.

1.   That the seed of development of every society inheres in the culture and economic activities of the society. Therefore African societies would have achieved a level of development compatible with their effort and endowment if left alone and without intrusion from outside.

2. The externalization of dynamics of development which occurred in the process of penetration deprived the societies of the opportunity to employ their productive efforts and endowment for their own use. The satellization which this process brought about extinguished the independence of the states and societies. Therefore, the degree of development achieved by penetrated societies reflected the degree allowed by the external prime-mover, the colonizer.

3.   Western capitalist penetration was not designed to benefit Africans but Europeans; therefore, the whole relationship between the colonies and the metropoles was exploitative, leading to impoverishment of Africans. Little wonder, therefore, that the political economy of Africa is that of underdevelopment.

4.   The present economic backwardness, social disarticulation, political instability and failure of Western-type democratic practice, ignorance and disease are the outcrops of the multifarious ways in which western capitalist penetration and its structures shaped the course and content of development in Africa.

The first groups of people to articulate the penetration thesis were the westernized early African nationalists. Their early writings about the plight of Africa reflected this. This is particularly the case with the works of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Jomo Kenyatta, Ahmed, Sekou Towre, Kwame Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, Leopold Senghor, Patrice Lumumba, Julius Nyerere and a host of others.

They were joined by Africans in Diaspora to articulate the thesis. Most outstanding among these were W.E.B. Dubois, George Padmore and C.R. James who identified with the African struggle as young people in the Pan-African movement.

African scholars in search of explanation for Africa's underdevelopment have now delivered incontrovertible evidence for the role which western capitalist penetration has played in conditioning African underdevelopment which is reflected in its economy and politics boldly. The most outstanding of such scholars is Samir Amin. Others are Franz Fanon and Walter Rodney. They all condemn imperialism for the African predicament.

Note

The colonies were underdeveloped by satellization of their economies to the metropolitan ones coupled with the following mechanisms: Introduction of money nexus and taxation in cash and kind, arrest of the development of indigenous technology, pillage, slave trade and unequal exchange.

Reading Activity

Review Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.*

Post your response on Study Session Four forum page on course website.

Study Session Summary

Summary

In this Study Session, we discussed the penetration thesis. Penetration thesis traces the root of African political, economic and social situation to western capitalism. We noted that Western capitalist penetration of Africa entails the multipurpose way in which the West eroded the independence of African societies. They did that by taking control of their political economy and stopping their self-directed development. We discover that even after the so-called independence, the African states and societies are unable to shake off the features of the colonial state which made the mal development possible.

Study Session 4

Imperialism in Africa

Introduction

In the previous study session, we explored how Western European metropolis completely took over African territories, administration and political economies. In this Study Session you will be exposed to the mechanics of imperialism in Africa.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Study Session, you should be able to:

4.1 *discuss* the concept of imperialism in relation to African experience.

4.2 *argue* for or against the doctrines of imperialism.

4.3 *discuss* the assumptions on which the doctrine of civilization is based.

4.1 Meaning of Imperialism

Imperialism has been defined in various ways depending on the interest of the writer, and the aspect or aspects of the concept the writer wants to emphasize. But let us examine just two of such definitions. In the *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* we find imperialism defined as follows:

> "In its broadest sense imperialism means the political organization which we call an empire. An empire always implies the role of one nation, race or community over another. It is a social organism or state in which the political status of the peoples inhabiting the geographical area within the state is not equal; one community is dominant and the other subject. Political inequality is the essence of empire".

This definition, as you will observe, emphasizes the power relations between two peoples or two states. The two peoples or states relate to each other on the basis of inequality because there is a disparity of political power between them. This power disparity is, according to this definition, the source of imperial dominance of one people or state over another people or state. As you will also observe, this broad definition of imperialism emphasizes political aspect of imperialism. The strength of this definition lies in the fact that political dominance of the imperial power which it emphasizes can, in fact, be deployed to achieve a number of ends depending at various times on the need of the imperial or imperialist power. This explains why some writers, especially Hans

Morgenthau in *Politics Among Nations*, argues that imperialism is about power; power to dominate. Once that power has been achieved it can be used to pursue other ends that may be economic, cultural or military. In this sense the definition which we have just discussed contains the seeds of the next one.

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The second definition to be considered is by Barratt Brown in his book, The *Economics of Imperialism*. Brown defined imperialism as: "the outward drive of certain peoples... to build empires - both formal colonies and privileged positions in markets, protected sources of materials and extended opportunities for profitable employment of labour. The concept has thus been associated with an economic relationship between states, not simply the inequality of large and small, rich and poor trading partners, but the inequality of political and economic dependence of the latter on the former". This second definition differs a little bit from the first one in terms of its own focus. Its focus is essentially economic.

Barratt posits that imperialism is a set of economic relationships. This set of economic relationships of inequality gives rise to political as well as economic subordination and dependence. Compared with the first definition, the second reverses the sequence of occurrence between political dominance and economic inequality. What you have seen here is the result of difference in the approaches used by the two writers. The weakness of Barratt's economic definition lies in the fact that it fails to point out the relationship between imperialism and capitalism.

If we relate both definitions to Africa's experience we find that each explains imperialist enterprise on the continent at different times. Claude Ake in *A Political Economy of Africa* confirms this by stating that, "Western imperialism in Africa took many forms at different stages - the pillage of Africa's natural resources, trade, and colonisation".

It is not appropriate to equate colonialism alone to imperialism. Experience has shown that imperialism can pre-date colonialism as it did in Africa. Imperialist activities in forms of pillage, a semblance of trading which involved outrageous under-pricing of African commodities came before colonization which formally put political structures of dominance in place and carved out areas of exclusive exploitation. Many people take colonialism as the only form that imperialism can take because most of the transformation accompanying western capitalist penetration in Africa took place under colonialism. As you will know later in this course, imperialism is highly adaptable. History of post-colonial Africa has also pointed out to us that the end of colonialism does not put an end to imperialism.

4.2 Doctrine of Imperialism

While there is a minimum of agreement among writers on the definition of imperialism as a concept (as a phenomenon) there have been different views on the nature and character as well as the causes of imperialism.

The use of the word has been open to abuse by opposing ideological groups as well as social classes both in imperialist countries and in imperialised societies. Shifts in global structure of power have also influenced our views on the phenomenon.

