

When Corruption Is Officially Institutionalized: Revision of the Politics, the Society, and the Culture of the sub-Saharan Africa: A Post-Colonial Reading.

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Abstract: *This paper thinks a standard political analysis, Africa Works by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz in which the social, the political, the economic, and the cultural factors in sub-Saharan Africa are described as being upside down. The discussion brings out Africa's typical politics of irrational practice of witchcraft and religion, unbelievable misdistribution of money; misuse of power; and the instrumentalization of disorder. The argument the book undergoes is to help reveal the fact that the African politics is informal and personalized. It confirms the illegitimate tie between patron and client that invites corruption and war in the societies; and ultimately creates the productivity of economic failure. The corrupt leaders and the clientelistic constituency are the cores of the management of patrimonial and the particularistic nature of politics. Chabal and Daloz divide the book into four chapters; and each has the information of how Africa is going backward; at the same time has reformation of institutionalizing the whole continent's politics properly. Both authors consider the African states are colonial; arbitrary as well as poorly bureaucratized that these states durably fail to meet the democratized notion of the western political modernization. The authors end discussion holding Africa's political infrastructure accountable for legitimating criminalization in the societies.*

Keyword: *Corruption, Criminalization, disorder, Patrimonial politics, war.*

I. Introduction

Man is believed to be equal and free. Every man should have a social status, right to politics, and economy, and participate in it. Although equality and freedom are the characteristics to human being, history has privileged another story of human; the story of human discrimination in terms of social, political, and economic status, religion, cast, ethnicity, and the like. History has also privileged colonial relationship between men; and celebrated the power, and wealth the colonials have consumed. It is signified that history is particularized as well as colonized because it has given spaces to the ruler class of people; but rarely brought the suffering along with the demands of the ruled class of people to light. Issue of freedom and equality can be said to be no longer at work today. Issue of colonialism, neocolonialism, and capitalism are understood to be the focus of this time.

1.1. The Purpose

This research, in general, concentrates on the book *Africa Works* and particularizes some important issues such as the book comments on the sub-Saharan Africa's so-called, informal, and politically corrupt class of people, who, for their own luxuries and interests, enslave the common people; and even deny them to their basic rights. The research is, mainly, expected to focus on what is actually happening inside the sub-Saharan Africa. The research tries to show the concept of neocolonialism within the same ethnic group; and explains the violence in terms of the rights of the common people in the sub-Saharan Africa who want to have their just position socially, politically and economically.

1.2. The Aim/Contribution of the Paper

As the book *Africa Works* is the main consideration of this paper, this research aims at ransacking the detailed information along with the paradigm of knowledge about the sub-Saharan Africa's real history of the public, and the private life as attempted with some effective suggestions by the historians and writers of the book, Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz. The book is marked as being a documentary that outlines some very important realistic analyses of the Africans' colonized lives. Poorly institutionalized politics; clientelism and nepotism; representation of private property; privatization of the government; denial of public interest, and rights; and conventional and orthodox ruling systems are the prime detected issues that thoroughly marginalize the whole Africans into two particular classes such as the rich and the poor; the privileged and the ignored; the powerful and the powerless. The research shall be analyzed from the post-colonial reading. The post-colonialism reads the core of the text that to designate the patterns of social, political, and economic domination,

the black ruling classes set up new colonies within their own countries; and create severe inter-racial conflicts; and bring economic disorder among the poor classes around the sub-Saharan Africa.

In fact, the Sub-Saharan Africa is filled with extremely patrimonial governing system that is made corrupt; and needs new political reformations. The research shall examine this knowledge of Africa from a post-colonial perspective. The research is not intended to give a solution to these problems prevailed in the African societies, the politics, and the economy; rather it shall investigate these core cultural problems that must need to be addressed.

1.3. Revision of the Post-colonial Approach

Post-colonialism is a doctrine that has its root in the past; but is still understood to be influential to human life in terms of class, social, political, and economic status. It has been theorized today as the societies are splitting into different classes. It studies how some groups of people are ruling other groups in the same ethnicity; and are easily making discriminations among own people. In this way, the ruling class develops quite severe a power relationship with the ruled classes of people. The ruling classes introduce a set of ideals that are implemented purely on the ruled class forcefully. Gwyn Prins observes that “power is to be found located in patron-client relationships, not in bureaucracies, and once you understand this, a rich and robust pattern of informal and widely ramified social power is revealed, not dissimilar to the way in which effective political power in Russia has returned to factions and patrons (440). If it is scrutinized, the ruling classes turn to be the colonial rulers, who execute their imperialistic demands at the expense of common people’s suffering. The term, post-colonialism actually observes these post-world problems that unleash conflicts and, sometimes, war among the different nations in Africa. This is so happens there because the Africans are obsessed with old tyrannizing witchcrafts and superstitious beliefs. They cannot even so effectively engage the rationales of fundamental liberation as well as the civilizing potentials of modernization.