Tip

The doctrines of imperialism are therefore the theoretical opinions canvassed by the advocates of imperialism to justify their activities in order to escape moral condemnation at home and abroad.

In the hey-days of European expansionism and imperialist adventure, especially between the 1850's and the second half of the 19th century, there were some dominant views held by three groups of people in Western Europe. Such views were also "sold" to the rest of the world as explanations for imperialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These explanations which are also subjective are what I refer to in this Study Session as doctrines of imperialism. Now, what is a doctrine?

The Oxford Universal Dictionary defines doctrine as, "that which is laid down as true concerning a particular department of knowledge as religion, politics, science and so on, a theoretical opinion".

The doctrines of imperialism are therefore the theoretical opinions canvassed by the advocates of imperialism to justify their activities in order to escape moral condemnation at home and abroad. Three groups of people were involved in canvassing the opinions. They are:

1. *Politicians and statesmen in imperialist nations*, e.g. Chamberlain, Lord Salisbury, for Britain, Bismark, the Eisen-Kanzler for Germany and Richeleu for France.

2. *The ideologues of imperialism* such as P.T. Moon, D. Landes and the British dramatist and Fabian Socialist, Bernard Shaw, who opined that through illiberal colonialism the poor should be ruthlessly abolished by raising their standard of life while the rich was preserved.

3. *Imperialist agent's* especially colonial officers or field workers who served in various colonies over time in different capacities. Among these are people like Rudyang Kipling and Lord Lugard who had to commit their views into writing.

4. *Cooperative natives*: These are westernized indigenous Africans who, some sincerely, held the view that colonialism was the best thing that ever happened to Africa and Africans.

4.2 Doctrine of power

This explains imperialism as the logical outcrop of power disparity between two interacting nations or peoples. It is, according to this doctrine, the exercise of right of the stronger over the weaker.

The substance of the argument has been stated by Daniel Landes as follows: "Imperialism is a multi-farious response to a common opportunity that consists simply in disparity of power". Luthy holds corroboratively that the passive capacity of the non-European world to be colonized was a basic factor in European world power as the European drive for expansion itself because virtually, nowhere did the colonizers come across political entitles and social structures possessing an inherent capacity to resist external onslaught or people who lived in liberty, and independence worth defending and under rulers worth preserving.

It is further argued by the apostles of power doctrine that power naturally does not allow power-vacuum. It flows to a situation of powerlessness. Europe, in the heyday of imperialist expansion, was a region of powerful nations. Africa on the other hand, was inhabited by relatively weaker nations. Therefore, European incursion into Africa obeys perfectly the law of nature.

Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe in one of his early books, *Renascent Africa*, referred to this doctrine as the doctrine of exploitation because the same right of the stronger over the weaker is involved to forcibly take over the people of colonized territories and their resources.

Reflection

> Peoples that were once sovereign and who basked in an age long freedom suddenly became subject peoples under a new administration and new laws. Their labour could be commandeered at will so were their valuable resources including the source of their livelihood-land, which had now become Crown Land.

The argument of imperialists in this regard was that the human and material resources were being developed on behalf of the native people. In fact, it was the metropolitan states that were thus developed while the colonies were underdeveloped. It was through this process that large stocks of capital were accumulated in Western Europe and in North America.

The doctrine of power also informed the style of colonial administration which relied at first on direct coercion and later after the "pacification" stage, on draconian legal sanctions.

4.2.1 Primary Resistance and the Doctrine of Power

It is necessary to point out the fallacies in the doctrine of power, especially the aspect of it which gives the impression that indigenous peoples of Africa did nothing to preserve their independence or ward off external aggression mounted in the wake of imperialist campaign in Africa. This is a wrong impression. The truth is that all African communities put up resistance led by their rulers or traditional war-lords. This is often referred to as primary resistance. We find ample evidence of such resistance among West African ethnic groups leading to the exile of notable rulers like Prempeh of the old Gold Coast, King Jaja of Opobo, and others. In East, Central and Southern Africa, the Kikuyus, Luo, Massai, Matabeles, Mashonas, Dinuzulus, Bakongos, etc rose up at various times to resist English, French, Belgian and German imperialists. At the battle of Adowa, the Ethiopians defeated the Italians. The film, *The Zulu*, documents the amount of blood of resisting Zulus that Britain had to let before she could take over Zululand which has now become part of apartheid Republic of South Africa.

Treaty A formal contract or agreement negotiated between countries or other political entities.

The second impression that needs correction is that the colonization process was entirely by conquest. This is also false. Military campaigns against indigenous rulers and their people, followed only in cases where the ruler resisted overtures by colonial agents. Such overtures, as I have mentioned in earlier study sessions, were in the form of the so-called "**treaties** of friendship". Each colonial agent was supplied with copies of such spurious treaties to be signed and concluded with native rulers whenever opportunities presented themselves. You will recall that this fact has been mentioned before.

Regarding the quality of governance and the state of order on the eve of colonial incursion into African polities, colonial anthropologists, in spite of the biases of their research methodology were more objective than the advocates of colonialism. Most of them testified to the high standard of administration which manifested itself in the governance of pre-colonial African polities.

Reflection

> The doctrine of power is no more than a rationalization of predatory activities of imperialism since the main plank in its argument reduces to glorification of the employment of brute force to kill, destroy and exterminate cultures in the process of demonstrating superiority of power, but the doctrine has failed to tell us the prime-motive behind this demonstration of power. What did the so-called superior power want to achieve by exercising dominance in African territories? This question remains unanswered. Now, let us examine another doctrine of imperialism.

4.3 Doctrine of Civilization

Imperialism is also explained in terms of civilizing mission. The essence of this doctrine was expressed in a poem written by a former British colonial Governor in India - Rudyan Kipling. Consider the first stanza of the poem:

> Take up the Whiteman's burden
>
> Send forth the best ye breed
>
> Go bid your sons to exile
>
> To serve your captive's needs
>
> To wait in heavy harness
>
> One fluttered fold and wild
>
> Your new caught sullen people's half devil half child.

Thus imperialism is conceived as the "white-man's burden" gladly carried in order to civilize black, brown and yellow peoples in all nooks and corners of the world. An onerous task accepted in the interest of humanity. This is what we are supposed to believe. We are also supposed to believe that whatever is done in the process of this "civilizing mission" is essentially for the good of the black, brown and yellow peoples. This explains President W. Mckinley's stance when U.S. annexed the Philippines. He said:

> *"There is nothing for us to do but to take them, all of them and to educate the Philipinos and uplift and civilise and christianize them as our own fellow men for whom Christ also died."*

Such an explanation of imperialism is not limited to raving politicians and statesmen alone; several serious-minded writers with Eurocentric biases rigorously engage in such unscholarly enterprise. Take for instance, Griffiths, in his book British *Impact In India*, holds the view that, "a condemnation action of the colonization is tantamount to a condemnation of the main process by which civilization has been diffused". To Griffiths, colonialism is the vehicle for the dispersal of civilization across the world. Even younger generations of European and North American writers have not abandoned this subjective rationalization for a predatory phenomenon. Writing in the 1960's, Rupert Emerson, in *Nation and the Empire*, believes that "there remain good reasons to doubt that non-European peoples could have been induced without compulsion to undertake, in any comparable space of time, the revolutionizing of their societies which involved abandonment of their established way of life". This is a refined way of saying the same thing expressed by P.T. Moon in a book that was written in 1927 and titled, *Imperialism and World Politics*. P.T. Moon, very bluntly put it as follows: "This is altruism, an aggressive altruism, because it means using brutal force to impose on unwilling native peoples the blessing of French or German or British or American civilisation. Indeed this altruism goes to such length that the civilizing nations are willing not only to shoot the Hindus or the Zulus or the Philippinos or the Mexicans into culture but to undergo the hardship of war with equally zealous civilizing nations..."

Tip

> Colonialism is the vehicle for the dispersal of civilization across the world. Even younger generations of European and North American writers have not abandoned this subjective rationalization for a predatory phenomenon

The term "dual mandate" coined by one of the most successful colonial governors- Lord Lugard is supposed to summarize the ultimate objective of the civilizing mission of European imperialism. The notion of dual mandate views the black, brown and yellow peoples of the world as the trust of western civilization. They are to be civilized and developed not only in their own interest but also in the interest of mankind.

Comments on the Doctrine of Civilization

The doctrine of civilization reveals the following assumptions at a second look

1. Absence of any kind of civilization worthy of recognition in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This eurocentric cultural arrogance explains the wanton destruction of civilization by Europeans as they came in contact with other societies. Thus the Spaniards destroyed superior Inka Culture in Mexico and various African cultures in the wake of their expansionist efforts. If culture is truly "the complex of the distinctive beliefs, attainments and traditions of a particular society which in action assert themselves under the name of a civilization" it cannot be validly proved that the black, brown and yellow peoples that imperialism claims to be civilizing, have no cultures of their own because a society without beliefs, attainments or traditions, no matter how lowly or exotic, is unthinkable. Therefore, explaining the imperialist enterprise in terms of civilizing mission is less than honest about the real purpose of European imperialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

2. Assumption of racial superiority of white people deriving from the superiority of caucasian culture over those of other peoples of the world. This forms the root of white racism. For, if you allocate a subordinate class to other people as the doctrine does, you will develop contempt for them and consequently discriminate against them on the basis of their race Marcus Garvey sees the root of white racism not in the colour of the skin but in the Whiteman's claim of superior culture - "because as a race to them we have accomplished nothing, we have built no nation, no government and because we are dependent for our economic and political existence."

The racist underpinnings of the doctrine of civilization which held sway among western imperialist nations in the heyday of their incursion into Africa, as a convenient rationalization for a deeply economic phenomenon, finally surface at the end of World War I, and found documentation in the League of Nations Covenant and the provisions on the League's Mandate system. Now, it is pertinent to discuss this important document because of the implication which its implementation had unleashed on existing international society.

4.3.1 The Civilizing Mission and the League of Nations' Mandate System

The influence of the USA and President Woodrow Wilson on the affairs of Europe after the First World War, 1914-1918 cannot be over-emphasized. Paris Peace Treaty was concluded, essentially, on the basis of President Wilson's 14-Point Programme for peace to return to Europe and the rest of the world after the defeat of Germany and the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

Paris Peace Treaty recognised the right of non-German speaking peoples of Austro-Hungarian Empire to self-determination. To this extent, new nations emerged from the ashes of Hapsburg's old domain. Serbian, Csechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians and other minorities in the Balkan Peninsular joined others to forge federated states or maintain individual existence. The First World War, in this fashion, put an end to the existence of formal political dominance among European peoples in form of imperial subjugation. But the situation was different for the peoples of the Middle East, Asia and Africa, Instead of the liquidation of both German and Ottoman Empires in these regions; the territories under both German and Ottoman Empires were parcelled out afresh to other established colonial powers. The arrangement was incorporated into the League of Nations Covenant and called the Mandate System.

> **Note**
>
> The First World War put an end to the existence of formal political dominance among European peoples in form of imperial subjugation. But the situation was different for the peoples of the Middle East, Asia and Africa, Instead of the liquidation of both German and Ottoman Empires in these regions; the territories under both German and Ottoman Empires were parcelled out afresh to other established colonial powers.

The provisions of Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant regulated the mandate system. First, the territories in the German and Ottoman Turkish empires were categorised into 3 classes - A,B,C. The Near Eastern territories (now called Middle-East) were in the A category - these were, Syria, Iraq and Palestine. These Arab lands were handed over to the British and the French. Syria went to the French while Iraq and Palestine went to the British. African territories of the two Empires were either in the B or C categories; because the classification corresponded "to the degree of development of the peoples who were placed under them." Rene Albrecht-Carrie, in *A Diplomatic History of Europe* hinted that "the British and the French had planned a partition between themselves of the existing German colonies in Africa".

The result of their manoeuvres was a division of German Cameroon and Togoland between Britain and France. These were B mandate territories. German Southwest Africa was assigned to the Union of South Africa as a C mandate because it was "sparsely populated and highly undeveloped." Southwest Africa was to be administered as an integral part of the Union of South Africa. I shall return to the problem which South African administration of the territory now poses for African and world affairs later in this study session. Further, a portion of German East Africa called Rwanda-Burundi became a Belgian mandate.