What is the noticeable feature of the post-colonialism is the introduction of the neocolonialism. Neocolonialism is also viewed as being the revision of the post-colonialism as the neocolonialism gets inspiration from the old practices of western colonialism. In addition to this, neocolonial rulers reflect on the previous colonialists, who have enslaved people around the world while the neocolonialists rank their own country people in terms of their low positions in the society. This kind of neocolonial practices can be seen to have been institutionalized in the sub-Saharan Africa. The rulers of these regions set certain degrees of corruption that turn the continent into poverty; and severe stresses of exploitation. Therefore, post-colonialism marks the unbearable suffering of the colonized classes and the demolishing of the democracy in its fullest. In the path-breaking studies of the sub-Saharan Africa under colonial regime system it documents the continent’s being more traditional (signifying backward); and getting adept at leading at the same instant different private and public lives and also identities, which are, in their interpretations, particularistic and mutually exclusive. In a perfunctory, critically documented, and an exactly argued focus on the sub-Saharan Africa’s administrative capacity, it is evident that the contemporary African political system characterized by the criminalization of the public authority, patrimonialism, and the deficiency of proper political institutionalization goes to an acute degree of political disorders and chaos. This is actually what the Africans have to do in their countries, which are, in William Reno’s words, full of ‘warlord politics’. Yoweri K. Museveni comments that “if you asked me what the biggest problem the African people are facing today is, I would tell you that it is backwardness” (155).

II. Summary of the Book, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*

“For those interested affairs, but lacking detailed knowledge of Africa..... If you read only one book about Africa this year it should be this one”

-Gwyn Prins, International Affairs

Africa Works: Disorder As Political Instrument is a remarkable work of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, who pay attention to what is actually happening in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The book, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* is charged with the real history of corruption; and mismanagement run in the African continent by its own rulers. Both Chabal and Daloz present some significant issues in the book that might escape the general as well as the critical attention of the scholars. The aim of the book has to deliver the quality framework for the African politics in its relationship between the patron and the client that will help explain the readers the ‘political instrumentalization of disorder’. The instrumentalization of disorder explains the moral basis of leadership is formed by the failures of governance, violence, corruption, and the abuse of international aid. In addition, the enforcement of colonialism are partially but greatly responsible for the continent’s to form back. Humanitarian crisis, exacerbating social tensions, territorial divisions, and poverty are the results frequently available in the sub-Saharan Africa due to its apparent contradictory nature of politics. There is a crucial breakdown in the foundation of Africa’s political orders as it rests on the irrational belief system of witchcraft and religion that affect as well as invite dichotomy between the elites and the common in the Africans’ everyday lives. In the name of witchcrafts and religion, an untold damage and inordinate suffering

seem to be the hallmarks in the African societies today. Chabal speaks that “not only is there nowadays more civil discord, more fighting, but there is also an extra-ordinary degree of strife in everyday life, ranging from the abuse dispensed by police and other authorities to the increasing use of religiously sanctioned or witchcraft driven brutality” (1). Actually, the contact between government’s power and the acts of violence seem not to provide any meaningful generalization to consider. In fact, from Chabal’s statement, it is clearly noticed what politics and power are that essentially transit through the operation of the governments. The political structures are formal; but the usage of power transits by way of informal division units. Chabal observes carefully that “the operation of political institutions is thus very largely conditioned by the exercise of personalized power” (4).

As many issues concerning Africa’s illegitimate responses to clientele concentrated, Chabal and Daloz’s *Africa Works* has remarkably been divided into four principle chapters which are as follows:

- 2.1. The Informalization of Politics
- 2.2. The Re-traditionalization of Society
- 2.3. The Productivity of Economic Failure
- 2.4. A New Paradigm

Secondly, each principle chapter has also been divided into three sections except the last chapter that is followed by one section. Each principle chapter along with its sections are mentioned as follows:

The first principle chapter reads

- 2.1.1. W(h)ither the State?
- 2.1.2. The Illusions of Civil Society
- 2.1.3. Recycled Elites

The second principle chapter reads

- 2.2.1. Of Masks & Men: the Question of Identity
- 2.2.2. The Training of Irrational Witchcraft & Religion
- 2.2.3. Crime & Enrichment: the Profits of Violence

The third principle chapter reads

- 2.3.1. The Ab(use) of Corruption
- 2.3.2. The Bounties of Dependence
- 2.3.3. The In(significance) of Development

The fourth principle chapter reads

- 2.4.1. The Political Instrumentalization of Disorder

The book *Africa Works*, with these organized; and coherent chapters along with each section, and sub-sections, pays a scrutinized visit to the core problems of the Sub-Saharan Africa; and attempts to reform the apparent discordant political structures within the African continent.