In theory, "the mandatory power was to be responsible to the League for the administration of his mandate, and his role was to be that of educating the mandate area to the point where it would be prepared for independence". German possessions in the Far East were taken over by Japan while Australia and small New Zealand shared German Pacific possessions.

The mandate system of the League was a glaring documentation of the civilizing mission syndrome. It was not only eurocentric and racialist; it

was fraught with racial and interstate conflict which in the ripeness of time has generated indigenous nationalism that, in turn, is currently clashing with the nationalism of the mandatory power as in the case of the Namibian people and their racist South African oppressor. It has also become a continual source of conflict between those who benefitted from the rulership of the mandatory power and the indigenes who are outplayed like the case is between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the Middle East today.
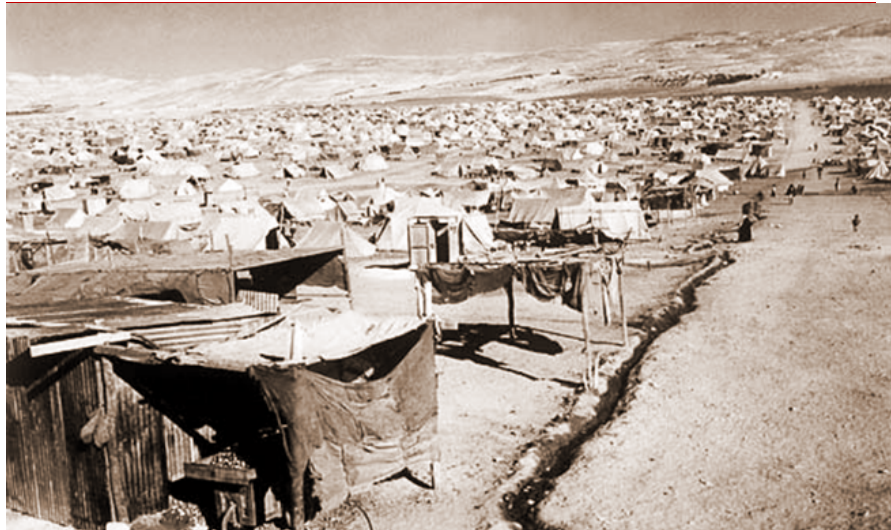
Palestinian Refugee Camp
During the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel captured territory from surrounding Arab nations. Thousands of Palestinian Arabs living in those areas fled to refugee camps administered by the United Nations, like the Baquar refugee camp in Jordan. The Palestinians remain the largest refugee population in the world.

Both cases gulp a tremendous amount of resources from the peoples of the regions who are locked in the clash of nationalisms. South African mandate and the intransigence of the apartheid state to give up the administration of Namibia in spite of a ruling of the International Court in the Hague and UN resolutions terminating the mandate of South Africa over the territory as the successor to the League of Nations has created conflict situation in Southern Africa as the conflicts between the SWAPO and South Africa has now become a feature of the politics in the Southern African region and a continental problem.

The presence of the United Nations Peace Keeping Force in the Middle East since two decades ago illustrates the recognition accorded Arab-Israeli conflict as a threat to international peace and security. Today, the League of Nations' Mandate System has been recognised for what it was - "a mere hypocritical cloak for the operation of traditional imperialism, adapting itself to the climate and verbiage of the day".

Study Session Summary

Summary

In this Study Session, we examined imperialism as an established political dominance exercised by the imperial power over a subject race, nation or community. Advocates of imperialism - statesmen, politicians and intellectuals in Europe and North America have canvassed theoretical doctrines for explaining imperialism: the doctrine of power and the doctrine of civilisation.

Study Session5

Theories of Imperialism

Introduction

In this Study Session, we shall explore the "evil" called imperialism. This we will do by examining the various theories that have been advanced by scholars on the subject.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Study Session, you should be able to:

5.1 *discuss* Hobson's view of imperialism and why it is referred to as economic theory of imperialism.

5.2 *contrast* Hobson's and Lenin's theories of imperialism.

5.3 *discuss* the reasons why Schumpeter's theory of imperialism is considered to be of low utilitarian value.

5.4 *discuss* why the Devil's and Schumpeter's theory are considered inferior to Hobson's and Lenin's.

5.1 Hobson's Theory of Imperialism

In 1902, J. A. Hobson wrote a book titled: *Imperialism: A Study*. By publishing this book, Hobson started a series of theoretical discussions on imperialism as serious-minded scholars were not satisfied with the explanations presented by imperialist statesmen, their field-workers and intellectual supporters.

John Atkinson Hobson was born in 1858 and "bred in the middle stratum of the middle class of a middle-sized industrial town of the Mid-lands." His theory was not only the first systematically articulated and scientifically researched study; it was also the first economic theory of imperialism.

Hint

Hobson sees imperialism as the consequence of maladjustment in the capitalist mode of production which brings in its wake a grossly unfair income distribution pattern among the different social classes that make up the civil society. This in turn results in 'under consumption on one hand and over savings on the other.

Progressively, excess goods pile up within the economy as well as excess

capital. He puts it as follows:

> *"Everywhere appear excessive powers of production, excessive capital in search of investment. It is admitted by all businessmen that the growth of the powers of production in their country exceeds the growth in consumption, that more goods can be produced than can be sold at a profit, and the more capital exists that can find/remunerative investment. It is this economic condition of affairs that forms the taproot of imperialism."*

Note

It is important to pay attention to the above quotation as it explains why Hobson's theory of imperialism is referred to as an economic theory of imperialism. The last sentence is particularly worthy of note for it leaves no one in doubt as to what Hobson believed to be the main cause of imperialism or, in his own words, "the tap-root of imperialism".

Much as Hobson traced the "tap-root of imperialism" to a particular "economic condition of affairs", he recognised the role which the use of political power plays in implementing an imperialist policy. It can even be said that Hobson recognized the limitations of the economic actors in achieving their ends. Now, hear him:

> *"As one nation after another enters the machine economy and adopts advanced industrial methods, it becomes more difficult for its manufacturers, merchants and financiers to dispose profitably of their economic resources and they are tempted more and more to use their governments in order to secure for their particular use some distant undeveloped country by annexation and protection..."*

From this quotation it does appear that the imperialist enterprise is meant to find solutions to identified economic problems. This solution, according to Hobson, is recommended by economic actors - "manufacturers, merchants and financiers". The politician or statesman, who commands political power, deploys it to achieve the objective. But, of course, he has to give a national interest - related explanation for the deployment of state power since there are more groups in the state than merchants, manufacturers, and financiers. For instance, what would peasants, workers and the unemployed say if they knew that their government has committed so much of their human and material resources in order to secure the annexation of a distant territory on behalf of or for the benefit of manufacturers, merchants and financiers only? This explains why politicians and statesmen do not tell the truth about why they engage in imperialist enterprise!

5.1.1 Mechanisms of Hobson's Theory

Hobson also identified two mechanisms for achieving imperialist objectives. These are a reversion to **mercantilism** and war or militarism. The choice of these mechanisms relates directly to the primary objective

of imperialism in the 19th century.

This was to annex foreign territories under various pretexts. It was the colonial stage of imperialism. Imperialist countries at this stage had to fight colonial wars because all peoples resisted the colonization bid. Unless such resistance was broken, by force of arms, colonisation could not proceed.

Again imperialism in the 19th century had to be relevant because of the nature of economic state of affairs which gave rise to imperialism. Market had to be found for dumping goods and raw materials had to flow to the colonial metropole and to the industries. It should be borne in mind that these mechanisms later became obsolete as imperialism changed its form.

5.1.2 Prevention of the Rise of Imperialism

Hobson saw imperialism as an undesirable phenomenon. He therefore made policy recommendations to prevent the rise of imperialism. As far as he was concerned, imperialism does not constitute an inevitable stage in the development. The following are some of the public policies recommended in order to prevent the rise of imperialism under capitalism:

1. Rapid and important structural changes in the material and social environment.
2. Public planning.
3. The use of taxation to eliminate material inequalities among the social classes.

Note

It must be stated here that although his recommendations conflict with the social consequences of capitalism, Hobson upheld liberal economic traditions by rejecting both class struggle and Marx's labour theory of value. For these and other reasons Hobson's is also known as the liberal theory of imperialism.

5.2 Lenin's Theory of Imperialism

When Hobson's book, *Imperialism*: *A Study* was published in 1902, it generated a lot of controversy among the intellectuals in Europe and North America. The Marxists were most vocal in their criticism of his theory and its conclusions. The most outstanding of the disciples of Marx who engaged in this theoretical controversy were Lenin, Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxembourg and Hilferding. Each of these Marxist theoreticians, in the process of disputation and polemics, threw more light on the nature and essence of imperialism.

Lenin's theory was and still remains the most popular contribution because it combined the best in the contributions of these people. So, strictly speaking, Lenin's theory is not original to Lenin because various aspects of it have been articulated more or less by his fellow Marxists. For instance, the concept of "finance-capital" which means the merger of industrial and bank capital was originated by Hilferding who wrote a

book titled *Finance-capital* before Lenin's book was published. V.I. Lenin's book which bears the title *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* was published in 1916. It was written, not in Russia, as you might think, but in Zurich in the spring of that year. In the preface to the Russian edition of the book where Lenin was lamenting paucity of literature on the subject, he declared: "1 made use of the principal English work Imperialism, J. A. Hobson's book, with all the care that, in my opinion, that work deserves" This leaves no one in doubt that he was reacting to Hobson's theory.

> **Note**
>
> Lenin's theory was and still remains the most popular contribution because it combined the best in the contributions of these people. So, strictly speaking, Lenin's theory is not original to Lenin because various aspects of it have been articulated more or less by his fellow Marxists.

In the presentation of his theory, Lenin first of all identifies five features which define imperialism. The features are as follows:

1. The concentration of production and capital developed to such a stage that it creates monopolies which plays a decisive role in economic life.
2. A merger of bank capital with industrial capital giving rise to finance-capital" and consequently to a financial oligarchy.
3. Exportation of capital as distinguished from commodity exportation.
4. The existence of international capitalist monopoly combines which divide up the world.
5. Complete territorial division of the world among the greatest capitalist powers.

The synthesis of these features form the centre-piece of Lenin's theory which he articulates as follows:

> *"Imperialism is capitalist in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance, in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the partition of all territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed."*

You will agree with me that this main body of Lenin's theory is purely economic in character and content. But there is also a minor historical aspect to the theory.

This historical portion of the theory attempts to explain that imperialism, as a phenomenon, surfaces at a particular stage in the development of capitalism. Which stage'? The highest stage of capitalism. Lenin disagreed with Hobson over the possibility of a rational and humane domestic economic and social policy curing or eliminating imperialist tendency in capitalism.

Lenin argues that "uneven development and wretched conditions of the masses are fundamental and inevitable conditions and promises of this mode of production". (p. 63). He further asserts that surplus capital would not be used to the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country as long as capitalism behaves true to type, instead such surplus capital would be exported abroad to backward countries where they will attract high interest rates.

5.2.1 Mechanisms of Lenin's Theory on Imperialism

The mechanisms employed by imperialism which Lenin identified are similar to those of Hobson but with some modifications. To Lenin, militarism is a natural ally of imperialism as direct violence in form of wars is needed, at various levels, to achieve imperialist ends. First, military operations are necessary to subdue the indigenous peoples of the territory to be annexed and the subjugation has to be maintained by force of arms on a continuous basis.

Furthermore, arms race among imperialist powers is inevitable because each power wants to eliminate the other in order to take over her colony or sphere of influence so that all the economic and political advantages may accrue to her. He states that "politically, imperialism is, in general, a striving towards violence and reaction". On the question of cartelization, while Hobson sees it as a means to imperialist end, Lenin views the same phenomenon as a precondition for imperialism.

5.3 Joseph Schumpeter's Theory of Imperialism

JosephSchumpeter, was an economist born in 1883. He lived and worked as a professor of economics in his native Austria before he migrated to Germany and USA where be died in 1950.

Schumpeter's explanation of imperialism is sociological in nature. This explanation was articulated in his essay, "Zur Soziologie der Imperialismus", which was published in 1919. Through Heinz Nordon's translation, it became available in English Language under the title 'Imperialism and Social Classes'.