2.1. The Informalization of the Politics

In the first chapter of the book, *The Informalization of the Politics*, Chabal and Daloz introduce the idea of the informalization of the continent’s politics that they consider to be formalized so that the patrimony, and the accountability for the corruption in the continent may not come to anybody’s notice.

2.1.1. W(h)ither the State

Chabal and Daloz in section one, W(h)ither the State, describe that “some argue that such political institution have pre-colonial roots in the continent. Others contend either that they have not been successfully transplanted from their Western origins or that only now are they in the process of being constructed” (3). Chabal and Daloz here emphasize on the patrimony, and empirical nature that partially informalize the politics of the continent. Put very simply, what that informalizing of the African politics manifests is the political legitimation to meet the clientelistic claims to keep secure the power. Chabal puts that “since the structural dynamics of African political systems remain essentially patrimonial, and since resources are steadily diminishing, the political elites increasingly use disorder instrumentally” (8).

Moreover, Chabal and Daloz come up with three cultural considerations such as ‘established political structures’, ‘role of the dominant class’, and ‘appearance with reality’ that should be emancipated (5). These three considerations could be meant that the continent may appear to be improving gradually; but the system of the continent is poorly institutionalized in terms of its political power and resources. Although the government shows a syncretization of the private and the public, the real fact is that there is a strong distinction between the private and the public spheres as Chabal and Daloz suggest. The privatization of the public sectors, working for the clienteles; and nepotism are accountable for the disorder in the continent.

2.2.2. The Illusions of Civil Society

In the second section, the illusions of the civil society, Chabal and Daloz concentrate on the concept of the civil society. They suggest that the civil society is vague and idealized word in contrast to what is

happening in the continent. They mean that the concept of the civil society “does not reflect realities on the continent” (17).

They go on saying that the idea of the civil society is used and also abused only for political purposes. To create a civil society, this section emphasizes, the politics should be free from all types of clientelistic networks and kinship with the social elites.

2.2.3. Recycled Elites

The third section describes the reorder or recycle of the elites and of their clientelistic role in the politics. Chabal and Daloz think that the renewal of this political leadership shall bring democracy in the system; but at the same time, doubt that such renewal may not be possible in the existing political order. Chabal and Daloz say that “our argument thus casts serious doubts emphasizing divisions between ‘high’ and ‘low’ politics, elites and masses, ruling classes and populace. Such is decidedly not the reality on the continent” (42).

2.2. The Re-traditionalization of Society

In the second chapter, The Re-traditionalization of Society, Chabal and Daloz insist on the continent’s being re-traditionalized in terms of the politics. They think that the continent is moving backward and it, necessarily, needs to be re-traditionalized. According to them, Africa is modernizing but differently, that is, Africa is inheriting the colonial roles from the Westernization, which is problematic to the African political operation.

2.2.1. Of Masks & Men: the Question of Identity

From this interpretation Chabal and Daloz raise several important issues that shall be addressed now. They ask if “the question of identity” determines the political condition of the continent (49). Their inquiry is of a greater significance because if the Africans are inviting Westernization to their culture and politics, certainly, it shall question their identity of Africanization.

Chabal and Daloz then go on defining the term, ‘Africanization’. From their discussion it is explicit that they insist on the separation between the political realm and the more economic, social, religious or cultural areas (52). But in Africa, politics is privatized; and other organizations also maintain clientelistic relations with the political patrons, who are colonizing their own people. What Chabal and Daloz emphasize here is African Individuality. They argue that to be modern it is necessary for the Africans to be single individuals. But, in Africa, the politics is thought to have been mingled, that is to say, both individual and communal affairs are inter-related; and this could become problematic to the making of a modern society in Africa. To make a modern society possible in Africa, it needs political legitimacy to be confirmed. Chabal and Daloz say that criminalization is, in Africa, thought as well asperceived legitimate, and legal. On the other hand, the notion of representation is also important to assure the African identity, which is necessary for making Africa properly modernized.