Schumpeter explains imperialism as social atavism. It cannot be explained in terms of special interests, economic, political or any other, he argues. Imperialism is a non-rational phenomenon which consists in aggressive expansionism without a specific objective in mind. It is thrown up by impulses which characterize the aggressive behaviour of individuals and social classes whenever they are under pressure. Imperialism is therefore the manifestation of the vestiges of the Psychological structural outcome of such pressure and effort to survive after the pressure has gone.

He argues further that far from being the cause of imperialism, capitalism is antithetical to it. This is because the large capacity for innovation and invention which capitalism calls for demands in turn, rationality at every turn. Therefore, it is unlikely that capitalism will predispose people to the

risks involved in the imperialist enterprise. In his own words:

> *"Imperialism is atavistic in character. It falls into large groups of surviving features from earlier ages that play such an important part in every concrete social situation. In other words, it is an element that stems from the living conditions not of the present but of the past... since the vital needs that created it have passed away for good, it too must gradually disappear."*

Quite a number of writers have criticized Schumpeter's theory for imperialism. Some have even suggested that his is not a theory of imperialism. Let us examine some of the things which Claude Ake has to say about Schumpeter's theory of imperialism.

Ake's first quarrel with the theory is its definition of imperialism. Imperialism defined as "expansionism pursued specifically by military force" he finds grossly inadequate, because military subjugation of foreign lands is not the only method of subjugation possible. In fact, the same results have been accomplished through economic means. Then Ake argues that the notion of imperialism as a purposeless impulse without the realization of a concrete objective in mind in spite of its aggression and risks recognized by Schumpeter himself cannot be taken too seriously. Furthermore, to trace such an irrational behaviour to some historically acquired disposition is, to say the least, a source of confusion.

Finally, Ake critically examined Schumpeter's dissociation of imperialism from capitalism on the score that capitalism is rational while imperialism is irrational and concludes that "one of the interesting things about capitalism is that it looks so rational from the perspective of the individual competitor but quite irrational from the point of view of the whole system. The multiplicity of centres of economic decision-making, necessarily a feature of capitalism, leads to a waste of resources, competition and anarchy, and the gearing of production to effective demand means that production is often dissociated from want". (Ake, p. 24).

Tip

> You will observe from the fore-going that the central message in Schumpeter's theory is nebulous and of low utilitarian value, especially when compared with the theories that we examined before it. But Schumpeter's is not the only theory of imperialism that lacks elegance and rigour. Shortly, we shall examine another one with identical features.

5.4 The "Devil's" Theory of Imperialism

Unlike the theories that we have discussed so far, the "devil's" theory of imperialism is no handiwork of a single person or the perfection of a theory propounded by a school of thought. Compared with Lenin's and Hobson's theories of imperialism, this theory is a rather facile statement. It was propounded by the *Nye Committee* of the US Senate which investigated between 1934 - 1936, the influence of financial and

industrial interests on the U.S intervention in the First World War. This theory is sometimes referred to as the "devil's" theory of war.

Terrorists Destroy World Trade Center
A fireball erupts from the south tower of the World Trade Center in New York City after a hijacked passenger jet crashed into it on September 11, 2001. Another hijacked jet had crashed into the north tower about 15 minutes earlier. Both of the 110-story skyscrapers soon collapsed completely. Hijackers crashed a third plane into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and a fourth hijacked plane crashed in Pennsylvania. The terrorist attacks, which killed about 3,000 people, were the deadliest in United States history.

The theory which, in effect, was the report of that Committee, identifies the class of people that benefit from war directly. These are the ammunition makers and financial barons as well as international bankers in Wall Street. The theory then proceeds to draw the conclusion that these categories of people, since they profit by war-mongering, exert pressure on governments to wage wars and engage in expansionist and predatory policies. In this way, the devil's theory attempts to explain imperialism as a conspiracy of the capitalist class, emphasising the militarist aspect of imperialism like Schumpeter. In certain circles today, the United States global engagement and involvement in declared and undeclared wars in different parts of the Third World are still explained in terms of the influence of "military-industrial complex" on American foreign policy.

The general theory that can be teased out of the fore-going is that imperialism, as a phenomenon, appears under capitalism with industrialists and financiers performing vanguard roles in its enterprise. War is identified as the mechanism for achieving imperialist goals.

As was said at the beginning of this study session, both Schumpeter's as well as the "Devil's" theories of imperialism lack the sophistication of both Hobson's and Lenin's theories. You must also have observed that both overly emphasize the use of military power to achieve imperialist objectives. The problem with this aspect of their theory is not that they identify militarism as a mechanism, after all both Hobson and Lenin in various ways also identify this mechanism but they do not over-emphasize it in order to avoid the impression that this is the only mechanism applicable.

	What are the weaknesses in the theories advanced in support of imperialism?
Discussion Activity	*Post your findings on Study Session Six forum page on course website.*

Study Session Summary

Summary

In this Study session, we focused on four theories of imperialism. Hobson's theory of imperialism attributed the rise of imperialism to maladjustment in the capitalist mode of production. Lenin identified imperialism as essentially an economic phenomenon with socio-political outgrowths. Schumpeter's theory of imperialism represents a psychological explanation for the phenomenon. The "Devil's" theory, which was propounded by the Nye Committee of US Senate was also discussed.

Study Session 6

Structural Theories of Imperialism

Introduction

In this Study Session, we shall examine the structural theories of imperialism. This theories illustrates how structural relationships among human collectivities can precipitate over time into dominance.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Study Session, you should be able to:

6.1 *explain* how the structural theory of imperialism differs from the general theories.

6.2 *discuss* the mechanisms of structural theory of imperialism.

6.3 *present* a discourse on the five forms of imperialism.

6.1 Imperialism in Structural Perspective

From structural perspective, imperialism is a dominance relation between collectivities, particularly between nations. It is a sophisticated type of dominance relation which cuts across nations, basing itself on a bridge-head. This bridge-head is established by the Centre nation in the Periphery nation for the joint benefit of both of them. This definition, as you will observe, is different from the ones we have discussed in this course. Firstly, it does not talk about any economic system in relation to the cause of imperialism. You will recall that Hobson, Lenin and the Devil's Theory all nominated capitalism as the socio-economic system that throws up imperialism. This definition is concerned with relations between nations - a Centre nation and a Periphery nation.

A Centre nation is an industrialized nation which controls a large stock of capital and has achieved an appreciably high level of technology.

A Periphery nation is an agrarian - primary goods producing nation, with very low capital stock whose technological achievement is abysmally low.

The author of this theory is Johan Galtung. He is a Norwegian social scientist. He is currently the Rector of United Nations University and the fore-most European peace researcher. His structural theory of imperialism first appeared in the *Journal of Peace Research* published in 1971.

A Centre nation is an industrialized nation which controls a large stock of capital and has achieved an appreciably high level of technology. In contrast, a Periphery nation is an agrarian - primary goods producing nation, with very low capital stock whose technological achievement is abysmally low.

6.2 Mechanisms for Structural Imperialism

Galtung identified two mechanisms for bringing about imperialistic relations between two nations. These are:

    i.   Vertical interaction relations

    ii.   Feudal interaction relations.

6.2.1 Vertical interaction relations

Vertical interaction relations are defined by the nature of exchange pattern between the Centre nation and its Periphery counterpart. Vertical interaction relations constitute the major source of inequality among nations. This inequality is in turn traceable to the unequal (asymmetric) nature of the exchange between the two nations. We say that a particular exchange is unequal (asymmetric) if the two exchanging parties do not benefit equally from the deal. This means that one party derives more advantages or qualitatively better advantages from the transaction than the other. The particular case of exchange between the Centre and the Periphery is characterised by primary (unprocessed) goods in exchange for processed goods. More and qualitatively better advantages accrue to the Centre nation which exchanges its processed goods (e.g. fertilizer) for unprocessed goods (e.g. cocoa beans) from the Periphery nation.

Hint

Vertical interaction relations constitute the major source of inequality among nations. This inequality is in turn traceable to the unequal (asymmetric) nature of the exchange between the two nations. We say that a particular exchange is unequal (asymmetric) if the two exchanging parties do not benefit equally from the deal. This means that one party derives more advantages or qualitatively better advantages from the transaction than the other.

Effects of Unequal Exchange

Two types of effects become noticeable when two nations engage in unequal exchange. These are:

    A.   Inter-actor effect
    B.   Intra-actor effects

Inter-actor effects

When two nations (e.g. C & P) are engaged in unequal exchange over time a gap develops between them. As the exchange is prolonged so does the gap (in terms of material welfare and power of each nation) widen until it becomes obvious to everybody. This gap makes itself noticeable in various aspects of national life cast in comparative mould. These effects are known as inter-actor effects of unequal exchange.

Intra-actor effects

These are the effects of unequal exchange that manifest themselves within the domestic environment of the two nations engaged in the transaction. They are essentially social, economic and political in nature. Usually they are negative in Periphery nations while they are, of course positive in centre-nations to the extent that their domestic environment is strengthened through the exchange. The relation is exploitative. It is important to note that the inequality in cocoa beans - fertilizer exchange pattern is traceable to the gap in the processing level of the things exchanged.

6.2.2 Feudal Interaction Structure

This is the mechanism that is employed to maintain and reinforce the inequality between nations through vertical interaction relations. It does one more thing. It protects the gains of the Centre nation and perpetually holds down the Periphery nation through the operation of certain rules to wit;

  i. There is only vertical interaction between Periphery and Centre nations

  ii. There is no interaction between the Periphery nations.

  iii. Multilateral interaction involving a Centre and any two, independent Peripheries is missing.

  iv. Centre monopolizes interaction with the outside world.

In this manner Periphery nations become exclusive spheres of interest and satellites of individual Centre nations. In other words, through this mechanism, free interaction of the Periphery with other nations of the world is restricted. This casts grave doubts on the sovereignty of P, in the face of impaired capacity, to relate to its counterparts on rational and mutually beneficial basis. The consequence of this situation for the development of P is grave as we look into its effects in many ways.

It reduces the possibility of multiple trading partners and therefore exposes P to the blackmail of C in whose hands the bulk of P's trading is concentrated. Politically, C makes crucial decisions for P as it virtually holds the purse-string. This political power is exercised either directly or through its surrogates who constitute the bridgehead.The deployment of these two mechanisms spells dependency of P on C.

Reflection

Periphery nations become exclusive spheres of interest and satellites of individual Centre nations. In other words, through this mechanism, free interaction of the Periphery with other nations of the world is restricted. This casts grave doubts on the sovereignty of P, in the face of impaired capacity, to relate to its counterparts on rational and mutually beneficial basis. The consequence of this situation for the development of P is grave.

6.3 Types of Imperialism

The two mechanisms explained above eliminate the use of direct violence by imperialism unless they do not work as perfectly as they should. Thus, we can say that at its mature or sophisticated stage, militarism ceases to be an inevitable mechanism for imperialism as the older theories do assert.

Now, five well developed types of imperialism are identifiable. These are:

  i.   Economic imperialism
  ii. Cultural imperialism
  iii. Communication imperialism
  iv. Political imperialism
  v.   Military imperialism

6.3.1 Economic Imperialism

As I have explained under vertical interaction structure, it is this structure that engenders economic imperialism. This consists in the satellization of the economy of P. to the extent that it becomes a service-economy to that of C. P is totally dependent on C for its capital, processed goods, managerial skill as well as technology. Whenever C's economy catches cold, that of P must start sneezing. This relationship impedes the economic development of P. Therefore, economic stagnation occurs whose consequences are manifested in both political and social spheres of the life of the imperialized society.

6.3.2 Cultural Imperialism

This is sometimes referred to as scientific imperialism because it has to do with the processing of African data in Europe and North Africa and the subsequent exportation of theories derived there from back to Africa. In this manner the dominance of Centre nations in science and technology is illustrated. On the general, plain cultural imperialism means the pervasive dominance of western cultural values and goods in Periphery nations some of which had had more glorious cultural past than some of the nations that now dominate them culturally. The mimicking mentality of the ruling class in Periphery nations has engendered cultural imperialism more than any other factor.

6.3.3 Communication Imperialism

This type relates to the dominance of the Centre nations in matters relating to communication media as well as transportation. Specifically, it has to do with Mass media communication, and all forms of transportation vehicles (land, space and water). All of these are dominated by the Centre nations while Periphery nations enjoy communication technology by their grace. There is total dependence on Centre nations for supply and maintenance of almost all types of

communication media. Through this form of imperialism it is easy for Centre nations to control the minds of people in Periphery nations.