2.2.2. The Training of Irrational Witchcraft & Religion

The notion of the modern society is also related to the removal of the practice of witchcraft and other ritualistic ceremonies, which Chabal and Daloz consider ‘the taming of the irrational’ (63). They argue that still Africa has some superstitious belief; and witchcraft is still thriving in the society. These practices go against the dream of the implementation of the modern society in Africa. The African’s belief in this superstitious religious practice is considered to be connected to its political culture but the politics is not considered irrational by Chabal and Daloz. What they suggest is to separate politics from the religious influence as there is no firm boundary between African religious belief and the temporal. The Africans have a traditional belief in the link between the living and the dead; and they believe that there is no frontier between the living and the dead. Such is their belief system that influences the inter-relation between individual and communal affairs that has been discussed in the previous section. Chabal and Daloz make a survey of the Western politics; and the African politics; and find out that the Western politics comes as ‘church, power, and society while in Africa it is ‘witchcraft, society, and politics’ (70-73).

2.2.3. Crime & Enrichment: the Profits of Violence

Chabal and Daloz then go otherwise to discuss the profits of violence in Africa. They relate the high level of violence in Africa to its non-modern political system in which law is weak and patrimony increases. Chabal and Daloz see how a petty crime transforms into a civil war. They reason that the ineffective political initiative franchises the criminalization; and the illegitimate activities in the society; and, in addition, this clientelistic link with the patron are largely accountable for the wide range of violence. Moreover, the businessmen in Africa are economically strong; and have affinity with the political patron. What is surprising to know is that, as Chabal and Daloz disclose, “Determination to control and contain disorder within manageable

boundaries ties both the business elites and the politicians together” (80). Thus, consequently, the syncretization of the elite and the politician brings anger in the common people’s mind that invites the war to start in the continent.

2.3. The Productivity of Economic Failure

In fact, the war ultimately brings the economic failure to a country as well as to the continent. Chabal and Daloz term such syncretization as “the productivity of Economic ‘Failure’” (93). For the economic failure both Chabal and Daloz re-investigate into three core inquiries such as corruption, dependence and development.

2.3.1. The Ab(use) of Corruption

In the words of the political analysts like Chabal and Daloz, corruption in Africa is everyday practice. This may be due to poor institutionalization of the politics. From Chabal and Daloz’s interpretation, it is explicit that excessive introduction of the capitalism, lack of morality, and democratic practice, and increasing criminalization, and violence give a considerable space to corruption in the continent. The aftermath of post-colonialism counts that a significant proportion of the state wide corruption clearly visible in the sub-Saharan Africa is for the most part encountered at a clerkish level. Much of such proportion of the corruption in the lower level occurs purely due to the ineffective administration; and its malfunctioning of the services provided. Chabal and Daloz state that “corruption is not just endemic but an integral part of the social fabric of life in the African Continent” (99). In addition, it is believed that due to the past colonial practices adopted by the present African rulers in the continent; and money is the central power to these colonial rulers, who earn it through corruption; and get hold of the control over the common people of the continent. Such typical as well as complex cases of the Africans’ lives wrapped in corruption validate the assumption that corruption is the mindset shared by all layers of population in the sub-Saharan Africa.

2.3.2. The Bounties of Dependence

The second inquiry of Chabal and Daloz rests on the term, ‘dependence’ that is very important to the discussion of what is happening in the African continent. Dependence is actually politically used instrument, as Chabal and Daloz suggest. Dependence, as it is understood from the book, is a nation’s, or a country’s, or a continent’s economic need that is fulfilled by the foreign aid. In Africa, the elites accumulate donor’s aid, and use it for their patron’s sake; thus they maintain their existence with security. The political rulers, who borrow the aid from the donors, grant the aid as a foreign aid, and that is not re-paid. They always represent poverty to the developed countries to borrow money. In this way, the political patrons keep them benefitted in the continent. They intentionally make themselves dependent nation to the rich nation. Chabal and Daloz state that “Africa’s governments did not hesitate to continue to borrow as much and as often as they could” (114). Therefore, dependence can be seen to be a profitable business in the African continent.

2.3.3 The In(significance) of Development

It is the fact that dependence tradition in the continent can be said as being the obstacle to the development. Here Chabal and Daloz emphasize on Africa’s being aware of its politics, society, economics and citizen. Abuse of power, pluralistic political nature, increasing privatization, absence of individualism, exclusion of public interest and demand, inclusion of clientelism and dependence nature of the patrons are considered to be making of the development impossible in the continent. Thus, Africa’s development is doubted because of its informalization of politics. Although development is given the priority, it is sternly criticized because development is not encouraged in Africa. The micro level of corruption is seen to be promoted to the macro level. What is mostly suggested in the book is that the African continent should implement individualism, and establish its own identity. It is true that westernization of Africa may spoil its soul.

2.4. A New Paradigm

The idea of the modernization in Africa stresses its being free from the western colonial tradition; and insists on re-institutionalization of the politics; and the mindset of the Africans that contradicts to their development theory and modernization should be reconsidered.

2.4.1. The Political Instrumentalization of Disorder

The authors, Chabal and Daloz disclose that the way the social, the political, and the economic factors come in together to be in the process of democratization does not actually work in everyday life in Africa. The condition of the African states is pluralistic in terms of modernization from an analytical standpoint. The entire system is run through a combination of western democracy along with tradition. So, the authors here claim that they are not saying the African states are backward, or so-called. They are just explaining

why the Africans are moving to the directions of backwardness; and fail to avoid their existing paradigms of disorders.

III. The Post-colonial Appreciation of the Book *Africa Works*

The term, post-colonialism, generally, refers one's vision to the history of oppression of the ruled class of people. The ruled class of people had alien experiences under the ruling class. Although the British colonial system went away, it is understood that the seeds of colonialism is still rooted in many parts of Africa. The book, *Africa Works* is the landmark to the canon of history. Patrick Chabal and Jean- Pascal Daloz experiment a lot to identify the political disorder that is understood to have meant how the political disorder in the African continent colonizes its own people only in terms of power and money. For the economic gain, the sub-Saharan Africa is caught within the severe corruption state. D.P.H. Ahluwalia argues that "despite sub-Saharan Africa pursuing what could be broadly referred to as either a capitalist or socialist development strategy, the economic strategy which have plagued this region since the 1970s have led some analysts to theorize the phenomenon of 'collapsed states'" (53).

What Ahluwalia wants to say is that the states collapse because the states fail to maintain a good political behavior. He adds that "regardless of the manner in which the state is characterized- collapsed, healthy or fictitious- the idea that the state is unable its role is rooted firmly in what Colin Leys has labelled the 'African Tragedy'" (53). Both Chabal and Daloz exhibit an insight into reading the African leaders' corrupting nature that opens the gate to money making only to their clients and elites. These leaders are presented to be nepotistic and particularistic in accordance with their nature. In fact, this could be said as neocolonial system introduced by the post-African political leaders. Chabal and Daloz argue that "all African states share is a generalized system of patrimonialism and an acute degree of apparent disorder, as evidenced by a high level of governmental and administrative inefficiency, lack of institutionalization" (par.).

In short, from the post-colonial perspective, the political disorder of the sub-Saharan Africa is meant to be a constant practice of patrimony that privileges a particular class while the interests of the common people are of no values and, most of all, the political rulers are seen not to have been concerned of the common people. The common people of these regions remain dependent, and paralyzed economically by the politicians. Chabal and Daloz argue that "it is the consequence of the fundamentally instrumental concept of power, which marks out what we call the informalization of politics on the continent" (4). More traditional views of the politics on the continent make the system to rule stagnant and unworkable. The governing system of the continent according to Chabal and Daloz urges for the modernization but, in reality, the continent is experiencing backwardness, and so-called informalization in politics. The system of the continent is understood to be made extremely colonial; and oppresses its people, who either has to tolerate the suffering or to revolt against.

IV. Conclusion

Africa Works is, actually, considered to be a documentary that discloses a distance between the governments of the sub-Saharan Africa and its people. The authors find out the core problems in the continent and try to suggest a set of solutions such as the modernization of the society; formalization of the politics; and re-ordering the policies. The authors also observe the lobbying between the clients and the patrons; and their scheme to sustain their own political stability. What is, in particular, happening in the continent is 'disorder' that is the sole instrument of the political leaders, who institute it as their weapon. By disorder, they could be able to earn quick money. *Africa Works* is also seen as a case study as the analysis of the essay draws on the criminalization of the continent's politics; and researches the possible reasons that are accountable for such criminalization.

The research is approached with a critical attention paid to the post-colonialism because the content of *Africa Works* clearly signifies the African politics of nepotism, clientelism, and self-privilege that negate the rights to the common people, who cannot even share the same facilities and properties in accordance with their eligibility and education. The book implicitly or, in some cases, explicitly reads the African politics of colonialism; and its practical internal oppression of the general people. In particular, the informal politics of the African representatives is understood to be personalized; and brings the state into a chaotic situation making distinction between the people in terms of socio-political, and economic status.

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