6.3.4 Political Imperialism

Political imperialism is related to the dominance exercised by Centre nations over Periphery ones in matters relating to decision-making as well as model lending. Through it, the so-called foreign experts enhance the effectiveness of political imperialism in Periphery nations and reduce the actual sovereignty of the states.

6.3.5 Military Imperialism

Military imperialism is the dominance of Centre nations in military matters. This includes the supply of military hardware and the provision of training facilities and logistics. This is illustrated by the fact that all Third World nations rely on Europe and North America for their supply of military hardware and training. In times of conflict, military advisers are also sent to troubled areas in the Third World ostensibly to help the friendly nation but infact to protect the interest of the Centre nation.

Discussion Activity

Discuss the most prominent type of imperialism on the African continent.

Post your findings on Study Session Six forum page on course website.

Study Session Summary

Summary

In this Study Session, you learnt that Structural Theory of imperialism is based on two mechanisms: vertical interaction structure and feudal interaction structure. The proper functioning of these mechanisms eliminates the use of overt violence in establishing multi-purpose dominance.

Without the cooperation of the ruling class in the Periphery nations, structural imperialism by Centre nations is not possible. It serves as the bridge-head.

Five types of imperialism are also identified. These are economic, cultural, communication, political and military.

Study Session 7

Relevance of Imperialism to the Study of Politics in Africa

Introduction

In this previous study session, we shall summarize why we have gone this length to study imperialism in a course of Politics in Africa.

Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this Study Session, you should be able to:

7.1 *make* a strong case on your own for the study of imperialism.

7.1 Relevance of the Study of Imperialism

You will wonder why so much time and energy has been devoted to the study of imperialism in a course on Politics in Africa. We have to do this if you should understand the roots of the realities which define African politics today. Unless we do, you have no way of knowing why the post-colonial African state behaves the way it does and therefore have insight into its problems. Furthermore, a student of African politics with a flair for in-depth knowledge of the economic predicament of African societies in post-colonial era will continue to chase the shadow unless the problem is situated within the historical context to which it belongs.

Hint

We would be unable to say much about the institutions of the post-colonial state and society and their behaviour unless we unravel the problem of their roots and therefore the rationale for introducing them in the colonial situation.

Therefore, unless we look closely into the roots and the course of imperialism, we will not only be unable to explain, with appreciable degree of credibility, the nature and character of African politics, but we would also fail to realize why African states operate under what Julius Nyerere calls "hostile external environment". Now let us examine some essential components of African politics in order to assess the relevance of imperialism to its study.

7.2 Post-Colonial African State

The post-colonial African state that represents both the physical as well as the juridical terrain of African politics owes its birth to imperialism. How? The post-colonial state is a successor state to the colonial state. The colonial state was put together by colonial fiat arbitrarily and to suit imperialist objectives. The way the borders are drawn illustrates the arbitrariness that I am talking about and the dismemberment of a single ethnic group (a nation) into three or more parts in three or more states is a demonstration of this arbitrariness.

On the theoretical plain, it is impossible to explain the emergence of the colonial state and therefore, that of the post-colonial state, in terms of any of the well established theories of the state. For example, the colonial state did not emerge as antagonistic class interests became irreconcilable as Marxists say. Nor does the Lockean social contract theory apply. The colonial state was an artificial state created by force of arms and therefore, welded culturally disparate peoples together in an involuntary political arrangement, so much so that decades after the existence of the colonial state, its nation has not arrived. This constitutes an intractable political problem which manifests itself in quite a number of ways. So many political problems have been traced to the nature and character of the post-colonial state that political scientists are now agreed that a theory of the post-colonial state has become necessary. A number of such theories are now available. In this regard, the contributions of Hamza Alavi and Leys should be mentioned, although the debate is still inconclusive.

7.3 African Economy

You will recall that early in this course, we took a look at the characteristic features of pre-colonial political economy. You will observe that these features are not shared by the postcolonial Africa. There has been a tremendous change since colonialism. You will also recall that the presence of European powers in Africa during the scramble has been explained in economic terms. The structural theory of imperialism attempts to explain the relationship between the economies of African states (Periphery nations) with those of industrialized Europe, N. America and Japan (Centre nations). The consequences of the exchange interaction between Africa and Europe, N. America and Japan for internal material situation in those African states have also been made clear by that theory. You will now see how ignorant of the roots of Africa's economic situation we would have been without a good grasp of

what imperialism is all about. Our knowledge of politics in Africa would, in turn, have been superficial without a good understanding of the nature and character of the economy of African states.

7.4 Political Institutions

African political institutions whose study is inevitable in a meaningful discussion of African politics are essentially those that emerged during colonization and nurtured in, the colonial situation.

> **Note**
>
> Although political institutions like the judiciary and the legislature did exist in traditional African political systems, their structure and function were different. Other political institutions like the political party and official opposition were totally unknown to the traditional political system.

The vestiges of traditional political system have, to all intents and purposes, lost power and punch to the modern western-type ones that came with colonialism. Wherever a clash occurs between these vestiges of the old and the new, it is often settled in favour of the new. Our study of imperialism explains to us why these political institutions were not introduced in their original forms but had to be adapted to serve subjectively defined objectives.

7.4 Global Political System

It is not possible for a student of African politics to understand Africa's external relations and linkages as well as patterns of Africa's trade flows and other international economic relations without situating all of those within the right historical perspective.

Drawing on our knowledge of imperialism and its contemporary forms, the position of African states within the global power structure is made clear. It also sets limit on the extent to which these states can rely on this global power structure to solve their problems.

Study Session Summary

Summary

In this Study Session, you learnt that knowledge of imperialism is crucial to our study of politics in Africa because the African State (colonial and post-colonial) is a product of imperialist enterprise. Furthermore, political institutions of African states as well as their economies took their content and form from the colonial situation. And with the transformation of the traditional African polity to a modem African state we need an in-depth knowledge of the forces and impulses that forged the relationship between Africa and Europe as well as North America which continue to have influence on the politics, economy and the social structures in African societies.

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